The Formation of Organizational Networks in Emerging Economy: the Case of Agribusiness Incubators  
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### Introduction and Aim
- The role of the Business Incubator is to broker the process of interlinking incubated enterprises with internal and external partners.  
- Scholars have identified the positive effect of networks in obtaining access to resources and for creating an enabling environment for future incubated enterprises. The role of networks and networking has not yet been sufficiently addressed.  
- Previous research has underestimated the benefits of networking activities provided to business incubators, since mainly the incubator manager perspective has been taken into account.  
- Scholars have pointed out the need for more scientific research to understand the role of networks and networking in business incubators.  
- While attention has been devoted to networks and their critical importance for the success of the incubator, less attention has been focused on how the networks are established, shaped and maintained.  
- We investigate the organizational network formation during the establishment of an incubator by asking the following research questions:  
  - How is the internal network established among partners of the triplicate business incubator?  
  - How is the inter-organizational network established based on partners’ subnetworks?

### Literature review

#### Social network theory
- Constructs of the theory  
  - Relational Content (Business, Friendship, Advice-based)  
  - Relational form  
  - Strength of relational / Frequency of contacts  
  - Actor’s Central position / Prominence  
  - Network size / Diversity of Relations

#### Case study
- 4 cases in 3 African countries: Kenya, Uganda, Zambia

#### Conclusions
- This study contributes to business incubator management literature in general and particular for the developing country context.  
- Empirical studies are sparse & this study represents one of the first attempts to fill this gap in the literature since the business incubator concept in increasingly being translated, adopted, and implemented in the African contexts.  
- This study highlights the need to modify methodological approaches according to the cultural and institutional context in which they are used.

### Methods
- Research design: A cross-sectional descriptive multiple-case study  
- Semi-structured interviews (10 Individual + 5 Group interviews) & Networking survey (15)  
- Secondary data (incubators’ business plans and 4 consortium agreements)

#### Data analysis
- SSI design and analysis (15 questionnaires addressed the incubator network formation)
- The questionnaire design = a free recall format
- Unit of analysis: 1 representative from university, research organization and private business
- The structural data analyzed in egocentric level 
- Two-mode network matrices are constructed & exported to UCINET

#### Results
- The internal networking of BI is largely based on embeddedness of partners in their social network with already known actors.  
- University partners turn to people based on previously & current relationships. Previous informal relations among partners became formalized when the business incubator was established.  
  - Proposition 1: Incubator partners depend on strong ties during the creation and implementation of a business incubation program  
  - Concerning relational form, results show that partners rely heavily on strong ties. Empirical evidence reveals uniformity in terms of relational content. Majority of linkages that partners expect to draw on are identified as ‘business’ ties.  
  - Partners considered strength of relations based on prior contractual agreement, current MoUs, joint projects, previous collaborations, & group membership.  
  - Tie strength is not simply related to intimacy that partners of the incubator have with family and friends, but also with other types of ties such as business, advice and professional ties.  
  - Proposition 2: The strength of the ties does not depend on the type of the relations that partners of incubator possess.

#### Inter-organizational network
- Partners draw on their social network as the basis of the creation of the BI’s inter-organizational networks  
- Proposition 3: Incubator partners will serve as focal nodes and they will facilitate the creation of inter-organizational network by activating their social networks.  
  - Results show minor differences among partners in the number of ties they contribute to the partnerships.  
  - It becomes difficult for any of the partners to claim a central position by virtue.  
  - The compositions of the partnerships results in balanced networks.

#### Proposition 4:
  - Given the partnership setup, there will be no prominent actor in the business incubator network

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*Image diagrams and tables are not reproduced here, but they are part of the full document.*