

Navigating Institutional Logics

An Ethnographic Account of Enterprise Governance in Uganda (2000–2026)

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ABSTRACT

Enterprise governance in emerging economies is often analysed through singular, imported institutional logics, neglecting the complex interplay of local socio-cultural systems. This creates a gap in understanding how organisations navigate competing governance rationales in practice. This study aims to ethnographically document and theorise the lived experience of organisational actors as they navigate and reconcile competing institutional logics—specifically, globalised corporate governance norms, kinship-based obligations, and state-patronage networks—within their enterprise governance practices. A longitudinal, immersive ethnography was conducted, involving participant observation, in-depth interviews, and document analysis within a purposive sample of Ugandan enterprises. The researcher was embedded in organisational settings to capture tacit, everyday governance practices. A dominant theme was the strategic, situational hybridisation of logics rather than their conflict. For instance, in approximately 70% of observed board-level decisions, formal audit committee recommendations were explicitly adapted to accommodate pre-existing kinship obligations, reframing them as 'social risk mitigation'. Enterprise governance is enacted as a dynamic, pragmatic process of logic blending, which challenges orthodox models that presume the dominance or convergence towards a single global standard. This sustains a uniquely adaptive, yet opaque, governance ecosystem. Policy frameworks and investor due diligence should account for blended logics as a constitutive feature of the governance environment. Corporate governance training for directors should incorporate case-based learning on managing logic plurality. institutional logics, corporate governance, ethnography, hybridity, Uganda, kinship, boardroom practices This paper provides a novel, empirically-grounded framework of 'situational hybridisation' to explain governance practices, derived from a unique longitudinal ethnographic dataset capturing boardroom and executive interactions.

Keywords: *Ethnography, Institutional Logics, Enterprise Governance, Sub-Saharan Africa, Organisational Culture*

Article Highlights

- Governance emerges from strategic, situational hybridisation of competing logics, not their conflict.
- Formal corporate norms are pragmatically blended with kinship obligations and state-patronage networks.
- The study challenges orthodox models presuming convergence toward a single global governance standard.
- Findings advocate for policy and training that account for logic plurality as a constitutive feature.

Core Contribution

Introduces the framework of 'situational hybridisation' to explain how enterprise governance is enacted as a dynamic, pragmatic process of logic blending.

Draws on a unique longitudinal ethnographic dataset capturing boardroom and executive interactions.

ABSTRACT-ONLY PUBLICATION

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