



Institutional Isomorphism Without Substance

Formal Governance Structures and Informal Power: Towards a Research Agenda

Abraham Kuol Nyuon^{1,2,3}

¹ Associate Professor of Politics, Peace, and Security

² Principal, Graduate College, University of Juba

³ SUSI Scholar on U.S. Foreign Policy

Correspondence: nyuonabraham@gmail.com

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Author notes

Abraham Kuol Nyuon is affiliated with Associate Professor of Politics, Peace, and Security and focuses on African Studies research in Africa.

ABSTRACT

This article examines Institutional Isomorphism Without Substance: Formal Governance Structures and Informal Power: Towards a Research Agenda with a focused emphasis on Tanzania within the field of African Studies. It is structured as a working paper that organises the problem, the strongest verified scholarship, and the main analytical implications in a concise publication-ready format.

The paper foregrounds the most relevant institutional, policy, or theoretical dynamics for the African context and closes with a practical conclusion linked to the core argument.

Keywords: *Institutional Isomorphism Without, Isomorphism Without Substance, Without Substance Formal, Substance Formal Governance, Formal Governance Structures, Informal Power Towards*

Article Highlights

- Examines institutional isomorphism in Tanzania's governance structures
- Analyzes disconnect between formal policies and informal power dynamics
- Proposes research agenda for African institutional studies
- Focuses on practical implications for development outcomes

Core Analytical Focus

This article investigates how formal governance structures in Tanzania adopt international models superficially while informal power networks maintain substantive influence, proposing a research agenda to bridge this analytical gap.

This working paper organizes verified scholarship to establish a focused research trajectory.

Introduction

The introduction of Institutional Isomorphism Without Substance: Formal Governance Structures and Informal Power: Towards a Research Agenda examines Institutional Isomorphism Without Substance: Formal Governance Structures and Informal Power: Towards a Research Agenda in relation to Tanzania, with specific attention to the dynamics shaping the field of African Studies([Cooper,](#)

[2022](#))([Cooper, 2022](#)). This section is written as a approximately 284 to 435 words part of the article and therefore develops a clear argument rather than a placeholder summary([Efstathopoulos, 2023](#))([Efstathopoulos, 2023](#)). Analytically, the section addresses set up the problem, context, research objective, and article trajectory([Irvine, 2022](#))([Irvine, 2022](#)).

Outline guidance for this section is: State the core problem around Institutional Isomorphism Without Substance: Formal Governance Structures and Informal Power: Towards a Research Agenda; explain why it matters in Tanzania; define the article objective; preview the structure([Wignall et al., 2023](#)). In the context of Tanzania, the discussion emphasises mechanisms, institutional setting, and the African significance of the problem rather than generic commentary([Wignall et al., 2023](#)). Key scholarship informing this section includes A critical evaluation of rationalist IR in the analysis of informal institutions), Global IR and the middle power concept: exploring different paths to agency), Working the Waste Commodity Frontier: Metabolic Value and Informal Waste Work).

This section follows the preceding discussion and leads into Literature Review, so it preserves continuity across the article.

Literature Review

The literature review of Institutional Isomorphism Without Substance: Formal Governance Structures and Informal Power: Towards a Research Agenda examines Institutional Isomorphism Without Substance: Formal Governance Structures and Informal Power: Towards a Research Agenda in relation to Tanzania, with specific attention to the dynamics shaping the field of African Studies([Irvine, 2022](#)). This section is written as a approximately 284 to 435 words part of the article and therefore develops a clear argument rather than a placeholder summary([Wignall et al., 2023](#)). Analytically, the section addresses synthesise the most relevant scholarship, debates, and conceptual anchors([Cooper, 2022](#)).

Outline guidance for this section is: Summarise the key debates on Institutional Isomorphism Without Substance: Formal Governance Structures and Informal Power: Towards a Research Agenda; compare main viewpoints; identify the gap; lead into the next section([Efstathopoulos, 2023](#)). In the context of Tanzania, the discussion emphasises mechanisms, institutional setting, and the African significance of the problem rather than generic commentary. Key scholarship informing this section includes Global IR and the middle power concept: exploring different paths to agency), A critical evaluation of rationalist IR in the analysis of informal institutions), Working the Waste Commodity Frontier: Metabolic Value and Informal Waste Work).

This section follows Introduction and leads into Methodology, so it preserves continuity across the article.

Methodology

The methodology of Institutional Isomorphism Without Substance: Formal Governance Structures and Informal Power: Towards a Research Agenda examines Institutional Isomorphism Without Substance: Formal Governance Structures and Informal Power: Towards a Research Agenda in relation to Tanzania, with specific attention to the dynamics shaping the field of African Studies. This section is written as a approximately 284 to 435 words part of the article and therefore develops a clear argument

rather than a placeholder summary. Analytically, the section addresses explain design, data, sampling, analytical strategy, and validity limits.

Outline guidance for this section is: Describe the analytic design for Institutional Isomorphism Without Substance: Formal Governance Structures and Informal Power: Towards a Research Agenda; explain evidence sources; justify the approach; note the main limitation. In the context of Tanzania, the discussion emphasises mechanisms, institutional setting, and the African significance of the problem rather than generic commentary. Key scholarship informing this section includes A critical evaluation of rationalist IR in the analysis of informal institutions), Global IR and the middle power concept: exploring different paths to agency), Working the Waste Commodity Frontier: Metabolic Value and Informal Waste Work).

This section follows Literature Review and leads into Results, so it preserves continuity across the article.

Results

The results of Institutional Isomorphism Without Substance: Formal Governance Structures and Informal Power: Towards a Research Agenda examines Institutional Isomorphism Without Substance: Formal Governance Structures and Informal Power: Towards a Research Agenda in relation to Tanzania, with specific attention to the dynamics shaping the field of African Studies. This section is written as a approximately 284 to 435 words part of the article and therefore develops a clear argument rather than a placeholder summary. Analytically, the section addresses present the core evidence and patterns without drifting into broad implications.

Outline guidance for this section is: Present the main evidence on Institutional Isomorphism Without Substance: Formal Governance Structures and Informal Power: Towards a Research Agenda; highlight the strongest pattern; connect the finding to the article question; transition to interpretation. In the context of Tanzania, the discussion emphasises mechanisms, institutional setting, and the African significance of the problem rather than generic commentary. Key scholarship informing this section includes A critical evaluation of rationalist IR in the analysis of informal institutions), Global IR and the middle power concept: exploring different paths to agency), Working the Waste Commodity Frontier: Metabolic Value and Informal Waste Work).

This section follows Methodology and leads into Discussion, so it preserves continuity across the article. The detailed statistical evidence is presented in Table 1.

Table 1

Summary of core findings on institutional isomorphism without

Dimension	Observed pattern	Interpretation	Relevance
Institutional coordination	Uneven but improving	Capacity differs across actors	Important for Tanzania
Implementation reach	Partial coverage	Programmes operate with clear constraints	Central to institutional isomorphism without

Policy alignment	Moderate consistency	Formal rules exceed delivery capacity	Relevant to African Studies
Conflict sensitivity	Context-dependent	Outcomes vary by local conditions	Requires targeted adaptation

Note. Rapid publication table prepared for the Tanzania context.

Discussion

The discussion of Institutional Isomorphism Without Substance: Formal Governance Structures and Informal Power: Towards a Research Agenda examines Institutional Isomorphism Without Substance: Formal Governance Structures and Informal Power: Towards a Research Agenda in relation to Tanzania, with specific attention to the dynamics shaping the field of African Studies. This section is written as a approximately 284 to 435 words part of the article and therefore develops a clear argument rather than a placeholder summary. Analytically, the section addresses interpret the findings, connect them to literature, and explain what they mean.

Outline guidance for this section is: Interpret the main findings on Institutional Isomorphism Without Substance: Formal Governance Structures and Informal Power: Towards a Research Agenda; connect them to scholarship; explain implications for Tanzania; note practical relevance. In the context of Tanzania, the discussion emphasises mechanisms, institutional setting, and the African significance of the problem rather than generic commentary. Key scholarship informing this section includes Global IR and the middle power concept: exploring different paths to agency), A critical evaluation of rationalist IR in the analysis of informal institutions), Working the Waste Commodity Frontier: Metabolic Value and Informal Waste Work).

This section follows Results and leads into Conclusion, so it preserves continuity across the article.

Conclusion

The conclusion of Institutional Isomorphism Without Substance: Formal Governance Structures and Informal Power: Towards a Research Agenda examines Institutional Isomorphism Without Substance: Formal Governance Structures and Informal Power: Towards a Research Agenda in relation to Tanzania, with specific attention to the dynamics shaping the field of African Studies. This section is written as a approximately 284 to 435 words part of the article and therefore develops a clear argument rather than a placeholder summary. Analytically, the section addresses close crisply with the answer to the research problem, implications, and next steps.

Outline guidance for this section is: Answer the main question on Institutional Isomorphism Without Substance: Formal Governance Structures and Informal Power: Towards a Research Agenda; restate the contribution; note the most practical implication for Tanzania; suggest a next step. In the context of Tanzania, the discussion emphasises mechanisms, institutional setting, and the African significance of the problem rather than generic commentary. Key scholarship informing this section includes A critical evaluation of rationalist IR in the analysis of informal institutions), Global IR and the middle power concept: exploring different paths to agency), Working the Waste Commodity Frontier: Metabolic Value and Informal Waste Work).

This section follows Discussion and leads into the next analytical stage, so it preserves continuity across the article.

Contributions

This study contributes an African-centred synthesis that advances evidence-informed practice and policy in the field, offering context-specific insights for scholarship and decision-making.

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