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AREA OF EXPERTISE: Health Information Systems
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DISSERTATION TITLE: *Exploring the Institutional Logics and Complexity of Health Management Information Systems*

Ime Asangansi, a medical doctor from Nigeria researching on health management information systems (HMIS) in developing countries, presents his dissertation.

The dissertation explains some of the organizational issues facing HMIS implementation in developing countries. It provides new knowledge that improves our understanding of HMIS deployment and institutionalization. This new knowledge can lead to better implementation strategies by government, funders and technical implementers.

Essentially, HMIS are systems that help in the management of public healthcare. However, in developing countries, these systems are functioning too poorly. This is because of many problems but a central one is the complex organizational environment. One major reason for the complex organizational environment is that there is poor coordination between the different players involved such as the government, the donors, and the technical implementers.

This thesis found that the situation is especially complex because of the many organizations and participants working at many levels (e.g. community, sub-district, district, state and national levels). More so, the organizations have different and sometimes-competing ways of thinking (describe as “institutional logics” in this thesis). Each participant is guided by their institutional logics, which is what guides their framing of the problem as well as their approach to developing solutions. The result is that conflicts in logics and approaches arise when many participants are working together in a project as large as typical national or state HMIS projects.

This work analyses these conflicts and demonstrates how they lead to difficulties as well as possible ways through which these difficulties can be resolved. This exploratory work offers three explanations (“frameworks”) of different aspects of HMIS logics and institutional complexity, and calls for more research in these key areas.

The research was based on three years of ethnography-inspired fieldwork done using an action research framework involving HMIS design and implementation in Nigeria.