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## Equity in REDD+: varying logics in Tanzania

### Abstract

Equity is frequently cited as one of the key design aspects of environmental governance regimes. In the context of Reduced Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD+), a forest-based climate change mitigation instrument, the manner in which 'equity' is understood will be of critical importance for the impacts and acceptance of REDD+ policies and initiatives. Whereas the concept has been extensively studied in the academic literature, references to equity in REDD+ policy debates and documents are often vague, leaving room for various interpretations and modes of implementation. In our case study of the Tanzanian national REDD+ policy domain, we provide a conceptual framework based on an institutional logics approach for analysing the various underlying rationales in the 'equity in REDD+' debate. We apply it to demonstrate how the involved policy actors draw from heterogeneous equity logics in their support for and opposition to different governance models, highlighting the importance of precise contextualization and operationalization of broad international principles in national REDD+ initiatives.

**Keywords:** REDD+, equity, institutional logics, policy, Tanzania

## Introduction

Climate change poses enormous governance challenges and has profound social implications for people. One of the key challenges currently faced by policy makers relates to understanding variation among the short- and long-term priorities of different groups of stakeholders, and balancing them for legitimate and effective climate change policies. In policy and academic debates on Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD+), a climate change mitigation mechanism based on incentives and compensation for the maintenance and enhancement of carbon stocks in tropical forests and trees, concerns over social justice are accentuated (Peskett *et al.*, 2011; McDermott *et al.*, 2012). It is argued that while REDD+ might have potential to bring benefits to local communities in developing countries in the form of rewards for forest conservation and sustainable forest management, REDD+ also carries the risk of livelihood losses and marginalization of forest-dependent people due to recentralization of forest governance and appropriation of benefits by states and other more powerful actors (Griffiths, 2008; Cotula and Mayers, 2009; Agrawal *et al.* 2010; Phelps *et al.*, 2010; Sandbrook *et al.*, 2010). Framing the REDD+ debate around winners and losers – the latter invariably identified as forest-dependent communities and indigenous peoples – is central to the critique towards REDD+ articulated by a number of environmental and social organizations (Griffiths, 2008; Di Gregorio *et al.*, 2013). At the same time, there is a growing consensus that effective and equitable participation by a wide range of stakeholders, including local forest users, is needed for REDD+ to succeed (cf. UNFCCC, 2011).

Consequently, 'equity' is frequently cited as one of the key aspects for the design of national and sub-national REDD+ interventions (Angelsen, 2008; Angelsen *et al.*, 2009; Peskett *et al.*, 2011). Yet, the term is generally left undefined (McDermott *et al.*, 2012) or mentioned in passing among the other "three E:s", effectiveness and efficiency (Angelsen 2008, Angelsen *et al.* 2009). In the 3E framework, equity is seen to concern the fair distribution of REDD+ benefits within and among countries (Angelsen and Wertz-Kanounnikoff, 2008). A key concept in the literature on environmental justice, *distributive equity* is concerned with the "distribution of 'goods' and 'bads' in society and

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3 the principles by which these benefits and burdens are, or should be, distributed”  
4 (McDermott *et al.*, 2012, p. 3). The focus in the Northern hemisphere has tended to be  
5 on the unequal distribution of environmental burden, while in the South, on that of  
6 benefits (Schroeder *et al.*, 2008). While REDD+ implementation is still incipient, equity  
7 in REDD+ is most frequently discussed in relation to potential benefit-sharing  
8 mechanisms between governments and forest custodians (Peskest *et al.*, 2011;  
9 Balderas Torres and Skutsch, 2012; Pham *et al.*, 2013; Skutsch *et al.*, 2013; Luttrell *et*  
10 *al.* 2013).

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12 Partly as a response to critique of too narrow a definition of equity in terms of  
13 distribution of burden or benefits (Schroeder *et al.*, 2008; McDermott *et al.*, 2012),  
14 attention has been drawn to the *procedural equity* of planning and decision-making  
15 processes. Matters of choice, access, recognition, participation, representation and  
16 distribution of power shape the fairness of political, legal, market, and other processes  
17 that allocate resources and resolve disputes (Paavola, 2007; Schroeder *et al.*, 2008;  
18 McDermott *et al.*, 2012; Wutich *et al.*, 2013). Procedural and distributive equity are thus  
19 intrinsically linked (Paavola, 2007; Schroeder *et al.*, 2008). McDermott *et al.* (2012)  
20 discuss the effect of previous distributive and procedural inequities on current Payments  
21 for Environmental Services (PES) and REDD+ interventions as contextual equity; the  
22 political, economic and social conditions present at the start of an intervention that  
23 shape access to it (cf. Brown and Corbera, 2003). It has been warned that strong social  
24 safeguards are needed so that REDD+ will not reproduce or further strengthen the  
25 existing regressive conditions, the “uneven playing field”, present in many countries  
26 preparing REDD+ interventions (Ribot and Larson, 2012; Mustalahti and Rakotonarivo,  
27 2014).

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29 In climate change and REDD+ documents and debates, equity issues, principles  
30 and criteria are often presented in a normative tone and as impetus for desired practice,  
31 i.e. ideal descriptions of how things should be (Heyward, 2007; Angelsen *et al.*, 2009;  
32 Mustalahti *et al.*, 2012). But what is considered equitable by whom? Varying  
33 conceptions of equity are based on particular actors’ perspectives and circumstances  
34 instead of universal, shared meanings, and equity principles are used in accordance to  
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3 users' interests (Heyward, 2007). This has important implications for the design of  
4 'optimal' REDD+ strategies and initiatives. As noted by Wiegandt (2001, p. 148), "there  
5 is no rational nor scientific basis on which to choose among different conceptions of  
6 ethics". Lack of clarity on which dimensions of equity should be targeted further  
7 complicates the operationalization of the concept in REDD+ planning, decision making  
8 and implementation (McDermott *et al.*, 2012). Various conceptions of equity are thus  
9 likely to come into conflict in the national and sub-national REDD+ processes in which  
10 distinct actors, often dissimilar in their interests and influence, participate.  
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18 This paper explores the various rationalities and logics regarding equity employed  
19 by organizational actors participating in the development of a national REDD+ strategy  
20 in Tanzania. Recognizing the conceptual as well as normative plurality in the equity in  
21 REDD+ debate, we turn to the theory of institutional logics (Friedland and Alford 1991;  
22 Thornton *et al.*, 2012) which provides us with a useful conceptual angle to understand  
23 the logics and rationalities used to interpret and implement the global REDD+ debate at  
24 the level of organizational fields and individual organizations. Identifying the multiple  
25 rationalities and logics in the conceptualization of equity facilitates the understanding of  
26 the dynamics and outcomes of REDD+ policymaking and implementation. For instance,  
27 in our case study country, Tanzania, much of the debate surrounding the development  
28 of a national REDD+ strategy is focused on the design of a benefit-sharing mechanism  
29 between the government and local forest custodians. The government agencies  
30 spearheading the national REDD+ initiative argue that the best way to ensure equitable  
31 outcomes is state-controlled benefit distribution through a national trust fund, while civil  
32 society organizations, mainly domestic and international NGOs, critique the model for  
33 maintaining previous inequalities, namely state capture of forest benefits (Rantala and  
34 Di Gregorio, in press). We propose that central to this debate are the different,  
35 unspoken logics related to equity in the specific natural resource governance context in  
36 Tanzania, which are likely to continue to cause friction as REDD+ moves from the  
37 national debates to local level implementation.  
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54 Acknowledging previous, commendable efforts to conceptualize equity in PES and  
55 REDD+ interventions based on thorough reviews of relevant theoretical frameworks  
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3 (e.g. McDermott *et al.*, 2012; Di Gregorio *et al.*, 2013), our contribution to this literature  
4 distinguishes itself by an inductive, data-driven approach. We depart from a working  
5 definition that draws from the theories of distributive and procedural equity, considering  
6 equity to be concerned with issues of negotiation power, participation in REDD+  
7 decision making and implementation, and allocation of costs and benefits among the  
8 stakeholders and groups involved. Within that broad definition, we identify the kind of  
9 vocabularies and arguments that policy actors use in reference to equity in REDD+, and  
10 associate them with distinct institutional logics that guide the actors' preferences  
11 regarding REDD+ policy proposals. Our approach discloses the heterogeneity of logics  
12 related to equity within the nascent REDD+ policy field in Tanzania, suggesting that  
13 enhanced deliberation should be promoted in the operationalization of broad  
14 international principles in national policy processes instead of assuming that shared,  
15 taken-for-granted rationalities exist.  
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### 27 **Institutional Logics Perspective to Equity in REDD+**

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29 The institutional logics approach is one of the most prominent approaches in the  
30 contemporary sociological organization theory (Meyer and Rowan, 1977; Friedland and  
31 Alford, 1991; Thornton and Ocasio, 1999; 2008; Greenwood *et al.* 2011; Thornton *et al.*,  
32 2012), though it has not yet been applied extensively in contexts spanning both the  
33 North and the South (but see Carter *et al.*, 2011, for an application in the analysis of the  
34 global climate change negotiations). The approach suggests that institutional logics  
35 connect individual organizations, organizational fields revolving around certain products  
36 or services, and wider societal contexts. The societal institutional systems such as  
37 family, religion, state, market, profession, corporation and community function according  
38 to their own logics which facilitate the interpretation of social situations in different ways  
39 (Thornton *et al.*, 2012; Friedland and Alford, 1991). For example, the logics of the state  
40 in modern societies revolve around bureaucratic rationality according to which the  
41 equity of citizens is guaranteed by a well-functioning governmental 'machine' (Weber,  
42 1947). The logics of the family, in turn, have been attributed to the nuclear family  
43 characterized by close emotional relations (Friedland and Alford, 1991). The logics  
44 affect organizational fields and organizational behaviour by providing meanings and  
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3 material practices which are reproduced and reinterpreted at the organizational level  
4 (Meyer and Rowan, 1977; DiMaggio and Powell, 1983; Thornton and Ocasio, 1999; p.  
5 804). Fields and organizations also face institutional complexity (Greenwood *et al.*,  
6 2010; 2011; Yu, 2013; Kraatz and Block, 2008), and draw from multiple logics in their  
7 everyday functions. Thus, the identification of specific logics emerging in selected fields  
8 and organizations remains a question of empirical inquiry.  
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14 The institutional logics approach contributes to our analysis of the 'equity in  
15 REDD+' debate in Tanzania in three important ways. First, it provides grounds for  
16 organizational understanding of "what constitutes appropriate behavior" (Thornton, 2004,  
17 p. 70), and hence analysing the underlying institutional logics of 'appropriate equity'  
18 enables novel understanding of the rationalities behind REDD+ interventions. Second,  
19 we propose that REDD+ facilitates an emerging transnational field composed of  
20 organizational actors ranging from international negotiators to national and local  
21 governments, domestic and transnational civil society actors, local communities and  
22 forest users. The REDD+ field is partly a novel resource environment for these  
23 organizations in terms of material and conceptual resources, and partly overlaps with  
24 the existing fields of international development aid (cf. Tvedt 2006) and forest  
25 management and conservation, the requirements and resources of which enable and  
26 constrain REDD+ planning and implementation (e.g. Kanowski et al. 2011). Within the  
27 system, the concept of equity gains different theoretical, normative and practical  
28 meanings, and fits various forms of rationality. Third, we contend that the emerging  
29 organizational field of REDD+ is characterized by institutional complexity illustrated by  
30 inherent contradictions in the logics articulated (Greenwood *et al.*, 2011). In a similar  
31 vein with, for example, the Canadian health care field characterized by competing logics  
32 of medical professionalism and business (Reay and Hinings, 2009), and Bolivian micro-  
33 finance organizations struggling to balance the logics of development and banking  
34 (Battilana and Doraro, 2010), at least the logics of market and bureaucracy may be  
35 expected to apply to REDD+ as a transnational field, given the basic features of the  
36 mechanism that entail international financial transfers to national governments.  
37 Disclosing the mutual complementarities and/or inconsistencies between the underlying  
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3 heterogeneous logics will help understand the diversity of policy models that are all  
4 proposed to lead to equity.  
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## 7 8 **Study Context and Methods**

### 9 10 **REDD+ in Tanzania**

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12 Tanzania is one of the countries participating in the United Nations Programme on  
13 REDD+ (UN-REDD), and has received substantial support for 'REDD+ readiness'  
14 activities from the Norwegian government since 2008. These activities include the  
15 development of a national REDD+ strategy under the leadership of a national REDD+  
16 Task Force, implementation of pilot REDD+ projects, as well as REDD+ research and  
17 capacity building. The final draft National REDD+ Strategy (URT, 2013) outlines two key  
18 structures for operationalizing REDD+ in Tanzania: a national trust fund for the  
19 administration and distribution of REDD+ rewards (payments), and a National Carbon  
20 Monitoring Centre which will provide technical services on measuring, reporting and  
21 verification of carbon stocks and REDD+ activities across the country. In March 2013,  
22 the government of Tanzania endorsed the National REDD+ Strategy and Action Plan  
23 (Daily News, 2013). The National REDD+ Strategy lists several general goals related to  
24 the development of equitable governance and institutional mechanisms for benefit  
25 sharing and capacity building (URT, 2013, p. 41, 42, 44, 45) but without defining what is  
26 meant by 'equitable' or detailing any explicit actions to operationalize it.  
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### 42 **Data Collection and Analysis**

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44 Data on the equity logics of REDD+ actors were collected through in-depth, semi-  
45 structured interviews with policy actors (organizational actors active in the REDD+  
46 policy formulation and consultation processes in Tanzania) in March-June 2011 (Table  
47 1). The interviews formed part of a larger study on the REDD+ policy process in  
48 Tanzania and did not solely target aspects of equity, which nevertheless came up  
49 extensively in the interviews. Equity was primarily discussed in relation to the  
50 development and content of the first draft national REDD+ strategy (URT, 2010) that  
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3 had just been released for public comments. The approach to defining and identifying  
4 relevant policy actors was through a panel of seven experts (individuals well-acquainted  
5 with the REDD+ process in Tanzania and involved in it in different roles) who were  
6 asked to nominate organizational actors that considered themselves as part of the  
7 REDD+ policy domain and were recognized by other actors as such. In other words, our  
8 approach to defining policy actors was realist in emphasising reputational relevance  
9 (Laumann *et al.*, 1992), resulting in the exclusion of, for instance, local communities and  
10 forest users that were not considered actors in the national policy formulation despite  
11 being stakeholders in REDD+. For each organization, a high-ranking official that could  
12 plausibly speak for the whole organization or the official that normally represented the  
13 organization in the national REDD+ strategy process was interviewed on the position  
14 and perspectives of their organization on REDD+. In total, 41 interviews were  
15 conducted.  
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27 The interviews were recorded and transcribed. Qualitative content analysis  
28 software was first used to extract relevant material, as longer strands of text, with  
29 reference to our working definition of equity. A manual thematic analysis of the resulting  
30 text extracts from 28 interviews was repeated three times by the first and the third  
31 author and based on input by the other authors, as the main patterns of different  
32 institutional logics on equity in REDD+ started to emerge and were sharpened. Since  
33 institutional logics are ideal types (Thornton *et al.*, 2012), their identification requires a  
34 close inductive engagement with the vocabularies of practice and arguments uttered.  
35 Hence, we looked for repetitions of certain vocabulary and arguments, specific  
36 expressions, analogies and metaphors, as well as transitions and connectors in the  
37 interviewees' narratives to see how distinct arguments were linked (cf. Ryan and  
38 Bernard, 2003) in our effort to categorize the institutional logics of equity and their inner  
39 contradictions. The previous literature on institutional logics (Thornton *et al.*, 2012)  
40 provided ideas for scoping the data, while we also intended to identify logics that might  
41 be specific for the Tanzanian context as well for REDD+ as a transnational  
42 organizational field.  
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4 The distribution of different types of organizational actors among the final set of  
5 interviews included in the analysis is presented in Table 1. It is representative of the  
6 distribution of different types of actors in the REDD+ policy domain in Tanzania in 2011  
7 as identified by the expert panel. The actual organization names are not disclosed  
8 because we guaranteed the interviewees full anonymity. It should be reiterated,  
9 however, that in line with the idea of analytical generalization typical of qualitative  
10 research (e.g. Mitchell, 2000), we have intended to describe the multiple institutional  
11 logics within the REDD+ policy domain in Tanzania, and more specifically, at the level of  
12 organizational actors as participants in this particular domain. Therefore, the emphasis  
13 is not on the frequency of utterances of distinct logics by certain types of actors, but on  
14 a 'thick description' (Geertz, 1973) of all the logics that could be identified.  
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#### 24 **Findings: Institutional Logics for Equity in REDD+**

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26 The arguments of the interviewed REDD+ actors were associated with several logics  
27 that could be related to three dimensions of the equity debate: first, *why* equity is a  
28 concern for REDD+ policies and initiatives; second, *how* equity in REDD+ interventions  
29 should be addressed; and third, *what stands in the way* of achieving equitable REDD+  
30 processes and outcomes. Some of the logics resonated with the ideal types presented  
31 in the previous literature (e.g. market, bureaucracy, family), but certain arguments  
32 related to the importance of inclusive participation by a broad range of stakeholders  
33 could be considered specific to the current context of multilevel, multiactor governance  
34 not only in REDD+ but as a general recent trend in natural resource governance  
35 (Thompson *et al.*, 2001; Forsyth, 2009). We identified six main categories of institutional  
36 logics, four of which were considered to possess inner tensions or distinctions. In  
37 resonance with the previous literature on institutional complexity, the interviewees  
38 typically presented arguments that could be related to several types of logics, that is,  
39 the main categories were not mutually exclusive. The results have been summarized in  
40 Table 2.  
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53 First, one of the most salient logics, in terms of the frequency of related  
54 arguments by all types of actors, was the market logic. It posits that REDD+ needs to  
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3 provide sufficient financial incentives at the local community level so that the changes in  
4 behaviour and livelihood strategies required for a reduction in deforestation and forest  
5 degradation are achieved. This view stresses distributive equity in compensating for  
6 forgone income and opportunities; an aspect which, in the view of the interviewees, the  
7 previous approaches to forest conservation and community-based forest management  
8 in Tanzania had failed to address (e.g. Vyamana, 2009; Blomley *et al.*, 2010; Rantala *et*  
9 *al.*, 2012). Hopes were therefore placed on REDD+ funds to provide the needed  
10 incentives and compensation, as reflected in this comment by one of the interviewed  
11 government officials:

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14 “The problem has been money and how do we make them [*local communities*] work.  
15 We give them incentives, so far not much. Then, when we heard about REDD+, we said  
16 OK, if it is to enhance carbon stocks and reduce emissions, making people who are in  
17 the rural areas, the poor, not to cut trees but to keep them and maintain them, then if  
18 viable alternatives can come forward, then people can appreciate” (Government forestry  
19 official, April 26, 2011).

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31 Second, the logic of rights, including both legal and moral rights to resources and  
32 to compensation for REDD+ related restrictions on resource access, constituted an  
33 important rationale to argue for equity in REDD+. These arguments were presented in  
34 relation to the Tanzanian context in which a distinction between legal and moral right-  
35 holders is relevant for the on-going discussion on defining REDD+ beneficiaries. Who is  
36 a legal right-holder may be subject to widely differing views in REDD+ implementation,  
37 due to varying interpretations of the national land and forest laws on tenure, not to  
38 mention the still-unresolved question of carbon rights. Parallel to the global REDD+  
39 debate, civil society actors in Tanzania have campaigned for a more straightforward  
40 recognition of local communities’ land and forest rights, which are intertwined in the  
41 decentralized legal framework. The government, as evident in the interviewees’  
42 comments as well as in the national policy documents on REDD+, continues to interpret  
43 the laws and regulations in such a way that the majority of land and forest still falls  
44 under its control (TFCG and MJUMITA, 2011; Rantala and Di Gregorio, in press). The  
45 moral rights argument sidesteps this quandary by stressing that all those whose  
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3 livelihoods are affected by REDD+ should be taken into account, regardless of their  
4 legal position.  
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8 Third, our analysis revealed that there was a prevalent inner tension between the  
9 logics of an ideal type of modern bureaucracy (Weber, 1947) referring to efficient,  
10 transparent and impartial state machinery, and that of the existing bureaucracy in  
11 Tanzania as perceived and experienced especially by the civil society actors. They  
12 framed the problem as one of clientelistic governance in which the state captures all  
13 resources while failing both the equity and effectiveness aspects of REDD+. They did  
14 not favour the proposed national REDD+ trust fund because it was seen at risk of  
15 replicating their experience with previous natural resource management schemes in  
16 which governmental bureaucracy had swallowed most of the benefits, with very little left  
17 to be distributed at the local levels. As one of the NGO representatives justified the  
18 position of his organization, based on what they had observed in relation to benefit  
19 sharing from hunting concessions:  
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29 “The closest thing we see to that is 20% of the revenue is returned to districts, but even  
30 that doesn’t then reach the communities where it has happened. So there’s just no  
31 precedent in Tanzania. There’s no history. There’s a precedent of the exact opposite.  
32 So we don’t think that a national reward system will work [...] If they’re talking 90% of  
33 the income going to communities, then maybe that’s fair. If they’re talking about 20%  
34 which is like traditional here, right, with wildlife, then it’s silly. It’s not remotely equitable”  
35 (Domestic NGO technical advisor, April 5, 2011).  
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42 In contrast, notions of the logic of (an ideal type of) modern bureaucracy could be  
43 detected in the arguments of the governmental actors, who saw the state bureaucracy  
44 in a very different light; as an unbiased and efficient apparatus that guarantees the  
45 equity of REDD+ processes and outcomes. Although they, too, admitted that there was  
46 room for improvement in the performance of the national forest governance system, the  
47 interviewed governmental officials expressed a firm belief that the state could best  
48 oversee the administration of REDD+ accounting and reward payments, as long as  
49 principles such as good governance and transparency and accountability were actively  
50 promoted and followed. We saw this as related to the fourth identified logic of  
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standards, which clearly connected the Tanzanian REDD+ equity debate to the international sphere. Within this logic, too, two contradictory sides could be identified: one taking the adoption of international standards and subsequent equity outcomes for granted, the other questioning their relevance in the current context. According to the sub-logic of established standards, equity and other good governance principles naturally flow from the international standards, agreements and partnerships, such as the UNFCCC and UN-REDD+, that Tanzania has agreed to follow. The flipside to this was pointed out by some NGO and international actors, referring to what we identified as the sub-category of 'buzzwords'. According to this logic, equity goals have been copied from the global discourse for a wider legitimacy of the national REDD+ strategy, but without clearly defining measures through which such goals might be achieved, so as to avoid accountability. As described by an NGO interviewee:

"It is very nicely written, these things, fairness, equity, gender balance, in the [policy] documents. But when it comes to actually doing, it is a different story [...] If you don't put up a very effective way of implementing to ensure that, life will go on as usual, yeah, business as usual" (Domestic NGO director, March 24, 2011).

Fifth, seen as both a justification for and a pathway to equitable REDD+ outcomes, the logic of participatory governance relates to the idea of REDD+ as a prime manifestation of multilevel, multi-actor governance spanning various jurisdictional scales and multiple sectors (Forsyth, 2009). The rationale that legitimate and effective policies require the equitable participation, direct or indirect, of as many stakeholders as possible, was salient in the arguments of all types of actors. Goals related to inclusive participation are frequently explicit in decentralization reforms taking place in many countries across the developing tropics (e.g. Larson *et al.*, 2010), including Tanzania, where decentralized policies and legal frameworks for land, forest and local government were introduced in the late 1990s-early 2000s. Since then, a focus on the national Participatory Forest Management policy has dominated academic and policy discussions in the Tanzanian forest sector (e.g. Wily and Dewees, 2001; Lund and Treue, 2008; Blomley and Iddi, 2009; Blomley *et al.*, 2010) in which many of the current REDD+ policy actors have a long history. The inputs by non-state actors required for

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3 effective and equitable policies were seen to span various types of expertise, as the  
4 below comment illustrates:  
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8 “I think it is high time we do away with the conservative way of thinking, being of what  
9 the government constitute. We should broaden consultation by taking on board people  
10 who can add value to the processes given the fact that REDD+ is multidisciplinary, it is  
11 a very wide ranging issue. They could involve people from the civil society, from the  
12 academia, from Zanzibar [...] You bring a professor of forestry, a professor of law, a  
13 representative of women’s groups, a representative of the disabled, a representative of  
14 business community and so on and so forth. If that is done, I think REDD can develop  
15 well because people can inform, it can represent diverse views and expertise,”  
16 (Domestic NGO technical advisor, April 21, 2011).  
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24 Finally, based on the conceptualization of community and family logics in the  
25 previous literature (Thornton *et al.*, 2012), existing social ties within communities and  
26 households might be expected to positively shape distributive and procedural equity in  
27 REDD+. In our data, however, references to the social embeddedness of equity were  
28 presented mainly in the negative light. There was concern over inadequate attention to  
29 traditional gender roles in REDD+ planning and implementation and the subsequent risk  
30 that women would not be able to access the benefits, while bearing the consequences  
31 of forest use restrictions in their daily lives. Examples of unilateral decision making by  
32 village leaders and entering into contracts with project proponents without the consent  
33 of the broader community were given (cf. Mustalahti and Rakotonarivo, 2014). The  
34 concerns over the capture of REDD+ benefits by village elites at the cost of weaker  
35 actors, such as women, the poorest farmers and landless villagers engaging in ‘illegal’  
36 activities such as charcoal making, were related in the arguments of the interviewees to  
37 a question which a national REDD+ benefit sharing mechanism as well as individual  
38 projects have to consider: whether benefits should be communal or distributed  
39 according to individual opportunity costs of REDD+.  
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## Discussion and Conclusions

The findings of our study suggest that the concept of equity may be related to highly heterogeneous institutional logics in the national REDD+ policy domain. They support our conceptual approach which proposes that the REDD+ domain represents an emerging international organizational field characterized by institutionalised meanings and practices, building on and overlapping with the more established fields of 'development' (Tvedt, 2006) and forest conservation and management. At least in the current readiness phase, the international flow of money in REDD+ is part of the development aid enterprise. The logics of international standards and buzzwords in REDD+ are very similar to those which may be found in the dynamics of international development and previous efforts of forest conservation, with their changing standards and discourses that are adopted and used in different ways when confronted with local realities. In particular, governments that aspire to be part of a certain international community, such as the 'REDD+ countries', may be susceptible to normative discourses employed by international organizations and adopt similar language and standards out of legitimacy and reputational concerns (Bernstein and Cashore, 2007; Happaerts, 2012). In a context where previous government policies to enhance social equity are perceived to have fallen short of their promises, the operationalization of such standards is likely to be met with particular caution and scrutiny by non-state actors.

Two logics emerged as particularly salient among the Tanzanian REDD+ actors: the market logic, addressing primarily the distributive dimension of equity, and the logic of participatory governance, mostly concerned with procedural equity.

It is perhaps unsurprising that the market logic appears so pervasive. After all, REDD+ is essentially based on the idea of putting the right price on the saved carbon and thus offering a sufficient incentive to change the behaviour and activities driving deforestation and forest degradation. Lack of incentives was widely cited as the main reason why previous forest conservation efforts had failed, suggesting that market approaches were perhaps seen as 'the thing to try next', again reflecting global trends and discourses. Delimiting the study to concern only policy actors, i.e. those actors participating in and having a voice – to varying degrees – in the national REDD+ policy



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3 process, may partly explain the relative scarcity of other types of arguments that might  
4 represent more 'endogenous' views on equity in the current context. Most of those  
5 policy actors, at least in 2011, were national level organizations with a specific  
6 environmental mandate. Other concerns may override those of environmental  
7 effectiveness at the local (sub-national) level.  
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13 Nevertheless, it is striking that the market logic as relating to such elementary  
14 resources for rural livelihoods as land and forest was not really questioned by the  
15 national REDD+ policy actors. There is mounting empirical evidence from Tanzania and  
16 elsewhere of the challenges of compensating lost access to natural resources with  
17 money (Cernea and Mathur, 2008; Rantala *et al.*, 2013). In fact, the literature on  
18 development-related displacement has highlighted the associated risks since the 1970s  
19 (Cernea and Guggenheim, 1993; Cernea, 2003). The poorest and most vulnerable  
20 groups may be at a disadvantage when handling cash and "quickly left both cashless  
21 and assetless" (Cernea, 2003; p. 41). Furthermore, it may be difficult or even impossible  
22 to replace the knowledge, skills and identities related to particular resources, which also  
23 importantly condition people's resilience, with money (Cernea, 2003; Rantala *et al.*,  
24 2013). Therefore, considering equity in REDD+ to be merely a question of the right  
25 amount of compensation reaching the right people is potentially problematic.  
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37 The salience of the logic of participatory governance, which emphasizes multiple  
38 ways of public participation, hearing different voices and engaging with different  
39 perspectives, suggests widespread concern over procedural equity in REDD+ among  
40 the interviewed policy actors. What we have labelled 'participatory governance' could  
41 also be described as multilevel, polycentric or network governance (McGinnis, 1999;  
42 Forsyth, 2009) or "a negotiated order rather than an order defined by formalized legal  
43 frameworks" (Peters and Pierre, 2004; p. 71). Often discussed in relation to a transition  
44 from government to governance, the participatory logic could be expected to challenge  
45 not only the clientelistic logic of existing bureaucracy, but also the logic of modern  
46 bureaucracy. While stressing transparency, objectivity and rules as characteristics of a  
47 Weberian ideal type, the modern bureaucracy logic still represents a closed national  
48 bureaucratic system that according to some actors fails to address the demands of a  
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3 dynamic, multi-scale REDD+ world. The interviewed government actors, however,  
4 clearly did not perceive the logic of participatory governance as incompatible with their  
5 rather positive idea of state administration. This may be related to the prominent role of  
6 participatory forest management in the formal forest policy and discourse in Tanzania  
7 during the past decades. Perhaps they conceive different roles reserved for modern  
8 bureaucracy and participatory governance; the latter playing a role in REDD+ planning  
9 and decision making, whereas equity in implementation and outcomes is seen as best  
10 guaranteed by the state.  
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18 In the global REDD+ policy debates, there are calls to develop social safeguards  
19 to monitor not only the carbon outcomes but also the delivery of broader co-benefits in  
20 the national REDD+ initiatives (UNFCCC, 2011; 2013) as well as to define the  
21 safeguards more precisely and make their monitoring binding (The REDD+ Safeguards  
22 Working Group *et al.*, 2014). Observations on how the distinct equity logics are rooted in  
23 the national policy contexts and continuum highlight the need to go beyond broad  
24 international principles and standards in these processes, and instead stimulate detailed  
25 discussions on how concepts such as equity might really be operationalized in REDD+  
26 initiatives in varying contexts. Such debates could reveal the often unidentified and  
27 unspoken underlying logics that guide the practices and preferences of distinct actors,  
28 and the assumptions and risks associated with those preferences. The enhanced  
29 deliberation, in turn, might increase the chances that participatory modes of governance  
30 result in more legitimate, and perhaps equitable and effective, REDD+ regimes –  
31 according to the expectations of the policy actors.  
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**Table 1. Distribution of organizational actors in the interview data on REDD+ institutional logics.**

| <b>Organizational type</b>                  | <b>n</b> |
|---|----------|
| Domestic NGO                                | 8        |
| Government ministry or executive department | 7        |
| International NGO                           | 4        |
| Foreign government agency (embassy)         | 3        |
| Intergovernmental organization              | 3        |
| Academic (national university)              | 1        |
| Domestic business                           | 1        |
| International business                      | 1        |
| Total                                       | 28       |

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**Table 2. REDD+ equity institutional logics identified based on the arguments of interviewed policy actors.**

| <b>Logic</b>             | <b>Inner tension / Distinction within</b> | <b>Rationale</b>  | <b>Central vocabulary / arguments</b>                            | <b>Representing (types of organizations)</b> |
|--------------------------|---|---|--|--|
| <b>Market</b>            | -   | WHY equity: Benefits/rewards should go to those whose behaviour needs to change in order to achieve effective REDD+ and who incur costs from REDD+. Enhancing local participation may also lower transaction costs and increase the cost-efficiency of REDD+. | Incentives, benefits, benefit sharing, costs, alternative income | All types                                    |
| <b>Rights</b>            | <b>Legal</b>                              | WHY equity: benefits belong to those holding legal rights to forests and land.  | Ownership, tenure, property rights                               | Government, domestic NGO                     |
|                          | <b>Moral</b>                              | WHY equity: it is appropriate to involve and share benefits with those whose livelihoods are affected by REDD+, regardless of their legal position.   | Rights, marginalization, eviction                                | Domestic NGO, academic                       |
| <b>State bureaucracy</b> | <b>Modern</b>                             | HOW equity: equity will result from an efficient state bureaucratic system administering REDD+ accounting and payments.   | Transparency, accountability, good governance                    | Government, academic                         |

|                                 |                              |  |   |  |
|---------------------------------|------------------------------|--|---|--|
|                                 | <b>Existing</b>              | WHAT hampers equity: equity is undermined by existing power structures; decision making and benefits are concentrated in the central government.   | Precedent/ history/experience of unequal benefit sharing, weak government, corruption                               | Domestic NGO, domestic business, academic, international NGO, foreign government |
| <b>Standards</b>                | <b>Established standards</b> | WHY and HOW equity: equity follows from international standards, agreements and collaboration, properly implemented at national and local levels.  | Goal, mission, strategy, action plan  | Government, domestic NGO, intergovernmental                                      |
|                                 | <b>Buzzwords</b>             | WHY equity: equity discourse is a superficial reflection of imposed standards for approval and legitimacy, not properly implemented.   | Lipservice, “making the right noises”, non-implementation, business as usual  | Domestic NGO, domestic business, international NGO, intergovernmental            |
| <b>Participatory governance</b> | -                            | WHY and HOW equity: stakeholder participation across scales guarantees effectiveness and equity, because the state needs wide support for successful policies. Equity of outcomes is enhanced if different perspectives are represented. | Participation, inclusion, involvement, engagement, stakeholders, representation, multidisciplinary, local knowledge | All types  |

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|----------------------------|---------------------------|---|---|---|
| <b>Social embeddedness</b> | <b>Community</b>          | WHAT hampers equity: equity outcomes are shaped by unbalanced power relations and practices of the community.   | Elite capture, “weak voices”, vulnerability | Domestic NGO, academic, foreign government    |
|                            | <b>Family / household</b> | WHAT hampers equity: equity is not realized within households due to gendered positions and division of labour. | Gender, culture, traditions                 | Government, international NGO (esp. Zanzibar) |

For Peer Review

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