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*Published in:*  
Technological Forecasting and Social Change

*DOI:*  
[10.1016/j.techfore.2021.121443](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.techfore.2021.121443)

Published: 01/03/2022

*Document Version*  
Publisher's PDF, also known as Version of record

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*Please cite the original version:*  
Levänen, J., Lindeman, S., Halme, M., Tervo, M., & Lyytinen, T. (2022). Bridging divergent institutional logics through intermediation practices: Insights from a developing country context. *Technological Forecasting and Social Change*, 176, Article 121443. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.techfore.2021.121443>



# Bridging divergent institutional logics through intermediation practices: Insights from a developing country context

Jarkko Levänen<sup>a,\*</sup>, Sara Lindeman<sup>b</sup>, Minna Halme<sup>b</sup>, Matti Tervo<sup>c</sup>, Tatu Lyytinen<sup>b</sup>

<sup>a</sup> Department of Sustainability Science, LUT University, Mikkulankatu 19, Lahti, Finland

<sup>b</sup> Department of Management Studies, Aalto University, Finland

<sup>c</sup> Embassy of Finland in Hanoi, Vietnam

## ARTICLE INFO

### Keywords:

Forest management  
Institutional logic  
Intermediation  
Practice  
Poverty reduction  
Developing country

## ABSTRACT

Poverty reduction is critical for global socio-political stability. In this paper we start from the observation that divergent institutional logics may indirectly uphold conditions of poverty. We focus on the intermediation practices of an organization working in Tanzania to deepen collaboration between forest sector stakeholders. Our findings show how operational inefficiencies in the forest sector perpetuate the deprivation of low-income populations and how increased intermediation can help to reduce such inefficiencies. We identify intermediation practices that create learning, clarity and synthesis and so help to overcome key differences between divergent institutional logics. The notion of intermediation practices helps not only to understand the work of intermediaries, but also to explain how operational environments need to be developed to achieve poverty reduction and sustainable development.

## 1. Introduction

In the Southern Highlands of Tanzania, the landscape is characterized by an endless undulating forest cover. The scenery is dotted by small-scale sawmills known as ding dong saws, so called because of their Chinese origin. Inexpensive and easy to transport to hard-to-access woodlots, the saws are operated by small crews earning just a few US dollars a day. The saw millers lead a nomadic life, spending the daylight hours working and then resting, cooking and sleeping onsite. Their work is dangerous and accidents happen frequently. In the Southern Highlands alone, there are hundreds of such sawmills at work all year round. Ding dong sawmilling represents a highly inefficient industrial practice, with up to 80 per cent of all the wood processed going to waste. The remaining saleable product is of poor quality and therefore fetches poor prices.

Against the backdrop of pressing poverty and the huge potential for forestry development in Tanzania, one is compelled to ask why the forestry sector remains so underdeveloped in the country. Although the problem may seem mundane, it warrants attention because the lack of decent livelihoods and the subsequent migration tendency are amongst the key threats to global socio-political stability (Wright, 2012). It is important to note that the development of sectors such as Tanzanian

forestry takes place at the intersection of different institutional logics, i. e. societal realities constructed of foundational ways of reasoning (Pache and Santos, 2013; Thornton et al., 2012). Although successful collaboration between actors representing different logics is key to long-term development (Klerkx and Aarts, 2013; Mair et al., 2015), actors' different conceptions about the key features of the operational environment also maintain diverse operational inefficiencies (Minbaeva et al., 2021; Purdy and Gray, 2009).

To understand how actors representing different institutional logics can collaboratively overcome operational inefficiencies, we focus our attention on the development of intermediation practices. Intermediation means facilitation of collaboration between actors in a particular field or sector (Howells, 2006; Stewart and Hyysalo, 2008). The phenomenon has recently attracted growing academic interest (Hossain, 2018; Kanda et al., 2018; Hyysalo et al., 2018; Polzin et al., 2016). Previous research on intermediation has mainly focused on identifying the roles and functions of intermediary organizations (Boon et al., 2011; Kivimaa, 2014; Kivimaa et al., 2019). Less attention has been paid to *what kinds of practices take place between people and organizations in the process of intermediation*, the research problem we address here. We therefore introduce the notion of intermediation practices, referring to practices that an intermediary organization purposely introduces in

\* Corresponding author.

E-mail address: [jarkko.levanen@lut.fi](mailto:jarkko.levanen@lut.fi) (J. Levänen).

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.techfore.2021.121443>

Received 24 June 2020; Received in revised form 6 October 2021; Accepted 15 December 2021

Available online 28 December 2021

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order to deepen collaboration between stakeholders working on the basis of different institutional logics. We argue that intermediation can be seen as a process where divergent institutional logics are brought closer to each other through collaborative practice development.

The notion of intermediation practices is applicable to all contexts that involve interplay between divergent logics within an institutionally complex operational environment. Sound and locally grounded intermediation practices enable the creation of decent jobs in a more inclusive market setting, which in the long term will reduce poverty and have also other sustainability implications throughout value chains (see also Lashitew et al., 2021; Weisenfeld et al., 2018). Sustainability challenges in developing countries shed particularly useful light on the development of intermediation practices because in these contexts differences between the logics that need to be brought together to solve pressing problems are typically large (Levänen et al., 2020; Rosca et al., 2020).

The paper proceeds as follows. We will next review the literature to ground our work in previous research. Then we move on to describe the data and methods, after which we show with empirical evidence from the context of Tanzanian forestry, how divergence between the logics representing local realities, global markets and development policy hamper the development efforts and perpetuate the deprivation of low-income communities. Our research exemplifies how an intermediary organization in such situations can develop practices that bridge divergent institutional logics. We identify intermediation practices that create learning, clarity and synthesis and so help to overcome key differences between the institutional logics concerned. Our work suggests that eventually, facilitated integration and elaboration of different perspectives contributes to overcoming inefficiencies in everyday organizational activities.

## 2. Literature review: Institutional logics, intermediation and practice development

Institutional theory suggests that combinations of formal and informal rules and practices comprise a structure that enables or restricts stakeholders' actions in different contexts and situations (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983; Hodgson, 2006). Institutional structure is plural by nature in that it consists of various rule systems that operate in relation to one another (Ostrom, 2005). The structure is also 'alive' in the sense that through participants' dialogue, it constantly reproduces the 'rules' for societal 'games' that are 'played' in different operational environments (North, 1991). Institutional structure creates and maintains diverse complexities that individuals and organizations try to manage and tolerate with their diverse capacities and capabilities (Greenwood et al., 2010; Langevang et al., 2018). In developing country contexts institutional complexities typically relate to resource scarcity, institutional voids and market affordability (Bhatti et al., 2018; Härrä et al., 2020; Mair et al., 2012).

### 2.1. Institutional logics shape the operational environment

The concept of institutional logic has been widely used to explain the emergence of institutional structures and the relations between people and organizations connected by a particular situation or occasion (Thornton and Ocasio, 1999; van Gestel and Hillebrand, 2011; Venkataraman et al., 2016). In its profound meaning, the concept of institutional logic describes how socially constructed and shared patterns of beliefs, values and assumptions guide action in different situations (Besharov and Smith, 2014; Thornton et al., 2012). In this study we apply institutional theory to understand the emergence and nature of intermediation practices that bring stakeholders together to collaborate in institutionally complex operational environments.

To allow consideration of all valuable perspectives in sectoral development efforts, multiple institutional logics need to be brought into a dialogue. In certain situations such a dialogue can be mutually beneficial for participating logics (Mair and Hehenberger, 2014;

Weisenfeld and Hauerwaas, 2018). At the same time, however, it is known that the presence of multiple logics may affect negatively on agency and actor autonomy (Martin et al., 2017) and the imbalance between the logics can leave some actors at a disadvantage to others (Mair and Martí, 2009; McKague et al., 2015). In sustainability management, simultaneously operating logics may also create tensions between activities taking place in diverse spatial and temporal levels, which adds institutional complexity (Hahn et al., 2015; Laasch and Pinkse, 2020).

### 2.2. Intermediation through collaborative practice development

Management of challenges brought about by multi-logic presence typically require external facilitation (Ansell and Gash, 2017; Levänen, 2014; Reay and Hinings, 2009). Such a facilitation is recognized as an important role for intermediary organizations, for example in the contexts of sustainability transitions (Hodson et al., 2013; Kivimaa et al., 2019; Martiskainen and Kivimaa, 2018), innovation processes (Kant and Kanda, 2019; Klerkx and Leeuwis, 2009), urban planning (Lindkvist et al., 2019) and the governance of socio-technical networks (Patala et al., 2020; Smith and Raven, 2012). Given its earlier preoccupation with the roles and functions of intermediaries, research does not sufficiently explain what in fact enables better or increased collaboration between diverse actors.

Collaborative practice development provides a new perspective to intermediation. Research efforts guided and inspired by practice theory (Nicolini, 2012; Shove et al., 2012) have gained attention especially in the field of sustainability management (Jalas et al., 2017; Rinkinen et al., 2021; Strengers and Maller, 2012). In this article, we understand practices as configurations of socio-culturally constructed ways of doing things that are grounded in material reality. Following the above presented metaphor where institutions are understood as 'rules', practices can be understood as different ways or strategies for 'playing' the societal 'games' (Vaara and Whittington, 2012; Weidner et al., 2010). The problem however, especially in a situation where heterogeneous institutional logics should be brought into dialogue, is that without external facilitation members of each logic typically remain 'playing' their own 'game', which is inefficient from the operational perspective.

From the practice theory perspective, at least one intermediary task should be to bring institutional logics closer to each other, which can happen through collaborative practice development. Through their engagement in shared practices, different actors can learn to translate their reasoning into the language of other logics – a critically important aspect of cross-logic collaboration (Pallas et al., 2016). The development of practices together with stakeholders operating under different institutional logics requires proactive facilitation on the part of the intermediary, as well as a capacity to interpret the co-occurrence of different logics (Currie and Spyridonidis, 2016). If the intermediary is capable of creating practices that combine the interests of different logics, then it should be possible to move towards increased collaboration and new relationships (Kistruck et al., 2013).

Over time, collaboratively created intermediation practices influence the wider operational environment. They may help to overcome diverse operational inefficiencies (Colyvas, 2007; Levänen, 2015), and in the long run, they may provide new opportunities for the institutional structure to renew itself (Campbell, 2004; Purdy and Gray, 2009). Ultimately, the implementation of new practices depends on the capacity of intermediaries to link collaboratively developed practices with each stakeholder's existing routines and values (Maguire et al., 2004).

## 3. Methods and data

We use the concept of institutional logics to analyse differences in stakeholders' thinking about the development of the Tanzanian forestry sector as part of the global timber and wood products markets. We argue that proactive intermediation between stakeholders representing

different logics is crucial to the development of the forestry sector, and in order to see how intermediation can be facilitated, we need to better understand the dynamics of the relevant institutional logics and their interaction. In this section, we present the research context and describe the methods of data collection and analysis.

### 3.1. Research context

Sectoral development projects in developing countries typically bring together very different institutional logics, providing an interesting setting for research on intermediation. Our research focuses on the initial phase of the Panda Miti Kibiashara Private Forestry Programme (PFP), a collaborative effort between the governments of Finland and Tanzania to create a sustainable small holder owned forestry sector in Tanzania (PFP, 2019). It is an ambitious undertaking, aimed at achieving ‘economically viable, sustainable and inclusive plantation forestry and related value chains’ that ‘provide employment and increase income for private forest owners, SMEs and vulnerable households in the Programme area’ (PFP, 2015, 3). For more information on PFP, see Appendix A.

PFP can be considered an intermediary organization because its main aim is to facilitate collaboration amongst different forest management stakeholders, from small-scale tree growers to international corporations and investors. Through its efforts to facilitate local livelihoods, PFP can be seen as a response to the challenge of ensuring that Africa remains a liveable environment for its growing population. We describe how PFP proactively develops intermediation practices that converge stakeholders’ divergent institutional logics, helping to remove operational inefficiencies that perpetuate the deprivation of low-income communities.

### 3.2. Data collection

We have collected data on PFP since 2015 through 12 thematic

interviews, 7 group discussions, various occasions of participant observation and content analysis of documentary materials (Appendix B). In addition, we have had access to interview data concerning PFP activities collected by external programme evaluators and to email correspondence between programme officers and other stakeholders. The data were collected in Finland and Tanzania. During data collection in Tanzania, we visited villages, tree plantations, seedling farms and sawmills in the Southern Highlands area. Further, we participated in events organized by PFP and met the majority of PFP personnel and programme stakeholders representing public administration, private companies and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). The data were gathered in three languages: the thematic interviews were conducted in English, Swahili and Finnish; the group discussions and participant observations were in English and Swahili; and all the documentary materials were in the English language.

A local interpreter helped us conduct the interviews and group discussions with informants who only spoke Swahili. Later, audio recordings were back-translated into English and reviewed by another native Swahili speaker to ensure the accuracy of the translation. These sessions also included in-depth discussion and analysis of voice delivery and other contextual and cultural factors identifiable in the recordings.

### 3.3. Data analysis

For data analysis, we used an abductive approach (Dubois and Gadde, 2002). This approach is well suited to analyse qualitative data from a partly informal empirical setting because it is necessary to move back and forth between theory and data to ensure the validity of the reasoning. Data from the thematic interviews, group discussions and participant observations were transcribed and analysed using Atlas.ti software.

Our analysis proceeded in three steps (Fig. 1) drawing on Gioia et al. (2013). The first step involved identifying first-order themes, i.e. observations concerning stakeholders’ conceptions of two issues: 1)

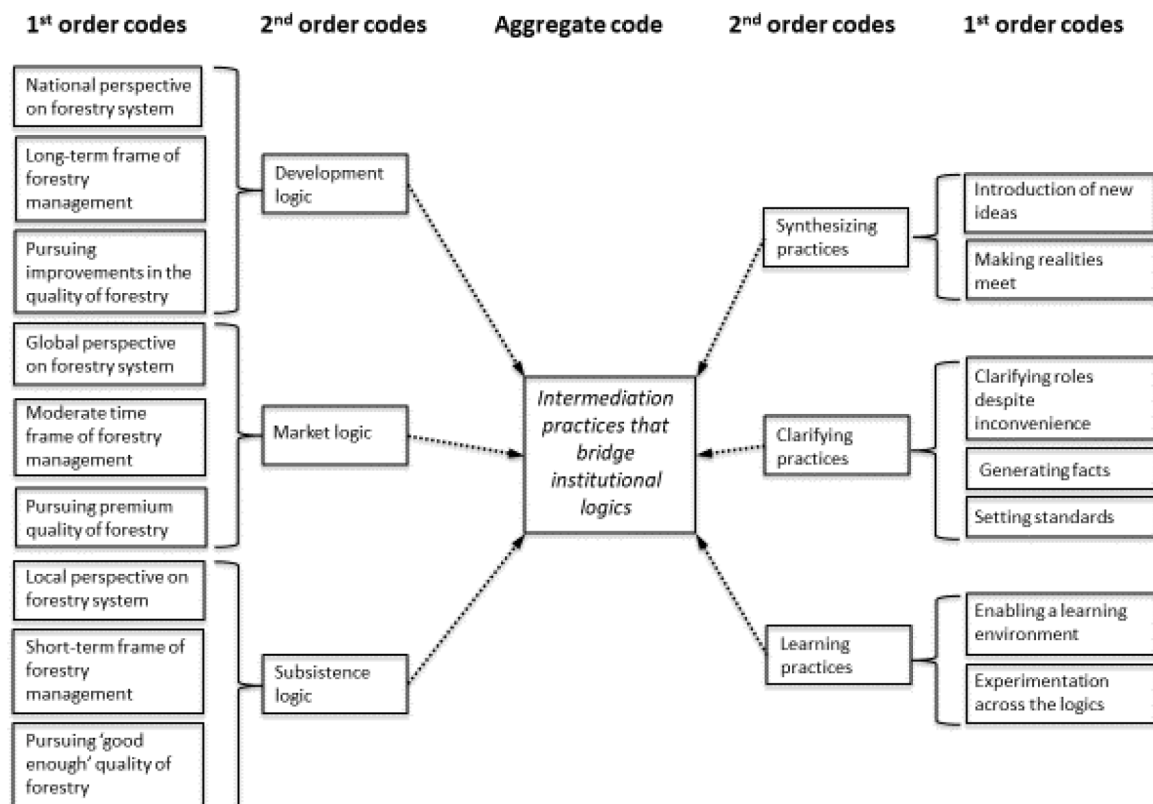


Fig. 1. Data structure.

Tanzanian forestry sector and its productivity, and 2) PFP's activities. First-order codes concerning Tanzanian forestry sector describe stakeholders' sharply diverging conceptions about the existing forestry system, the time frame of forestry development and the required quality of plantations, wood processing and products (left-hand side of Fig 3). First-order codes concerning PFP's activities describe practical ways of balancing between stakeholders different interests and ways of doing things (right-hand side of Fig. 1). In Appendix C, we present exemplary quotes that illustrate how the first-order coding scheme emerged from the data. In the identification of first-order codes, we focused on issues that are at the same time important for different logics yet, differently understood or emphasized within these logics. For example, time frame of forestry-related activities is interesting because its importance is shared, but each logic emphasize this importance from very different standpoints.

Grouping the first-order observations led to more abstract second-order codes. Amongst the divergent conceptions, we identified second-order codes corresponding to three institutional logics, i.e. market, development and subsistence logics. amongst PFP's intermediation practices, we identified second-order codes for different types of intermediation. We define different types of mediation as categories of practices that share a similar logic, i.e. synthesizing, clarifying or learning practices.

As the three logics and types of intermediation emerged from the first-order codes, we began to understand how the PFP project was working to overcome inefficiencies in the operational environment. PFP makes an effort to understand different stakeholders and strives to nurture new ways for them to collaborate, which could be framed as recognizing and bridging diverse institutional logics. This allows PFP to bring logics closer to each other in different everyday situations. The development of intermediation practices facilitates dialogue and working around differences in institutional logics, which in turn helps to cement mutual understanding and trust between the logics. The second-order understanding enabled the third step of our analysis, i.e. the formulation of the aggregate code: intermediation practices that bridge institutional logics.

## 4. Findings

In this section we present our findings in three parts. First, we introduce the key institutional logics we identified in the development of the Tanzanian forest sector. We then describe the key differences between the logics. Finally, we introduce the intermediation practices that PFP has developed to facilitate collaboration between different stakeholder groups.

### 4.1. Institutional logics in the development of the Tanzanian forestry sector

We identified three types of institutional logic that are important to the development of the Tanzanian forest sector and that are cohesive enough to be observed, studied and conceptualized as separate entities: development logic, market logic and subsistence logic (Fig. 1). We would like to emphasize that even though identified logics are presented through simplified qualities, they should not be understood as monoliths. In reality, there are differences between the actors representing a logic, and therefore, each logic is shaped by multitude of different views as well as internal tensions and contradictions. From the analytical perspective, however, it makes sense to simplify the reality by constructing institutional logics because it enables to understand reasons for different views and practices.

#### 4.1.1. Development logic

Development logic represents the thinking of traditional development actors and the aid efforts of Western governments aiming to reduce poverty, increase good governance and address collective concerns such

as social and ecological problems in developing countries. In this logic, it is assumed that society as whole and specific sectors of society develop when different capacities and capabilities are created in people (Day, 2017). Until recently, this logic has emphasized the importance of a strong nation-state and de-emphasized the significance of market-driven development. As a desk officer responsible for PFP at the Finnish Ministry for Foreign Affairs (MFA) explained, 'In our [Ministry's] logic, it is assumed that a state always has some idea of what its citizens want, even though we also conduct a lot of beneficiary interviews during programme planning'. In this article, development logic is most dominantly manifested in the shared vision of the Finnish and Tanzanian governments for forestry development in Tanzania.

#### 4.1.2. Market logic

Market logic represents the thinking that drives multinational corporations, smaller scale businesses and private investors. Traditionally, market logic has emphasized the importance of free markets as the mechanism for development, taking a sceptical view of the roles of authority and regulation. In this type of thinking, it is typical to assume that the main obstacles to the development originate in dysfunctional markets and governmental barriers, such as inadequate regulatory arrangements. Gradually, however, this logic has started to provide more tolerance to approaches in which authority and regulation are seen as enablers to new business opportunities (Kourula et al., 2019). For example, a representative of an international investment company said at a forestry seminar in Dar es Salaam that paying increased attention to environmental and social issues was 'a necessary evil' in the development of the forestry sector. In this article, market logic refers to the perspective of international and Tanzanian companies and investors interested in the development of the Tanzanian forestry sector.

#### 4.1.3. Subsistence logic

Subsistence logic represents the dominant thinking of local people and small-scale entrepreneurs living in rural areas of developing countries. The focus in this logic is on the survival and livelihood of one's family and community (Banerjee and Duflo, 2007). Research shows that while subsistence communities are typically resource scarce, they are rich and complex in social ties (Sridharan and Viswanathan, 2008). This known social realm is what subsistence traders perceive as the markets or sector, and trading outside the sector often makes the trader vulnerable to exploitation (Lindeman, 2012). Most typically, subsistence trade exchanges are face-to-face interactions informed by social norms, as there is a lack of written documentation and enforcement of official norms (Viswanathan and Rosa, 2007).

When 'people in local villages suffer from malnutrition, perhaps about 20 per cent [of the population], and not only in a nutritional sense but real genuine hunger' (PFP's capacity building and communication advisor), the challenge turns to maintaining wood growth until maturity, instead of selling the timber at the moment of hunger. At a higher level, the challenge is how to ensure that a significant proportion of the value capture of a developing forestry sector remains with the local people, i.e. how to generate more income from tree growing and wood processing and how to access more remote markets. In the words of a local tree grower during a group discussion: 'We plant trees to combat poverty'.

## 4.2. Key differences between the logics

Differences amongst stakeholders' beliefs, values and assumptions become evident in the way they perceive the development of the forestry sector. We found three key dimensions on which the logics identified differ: 1) the understanding of the system within which development is assumed to take place, 2) the time frame of different activities and 3) the required quality of plantations, wood processing and products. Our findings suggest that these differences are major underlying causes of inefficiencies in the operational environment (cf. Smink et al., 2015).

The differences between the logics are summarized in Table 1 with representative quotes and citations from the interviews, documentary sources and the notes of participant observation.

#### 4.2.1. Conceptions of the system

Our findings indicate that the stakeholders engaged in the development of the Tanzanian forestry sector have different conceptions about the system in which they participate. Development aid actors have traditionally considered nation-states to be relatively independent operational environments. Development logic thus emphasizes the importance of national markets and overall societal development at the national level. Market actors, on the other hand, consider markets and value chains to be global by nature, and market logic therefore conceptualizes Tanzanian forestry as part of the global system. For villagers, in turn, tree growing is typically one livelihood amongst many others, and their interactions are limited to local traders. Under subsistence logic, then, plantation forestry is a means of earning extra income at the local or regional level. It is difficult to find a common understanding of required developmental tasks in situations where stakeholders have fundamentally divergent conceptions about the scale of the system in which they operate.

#### 4.2.2. Conceptions of time

The three logics identified also differ in their conceptions of the time frames of forestry activities. Development logic is committed to the longest time frame as actors operating under this logic typically aim to

**Table 1**  
Key differences between the institutional logics.

	Conceptions of the system	Conceptions of time	Conceptions of the quality
<b>Development logic</b>	National system “...[In PFP] participatory [process] is between government and villages in managing the forest”. (Director of forest development, Tanzanian Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism)	Long time frame “PFP is scheduled to run for 16 years.” (Desk officer responsible for PFP)	Pursuit toward improved quality “Better quality pine lumber produced by more advanced technology sawmills receive a price premium on the market.” (Indufor Group, 2016, 1)
<b>Market logic</b>	Global system “At the end of the day, we will sell to the markets that will give us the best return.” (Representative of Tanzanian forest company)	Both short and long time frame “If we think about plantation forestry (...), once the plantation is established then you of course have annual cash flow, but when you start (...) you have to have patience to wait.” (Representative of global forest investment fund)	Pursuit toward high quality “In case of wood processing the markets are tight and there are lots of competitors, however there is a gap for high quality forest and wood products.” (PFP, 2018, 1)
<b>Subsistence logic</b>	Local / regional system “...when you are isolated, when you are alone, you might miss the market.” (Secretary of tree growers' association)	Short time frame Due to slowness of tree growing, it typically is an additional income generation activity for villagers, not a primary livelihood. (Participant observation notes)	Pursuit toward 'good enough' quality Low technological level of traditionally used sawmills do not allow production of high quality timber products. (Participant observation notes)

achieve broad societal changes. In market logic time frame is both long-term and short-term. It is recognized that strategic investments in forest plantations occur over long periods of time, but in day-to-day operations a more short-term view is adopted as the performance of companies is normally measured by quarter. In subsistence logic the time frame is short as people follow a daily or seasonal economic rhythm as micro entrepreneurs, daily workers or subsistence farmers. Local tree growers have to wait for up to 15 years to reap the full benefits from mature logs. However, life situations may force people to sell their trees after just a few years of growth, leaving them with a minimal profit. Differences in conceptions of time give rise to confusion and differing priorities as international forestry companies and development aid actors prefer to focus on longer term developments, while local people may be keen to gain immediate benefits.

#### 4.2.3. Conceptions of the quality of plantations, wood processing and products

Different stakeholders in forestry development also have widely differing conceptions about the required quality of plantations, wood processing and products. Development logic has started out from the low quality timber typically produced in ding dong sawmilling. In this logic the aim is to gradually improve quality through developmental efforts. Market logic has traditionally given precedence to highest quality timber and wood products, which have the strongest demand in the global markets. In terms of quality, subsistence logic is the most modest: at the outset of the programme local villagers were content with 'good enough quality' as long as it brought them a slightly better income. Subsistence traders are often unaware of the chances to get higher prices or unable to access such opportunities in practice. Differing views about the required quality is thus a major hindrance to forest sector development.

#### 4.3. Intermediation practices

PFP's efforts very much revolved around the development of intermediation practices and we saw that in many occasions these practices succeeded in bridging of institutional logics. The dynamics between intermediation practices and changes in the positioning of institutional logics are summarized in Table 2. In total, we identified seven intermediation practices. These practices were developed over a relatively long period of time – and this development is still ongoing. For the sake of simplicity, we describe the changes in the development of these practices in two phases. We call the early stages phase 1 (approximately 2011–2013) and the latter stages phase 2 (approximately 2014–2017). We found that the intermediation practices work in three ways: 1) by synthesizing existing conceptions, 2) by clarifying roles and activities within the sector and 3) by helping participants to learn. The following introduces the intermediation practices identified in each of these categories.

##### 4.3.1. Synthesizing practices

In synthesizing practices, the bridging of different institutional logics happens through collaborative elaboration about the functioning of the system (cf. Weisenfeld and Hauerwaas, 2018). This is very important because actors representing different logics may have very different conceptions about the scale and the functional dynamics of the system in which they operate. We found that this kind of intermediation can take place in the forms of targeted introduction of new ideas and making realities meet around a specific issue.

**4.3.1.1. Introducing new ideas.** This intermediation practice refers to the introduction and patient promotion of ideas that previously have been foreign to at least one of the logics. We illustrate this practice by examples relating to the management of land ownership and the organization of farmers. Land ownership in Tanzanian villages is traditionally collective by nature. Given Tanzania's socialist history, the idea of

**Table 2**

The dynamics between intermediation practices and institutional logics.

Intermediation practices	Examples PFP's phase 1 activities	Examples PFP's phase 2 activities	New positioning of the institutional logics
Introducing new ideas	<i>Introduction of tree growers' associations (TGAs)</i>	<i>Launching of umbrella organization to support TGAs</i>	<i>Bargaining position of actors representing different logics become balanced through implementation of more participatory structures</i>
Making different realities meet	<i>Working with actors operating at different levels of local and national governance</i>	<i>Facilitating targeted connections between global and local-level actors</i>	<i>Market and subsistence logics become emphasized equally important as the development logic</i>
Clarifying roles despite inconvenience	<i>To meet funding criteria, PFP gives to MFA an impression that it focuses on direct poverty reduction</i>	<i>Through clarification, the multifaceted role of PFP becomes better understood by MFA</i>	<i>As the roles get clarified, the discord between different logics reduces</i>
Generating facts	<i>Fact generation in connection with other activities</i>	<i>Systemic generation of knowledge about the qualities of forest reserves and required quality of wood products</i>	<i>Activities started by actors operating under development logic are important also to actors operating under subsistence and market logics</i>
Setting standards	<i>Recognizing the lack of standards and its implications for the sector</i>	<i>Initiating standard setting</i>	<i>An activity recognized by actors operating under market logic turn out instrumental to actors operating under all logics</i>
Enabling a learning environment	<i>One-way basic-level information sharing</i>	<i>Interactive knowledge production</i>	<i>An activity recognized by actors operating under subsistence and market logics provides benefits to actors operating under all logics</i>
Experimentation across the logics	<i>Providing seedlings for free</i>	<i>Providing seedlings at cost</i>	<i>Co-development of new activities that blend ideas of all logics</i>

private land ownership is still new to many people, especially in rural areas. Consequently, the management of land areas is often ambiguous, adding to the complexity of the situation and hampering the development of the sector.

PFP started to promote the benefits of clearer land ownership in phase 1 when the dominant conception was almost exclusively based on subsistence logic. During phase 2, PFP worked closely with the University of Turku in Finland to support the development of community-led land use plans for the allocation of shared lands amongst villagers. PFP's plantation forestry advisor explained the reasoning behind this activity:

'(...) we are trying to get them titles of occupancy – land ownership documents to our villagers. So, even if they are cut off from the shared lands of the village, those people . . . will get land of their own'.

Close collaboration between actors representing all logics in land use planning has been an important part of anchoring the new land ownership philosophy, which also has implied a significant change in the whole forest management culture. PFP has facilitated this collaboration and, as a result clearer land management planning has been

achieved in many places across the programme area. This illustrates how the introduction of new ideas as an intermediation practice gradually brings subsistence logic closer to market and development logics, as clearly defined ownership is a central component of market economy and an important starting point in many development activities.

Another example of PFP's activities that reflects the introduction of new ideas is the organization of tree growers. In our interviews, villagers often emphasized the importance of speaking with 'one voice' in the timber markets. The secretary of the local Tree Growers' Association (TGA) explained that by one voice, the villagers meant they wanted to have a strong collective bargaining position in order to get the best possible prices. Market interactions can be demanding for local tree growers, and TGAs are supposed to respond to diverse difficulties, as the director of forest development from the Tanzanian Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism (MNRT) explained:

'You come to me, you say hey, let's go to your plot. . . . Then, you start negotiating the price of buying the whole plot. . . . You find a woman or man from the village, a poor person – they may not even understand. You tell them [they could get] millions of shillings or thousands of euros. They may think that it's a very large amount of money, so they end up giving up the whole plot. . . . That's why we say we need to strengthen our Tree Growers' Associations'.

We found that PFP promotes the idea of 'one voice' in different ways in the programme area. The previous forestry project in the Southern Highlands area had started to establish TGAs before PFP, with the specific purpose of local capacity building for forest management. PFP continued to strengthen TGAs, and since the outset it has only collaborated with villages that were part of or committed to setting up a TGA. However, in phase 1 PFP officials realized that individual TGAs were not powerful enough on their own to expand tree growing activities and to reach international markets. Therefore, in phase 2, they decided to launch an umbrella organization called the Apex Body to support TGAs. The Apex Body is an interest organization that promotes tree growers' interests in market negotiations. Historically, the Finnish economy was largely built on small holder owned forestry, and the structure of the Apex Body was copied from Finland.

Even though PFP recognized the importance of the Apex Body from very early on, it was also understood that wide-scale implementation of this kind of new idea would require patience because at the time, tree growers were not necessarily familiar even with the idea of TGA. In some cases, PFP also faced firm opposition. As the Apex Body coordinator explained:

'Another challenge is accepting the Apex umbrella. . . . Some people who have trees want to make an easy business and need money. So when a businessman comes, [they] want to sell immediately to get some money. So when they find this umbrella . . . comes along to stop them from doing business. . . '.

Just as in the case of land ownership, the question of establishing a stronger bargaining position relates to stakeholders' fundamental conceptions about how the system of forestry works and who has the right to negotiate the 'rules of the game', in this case the prices of timber. Even though both the TGAs and the Apex Body also met with some opposition when they were introduced, in the longer term this kind of patient introduction of new ideas helps to synthesize conceptions across institutional logics. In particular, TGAs and Apex Body strengthen the position of tree growers in their negotiations with international, purely market-driven forestry actors.

**4.3.1.2. Making different realities meet.** This intermediation practice refers to the proactive facilitation of events and other arrangements where representatives of different logics are encouraged to come together and work intensively around mutually attractive topics for a certain period of time. Typically, these situations are starting points for longer term co-operation between actors who have not previously worked together. We illustrate this practice by reference to an example

of an event organized by PFP for a large number of diverse stakeholders in Tanzanian forest sector management.

Working on multiple societal levels has been an inherent principle of PFP since the outset. Even in phase 1, actors from diverse backgrounds were brought into the PFP network. In phase 2, the expansion of the network continued especially through events that brought together actors from all levels of forestry management. In these events forestry stakeholders learned from one another, a critically important aspect of bridging between institutional logics. Participants were encouraged to discuss specific issues and themes on which they had different interests. These issues and themes were introduced by diverse actors, not only representatives of a single logic.

A good example of an event organized by PFP was the International Forestry Conference in Dar es Salaam in November 2016, which attracted the attendance of around 150 representatives of local tree growing communities, international forestry companies, NGOs, research institutes and public administration. The conference programme included a field trip to the Southern Highlands area, where international participants had the opportunity to talk directly with members of local tree growing communities. The MNRT director of forestry development saw a strong connection between investments in forestry and local development. He was keen to emphasize the importance of events such as the International Forestry Conference for long-term business collaboration between local tree growers and international actors:

‘So, expecting people to come maybe after the conference. . . . They can come and then invest in tree planting. . . . But what is our idea? The government’s idea is to have a win-win situation. . . . We wish . . . the village to enter into agreement with some of the investors . . . to benefit these villagers. How they can benefit – actually the mechanism will be formed so that someone can’t just come to get land and then grow trees and go. Then you say . . . they are getting employment and whatever. Employment is not enough. . . . Let’s do business. Because otherwise they [villagers] will continue to be poor’.

The way in which PFP worked at different levels of national governance during phase 1 is typical of development logic in many parts of the world. However, inviting international market actors into that network in phase 2 and putting all actors of the extended network in touch with each other is not common practice for organizations dominated by any of the logics studied. This kind of activity can be seen as a form of targeted intermediation that fosters dialogue between the logics in a non-intrusive manner (cf. [Rainville, 2021](#)).

It is important to recognize that the International Forestry Conference was organized at an important stage of sectoral development and that it brought together representatives of all institutional logics. At that time, plantation forestry had only recently got underway in many regions of Tanzania, bringing previously separate actor groups in contact with each other and creating new tensions between them. Organizing an event such as the International Forestry Conference at that particular time allowed different actors to learn from one another, broadening their views and bringing different institutional logics closer to each other. The field trip organized as part of the programme further enhanced exposure to different realities.

#### 4.3.2. Clarifying practices

In clarifying practices, the bridging of different institutional logics happens through facilitation of communication about the aims and ways of doing things (cf. [Kanda et al., 2018](#)). The role of these types of practices needs to be emphasized because lack of information as well as socio-cultural sensitivity of different issues are central inefficiencies in numerous operational environments, especially in developing countries. We found that this kind of intermediation can take place through clarifying of roles despite inconvenience, generating facts and setting standards.

##### 4.3.2.1. Clarifying roles despite inconvenience. This intermediation

practice refers to entering into negotiations regarding roles in order to find new ways of working. As a funder of PFP, MFA wanted to see immediate results in terms of poverty reduction. However, the evaluation reports of PFP phase 1 indicated that the programme was having only limited short-term impacts on poverty and that it was not reaching the poorest people.

This prompted an exceptionally frank discussion between MFA and PFP (see correspondence data). The talks clarified the role of PFP, which was to promote long-term, systemic change. If successful, the programme could have a lasting, large-scale impact on poverty alleviation. However, the immediate impacts in this regard are marginal. Once MFA agreed to compromise on its core principle of focusing exclusively on poverty reduction, the programme was able to discontinue its various time-consuming and labour intensive activities with which it had been trying to appease the funder and to achieve at least some immediate poverty reduction. Instead in phase 2, PFP joined forces with the Tanzania Social Action Fund (TASAF), an organization that provides easy jobs for the poorest people, such as building roads in the Southern Highlands, with immediate poverty reduction impacts. PFP then simply allocated funds to TASAF for these purposes. Although this collaboration was not critical to the overall success of the programme, it helped to alleviate performance pressures from MFA.

Another example illustrates the challenging role of regional authorities. In Tanzania, regional authorities have overall responsibility for forest sector development and they are keen to hold on to their role. However they are crippled with corruption and malgovernance and do not enjoy the trust of either local communities or forestry companies. Again, with exceptional frankness, the programme aimed to overcome this problem by placing the PFP offices not under the regional authorities – which would have been the expected way – but instead under international development companies tendering to operate the PFP programme for MFA. This ensured that PFP could operate as a trusted intermediary between stakeholders. Regional authorities were given positions in the PFP steering group in order to compensate. This illustrates how a new role and position is created for PFP and the role of the regional authorities in PFP is clarified early on in order to avoid difficulties.

Both of these examples describe negotiation processes that dealt with highly sensitive issues and inconvenient truths. Gradually, however, these processes allowed all participating logics to move toward each other. With regard to MFA, the realization that their core principle of poverty reduction was actually hampering long-term poverty reduction was one such inconvenient truth. Likewise, making exceptions to this principle caused administrative inconvenience as the Ministry is spending public money. As for the concerns associated with the regional governments in Tanzania, it was inconvenient for the Tanzanian national authorities to recognize the presence of corruption and malgovernance, but nonetheless pragmatic to agree with the Finnish authorities that addressing this issue would be beyond the reach of the PFP programme.

From the participants involved the intermediation practice of clarifying roles despite inconvenience requires the presence of long-term empathic engagement (cf. [Sandman et al., 2020](#)). The frankness that characterized the negotiations in both examples was made possible by the long-term trust between the actors.

##### 4.3.2.2. Generating facts.

This intermediation practice creates clarity by establishing ways of generating facts about the relevant operational environment. One reason for the absence of development in the Tanzanian forestry sector is the endemic lack of a sound factual basis for negotiations and decision-making.

We illustrate this intermediation practice by looking at how PFP introduced the use of geographic information systems (GIS). In phase 1, no accurate information was available about the size or quality of existing forest reserves and possible plantation areas. To obtain factual

information on existing and potential wood resources, in phase 2 PFP entered into collaboration with the World Bank and a group of University of Turku researchers with expertise in GIS-based mapping. Furthermore, GIS-based mapping was backed up by official land-use planning that had already started at the time (see Introducing new ideas above). PFP's technical officer on village land use explained this process as follows:

'So we talk about [land use] planning and challenges with the villagers . . . and then . . . identify different values . . . that they [villagers] abide by. . . . The next thing is marking the satellite images. . . . So we use this [satellite image] to get to the actual [land use] plan. . . . In the end, they'll have a village assembly to approve the plan. . . . We have to explain to the villagers these things, discussing them in all the different languages, and then the village assembly has the power to approve or reject them'.

The outcome of the GIS work in phase 2 was a dataset on the forest resources in the Southern Highlands area. The total timber volume was larger than previously thought, and the PFP staff realized that local forestry in the Southern Highlands could actually satisfy the entire national demand.

The use of GIS and the development of a quality standard system for wood products contribute to clarifying conceptions about the quality of plantations, wood processing and products. GIS improves the overall management of plantations, which is directly reflected in the quality of raw materials for wood processing, while the creation of a quality standard system makes it easier for tree growers to work directly and on a more equal footing in the international marketplace. It can be said that in phase 1, fact generation started as a practice rooted in development logic, but in phase 2 it began to bring all three logics closer to each other through an increased understanding of the operational environment.

**4.3.2.3. Setting standards.** At the same time, it was known that both national and international demand was highest for quality timber and wood products, such as logs for electricity poles. Tanzania imports large amounts of timber, and it was also recognized by actors operating under market logic that entry into the international marketplace would require standardized quality. At the same time, however, PFP had recognized that there were no quality standards in place for timber products in Tanzania. PFP's plantation forestry advisor explained the situation as follows:

'One [problem] is the raw wood quality standard system – it does not exist, and trees are sold at price per unit, meaning [case-specific] price per tree, not a [fixed] price per cubic unit. . . . At the sawmill, the price is discounted – it is not about how much it costs to plant, take care of and harvest – it is how much a sawmiller is ready to pay, and that is what defines if it is profitable to plant trees. Before we have a quality standard system, this is a bit difficult. . . . It is an essential part of what this value chain is all about'.

In response, PFP set out in phase 2 to develop standards for timber logs and for sawn pine in phase 2. Following research and consultation with the industry, it prepared a draft report and submitted it to the Tanzania Bureau of Standards in October 2018. Also through consultation, PFP prepared log grade specifications and handed them over to MNRT. Although these standards are still in draft format and further interventions will be needed before they can guide the development of the sector, the initiation of this process alone was an important step towards improved quality management, which benefits local tree growers. It is anticipated that the new standards will see a movement away from bulk pricing towards more open and transparent markets for high-quality saw logs (PFP, 2019).

#### 4.3.3. Learning practices

In learning practices, the bridging of different institutional logics happens through interactive knowledge production about the issues that are central from the perspective of sustainable long-term management of

operations (cf. Lumosi et al., 2019). We found that this kind of intermediation can happen through enabling a learning and environment and experimentation across the logics.

**4.3.3.1. Enabling a learning environment.** This intermediation practice refers to developing practices that help stakeholders learn individually and together in order to collectively develop the sector. We illustrate this intermediation practice with the example of a training centre that PFP set up to improve two-way information sharing amongst stakeholders in forest sector management.

In phase 1, PFP focused on sharing information with villagers on different aspects of tree growing, such as the quality of seedlings and different strategies of plantation management. This practice was considered important under both development logic and subsistence logic because the shift from traditional rural forest management and protection of natural forests to plantation-based private forestry is a big step for development aid actors and local villagers. Information sharing in phase 1 was practically minded, as PFP's capacity building and communication advisor explained:

'Knowhow in the initial stage [of the programme] was that they [villagers] get technical advice. For example, when seedlings come in plastic bags, they might not understand to remove the bag [before planting] or they might not . . . improve the soil [of an established plantation] properly'.

PFP's decision to focus on issues closely related to tree growing in phase 1 meant that the marketing perspective was largely ignored. Soon, however, it was realized that in the longer term, this was not a sustainable way to organize a learning environment. Therefore, in phase 2, PFP established in Mufinga village a training centre that included industrial-scale sawmill machinery. At this training centre it is possible to learn about tasks and positions in the forest value chain that go beyond basic tree-planting and growing. The MNRT director of forestry planning explained this as follows:

'The training sawmill . . . is all about the need to teach these people how they can do better. And it's all about the value chain. We need to add value to the trees which have been planted. . . . No need to just sell trees – you can even add value to forest products. . . . The [training centre] facility is not only for learning, . . . saw milling or the wood industry but also for wood-working . . . and even management'.

The idea behind the learning centre is that it will eventually strengthen the whole forestry sector and facilitate local entrepreneurship. In the words of the director, 'So these people [villagers] – if they can form a group, they can buy a modern sawmill, which has a good [return on investment] percentage. . . . Some trees can be processed locally, and this is what we are hoping for'.

The establishment of a training centre responds to the need for a two-way information flow and learning. Shifting the focus from tree growing to value chain management forces community tree growers to take a longer term view on their business. This thinking allows local tree growers to better understand their position as part of the wider forestry system. For other stakeholders, such as foreign companies, the training centre serves as a point of entry to the local market that can enable piloting and learning. This shift influences knowledge generation because basic-level information sharing is no longer enough when diverse value chain activities are incorporated in training. In phase 2, PFP turned its focus to supporting interactive knowledge production between stakeholders, and the training centre exemplifies how this practice brings all three logics closer to each other.

**4.3.3.2. Experimentation across the logics.** This intermediation practice refers to testing approaches in order to find ways of working that strike a balance between the different logics. We illustrate this intermediation practice with an example showing how PFP developed the provision of seedlings and the local management of income generation and loans.

In plantation forestry, the quality of seedlings is of paramount

importance. A high-quality seedling will grow quickly and produce high-quality wood. Initially, to get local people more interested in plantation forestry and to achieve PFP's ambitious planting targets, free seedlings were handed out to villagers. The evaluation of phase 1, however, was sceptical of the sustainability of providing seedlings for free. This led to self-reflection and change in phase 2. The PFP plantation forestry advisor explained:

'We changed our approach a bit. During the first and second years [of the programme] we handed out seedlings regardless of how much the tree grower planted. But now, we have established the limit of 0.8 hectares . . . if one wants to have free seedlings. Up to five hectares, we provided trees [i.e. seedlings] at half the price as assistance, and above five hectares, you have to pay the full price'.

Handing out seedlings regardless of plantation size reflects a strong development logic which assumes that poor people are unable to invest in high-quality means of production. Phase 2 consequently moved towards the market logic approach of providing seedlings at moderate cost. PFP did not know how the farmers would react, and the change was implemented on an experimental basis. The reason why seedlings cannot be handed out free of charge is because this would eventually deplete the programme's resources, leaving less for those most in need. In the words of the plantation forestry advisor, 'anyone who can afford to have more than five hectares for tree planting can also afford to pay for the seedlings'.

Another example illustrating cross-logic experimentation is the encouragement of local management of income generation and loans. Perhaps the single most critical issue in tree growing is the avoidance of premature felling. This was raised by PFP during the programme planning stage. The idea then was to introduce new income-generating activities that would bring enough income to dissuade villagers from cutting trees if they suddenly needed cash. Various income-generating activities were experimented with in the programme area, as the capacity building and communication advisor explained: 'We gave bean seeds [to villagers]. Then, we had honey production. We supported avocado production in schools, and then from there [we moved to] potato production'.

This experiment, however, failed to reduce the risk of premature felling, as the plantation forestry advisor explained: 'We realized that the results [of income-generating activities], . . . if compared to the amount of money spent – hundreds of thousands of euros a year – were pretty poor'. Moreover, since the extra money from new income-generating activities was mainly spent on everyday investments, it did not provide a buffer for unexpected cash needs. The income-generating activities were based on development logic, which does not emphasize the need for extra capital. Under market logic, however, gaining extra capital to anticipate unforeseen shocks is a more common practice. In response to the failed attempt to instigate extra income-generating activities, PFP decided in phase 2 to replace this activity with community banking:

'We have now started community banking . . . We operate through TGAs so that they put together groups [that offer] micro-loans. The money does not come from outside but from the people themselves. . . . They put money into a cash register, and then people can have micro-loans from that register'. (PFP capacity building and communication advisor)

Low-threshold experiments – such as changing the seedlings policy and the introduction of a cash fund that serves as a buffer for unexpected needs – exemplify how an intermediary organization can facilitate the search for practices that work at the intersections of different institutional logics (cf. Laakso et al., 2017).

## 5. Discussion and conclusions

In this article we have studied *what types of practices take place between people and organizations during intermediation*. We have shown that intermediation involves the development of practices that bridge

divergent institutional logics. The main theoretical contribution of this article is to introduce and describe these intermediation practices. We also show what role intermediation plays in poverty reduction in the developing country context. Next, we discuss our findings in more detail and consider how they contribute to knowledge on intermediation.

### 5.1. Bridging between logics through intermediation

Our evidence suggests that lack of interaction and understanding between organizations subscribing to divergent institutional logics upholds or even increases operational inefficiencies that perpetuate the deprivation of low-income communities. In these situations the absence of dialogue between the logics hampers collaboration (Fig. 2, leftside situation). If in such an operational environment there are pressures to change – say to transition to new forest management practices – this may aggravate conceptions about the key features of the operational environment or increase the dominance of one logic over others. Intermediation can help to avoid such outcomes. In the previous section we showed how PFP as an intermediary organization has developed practices that bridge divergent institutional logics through different functional mechanisms. This process gradually brings stakeholders closer to each other and thus eventually helps to overcome operational inefficiencies (Fig. 2, rightside situation).

Without external facilitation, divergence between the logics may lead to a situation in which actors representing different logics end up 'playing their own games' even though they would be generally committed to a shared goal, such as development of certain sector (Martin et al., 2017). The situation may also require forms of collaboration that are new and alien to many (Weisenfeld and Hauerwaas, 2018). For example, at the time that PFP was launched, the distance between subsistence and market logic became evident in many questions related to forests and forestry. It was difficult for stakeholders acting under the market logic to understand small-scale forestry and local tree growers in rural communities.

If we accept that divergence between institutional logics may increase operational inefficiencies, then it logically follows that proactive bridging between logics may help to overcome certain types of problems, or at least reduce their negative implications (Mair et al., 2015). By bridging different logics, we mean that an intermediary purposely brings logics closer to each other through the development of new practices (Fig. 2, rightside situation).

While there have been significant research efforts to understand the roles and functions of intermediaries (Boon et al., 2011; Kivimaa, 2014; Kivimaa et al., 2019), the practices that constitute intermediation have not been identified. We argue that at the heart of intermediation lies the development of practices that bridge divergent institutional logics. We have defined intermediation practices as practices purposely introduced by an intermediary organization in order to deepen collaboration between stakeholders following different institutional logics. Bridging between divergent institutional logics makes it possible to overcome inefficiencies in the operational environment, and we argue that this is particularly important when different actors are pursuing different goals at the same time in complex operational environment.

### 5.2. Practical implications

Our research suggests that effective intermediation involves collaborative development of practices that focus on key differences between the institutional logics involved. In the context of Tanzanian forest management, we identified key differences in stakeholders' conceptions about the existing forestry system, the time frame of forestry development and the required quality of plantations, wood processing and products. Convergence between different logics seems to happen most particularly in practices that are constructed so that they value multiple aims and viewpoints at the same time, and are in some ways attractive to actors representing different logics and connect them for relatively long

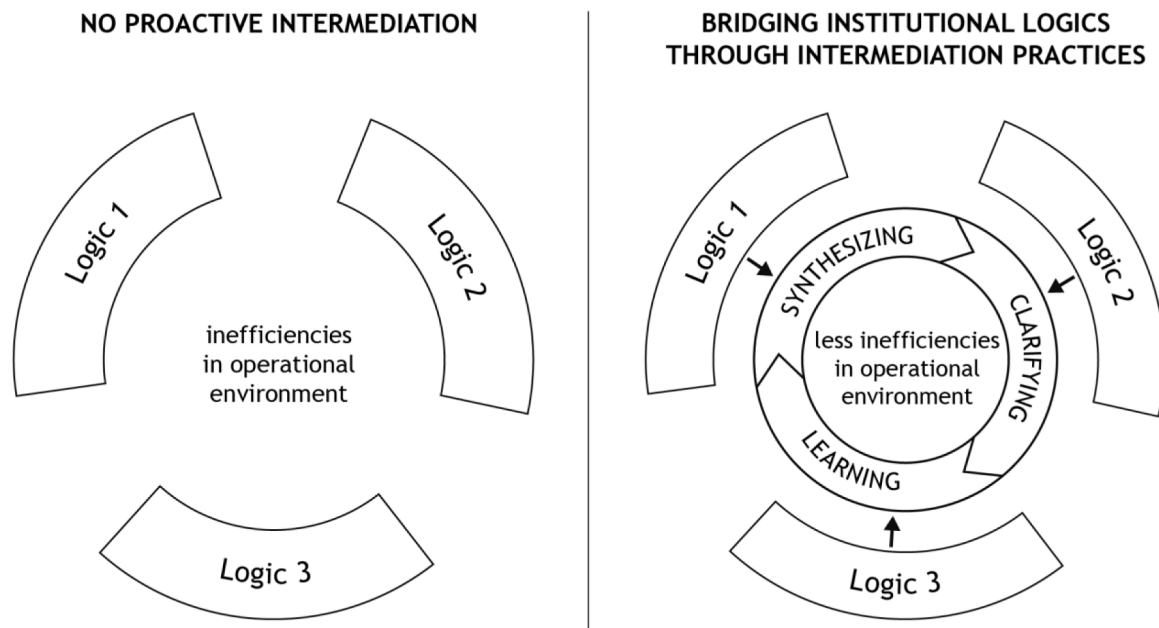


Fig. 2. No proactive intermediation versus bringing divergent institutional logics closer to each other through intermediation practices.

periods of time. For an outsider, some of the operational inefficiencies in Tanzania's forestry sector might well seem simple and straightforward to address, but our findings suggest that these inefficiencies are in fact underpinned by deep-rooted differences in institutional logics.

From the practical point of view, it is very important that intermediary organizations aim to identify key differences between the logics participating in the development of a sector or field of industry. Once key differences are sufficiently identified, it is easier to start building new practices that bridge diverse logics in everyday activities, which is a central task in the overall development of the operational environment. Our findings suggest that it is possible to create intermediation practices that enable collaborative handling of sensitive issues in a constructive manner.

### 5.3. Intermediation and poverty reduction

In developing country contexts, the notion of intermediation practices helps not only to understand the work of intermediaries, but also to explain how operational environments need to be developed in order to achieve sustainable outcomes. It is important to note that the development of new practices for a nascent sector involves many sensitive issues, including the division of power between stakeholders. This paper contributes to the debate on market-driven solutions to poverty reduction by showing that rather than moving once and for all from development logic to market logic, the most promising avenue to sustainable development is to strike the right balance between development, market and subsistence logics. It is important to note that the intermediary studied here is clearly committed to poverty reduction, but works towards this end by bridging and striking a balance between different institutional logics.

Our findings indicate that intermediation may be critical for global socio-political stability. Intermediation that bridges institutional logics may help to avoid situations where low-income populations are structurally deprived due to lack of development and reforms that create market logic practices exploiting vulnerable groups.

### 5.4. Limitations and suggestions for future research

In this study our focus was limited to the early phase of developing intermediation practices. Some of the practices described here may

become widely accepted amongst the stakeholders of Tanzanian forest sector development, others may change as they continue to evolve. More research is needed in at least areas: 1) the transition from the development of intermediation practices to their implementation, 2) the efficient ways of working around the key differences between institutional logics and 3) the dynamics of intermediation practices in different geographical contexts and operational environments.

### Biography

**Jarkko Levänen** is assistant professor of Sustainability Science at Lappeenranta-Lahti University of Technology (LUT). His research focuses on new socio-ecological models and sustainability management in the areas of circular economy and climate change mitigation. Jarkko's interests include sectoral transitions, institutional changes and novel policy approaches in various socio-economic and cultural contexts. His previous works have been published in journals such as *Environmental Research Letters*, *Ecological Economics*, *Journal of Cleaner Production*, *Technology Analysis & Strategic Management*, *Environmental Science & Policy*, *Environmental Policy and Governance* and *Global Sustainability*.

**Sara Lindeman** is a researcher affiliated with Aalto University, and the initiator of the New Global project ([www.newglobal.aalto.fi](http://www.newglobal.aalto.fi)) and Leapfrog Projects ([www.leapfrogprojects.com](http://www.leapfrogprojects.com)). Her research on sustainability innovations and market shaping for poverty reduction has been published e.g. in *Journal of Management Studies*, *Journal of Macromarketing* and *Corporate Social Responsibility and Environmental Management*.

**Minna Halme** is professor of Sustainability Management at Aalto University School of Business. Her research focuses on sustainability innovations, co-creation of frugal innovation for poverty alleviation and societal impacts of CSR. She has participated in several European research projects and heads a number of national ones. She teaches Sustainability Management at Aalto's Master programmes, in executive education and in the CEMS MIM program. She is Associate Editor of *Organization & Environment*, and member of the editorial boards of *Business Strategy and the Environment*, *Technovation*, and *Scandinavian Journal of Management*. Her work has been published in several refereed journals such as *Ecological Economics*, *Journal of Management Studies*, *Journal of Business Ethics*, *Business and Society*, and the *Journal of Cleaner Production*. Her research has won the Best Paper of

the Year Award of Business and Society in 2020, and Academy of Management has acknowledged her papers with All-Academy Best International Paper award, the ONE Unorthodox Paper award, and three Best Paper awards. Her work has also been featured in *The Ecologist* and *The Newswest*.

**Matti Tervo** serves as a Counsellor in the Embassy of Finland in Hanoi. He has served the Foreign Ministry over 10 years in different emerging and developing market contexts. Matti holds a Master's degree in Social Sciences from Jyväskylä University and is at the moment a post-graduate student in Frankfurt School of Finance and Management. He is specialized in private sector development and development

finance.

**Tatu Lyytinen** is PhD-student at Aalto University School of Business and COO and business developer at GIM Robotics. His-interests relate to connecting scientific and practical knowledge on facilitation of business model design, technology commercialization and new venture finance.

### Acknowledgements

This research has been funded by Business Finland (New Global project) and the Academy of Finland (project number AKA/4/02.04.10/2016).

## Appendix A. Information about Private Forestry Programme (PFP)

### Background

Development cooperation between Finland and Tanzania dates back to 1962. By 2002, all of Finland's bilateral projects in Tanzania were geared towards the sustainable use and management of natural resources. Tanzania's logging boom during 2002–2011 saw substantial log exports to China, India and other countries. Poor forestry management resulted in massive revenue losses, negative social impacts, forest degradation and weakened governance structures (Milledge et al., 2007, 4). The response in the development sector was based on the reasoning that people would stop using natural forests in unsustainable ways if they were educated about the benefits of plantation forestry. This would include 'increased employment, income generation, value added production, potential export earnings and a stable rural environment', which were also likely to 'improve measures to conserve biodiversity and mitigate climate change' (Indufor 2011, 1–2). Eventually, this thinking led to the establishment of the Panda Miti Kibiashara Private Forestry Programme (PFP) in 2011.

### Organizational structure of the Private Forestry Programme

PFP has two decision-making bodies: a supervisory board and a steering committee. The supervisory board is the highest decision-making body and consists of a permanent secretary from the Tanzanian Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism (MNRT), who serves as co-chair of the board; an ambassador from Finland who serves as the other co-chair; a director of forestry and beekeeping from MNRT; a chief executive from the Tanzania Forest Service Agency (TFS); a commissioner of external finance from the Finnish Ministry for Foreign Affairs; a director of sector coordination from the Prime Minister's Office; and a member from the Tanzania Private Sector Foundation. The supervisory board meets twice a year and makes strategic-level decisions concerning programme development.

The steering committee consists of a PFP coordinator from MNRT, who serves as chair of the committee; regional natural resource advisors and community development officers from Iringa, Morogoro, Songea and Njombe; representatives from the Embassy of Finland in Tanzania; a representative from the TFS; a representative from the Tanzania Forest Industries Federation; a representative from the Tree Growers Association's Apex Body; a team leader from PFP who serves as secretary of the committee; a national private forestry advisor from PFP; and a community development expert from PFP. Meeting on a quarterly basis, the steering committee makes operational-level decisions and mediates goals and targets between programme beneficiaries. The committee members are thus PFP's most relevant stakeholders. The committee works on a consensus basis.

In the event of disagreement or dispute, the committee may delegate decision-making to the supervisory board or suggest an alternative solution. PFP works at many organizational levels to enable the different policies, goals and agendas of the stakeholders represented in both decision-making bodies. The governments of Tanzania and Finland exchange views prior to decision-making meetings. Other stakeholders are consulted whenever necessary, and programme documentations are shared between the decision-making bodies.

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## Appendix B. Data sources

Thematic interviews	Name of organization	Position of interviewee	Documentation	Field trip no. (1: 5/2016, 2: 11/2016, 3: 4–5/2017) or the location of the interview
	Finnish Ministry for Foreign Affairs (MFA)	Desk officer responsible for PFP	Notes, 5 pages	Helsinki, Finland
	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)	African forestry expert	Notes, 3 pages	Helsinki, Finland
	Tanzanian Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism (MNRT)	Acting assistant director, Forest development	Recorded interview, duration 1 h 9min	2
	PFP organization	National private forestry advisor	Recorded interview, duration 47min	2
	PFP organization	Plantation forestry advisor	Notes, 6 pages (field trip 1); recorded interview,	1,2

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Thematic interviews	Name of organization	Position of interviewee	Documentation	Field trip no. (1: 5/2016, 2: 11/2016, 3: 4-5/2017) or the location of the interview
	PFP organization	Capacity building and communication advisor	duration 1 h 9 min (field trip 2) Recorded interview, duration 42min	2
	Apex body organization	Coordinator	Recorded interview, duration 33min	2
	Tree growers' association (TGA)	Chairman	Recorded interview, duration 27min	2
	Tree growers' association (TGA)	Secretary	Recorded interview, duration 19min	2
	Small companies organization	CEO	Recorded interview, duration 24min	2
	Tanzanian Forest Services	Representative	Recorded interview, duration 9min	2
	Private consultancy	External evaluator of PFP	Recorded interview, duration 2 h 7min	Helsinki, Finland
Group discussions	Type of group discussion	Participants	Documentation	Field trip no. (1: 5/2016, 2: 11/2016, 3: 4-5/2017) or the location of the interview
	PFP project meeting, Finnish Embassy	Senior specialist, consultant, project expert, researcher	Notes, 2 pages	Dar es Salaam, Tanzania
	Meeting with Tanzanian Investment Centre (TIC)	Senior specialist, consultant, project expert, four TIC experts and researcher	Notes, 3 pages	Dar es Salaam, Tanzania
	PFP project meeting, Njombe	Senior specialist, consultant, project expert, acting assistant director (MNRT), national forestry advisor (PFP), team Leader (PFP), plantation forestry advisor (PFP) and researcher	Notes, 6 pages	1
	Meeting with Tanzania Forest Services	Senior specialist, consultant, desk officer (MAF), acting assistant director (MNRT), national forestry advisor (PFP), team leader (PFP), plantation forestry advisor (PFP) two forest officers and researcher	Notes, 3 pages	1
	Discussion with TGA members	TGA members, researchers	Recorded group discussion, duration 5min	2
	Discussion with local school staff	School staff, researchers	Recorded group discussion, duration 15min	2
	Meeting with international forestry company	PFP staff, country manager, researchers	Notes, 3 pages	Dar es Salaam, Tanzania
Participant observation	Site	Participants	Documentation	Field trip no. (1: 5/2016, 2: 11/2016, 3: 4-5/2017) or the location of the interview
	Field visits to villages and forest plantations in Mufindi, Njombe and Makete areas	Local villagers, PFP staff, researchers	Notes, 6 pages, recorded discussions, duration 37min	1,2,3
	Site visit at industrial-scale sawmill	PFP staff, plant manager, researchers	Notes, 4 pages	1,2
	Site visit at seedlings plantation	PFP staff, plantation manager, researchers	Notes, 2 pages	2
	Visit at training sawmill	Training sawmill managers	Notes, 2 pages	2,3
Content analysis of published documentary materials	Name of document	Publisher	Publication year	Number of pages
	Private Forestry Programme: Key Findings on Tree Growing Incentive Scheme and Income Generating Activities	Indufor Group	2015	42
	Performance Audit of the Private Forestry Programme (PFP)	KPMG Oy Ab	2016	38
	Private Forestry Programme: Value chain analysis of plantation wood from the Southern Highlands	Indufor Group	2016	132
	PFP: First Annual Review	FCG International Ltd.	2015	43
	PFP: Second Annual Review (Draft)	FCG International Ltd.	2016	48
	Data types	Documentation		

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Thematic interviews	Name of organization	Position of interviewee	Documentation	Field trip no. (1: 5/2016, 2: 11/2016, 3: 4–5/2017) or the location of the interview
Content analysis of unpublished field evaluation data	Field notes from 8 village visits Field visit reports (preliminary analysis of field findings)	Notes, 25 pages Written text, 19 pages		
Content analysis of email correspondence between programme officers and other stakeholders	48 email messages	Written text, 50 pages		

### Appendix C. Example quotes illustrating the first-order coding scheme

First-order code	Example citations
National perspective on forestry system	“To strengthen and develop the forest industry so that they can produce good material (...) we are aiming of having actually the saw mills in which the recovery percent is high. (...) We are emphasizing on having good, big industries (...) and we are not actually (favouring) of exporting wood. (...) We need industry to be building Tanzania, so that we can also get employment to our people.” (MNRT director of forestry planning)
Long-term frame of forestry management	“The biggest challenge for us is to make people wait until growing period of trees end. For eucalyptus it is 15 years and for pine 20–25 years depending on region.” (Capacity building and communication advisor, PFP)
Pursuing improvements in the quality of forestry	“So, he (local tree grower) thinks, maybe other people want to see other species than the species they have used to see, but he believes in good quality species. (...) They (local sawmillers) want to add value (...) in tree plantation in general, maybe during processing of timber, so (they are) asking about the (possibilities to) invest in (local) sawmills (...) so that it would be easier for them to process their trees and get good quality timber.” (Secretary of TGA)
Global perspective on forestry system	“The difference between the local and the international companies (...) is (that) when we use the advantaged or international (...) sawmills, (...) (we) can get good quality timber compared to local sawmills.” (Secretary of TGA)
Moderate time frame of forestry management	“And we thought that hey, let’s start the activities, so that instead of cutting a tree at the age of ten (years), you have to wait. Then you have another source of money, and then you can send your children to school or you can go to hospital or whatever. But we thought we cannot realize (that). We are just planting trees (...) and the program will end at four years; the first phase. In four years the tree will be four years.” (MNRT director of forestry planning)
Pursuing premium quality of forestry	“So after introduction of the Private Forestry Program, where we are? We are actually also concentrating on the value, on the quality of seedlings. We need these people (local treegrowers) also to have seedlings which are (of high quality) so that the final crops will also be good and eventually they can (succeed at) markets.” (MNRT director of forestry planning)
Local perspective on forestry system	“Imagine the poorest of the poor. (...) And then now there comes another thing: (vulnerability) is not permanent. You might find me (vulnerable) today, after two or three years, I’m not vulnerable. You see now. So how to identify these people, and how to maintain these people so that they can benefit from the fruits of private forestry is also a challenge. (...) They have been actually planting trees, yes. But (...) what we are aiming is how they can benefit more from their efforts of planting trees.” (MNRT director of forestry planning)
Short-term frame of forestry management	Very often people cut trees far too early, now when there’s market demand, and that is when yields remain smaller than what it could otherwise be. It results from poverty and partly also from a fear of forest fires – here people have no forest insurances. So (in case of forest fire) you lose your whole plantation. (Capacity building and communication advisor, PFP)
Pursuing ‘good enough’ quality of forestry	“We (in PFP) aim to improve the situation of local people so that they would get basic education (about forestry) and their working conditions would be better in the future; so that technology would be better and there would be safety equipments available (...). What I have discussed with harvester entrepreneurs who hire people, (...) is that people just buy cheap Chinese chainsaws and go working into the forest without any education and sometimes wearing sandals.” (Capacity building and communication advisor, PFP)
Introduction of new ideas	“But for the moment, or for the current, we are on the way (to become) (...) assisted for market existence. (We) want to make a market (in) which (...) (we) can work together. We want, not to differentiate the price of the products, of tree products, from one year to another. (...) With a single voice or a single say, (...) you can say that this tree or this log you can sell.” (Appex Body coordinator)
Making realities meet	“For me (forestry conference) means that you meet new people. I am not so much interested about the presentations (...) but when there will be so much people from different parts of the world, it means a good opportunity to meet experts from different fields.” (Plantation forestry advisor, PFP)
Clarifying roles despite inconvenience	“So TASAF was developed in order to address some of the issues identified in the (PFP’s) poverty reduction strategy. And these people, (...) they have their own style on how to deal with these (vulnerable) people, you see now. And we decided to collaborate with them. So we made a discussion, we even developed some memorandum of understanding, and now they are assisting us on how to identify the (vulnerable people), and how to deal with them.” (MNRT director of forestry planning)
Generating facts	“So we talk about (forestry) planning and challenges to villagers (...) The next thing is marking over satellite image. We are doing better and better with planning currently (because) we are using satellite images. We think (that) because of this the whole villages (...) orientate better within the (...) areas. (...) This is an example of a satellite image for (an area) covering almost all villages. We also put boundaries of the villages and so they can see their own house there and then know also different areas they can see.” (TGA chairman)
Setting standards	“I would say that one (hampering) issue is the quality measurement system. It does not exist at all and therefore trees are priced individually. (...) There is no chart from where people could see what would be a good price. (...) Until we do not have standardized quality measurement system for both logs and timber, this is difficult. It (standardized system) is important part of the value chain.” (Plantation forestry advisor, PFP)
Enabling a learning environment	“One challenge (is that) individual members (of tree growing associations) lack knowledge and sometimes they think (that) what they understand is quite enough. (...) But we are trying to educate them. And we are making workshops to (...) make them think. (...) When we sit with them in the workshop, they find that they lack something.” (Appex body coordinator)
Experimentation across the logics	

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First-order code	Example citations
	“(We) make sure that what we are implementing do not negate from what we have been doing, and if there is anything which is crucial (...) we need to go back again and consult the authority, which is the steering committee for instance, or the advisory board (of PFP). That okay, we tried this, but in the course of implementing it we faced some challenges and we think that it cannot lead us to the direction we wanted. We have done as you say, studied, and we think this is the best option to take. We don’t just go to them without any option or solutions.” (National forestry advisor, PFP)

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