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Forests, discourses, institutions: A discursive-institutional analysis of global forest governance

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Abstract

The leading question of this *Forest Policy and Economics* special issue is whether, how and to what extent forest governance processes can be better understood by means of discourse analysis and the science-policy interface. This article focuses on discourses only, but it does so from an institutional perspective. The reasons to advocate this so-called *discursive-institutional* approach are threefold: (1) to acknowledge the relevance of both meanings and rules in policy continuity and change; (2) to emphasize the role of ideas, concepts and narratives in institutional dynamics; and (3) to make a useful distinction between discourses and practices (‘analytical dualism’™). As an example of applying this approach, we analyze the case of global forest politics from the early 1980s till today. It shows that new ideas and meanings concerning sustainability, biodiversity and governance have been institutionalized in this

field over time, implying policy change and innovation. Compared to more "classical" analyses, for example based on rationalistic or (purely) institutional accounts, the discursive-institutional approach draws another picture of global forest policy.



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Keywords

Global forest policy; Discourse analysis; Institutional analysis; Policy arrangements approach

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