

Preface

This book reflects the contents of the research programme of the Forest and Nature Conservation Policy Group (FNP) at Wageningen University, the Netherlands. It was conceived some years ago, when ideas about putting the concept of ‘practice’ central in FNP’s research programme first began to emerge. Since then, the group’s thinking has been developed as a result of discussing the concept’s content and the authors’ positions in seminars, freely deliberating book-related topics in research lounges, and actually writing the book. When we started writing this book, none of us could foresee the specific contents, but from the outset the concept of practice was key to us. Some proposed chapters dropped out, others changed in content or were added at a later stage, and new author teams emerged. Hence, writing this book was a process as creative and unpredictable as the forest and nature governance practices that the book documents.

Besides promoting and reporting our own research programme, the book also contributes to forest and nature governance studies by offering a novel approach in this field; it also contributes to governance studies in general by furthering an interpretative approach. In so doing, we hope to inspire a wide range of governance scholars. Our intended readers are graduate and postgraduate students in governance studies, as well as senior researchers and postacademic professionals in the fields of forest policy, forest management and nature conservation, in both the global North and the global South.

We are fully aware that this book is just a snapshot in an ongoing process. Practices are neither fixed nor universal categories, but instead are specific doings, sayings and things ‘in action’, whether that action be science or governance. Therefore, our thinking about governance practices and doing practice-based research in governance studies will inevitably develop further. We invite readers to respond, comment, criticise, reflect, etc. Please write to: bas.arts@wur.nl.

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