



Understanding emerging discourses of Marine Spatial Planning in the UK



Heather Ritchie*

Built Environment Research Institute, School of the Built Environment, University of Ulster, Shore Road, Newtownabbey, Co. Antrim BT37 0QB, United Kingdom

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received 29 March 2013

Received in revised form 6 November 2013

Accepted 14 January 2014

Keywords:

Marine Spatial Planning

Rhetorical Analysis

Discourse

Policy making

ABSTRACT

This paper investigates the emergence of Marine Spatial Planning (MSP) through Rhetorical Analysis of three UK marine policy documents. The analysis focuses on the rhetorical presentation of key MSP policy documents located within the previous Government period and seeks to reveal the rationality of how MSP was constructed at that time. This highlights the assumptions and ideologies emerging from this area of Government regulation and suggests that MSP reveals a discourse that may be aligned with New Labour and that bears the hallmarks of post-political environmental consensus. The findings of the analysis allow us to understand the significance of MSP's emergence and to question the future of MSP within a new political context.

© 2014 Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

Introduction

In recent years many informal attempts have been made at trying to coordinate the increasingly different uses and human activities taking place in the sea. Marine Spatial Planning is now recognised internationally as a comprehensive approach to managing the seas in a sustainable manner. Since 2008 the European Commission has been actively promoting the development of MSP across the EU Member States. The Roadmap for Maritime Spatial Planning (European Commission, 2008) encourages a common approach and cross-border cooperation for MSP in its implementation at national and EU levels. In March 2013 the Commission proposed a Directive establishing a framework for a maritime spatial planning and integrated coastal management (2013/0074). If enacted, it will establish common legally binding European framework for MSP and ICM in EU Member States to ensure that the growth of maritime and coastal activities and the use of resources at sea and on coasts remain sustainable. Whilst Member States are under no obligation, yet, to adopt a uniform approach to MSP, some countries such as Germany and the Netherlands have expanded their jurisdiction of terrestrial spatial planning into territorial waters (Jay et al., 2014; Drankier, 2012). Significantly, the UK's devolved administrations have adopted different styles of MSP where they have established new legislation for MSP that applies to each administration's territorial and offshore waters out to the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ),

and emphasis is placed on determining spatial planning priorities through a joint National Marine Policy Statement (MPS).

MSP has been introduced in the devolved UK as a policy tool to ensure the production of an integrative and consistent approach to the allocation of spatial and temporal distribution of human activities across devolved marine waters, achieving ecological, economic and social objectives (DEFRA, 2011a,b; European Commission, 2010). Whilst extensively promoted throughout devolved UK Government policy documents, the proposed style and approach of MSP in the devolved UK closely mirrored that of Terrestrial Spatial Planning (TSP), under New Labour at least. For example there was emphasis on wide and open stakeholder engagement, the promotion of sustainable development and for MSP to take place at the regional scale. However, given the change in Government to a Conservative/Liberal Democrat Coalition in May 2010, significant changes have been introduced to UK TSP. The most noteworthy reforms were the revocation of regional planning, devolving planning to a local neighbourhood level (Bailey and Pill, 2011; Lichfield, 2011) and the introduction of the National Planning Policy Framework (DCLG, 2012). The framework aims to make planning less complex and to reaffirm the purpose of planning as achieving sustainable development. It was repeatedly scripted that the overall aim of the changes were to reduce the economic deficit, but this could have been used as an excuse to further neo-liberalise public policy and institutions.

Located within this new planning dynamic, the Rhetorical Analysis of three MSP policy documents provides us with an opportunity to look back and reflect on the emerging discourses of MSP under the previous Labour Government, and to investigate the current positioning of MSP within a new sphere of planning

* Tel.: +44 02890366676; fax: +44 2890366826.

E-mail address: h.ritchie@ulster.ac.uk

within a Coalition Government. The significance of this shift in Government policy towards TSP is remarkable, yet curiously MSP has remained relatively unchanged, and carries with it many of its traits from its emergence under the previous Government.

This paper will firstly show how MSP (in England and Wales) was seen as a radical initiative and through the Rhetorical Analysis it will become clear that MSP is imprinted with the rhetoric of New Labour. Secondly the paper will speculate on why MSP has not been changed by the Coalition Government and lastly it will explain this as a feature of the post-political environment that now guides environmental governance.

The paper seeks to add to the current planning debates by noting the distinctive discourse that emerged signifying how MSP was approached and inflected by a particular policy making style, as clearly indicative of a rhetoric of New Labour¹ and its emphasis on ecological modernisation.² Whilst the nature of MSP has been relatively unaffacted since the Coalition Government (as marine plans are still being formulated at the regional scale),³ the overhaul of TSP suggests a contradiction in what should be two congruent planning systems, with coherence aligning between terrestrial activities and MSP (Calado et al., 2012). It is posed that this could have profound and unbounded consequences for the future of the MSP process.

The emergence of MSP within the UK

DEFRA's Safeguarding our Seas strategy and the Marine Stewardship Report (DEFRA, 2002a,b), announced the then Government's new approach to managing all marine activities. In 2004 DEFRA's Five Year Strategy was launched, and plans for a Marine Bill were announced. A keynote speech by Elliot Morley⁴ at the Coastal Futures Conference (January 2005) outlined the scope and benefits of new marine legislation. Academic literature followed advocating the need for a coordinated system of planning in the marine environment in the UK (Canning, 2003; Tydesley and Hunt, 2003; Hugget et al., 2003; Vincent et al., 2004; GHK Consulting, 2004; Peel and Lloyd, 2004). MSP gained momentum, both nationally and internationally, and particularly through various UNESCO activities such as Ehler and Douvère's (2007) First International Workshop on Marine Spatial Planning. In the UK the legislative process was prolonged, however the Marine and Coastal Access Act (MCAA) reached the Statute books in 2009. Hailed as one of the most important and long awaited pieces of marine legislation in 30 years (Maes, 2009; Flemming and Jones, 2012) it established a comprehensive regulatory planning system for the devolved UK marine environments.

A key component of the legislation was the development of a Marine Policy Statement (MPS). Setting out the policies that will help to achieve sustainable development in the devolved UK marine

area, it provides the framework for preparing plans and for taking decisions that affect the marine environment. Prepared by all the administrations and published in May 2011 (DEFRA, 2011a), the MPS vows to enable an appropriate and consistent approach to helping achieve the shared UK marine vision for 'clean, healthy, safe, productive, biologically diverse oceans and seas' (DEFRA, 2002a). The MPS was one of the first significant marine policy documents to come out from the Coalition Government, yet the agenda aligns with that which was shaped under the Labour Government, modernising how we govern in the marine environment. In the Coalition Manifesto (HM Government, 2010, p. 18) pledges exist in taking forward the MCAA, ensuring marine conservation measures are implemented effectively and to introduce measures to encourage marine energy. In understanding the case that MSP seems to remain as largely unchanged within a new Governmental planning regime, the paper seeks to look at MSP as a feature of a post-political environmental consensus, where there is an emphasis on keeping the general frame of a situation as non contested (Swyngedouw, 2010, p. 227).

The devolved administrations are working together to ensure a joined up approach to managing the UK's territorial and offshore waters, out to the EEZ. However, each administration has their own separate provisions for their territorial marine waters. Subsequent to the MCAA, the Marine Management Organisation⁵ (MMO) was established and is responsible for preparing Marine plans for English inshore and offshore waters. Scotland has its own differentiated, but parallel legislation, the Marine (Scotland) Act 2010 and Marine Scotland⁶ is responsible for the integrated management and national plan-making for Scotland's seas. The Welsh Assembly Government will be responsible for developing a Marine plan for the Welsh marine waters and the Northern Ireland Assembly has recently commenced work for its own draft Northern Ireland Marine Bill (DOE, 2012). A single Marine plan for Northern Irish waters will be drawn up by the Department of Environment to cover its territorial waters.

From new labour to localism

It is evident that progression in MSP has been long; however the effect of the transition from Labour to a Conservative/Liberal Democrat Government has been noteworthy for TSP. The vision for the new Government was, it was claimed, to introduce a 'fundamental shift of power from Westminster to people' and in 'promoting decentralisation and democratic engagement' (Cabinet Office, 2010, p. 11), thus reducing powers and bureaucracy of central Government. This is in direct contrast with the New Labour's modernising rationality and prioritising the economy and competitiveness through its links to business imperatives (Baker et al., 2010; Finlayson, 2009). New Labour believed that planning was the tool to bring about modernisation (Finlayson, 2009; Lloyd and Peel, 2009; Allmendinger and Tewdwr-Jones, 2009) through streamlining, speeding up regulatory processes, rescaling political arenas and pushing decisions upwards for major developments, such as through the, now abolished, Infrastructure Planning Commission and the Regional Development Agency. Most notably Cowell and Owens (2006) highlighted that such planning reforms, 'closed down the institutional spaces for challenges to the status quo'; where decisions were removed from the individual communities and dialogue is based on reaching a consensus. Planning powers have now been given to local people to determine their locality's future. Lichfield (2011, p. 23) notes that while 'localism' may have

¹ The New Labour concept is subject to multiple-interpretations. While its meaning and what it stood for may be contested, in this paper it is understood as suggesting a specific attitude towards regulation and a political position that MSP will be 'good for people' (Finlayson, 2009). When viewed as part of the wider 'modernising the state' agenda (Lloyd and Peel, 2009; Allmendinger and Tewdwr-Jones, 2009; Kunzmann, 2009) it brings about enhanced engagement and increased efficiency (Baker et al., 2010).

² Ecological modernisation is considered a contested concept, and it is used as a discourse that is closely connected to the rhetoric of New Labour. In this sense it is expressed as a discourse of sustainable development (Rydin, 2003, p. 106) where environment and economy do not conflict, but work together (Beck, 1998; Baxter, 2000).

³ The Marine Management Organisation (MMO) is currently working on the East Inshore and East Offshore areas as the first areas in England to be selected for Marine Planning. The East Inshore area included a coastline that stretches from Flamborough Head to Felixstowe. Available from <http://marinemanagement.org.uk/marineplanning/current.htm> (accessed 06.01.12).

⁴ In 2004 Elliot Morley was Minister for Environment and Agri- Environment.

⁵ The MMO is a non-department public body reporting to the Secretary of State – s 3(1) Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009.

⁶ A directorate of the Scottish Executive.

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/6548877>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/6548877>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)