

Conference Abstracts & Biographies

3C – Conservation and Engagement III

Chair: Stephen Jay, University of Liverpool

Negotiating the transition to a low carbon economy within the East of England marine spatial planning

Jane Clarke, Queen's University Belfast, Northern Ireland

Abstract:

Marine spatial planning (MSP) provides a significant progression from the historically fragmented practices of marine governance, towards integrated management regimes. MSP aims to democratise marine governance and, through stakeholder negotiations, produce consensus on a wide range of marine management issues (Ehler & Douvere 2009). In the UK, for example, MSP aims to develop cross-sectoral actions that facilitate a transition to a low carbon economy (UK Parliament 2011). This aim is operationalised through eleven plan areas covering English waters, all of which are either in place or in development. As an iterative process there is a need to develop a more in-depth understanding of MSP in practice so that we can ensure MSP meets its goals. Therefore, responding to calls for more theoretically-driven MSP evaluation, this study conceptualises the concept of 'transition' as a boundary object (Star & Griesemer 1989) around which agents contest and construct marine problems and their solutions. Boundary objects, are artefacts which may be used locally by several actors but have enough common meaning to allow collaboration. Hence object theory provides a useful lens for examining how, or if, actors work to collaborate despite heterogeneity (Star & Griesemer 1989; Star 2010). However, transitioning does not exist within an institutional void and it is important to consider the role of broader discourses beyond the boundary object. To do so, this study applies Hajer's (1995) argumentative approach to discourse analysis to understand the role of broader politics. By examining political speeches and documents, both the institutional context and process of negotiating the problem and solutions to transitioning to a low carbon economy within East of England MSP are considered.

Key words: English marine spatial planning, transition to a low carbon economy, negotiations, boundary object, power

References: [Ehler, C. & Douvere, F., 2009. Marine Spatial Planning: A step-by-step Approach toward Ecosystem-based Management. *Coastal Services*, 13(2), pp.1-7.] [Hajer, M.A., 1995. The politics of environmental discourse: ecological modernization and the policy process (p. 40). Oxford: Clarendon Press.] [Star, S., 2010. This is Not a Boundary Object: Reflections on the Origin of a Concept. *Science, Technology, & Human Values*, 35(5), pp.601-617.] [Star, S.L. & Griesemer, J.R., 1989. Institutional Ecology, `Translations and Boundary Objects: Amateurs and Professionals in Berkeley's Museum of Vertebrate Zoology, 1907-39. *Social Studies of Science*, 19(3), pp.387-420.] [UK Parliament, 2011. The UK Marine Policy Statement. The stationery Office, pp.1-51.]

Biography:

Jane Clarke is a second year Phd student at Queen's University Belfast examining how the transition to a low carbon economy is negotiated within English and Scottish marine spatial planning (MSP). This paper represents one of the two case studies constituting

her PhD research. She received a bachelor's degree in environmental biology from Queen's University Belfast and a master's degree in integrated environmental studies from the University of Southampton. Her current research focuses on the application of social sciences framework for understanding how, or if, consensus on transitioning is reached within MSP. She is interested in the role, and manifestation of power within practices of marine governance, particularly relating to climate change mitigation and adaptations.

Marine Spatial Planning and Citizen Science

Ben McAteer, Queen's University Belfast, Northern Ireland

Abstract:

The introduction of Marine Spatial Planning (MSP), seen as a 'rational' reaction to conflict within systems of marine governance, has, in reality, developed into a top-down model of consultation. Here, local actors are continuing to struggle to get their knowledge incorporated into the decision-making process. Consequently, MSP has become a site of politics; wherein unequal relations of power benefit some, to the detriment of others. However, it appears that, as the theoretical foundation of MSP was being laid, the issue of power was not sufficiently problematized. Responding to calls for more theoretically informed research, my PhD project aims to explore the potential of a radical turn in MSP practice. Moving away from the apparent rationalism of science and neoliberal logic incorporated into MSP, appeals have been made for a more equity-based, democratic decision-making process. This radical turn has been asserted as being operationalized via a greater relationship with terrestrial planning and an enhanced contribution from the social sciences. Building on these, this project calls for an increased focus upon stakeholder-driven knowledge production.

One such example of this is citizen science. While citizen science in a marine context is not a new means of producing knowledge, key social aspects of the approach remain relatively under examined at an academic level. In particular, an evaluation of its transformative potential, as opposed to solely conceptualising it as a means of data collection, remains underexplored. While this study examines how citizen science projects function, what types of knowledge they produce and where this knowledge goes, emphasis is placed upon an exploration of the potential to view citizen science as a means of; (i) changing power balances within structures of marine governance and (ii) enhancing the critical and political consciousness of project participants. Three separate and divergent citizen science projects within Northern Ireland serve as the case studies for this research. Ultimately, the findings of this study will be transformed into a framework of guidelines, aimed at increasing the impact of citizen science.

Keywords: MSP, power, participation, governance, citizen science

Biography:

I am a PhD student at Queen's University Belfast, studying citizen science and stakeholder participation in Marine Spatial Planning. I have completed a combined under-graduate and Masters degree in European Planning, having spent time in both Queen's University Belfast and the University of Amsterdam.

Nature's Rights: A Potential Tool for Managing Non Point Source Pollution and Coral Reef Degradation

Danielle Bilecki, University of Rhode Island, USA

Abstract:

Corals reefs are unique in that both the ecosystem they create and the coral species themselves are on the verge of extinction. While existing coral management approaches address regional and point source problems associated with reefs, there are few legal tools accessible to address global scale nonpoint source pollution problems, such as ocean warming and acidification. These known but largely unaddressed hazards to reefs have been the 'elephants in the room' when creating marine management policies, especially at an international scale. Protecting reefs requires a new approach. The social and ecological characteristics associated with reef death represent an opportunity to apply 'rights-of-nature' laws at an international scale, where corals would be given the legal right to exist and perpetrators of climate injustice would be held accountable for their CO₂ emissions. Humans, corporations, and even boats have legal rights, but nature still exists solely as property. Policies designed to protect this 'property' merely regulate the extent of destruction in relation to its quantified value to humans. Through an environmental justice lens, this paper will explore the potential of the rights-of-nature approach to modify how we conceptualize Marine Protected Areas. It will analyze case studies where rights-of-nature laws have been instituted at the community, national, and ecosystem scales in the past. I expect to find evidence that suggests that the rights-of-nature approach can be effective on an international level. In addition, since this new concept focuses attention on the reef itself rather than regulatory mechanisms generated by our current environmental management paradigm, this legal tool can be applied specifically to coral reefs. I argue that the rights-of-nature approach can improve coral reef management by creating new legal obligations, shifting the focus of environmental management resources, and by catalyzing global awareness and action.

Keywords: Climate Change, Environmental Justice, Coral Reefs, Rights-of-Nature, Marine Policy

Biography:

Current Graduate student at the University of Rhode Island under the Marine Affairs Program and Research Assistant at the Coastal Resource Center. B.A. Psychology, Minor in Environmental Studies from SUNY Geneseo. Returned Peace Corps Volunteer Cameroon 2013-2015. Professional experience in Environmental Education, Community Organizing, and as an Extension Agent for Development Work in Agriculture, Sustainable Livelihoods, and Women's Empowerment.