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NAVIGATING POLICY TRANSFER FROM INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS TO
SINGLE STATES: THE CASE OF MARINE SPATIAL PLANNING ADOPTION IN
COLOMBIA

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I hereby declare that Chapter IV in this dissertation 'The Agency of the IOC-UNESCO in Shaping Marine Spatial Planning as a Novel Policy Solution' has already been published as a book chapter in the edited volume: Jones, C. (Eds.). (2024). *Governing Oceans*. Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar Publishing. <https://doi.org/10.4337/9781035315598>.

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Summary

Marine Spatial Planning (MSP) has been championed by the International Oceanographic Commission of UNESCO (IOC-UNESCO) as a key instrument for sustainable marine governance. It aims to balance the increasing demand for marine resources with the need to maintain a healthy and resilient ocean. As a result, there has been a significant global expansion in the use of MSP as a policy tool, meant to enable coastal states to sustainably manage and integrate multiple maritime sectors within their marine territories.

Given MSP's growing significance, it is crucial to understand the process through which this policy is transferred from IOC-UNESCO to individual states. This paper employs policy transfer theory to explore the adoption of MSP by countries in the South-East Pacific region, with a particular focus on Colombia. It examines the IOC-driven policy transfer, analyzing the actors involved, the factors and mechanisms enabling the process, and the ways in which MSP has been adapted or 'domesticated' in Colombia.

The study is structured as follows:

Chapter I: The research begins by highlighting the growing significance of MSP and the challenges associated with implementing the ecosystem approach as the core principle of MSP under a 'blue economy' agenda. This establishes the thematic relevance of the study.

Chapter II: Next, the rationale for selecting Policy Transfer Theory is presented, including a detailed discussion of its key components: actors, content of transfer, context of transfer, and causal mechanisms.

Chapter III: The study then outlines its research design and methodology, providing justification for selecting Colombia as the case study.

The subsequent four chapters present empirical findings:

Chapter IV: This chapter analyzes the role of IOC-UNESCO in shaping the narrative and content of MSP policy. It reveals that MSP is increasingly being framed as an essential marine policy instrument, that evolved from a tool for marine space allocation into a comprehensive strategic mechanism for achieving national, regional, and international marine governance

targets. The chapter also notes a significant shift in MSP's alignment, from an ecosystem-based management framework toward a blue economy agenda.

Chapter V: This chapter tracks the policy transfer process of MSP from IOC-UNESCO to Colombia, identifying three distinct MSP transfer processes over a decade, involving three primary actors: an environmental NGO, a research center within the Ministry of Environment, and institutions linked to the Ministry of Defense. While IOC-UNESCO triggered all three processes, only one emerges as the 'official' path toward MSP adoption due to existing networks and institutional dynamics. The study highlights several domestic factors that influence MSP adoption, including Colombia's past experiences with Integrated Coastal Zone Management (a policy instrument similar to MSP) and inter-institutional rivalry between the environmental and defense sectors.

Chapter VI: This chapter delves into the causal mechanisms behind the policy transfer. It finds that *learning* about MSP's outcomes, processes, and institutional impacts is the primary causal mechanism, enabled by IOC-UNESCO as the policy supplier. Besides being a promoter, IOC-UNESCO also provides *instructions* that influence MSP's national-level implementation, revealing a novel causal mechanism not previously discussed in policy transfer literature. The study concludes that international factors have played crucial enabling role in this supply-driven policy transfer.

Chapter VII: This chapter examines the various adaptations, or 'domestications,' of MSP in Colombia by the three main actors. Through comparative analysis, the study predicts that future MSP in Colombia will likely evolve into a stand-alone technical tool for redistributing marine space, with limited consideration for environmental factors and minimal inter-sectoral coordination and stakeholder participation.

Chapter VIII: The final chapter summarizes the main findings and underscores their relevance for the scholarship on International Organizations and for the sustainable management of coastal and marine resources.

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List of Abbreviations

ANH = National Hydrocarbons Agency Colombia
ANLA = National Authority for Environmental Licenses Colombia
ARAP = Authority for Aquatic Resources Panama
AUNAP = Fisheries Authority Colombia
CAR = regional environmental authority in Colombia
CBD = Convention on Biological Diversity
CCO = Colombian Ocean Commission
CCCP = Centre for Oceanographic and Hydrographic Research for the Pacific (Dimar)
CICAR = Cooperative Investigations of the Caribbean and Adjacent Regions
CIOH = Centre for Oceanographic and Hydrographic Research for the Caribbean (Dimar)
COLCIENCIAS = National department for science, technology and innovation in Colombia
COMAEM = Multisectoral Commission for the State Action in the Maritime Area in Peru
CONPES = National Council on Economic and Social Policy Colombia
CONPES 3990 = National Policy: Colombia Sustainable Bioceanic Power 2030
COP = Conference of the Parties
CPPS = Permanent Commission for the South Pacific
DAMCRA = Directorate for Marine and Coastal Resources Colombia
DG MARE = European Commission's Directorate-General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries
DIHIDRONAV = Directorate of Hydrography and Navigation of the Peruvian Navy
DIMAR = Maritime Authority of Colombia
DNP = Department of National Planning Colombia
DRMI = Regional District for Integrated Management
EA = Ecosystem Approach
EBM = Ecosystem Based Management
EC = European Commission
EEZ = Exclusive Economic Zone
EU = European Union
FAO = Food and Agricultural Organization
GBRMPA = Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority
GEF = Global Environment Facility
GIS = Geographical Information System
ICAM = Integrated Coastal Area Management
ICZM = Integrated Coastal Zone Management
ILO = International Labor Organization

IMARPE = Institute of the Sea Peru
IMF = International Monetary Fund
IMO = International Maritime Organization
INVEMAR = Marine and Coastal Research Institute of Colombia
IO = International Organization
IOC = Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of UNESCO
IOCARIBE = Regional subsidiary body of the IOC for the Caribbean and Adjacent Regions
IODE = The International Oceanographic Data and Information Exchange (IOC)
IUCN = International Union for Conservation of Nature
LME = Large Marine Ecosystems
LME PACA = Pacific Central American Coastal Large Marine Ecosystem
MADS = Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development Colombia
MPA = Marine Protected Area
MSP = Marine Spatial Planning
MSPGlobal = MSP-related program of the IOC
NGO = Non-Governmental Organization
NOAA = National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
OECD = Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
OMC = marine and coastal territorial planning
OMC:VAM = marine and coastal territorial planning of the Colombian Maritime Authority
OTGA = Ocean Teacher Global Academy
PEM = Marine Spatial Planning (Spanish abbreviation)
PMO = 'medium oceanic power'
PNAOCI = National Environmental Policy for the Sustainable Development of Ocean Spaces and Coastal and Insular Zones of Colombia
PNN = National Natural Parks of Colombia
PNOEC = The National Policy of the Ocean and Coastal Spaces
POMCA = management for river basins in Colombia
POMIUAC = management plan for the UAC in Colombia
POT = plan for territorial management in Colombia
QCA = Qualitative Content Analysis
SDG = Sustainable Development Goal
SENALMAR = National seminar on marine science and technology in Colombia
SES = Socio-Ecological Systems
SIDS = Small Island Developing States
SINA = National Environmental System in Colombia
SMART objectives = specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound

SPINCAM = Southeast Pacific data and information network in support to integrated coastal area management

UAC = coastal environmental unit for territorial planning in Colombia

UACLLAS = UAC for the región Llanura Aluvial del Sur, Colombia's Pacific coast

UAO = oceanic environmental unit for territorial planning in Colombia

UN = United Nations

UNCED = United Nations Conference on Environment and Development

UNCLOS = United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea

UNCSD = United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development

UNDP = United Nations Development Program

UNEP = United Nations Environment Program

UNFCCC = United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

UNESCO = United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

UNHCR = United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

WTO = World Trade Organization

WWF = World Wide Fund for Nature

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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

I. Justifying the Inquiry

The United Nations Agenda 2030 and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), adopted by the world leaders in 2015, represent a commitment by the international community to mobilize efforts to eradicate all forms of poverty and hunger, tackle climate change and ensure a sustainable future for all. Considering the importance of oceans in the world's socio-ecological systems, SDG 14 deals explicitly with conservation and sustainable use of oceans, seas and marine resources: "By 2020, sustainably manage and protect marine and coastal ecosystems to avoid significant adverse impacts, including by strengthening their resilience, and take action for their restoration in order to achieve healthy and productive oceans" (SDG 14.2, UN, n.d.)

The Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC) of UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization), or hereinafter IOC-UNESCO, is the UN body responsible for supporting global ocean science and services. IOC-UNESCO's priority is to enable its Member States improve their scientific and institutional capacity required to achieve SDG 14 in conserving and sustainably managing ocean and marine resources by 2030. It does that by enabling its 150 Member States "to work together to protect the health of our shared ocean by coordinating programmes in ocean observations, hazard mitigation, tsunami warnings and marine spatial planning, among others" (UNESCO, 2019). Marine Spatial Planning (MSP) is an area-based tool considered as an essential instrument for integrated marine and coastal zone management. In this regard, the IOC-UNESCO "has been instrumental in implementing the concept of ecosystem based management through its Marine Spatial Planning approach" because of its unique position to "assist countries move toward ecosystem-based management of the marine environment through MSP" (MSP-IOC, n.d.).

In 2006, IOC-UNESCO convened the first international workshop on using MSP as a tool for the implementation of ecosystem-based management, with the participation of countries with practical experience in MSP, ocean zoning and sea use management. The outcome of the workshop is the highly-referenced MSP step-by-step guide published by the IOC-UNESCO in 2009, which "rapidly became internationally recognized standard" (MSP-IOC, n.d.). In March 2017, IOC-UNESCO together with the European Commission's Directorate-General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries (DG MARE), organized the 2nd International Conference on MSP where a joint initiative is launched "to accelerate Maritime/Marine Spatial Planning processes worldwide" (IOC-UNESCO & European Commission, 2017).

The last decade has witnessed a world-wide expansion in the adoption of MSP, with special focus on the countries from the Global South. In a matter of few years, countries from the South-East Pacific regional sea included MSP in their national ocean policies. This region is one of two chosen by the IOC-UNESCO and DG MARE as a target for transboundary MSP pilot activities and a region where the IOC-UNESCO is well established. Inspired by the fast and wide adoption of this novel policy instrument, this study poses the questions: *Under what circumstances (How) and for what reasons (Why) does a voluntary policy transfer occur, having an international organization on the supply side and a single country as the adopter?* Drawing on the Policy Transfer Theory and by applying elements of process tracing, the study unpacks the process behind the transfer of MSP as a policy instrument to one country from this region, namely Colombia. It analyzes its trigger, the mechanisms of interaction between the relevant actors and, finally, its outcome, which is the adoption of the policy instrument by the case country. The study looks into the reasons behind these interactions and their productive continuum from the cause (trigger) to the outcome.

This fast adoption in Colombia, a country with established close ties with the IOC-UNESCO, is a case-study that offers certain reference about how the MSP adoption process might be evolving in the rest of the countries in the region, but most of all, offering a lot of potential for analyzing the means through which IOC-UNESCO promotes and interacts with countries to adopt this instrument. With it, the focus of this study is less on the outcome – adoption of the MSP, and more on the process itself, best analyzed through a policy transfer approach. Because of the important role of the IOC-UNESCO in this process, an IO that took MSP as its flagship project, there is special emphasis in this research on its agency and activities around MSP promotion and policy shaping.

In order for the reader to better understand the nature and relevance of MSP as a policy instrument, this chapter firstly provides input on the Ecosystem Approach, which is the defining element of MSP, and on the Blue Economy, a development model under whose umbrella MSP is being promoted, before continuing to the actual presentation of the MSP itself.

II. The Ecosystem Approach

In the past few decades, it has been widely recognized that in order to achieve the Agenda 2030 the traditional management focused on single species or single sector is insufficient. Broad consensus has been built, aspects such as biodiversity, complexity of social-ecological systems, stakeholder participation, iterative planning and management, among others, should be considered more thoroughly. This holistic approach is generally known as Ecosystem-

Based Management (EBM) and is seen not as a strategy that manages the ecosystems per se, but as one that manages the human activities that have impact on ecosystems and considers these impacts when making management decisions. In this regard, the Ecosystem Approach (EA) and the EBM, as principles that overlap (Kirkfeldt, 2019), and are often used interchangeably (CBD & GEF, 2012; Engler, 2015: 299), have been widely acknowledged as the leading principles in environmental governance. In this study, these two concepts will be used interchangeably as synonyms.

Launched with the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) in 1993, the EA is broadly defined as a “strategy for the integrated management of land, water and living resources that promotes conservation and sustainable use in an equitable way” (CBD, 2000)¹.

One of the first initiatives that considered the overall health of ecosystems as the leading principle in natural resource management, is a set of workshops in the 1970's on wildlife conservation. Group of professionals across North America will coin the basic principles which later on, in 1978, will be enshrined in the United Nations Conference on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) (Long et al., 2015). The UNCLOS provisions would require coastal states to consider effects on associated and dependent species in the marine ecosystem (Hammer, 2015: 82). These provisions are mainly ecological objectives but provide the foundation for EBM approaches which also recognize governance and social objectives in addition to the ecological ones (Long et al., 2015). The UNCLOS provisions are then followed by the Rio Declaration and Agenda 21 that emphasize multi-species management in marine systems; as well as by a multitude of regional sea conventions (Hammer, 2015: 82)². However, the concretion of the EA as such would follow not until its entrance in the Conference of the Parties (COP) discussions of the CBD (Hartje et al., 2003: 5) and the consequential elaboration of the 12 Malawi principles in 2004 at the COP VII of the CBD³ (CBD, n.d.).

¹ The Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR) describes the EA as an approach that: “takes into account all the delicate and complex relationships between organisms (of all sizes) and physical processes (such as currents and sea temperature) that constitute the Antarctic marine ecosystem” (Long et al., 2015) emphasizing ecological factors more than any other. More elaborate definition is offered by some Regional Seas Programmes, such as the Baltic Marine Environment Protection Commission (HELCOM Commission) and the North-East Atlantic Commission (OSPAR Commission): “the comprehensive integrated management of human activities based on the best available scientific knowledge about the ecosystem and its dynamics, in order to identify and take action on influences which are critical to the health of marine ecosystems, thereby achieving sustainable use of ecosystem goods and services and maintenance of ecosystem integrity” (Joint Ministerial Meeting, 2003). This definition does not focus on ecological factors only (as the one from CCAMLR), but similarly to the CBD's definition, it includes the notion of ‘sustainable use’ of resources.

² Such as the Helsinki Convention for the protection of the Baltic Sea, the OSPAR Convention for the North East Atlantic, the Bucharest Convention for the Black Sea etc. (Hammer, 2015: 82)

³ In 2004, the CBD elaborates 12 interconnected and complementary principles (the Malawi Principles) in order to facilitate EA's operationalization, leaving space for adjustments according to local conditions

Many scholars and practitioners have dealt with the EA conceptually and practically, and even though its operationalization is complex and context-dependent there is still a general consensus about the defining dimensions of the EA. So, for example, one central dimension which best expresses the holistic nature of the EA principle is the understanding that *humans are part of nature* (Engler, 2015: 291). It considers humans along with their cultural diversity, as internal components and not an external influence on the ecosystems, something in line with the essence of the concept of *socio-ecological systems* (ibid.). Aside from its romantic connotation, this dimension has some very important and complex management implications, namely that management should focus on ecological, social, cultural and economic circumstances in a more integrative way (ibid.). However essential, this dimension is maybe the most challenging one. First, as ideal as it sounds, for many (natural science) scholars the ecosystem is defined by its biophysical and chemical components and processes, so, social and economic context should be considered under ecosystem management but that does not make them internal components of ecosystems (Grumbine, 1994; Larkin, 1996). Second, even if one accepts humans as part of ecosystems, there is an inevitable inherent trade-off between the social, economic and ecological objectives (Halpern et al., 2013) that lie at the core of this dimension. Recognizing this, the CBD states with its first Malawi principle that “management objectives are a matter of societal choice” (Malawi principle No.1, CBD, 2007), leaving space for contextual adaptation of the principle and where the prioritization of competing objectives should be decided upon in a political process. *Adaptive management* as another central EA dimension; it recognizes the constant change ecosystems go through, their variability, including the ecological and socio-economic one. This uncertainty requires management processes that can be flexible and be adjusted in the face of new scientific proof or other form of reliable knowledge concerning these variabilities. The management process is not linear but cyclical, since the objectives, as a starting stage of the planning process, can be adjusted anytime by input received from the evaluation of the previous planning cycle. The management process thus requires clear objectives, monitoring and revision and adjustment in light of new or improved knowledge. This EA dimension is also known as the “learning by doing” approach. (Engler, 2015: 303). In the CBD, the Malawi principle No.8, referring to the setting of long-term objectives in ecosystem management, as well as the Malawi principle No.9: “management must recognize that change is inevitable” (CBD, 2007) are, both, reflections of adaptive management. Third important EA dimension is that ecosystem

(CBD, 2004). Some of those principles are: Management objectives are a matter of societal choice; Management should be decentralized to the lowest appropriate level; or Ecosystem managers should consider the effects of their activities on adjacent and other ecosystems, just to name few (ibid.).

management should be *knowledge based* (Engler, 2015: 292). Now, this is one very important dimension whose operationalization has proven very difficult in practice. Always subject to change, understanding and sustainably managing ecosystems requires updated and interdisciplinary scientific knowledge. So, good science, or in other words, peer-reviewed, reliable and well-communicated science is one prerequisite to this EA dimension. As next comes the requirement for interdisciplinary and trans-disciplinary approaches in ecosystem management that go beyond the standard division of natural and social sciences (Alexander et al., 2019). Third, and most ignored one, is the inclusion of all forms of relevant knowledge in the ecosystem management process. This refers especially to knowledge coming from local and indigenous communities, since the understanding of our environment is not in an exclusive domain of science (Engler, 2015: 292). In the CBD, the Malawi principle No. 11: EA should “consider all forms of relevant information, including scientific and indigenous and local knowledge, innovations and practices” (CBD, 2007) reflects best the essence of this dimension. One final EA dimension discussed in this section is *stakeholder involvement*, referring to inclusion and engagement of relevant stakeholders accounting for, both, local and public interests (Engler, 2015: 292). This dimension theoretically increases legitimacy and brings an element of democracy into the ecosystem management process (Söderström et al., 2016: 12), but raises many challenges in the implementation process regarding selection of stakeholders, the form and timing of their engagement, power imbalances between them, as well as trade-offs between efficient vs just decision-making process, or majoritarian vs consensual decision-making. Under the CBD, the Malawi principle No. 12 stating that the EA should involve all relevant sectors of society, and the Malawi principle No. 2 that the management should be decentralized at the lowest appropriate level in order to increase ownership, accountability, participation and use of local knowledge (CBD, 2007), are clear expressions of this EA dimension. Merging the most relevant EA principles that came out in their study, Long et al. (2015) provide a bit longer but integrative definition of the EA/EBM worth considering at this point as it provides an overview of the main EA dimensions: “Ecosystem-based management is an interdisciplinary approach that balances ecological, social and governance principles at appropriate temporal and spatial scales in a distinct geographical area to achieve sustainable resource use. Scientific knowledge and effective monitoring are used to acknowledge the connections, integrity and biodiversity within an ecosystem along with its dynamic nature and associated uncertainties. EBM recognizes coupled social-ecological systems with stakeholders involved in an integrated and adaptive management process where decisions reflect societal choice” (Long et al., 2015: 59). Considering the increased importance of the EBM and EA in the governance of oceans and coastal areas worldwide, understanding its operationalization comes to the fore in the field of marine governance. The United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) published in 2011 an

introductory guide to ecosystem-based management for marine and coastal areas, providing decision-makers with “an overview of core elements and pathways to getting started” (UNEP, 2011). The EA and EBM have been mostly used by marine policymakers and promoted by regional and international environmental institutions, causing global rise in ecosystem-based marine management mechanisms. In this regard, Marine Spatial Planning (MSP), Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) and Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) are the mostly discussed marine governance mechanisms to translate the EA and EBM into practice. However, besides the proliferation of these mechanisms (Kelly et al., 2019; MSPglobal, 2021a) there are many challenges and shortcomings in the implementation of the EA in the field of marine governance. Findings indicate that although the EA facilitates inclusion of social, economic and environmental values in processes of marine management, the level of integration of these three components remains unbalanced, with the economic one being still dominant (Dominguez-Tejo & Metternicht, 2018); or similarly, marrying the EA to the “blue growth” strategies undermines environmental priorities and gives leverage to top-down marine governance designs (Jones et al., 2016). Considering the increasing world-wide adoption of ecosystem-based marine management mechanisms, such as MSP and ICZM, scholars rightfully agree that there is a need to better understand these approaches and scrutinize their implementation (Jones et al., 2016; Söderström et al., 2016), especially because consensus is absent on the exact definition and main approach for their operationalization (Long et al., 2015). Furthermore, as studies from the field show (Ansong et al., 2019; Aschenbrenner & Winder, 2019; Cavallo et al., 2019; Kelly et al., 2019; Lonsdale et al., 2020, among many others), the research on ecosystem-based marine management is concentrated on European seas, reflecting a bias in the scholarship, while in practice, the adoption of these instruments has been growing exponentially world-wide. This points to another argument in favor of focusing on MSP as an instrument meant to put EBM into practice in the countries from the Global South.

III. The Blue Economy

The concept of ‘blue economy’ is the second important one that contextualizes the present relevance of MSP in managing marine resources. ‘Blue economy’ originates during the preparations for the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (UNCSD), also known as the Rio+20 Summit or the Earth Summit, held in 2012. The main objective of the Rio+20 Summit was to reconcile economic and environmental goals for sustainable development (Silver et al., 2015). Until then, the values of the ocean for economic development were recognized under the concept of ‘green economy’. So, for example, an inter-agency paper towards the preparation of the Rio+20 Summit published by the IOC-

UNESCO, International Maritime Organization (IMO), FAO and the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), discusses 'blue-green economy' referring to the transition towards a human-ocean centered relationship where the humankind lives with the ocean and from the ocean in a sustainable way⁴ (IOC-UNESCO et al., 2011). During the Rio+20 Summit, it was the Small Island Developing states (SIDS) who insisted on the higher relevance of the ocean for the development of their economies and who actually helped proliferate the term 'blue economy' as a legitimate concept in its own right (Keen et al., 2018; Silver et al., 2015). Since then, the concept has been used increasingly and with different interpretations. However, it remains to be a term that reflects the inherent conflicts of two main discourses: the ocean as an area of growth, opportunity and development, and the ocean as a vulnerable and threatened space in need of protection (Voyer et al., 2018). In this regard, according to the definition of UNEP, the blue economy aims at "improved human well-being and social equity, while significantly reducing environmental risks and ecological scarcities" (UNEP, n.d.)⁵ No matter how popular the concepts 'blue economy' and 'blue growth'⁶ may be, they have definitely provoked a lot of critique. The main criticism is about failure to include the social equity and environmental protection perspectives, moving away from the more integrative conceptualization of the 'blue economy' when it first appeared on the international development agenda (Cisneros-Montemayor et al., 2019). In this regard, the current predominant interpretations and understandings of the 'blue economy' are all based on market-based assumptions and goals, with the social equity and well-being only "implicitly assumed to follow from economic growth in ocean industries" (Cisneros-Montemayor et al., 2019: 2). Social equity is understood as the fair treatment of all groups of people that are

⁴ The four objectives of such transition are: reducing stressors and maintaining and restoring marine ecosystems for sustainable use of marine resources; alleviations of poverty and promotion of sustainable ocean sectors and livelihoods through participatory processes; policy and institutional reforms for effective ocean governance; supporting marine research, technology and capacity transfer (IOC-UNESCO et al., 2011).

⁵ For the Pacific SIDS countries, 'blue economy' "refers to the sustainable management of ocean resources to support livelihoods, more equitable benefit-sharing, and ecosystem resilience in the face of climate change, destructive fishing practices, and pressures from sources external to the fisheries sector." (Keen et al., 2018). For the WWF Baltic Ecoregion Programme, blue economy is a marine-based economy that: provides social and economic benefits for current and future generations; restores, protects and maintains the diversity, productivity, resilience, core functions and intrinsic value of marine ecosystems; and is based on clean technologies, renewable energy and circular material flows (WWF, 2015).

⁶ Additional to the many definitions of 'blue economy', there are several other similar concepts. Some studies would distinguish between 'blue economy', 'blue growth' and 'ocean economy'. For example, Cisneros-Montemayor et al. (2019) say that 'ocean economy' encompasses any and all economic activity related to oceans excluding the ones without a market value, which on the other hand the 'blue economy' does include. Whereas 'blue growth' is the expansion of this 'ocean economy' in a market economy sense with some implicit observance of environmental sustainability (ibid.: 2). However, it is also very common to use 'blue economy' interchangeably with 'blue growth' (WWF, 2015) and to 'sustainable ocean economy' (Mulazzani & Malorgio, 2017). This study too, will use especially the concepts 'blue economy' and 'blue growth' interchangeably.

positively or negatively affected from rising ocean industries, their inclusion in the design of policies that affect them and the just distribution of benefits and burdens from the growing industries (Cisneros-Montemayor et al., 2019: 2). This being said, the consideration of “old” and unsustainable industries such as oil and gas extraction under the concept of ‘blue economy’ becomes unimaginable if this concept intends to set a new sustainable development course for the future (ibid.). It remains nevertheless a fact that the majority of the governments that adopt the ‘blue economy’ concept actually rely predominantly on exactly these industries for the growth of their ocean economies⁷.

Besides the rising criticism and the very many challenges the ‘blue economy’ agenda needs to overcome, it is nevertheless a development model that is here to stay. Constructive criticism has pointed to several directions to improve the course of this agenda. For example, considering not only resource availability but other local enabling conditions need to be addressed in developing sustainable blue economy (Cisneros-Montemayor et al., 2021). To estimate the blue economy potential of countries and hence to define adequate blue economy objectives, aspects such as corruption, gender equality, economic equity, biodiversity, water quality, national stability and infrastructure, just to name a few, need to be considered. This comes in addition to the resource availability of the country as a separate aspect, which determines the potential for the development of mariculture, fisheries, ecotourism, energy and other ocean resources-dependent sectors (ibid.). Mistakenly, only the aspect on resource availability is considered in the definition of blue economy strategies world-wide (!) leaving aside a whole lot of factors that can make even the most well-intentioned blue economy development strategy go wrong. Bennett et al. (2019) speak of courses of action to achieve inclusive governance of the blue economy involving public-private partnerships, community-industry partnerships and collaborative management among governments, private sector and the civil society. While the blue economy means economic development of the oceans, environmental sustainability and social equity need to be its core tenets (ibid.).

⁷ In this regard, ‘blue economy’ and ‘blue growth’ have given rise to concepts such as ‘blue justice’ as something that must be central to the ‘blue growth’ agenda (N. J. Bennett et al., 2021), or, ‘ocean grabbing’ as a looming danger from wrongly defined blue growth objectives (N. J. Bennett et al., 2015). Most starkly affected groups from the blue ‘injustice’ are artisanal fishers, indigenous communities and women, all of whom may easily become subjects to marginalization, dispossession, human right abuses, loss of access to marine resources with decreasing food security and wellbeing, if an unsustainable blue growth takes a fold (N. J. Bennett et al., 2021).

IV. Marine Spatial Planning

The emergence and relevance of MSP

In the last several years there has been a rising interest in MSP worldwide. A study on the increasing number of articles on MSP, has shown that in 2017 there were 900 scientific articles in international peer-reviewed journals listed in “Web of Knowledge” and around 10,000 articles appeared on Google Scholar under the search term “marine spatial planning” (Ehler et al., 2019: 1). This trend starts somewhere after the year 2000, with a steady rise from 2006 onwards (Merrie & Olsson, 2014: 368). This supports the argument that much of the interest for MSP starts with IOC-UNESCO’s first international workshop on MSP in 2006 (Ehler et al., 2019: 2), considered as the *seed-planting phase* for MSP’s emergence and spread (Merrie & Olsson, 2014: 371, original emphasis; Miteva-Bölter, 2024). According to IOC-UNESCO’s estimations, between 2000 and 2013, MSP was implemented in nine countries with a total area of 13 million km², making 9% of the global Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZs). Considering that trend, the prediction is that by 2025 the total area covered with MSP plans will cover almost 25% of world’s EEZs (Merrie & Olsson, 2014: 372, In: Miteva-Bölter, 2024). Ehler (2019: 1) expects that by 2030 at least a third of the EEZs will be covered with MSP plans. These numbers are a very clear indicator of the relevance MSP is gaining regarding the future use of our seas and ocean (Miteva-Bölter, 2024).

Key preconditions for the initial emergence of MSP as a tool for marine management are previous similar planning experiences and practices. Such are the terrestrial land-use and conservation planning practices, the zoning practices in the Great Barrier Reef in Australia, the development of the Geographical Information Systems (GIS) as a key hardware tool enabling MSP to work with large amount of spatial data, and the high-quality scientific information as a precondition for the MSP to account for ecosystem interconnectedness (Merrie & Olsson, 2014: 370). But of course, one very important precondition is the existence of so the called ‘institutional entrepreneurs’ (ibid.: 368). They are an informal network of multinational interdisciplinary individuals involved in knowledge and experience exchange regarding the practices and issues listed above. Through collaboration and knowledge exchange, practitioners and experts from countries with existing marine planning practices (such as Belgium, Australia, UK, Germany etc.) have developed over time the guiding principles around MSP and ‘planted the seeds’ for its wider adoption (ibid.). In this regard, not only individuals from the IOC-UNESCO proved crucial, but also from the IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature), NOAA (National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration), WWF, GBRMPA (Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority), among others (ibid.).

Defining Marine Spatial Planning

The last two decades have shown that the competition for space and resources is increasingly shifting from land to sea. Industrialization of the marine space is unfolding with a miraculous speed. For example, the average size of European off-shore wind farms has increased from ca. 80 MW in 2007 to ca. 500 MW in 2017, whereas the global aquaculture production has been growing steadily at an annual average rate of 6.6% since 1995, reaching more than 100 million tones in 2015 (Flannery et al., 2019: 201). Due to the increasing pressure on marine areas and resources, there is a need for this usage to be managed holistically. One of the most famous instruments for this is the MSP. The IOC-UNESCO defines MSP as a: “[p]ublic process of analyzing and allocating the spatial and temporal distribution of human activities in marine areas to achieve ecological, economic, and social objectives that have been specified through a political process” (IOC-UNESCO, n.d.).⁸

As an adjustable concept it can take different forms and different purposes. MSP can be implied as a simple zoning tool, but also as a governance tool for complex planning and management process. It can further be applied on a local level, for the planning and management of small coastal and marine areas within one or several communities; on a national level, for the planning of the national territorial sea and the complete exclusive economic zone (EEZ); on a regional level, for cross-border cooperation between countries to jointly manage border areas of common concern; or even for management of areas that can spread beyond national jurisdiction entering high seas, such as the areas of Large Marine Ecosystems (LMEs). In this regard, MSP can have different objectives varying from more environmental to more economic objectives, from avoiding spatial conflicts to complex and long-term strategy planning.

In a broader sense, MSP is basically analogous to land-use planning but in the three-dimensional marine space (Douvere, 2008). MSP is a process (which is why it is called *planning*) that has as outcome a marine spatial *plan*. Being an iterative process, it consists of at least three stages: planning and analysis, where data is being collected, alternative scenarios are considered and objectives are formulated; implementation, where the plan with

⁸The CBD defines MSP as: “...a framework supporting ecosystem-based management, in that it recognizes the connections between land, freshwater, and marine ecosystems, and addresses human uses and impacts of importance in all these systems” (CBD & GEF, 2012: 8). As from these two definitions, one can notice the stronger environmental focus of the CBD approach where MSP supports EBM, compared to the more balanced approach of the IOC-UNESCO, where MSP is a tool to organize human activities. The EU defines MSP as a: “process by which the relevant Member State’s authorities analyse and organise human activities in marine areas to achieve ecological, economic and social objectives” (EU MSP Directive, 2014: Article 3).

the additional measures are executed; and monitoring and evaluation, where the effectiveness of the plans are evaluated and are fed back into the iterative process (Ehler & Douvère, 2009: 46)⁹. MSP has been popularized through IOC-UNESCO's MSP step-by-step guide, whose authors, Ehler and Douvère, have been the loudest spokesmen for MSP¹⁰.

MSP and other integrated marine management tools

As an integrated area-based (or spatial) management tool, MSP is similar to other area-based management approaches, and mostly so to Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM)¹¹.

MSP and ICZM are, both, integrated approaches, seeking to coordinate the needs of several different sectors within the same area, whereas other spatial management approaches, such as pollution management zones, fisheries closure areas, no-go marine protected areas, or seabed mining exclusion areas, focus on individual marine sectors (UN Environment, 2018: 7). Per definition, MSP focuses on marine areas only, whereas ICZM focuses on coastal areas. In this regard, the latter takes explicitly into account land-sea interactions. ICZM manages not only marine but also terrestrial areas part of the coastal zone and has therefore an additional challenge to also consider land-use planning processes and coordinate not only with marine but also with terrestrial sectors (ibid.: 12-15). They both, in theory, apply the ecosystem approach, include stakeholder involvement, represent long-term iterative planning processes with cross-sector integration and reliance on science and other forms of knowledge. Countries or regions that apply both, ICZM and MSP, will normally treat MSP as a

⁹ More specifically, MSP is developed and implemented through a 10-step process, with many feedback loops: (1) identifying needs and establishing authority; (2) obtaining financial support; (3) organizing the process through pre-planning; (4) organizing stakeholder participation; (5) defining and analyzing existing conditions; (6) defining and analyzing future conditions; (7) preparing and approving the spatial management plan; (8) implementing and enforcing the spatial management plan; (9) monitoring and evaluating performance; (10) adapting the marine spatial management process (Ehler & Douvère, 2009).

¹⁰ It is important to also consider Douvère's (2008) definition of MSP at this point, which will be referred to further in this study. Namely, according to her, MSP is a means to "[c]reate and establish a more *rational organization* of the use of marine space and the interactions between its uses, to balance demands for development with the need to protect the environment, and to achieve social and economic objectives in an open and planned way". (Douvère, 2008: 766, emphasis added).

¹¹ The CBD's Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 to achieve 20 Aichi Biodiversity Targets has proclaimed the ecosystem approach as the main ecological principle, and the MSP and ICZM as the main tools to achieve this goal (CBD, 2015). MSP and ICZM are often times even used interchangeably with the ecosystem approach (Stephenson et al., 2019); sometimes as complementary practices and instruments to the ecosystem approach (Rojas Giraldo et al., 2010); or, the ecosystem approach is treated as the overarching theoretical framework for the application of these mechanisms (CBD, 2015; Kern & Soderstrom, 2018). In sum, there is no general agreement on their exact definitions and differences (Alexander & Haward, 2019; Rochette et al., 2015). Nevertheless, similarly to MSP, ICZM can be defined as "a resource management system following an integrative, holistic approach and an interactive planning process in addressing the complex management issues in the coastal area" (Thia-Eng, 1993: 84).

complementary instrument to ICZM that manages different or slightly overlapping areas that continue sea-wise from the coastal zone, reaching sometimes the borders of the country's EEZ (Ramieri et al., 2019).

ICZM is older instrument in comparison to MSP but has not known MSP's popularity. Nevertheless, as an older and more established instrument, it has found its ground earlier in developed and developing countries alike. In this regard, the research on ICZM is more balanced in terms of geographical coverage in Europe and worldwide, especially in developing countries, pointing to its more established role in developing countries compared to MSP (CBD & GEF, 2012)¹².

Another similar area-based instrument is the Marine Protected Area (MPA). MPA is an area of the ocean reserved for long-term conservation aims (IUCN, 2017). MSP and ICZM can both be used for the identification and management of MPAs (ibid.). Basically, one could say MSP and ICZM are tools for the establishment and sustainable management of MPAs. There are six categories of MPAs under IUCN's classification according to their management objectives, going from Category I of "strict nature reserves" (or, no-take areas) to Category VI of "protected areas with sustainable use of natural resources" (IUCN, 2022). The latter's primary objective is to, both, protect natural ecosystems and use natural resources sustainably, which is where especially the integrative approach of MSP comes in hand for their management. There is however a growing tendency worldwide to declare MPAs just to achieve the global biodiversity target "30 by 30" - conserving 30% of the sea until 2030 (CBD, 2021). The declared

¹² In Europe, case studies from the Mediterranean Sea (Gambino et al., 2016; Maccarrone et al., 2014; Papatheochari & Coccossis, 2019), Black Sea (Kosyan & Velikova, 2016), and from South European countries in general (Buono et al., 2015; Cantasano & Pellicone, 2014; Guimarães et al., 2014; Pinto & Martins, 2013) are more prevailing than studies on Western European countries (Kratzer et al., 2014; Tiller et al., 2012), pointing to the influence in these countries of the ICZM Protocol to the Barcelona Convention for the protection of the Mediterranean Sea. The studies mainly deal with specific case studies, with occasional comparative overview of several ICZM initiatives Europe-wide (Reis et al., 2014). Outside Europe, there is widespread research in Asia (Abelshausen et al., 2014, 2015; Afroz & Alam, 2013; Albotoush & Shau-Hwai, 2019; Wu et al., 2012), with studies also in Central and South America (Batista et al., 2019; Campuzano et al., 2013; Caviedes et al., 2020), North Africa and the Middle East (Ibrahim & Shaw, 2012; Khelil et al., 2019; Klimašauskaitė & Tal, 2020), among others. Whereas MSP research, until recently has been highly concentrated on European seas (Ansong et al., 2019; Aschenbrenner & Winder, 2019; Bakker et al., 2019; Cavallo et al., 2019; Karlsson, 2019; Kelly et al., 2019; Lonsdale et al., 2020; Raakjaer et al., 2014; Spijkerboer et al., 2020; van Leeuwen et al., 2012) with significant research on the Baltic Sea region (de Grunt et al., 2018; Jones et al., 2016; Kern & Soderstrom, 2018; Kull et al., 2019; Morf et al., 2019; Piwowarczyk et al., 2019; Qiu & Jones, 2013; Söderström & Kern, 2017). Outside Europe, the research is limited but increasing, with case studies from different parts of the world such as Antigua and Barbuda (Johnson et al., 2020), China (Fang et al., 2019), Kenya (Thoya et al., 2019) etc. With the MSPGlobal initiative, there is an increased focus on developing countries, especially, but not exclusively, on those belonging to the South-East Pacific (MSPglobal, 2021c) and the Western Mediterranean regional sea (MSPglobal, 2021d).

MPAs, however, belong predominantly to Category VI and thus do not prioritize conservation objectives, raising concerns about the actual biodiversity protection target aimed for with the “30 by 30” initiative. Further concerns are raised about the implications of these fast MPA declarations related to the mass evictions of (coastal) indigenous populations (Mukpo, 2021). These and many more, are just some of the challenges that MSP and similar approaches must overcome to deserve the designation ‘integrated approaches for ecosystem-based management’. As holistic management tools, they are easier to agree on general terms and at a higher level, while their implementation becomes more complicated on lower levels. Path dependency and institutional inertia are taken as persistent problems when it comes to ocean and coastal integrated management (Kelly et al., 2019), pointing to the fact that the mere adoption of novel instruments is far from a guarantee that they will succeed in solving the problem they were meant to solve.

V. Quick Take & Roadmap

This chapter has so far showcased the relevance of this research, especially regarding the policy instrument under investigation. While proving to slowly become an indispensable policy instrument for the management of the world marine and coastal areas, it is also very clear that there are many challenges regarding the implementation of MSP. The latter especially in terms of staying truthful to the ecosystem approach while being promoted and implemented under a ‘blue economy’ agenda.

In what follows, the study provides the rationale for the selection of the Policy Transfer Theory with more detailed discussion of its constitutive elements (chapter II: Theoretical Framework); then, the study presents its research design and methodology, as well as the justification for the case selection (chapter III: Methodology); these are followed by the empirical analysis of the agency of the IOC-UNESCO in shaping MSP (chapter IV), the analysis of the policy transfer process of MSP from IOC to Colombia (chapter V), the analysis of the causal mechanisms behind the policy transfer (chapter VI), the presentation of the different adaptations of MSP in Colombia, or the so called MSP ‘domestications’, and the final discussion chapter (chapter VIII).

CHAPTER II: THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS

I. Policy Transfer Theory

I.1. Rationale for the selection of the theory

Inspired by the fast and wide adoption of MSP as a novel policy instrument, this study poses the question: *Under what circumstances (How) and for what reasons (Why) does a voluntary policy transfer occur, having an international organization on the supply side and a single country as the adopter?*

The last few years have witnessed fast and world-wide spread of Marine Spatial Planning (MSP) as an innovative policy instrument for marine management (MSPGlobal, n.d.) promoted mainly by the IOC-UNESCO. This has provoked huge surge in research articles in 2018 and 2019, especially in the area of ocean and coastal management and marine policy (Albotoush & Tan Shau-Hwai, 2021). The geographical focus is predominately on Europe, North America and comparative cases across continents (ibid.). There is a lot of research on implementation challenges and outcomes, with often very technical details reflecting the nature of the instrument. On the other extreme, also very present, is the literature that offers more conceptual discussion on the driving principles behind MSP, such as for example the ecosystem-based approach or the precautionary principles and their operationalization through MSP. Many of these articles embrace directly, or in essence, the governance approach, especially the environmental and resource governance approach.

Outcomes are at the center of attention in environmental governance approaches¹³. At the same time, these approaches are more static, reflecting how the existing structures affect a desired or undesired outcome. Without a doubt, one very valuable and intuitive way to analyze MSP is through its potential impact or potential in achieving certain objectives, which has predominantly been done in the MSP literature. What is missing, however, is research on what actually happens before one can speak of outcomes from MSP's application or the lack thereof. What is missing is research on why, how and under what circumstances would a country adopt this instrument in the first place. In other words, MSP has been studied largely through the cause/outcome logic, be it MSP as a cause and its impact over sustainable

¹³ In a review paper on environmental governance theories in coastal areas, Partelow et al. (2020) state that, in general, the environmental and resource governance scholarship "has aimed to understand how different governance processes or policies influence desired *outcomes*" (ibid.; emphasis added). Stating a critique to the many existing concepts, theories and frameworks in this scholarship, they continue saying that their proponents "struggle to satisfactorily explain or predict the occurrence of undesirable *outcomes*." (ibid.; emphasis added).

management of marine areas, for example, or MSP as an outcome, when researchers look for the reasons for its successful and less successful implementation. But MSP has rarely been investigated as a public policy¹⁴, and in this regard as a part of a policy *process*, where “interactions that occur over time between public policies, surrounding actors, events, contexts and outcomes” (Weible & Sabatier, 2018: 2), are taken all together as relevant to explain policy change or the lack thereof. This in-depth focus on the process preceding the domestic policy change as such, a policy process which at the same time does not represent an independent decision-making but is largely influenced by domestic and international actors - gets most adequately addressed by the policy transfer theory (Marsh & Sharman, 2009).

The focus of the policy transfer theory is on the process itself, considering a trigger or a cause as the first, and an outcome, as the final part of the process. The main focus stays, however, on the process *in-between*. The outcome in a policy transfer theory would be the adoption of a foreign policy, the lack of its adoption, or something in between (such as *degree of adoption*, as according to Dolowitz & Marsh, 2000). Whereas, for example, in governance theories the goal-achievement or performance of the transferred policy itself would be the typical relevant outcome. This goals/performance approach is valuable for countries and cases where there is evidence of performance, but not that much for cases where the policy is new and in the process of adoption. In these countries, one important mean to provide explanations related to the newly adopted policy is by going backwards and understand the process of the policy transfer from the promoter to the adopter. This in a way might explain why the vast amount of MSP research articles has focused on countries from the Global North, where MSP's implementation is more advanced. This leaves us with yet another research gap to be filled, not only regarding the theoretical approach applied in MSP research, but also to the geographical coverage of the MSP studies, which is one of the criteria for the case selection, as explained in chapter III: Methodology.

Policy transfer theory is applied to explain the process of adoption of policy innovations. Policy transfer is defined as the “process by which knowledge about policies, administrative arrangements, institutions and ideas in one political system (past or present) is used in the development of policies, administrative arrangements, institutions and ideas in another political system.” (D. P. Dolowitz & Marsh, 2000). Policy transfer, as well as policy diffusion are theories discussed very often together. They both study processes in order to explain circumstances and reasons for adoption of policy innovations, with the main difference being

¹⁴ Understood here in more general terms, as the “deliberate decisions—actions and nonactions—of a government or an equivalent authority toward specific objectives.” (Weible & Sabatier, 2018: 2).

that policy transfer focuses on the process and content of transfer in single cases, whereas diffusion focuses on the explanation of adoption patterns, basically looking into variations among several cases (Holzinger & Knill, 2005: 767-768). In this sense, regarding the applied methodology, the diffusion literature would compare large number of cases by using quantitative techniques, whereas policy transfer would use qualitative analysis of limited number of cases analyzed in detail typically by using process-tracing (Marsh & Sharman, 2009). Related to, both, policy transfer and policy diffusion theories is the policy convergence. Policy convergence is the tendency of policies in different countries to become more similar over time (Holzinger & Knill, 2005). Policy convergence, thus, places emphasis on effects whereas policy transfer and diffusion on processes, and so, transfer and diffusion are processes that might result in policy convergence (ibid.: 767). Because of this correlation between policy transfer/diffusion and policy convergence, they are often studied together and many of the empirical studies discussed in this chapter will occasionally refer to all of them. Policy transfer and diffusion theories work with similar concepts: key actors involved in the transfer process, transfer content, causal mechanisms behind the transfer and inhibiting/enabling factors for the transfer (Bender et al., 2014; Dolowitz & Marsh, 1996; Dolowitz & Marsh, 2000; Holzinger & Knill, 2005). In order to understand a transfer process, all of these elements should be addressed.

1.2. Supply-driven voluntary policy transfer

In a standard voluntary policy transfer process, countries learn from each other and policy transfer happens on a country-to-country level, when a country faces a political problem and looks for a solution from another peer, which represents a typical demand-driven policy transfer. The standard process flow in this case would be: country faces problem -> country looks for a solution outside (usually a peer country) -> country adapts and adopts the foreign solution. Whenever an international organization (IO) is involved as a relevant actor in a voluntary policy transfer, the typical process flow is: forerunner countries apply a solution -> IO picks-up and promotes solution -> other countries adopt solution (similar in: Finnemore, 1993). Now, in a demand-driven transfer, the country is proactive in looking for solutions to its problem; in a supply-driven transfer, the country is passive, does not look to adopt policy innovation, the innovation is nevertheless supplied from outside, normally the impetus for the adoption being intensive promotion by an IO (ibid.: 576).

Now, there is a debate on what exactly constitutes voluntary and what coercive transfer, and whether elements of both are not present at all times in every transfer (Dolowitz & Marsh, 2000: 15). For example, Dolowitz & Marsh conceptualize policy transfer as lying along a

continuum from completely voluntary transfer to the “direct imposition of a program, policy or institutional arrangement on one political system by another” (ibid.: 13). Holzinger & Knill (2005), on the other hand, find it difficult to place the transfer resulting from regulatory competition for example, as more coercive than the transfer driven by desire for international acceptance, since in both cases governments may choose to respond to these external pressures but are not “forced” to do so (ibid.: 779). Since it is debatable what constitutes pressure upon a country and whether it contributes to a coercive policy transfer, the present study takes its stance by defining the conditions that *should not* be present in a voluntary transfer. Namely, voluntary transfer is considered as the transfer that happens *without* the presence of a binding international rule that obliges countries to adopt certain policy; and, transfer that happens *without* direct evidence of coercion from more powerful external actors in the form of conditionality or other forms of political pressure to adopt a given policy. Again, one needs to consider that there isn’t a transfer that is completely voluntary; weighing costs and benefits, as well as certain forms of international pressure will always be present. The present study, however, traces the predominant mechanism behind the adoption and whenever countries have actual choice not to adopt without high costs, it will be considered as a voluntary transfer. This said, tracing elements of conditionality behind the decision to adopt is not excluded. A policy is considered as adopted when it is of nation-wide scope (not of regional or local scope) and is adopted formally by governmental or parliamentary decision (Busch & Jörgens, 2005: 880).

In order to provide the elements for answering the research question, in the following sections, the policy transfer theory will be disentangled by dedicating one section on each of its constitutive elements: actors, transfer content, transfer context and causal mechanisms (see image below for visual representation of the used theory).

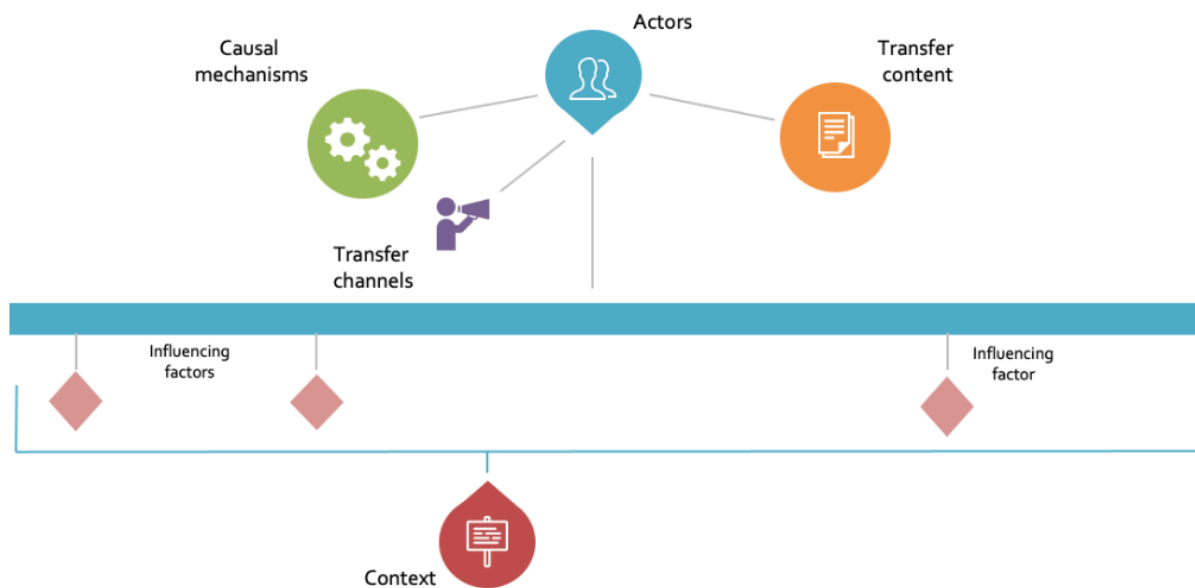


Figure 1: Policy Transfer Theory: main concepts
 Own elaboration (elements based on Dolowitz and Marsh, 2000; Holzinger and Knill, 2005)

Because of the special relevance of IOs as actors in the chosen case study, there is one separate section dedicated only to IOs. On the other hand, since the content of the transfer can be best explained in direct link to the context of transfer, both of these elements are discussed together. In every section, the respective constitutive elements will be elaborated thoroughly through a selection of theoretical and empirical studies that illustrate the relevance of the elements for the policy transfer or policy diffusion processes (with occasional reference to policy convergence too). The chapter ends with a summary of the main arguments concerning the respective constitutive elements of the policy transfer theory, which will provide the guidance for the present study’s empirical analysis.

II. International Organizations (IOs) as Actors in Policy Transfer

II.1. IOs and the spread of global norms and policies

The role of international norms in influencing national policy change and informing state’s policy choices and practices has been widely documented. States do not function in a vacuum and “worldwide cultural and associational processes” (Meyer et al., 1997a: 173) shape nation-states which become more isomorphic that ever (ibid.). States looking to peers or adhering to international norms is a long-recognized necessity for state’s international recognition, legitimation and therefore development. Some state actors could also make use of international norms to advance their own domestic interests and advance their political agenda (Cortell & Davis, 1996). In the context of international norms, IOs serve as main organizational platforms through which international norm entrepreneurs act (Finnemore & Sikkink, 1998:

899). IOs are arenas in which norms and expectations about international behavior are developed; they are “principals” that act as promoters of new norms (Finnemore, 1993: 594), or the “venues for interstate socialization” (Greenhill, 2010). Several decades of valuable empirical studies have fed the theoretical underpinnings sustaining the phenomenon of global norm transfer and diffusion and the role of IOs in the process. The following discussion through reviewing theoretical and empirical literature provides a brief overview of the different fields in which this phenomenon has been studied and documented.

In the field of peace and security, Barnett (1995) explores the undoubted contribution of the UN in keeping international order and peace. UN is an organization that provided for shared understanding about the means that maintain international order, namely, states respecting each other’s juridical sovereignty and domestically accomplishing empirical sovereignty. In another work, Barnett (1997) deepens on the normative role of the UN by stating that UN contributes to international order by shaping state action through its legitimation function, adding that the UN articulates and transmits norms of state action and with it achieves “normative integration” (ibid.: 548).

In the field of human rights and democracy, Risse & Sikknik (1999) explain the spread and worldwide adoption of human rights norms. They find that the international factor is present in the form of IOs that typically regulate human rights norms, such as the UN and its treaties, but also of transnational advocacy networks composed of domestic and international NGOs and foundations that share collective understanding and identity regarding human rights norms (ibid.; similar in Black, 1999). The authors find that international norms and networks are a necessary condition for the global democratization wave in the 1990s. Greenhill (2010) finds that for the wider spread of human rights norms it may not be that relevant what the mandate of the IO is, but what the humans rights score of the IO’s member states is (ibid.). Pevehouse (2002) elaborates more clearly on the IO-democracy association, which, as he mentions, has been taken as natural and given but never really explained. He finds that, IOs can influence domestic political processes through different causal mechanisms (such as pressure or socialization, for example) which explain well the behavior change of national elites. In a similar fashion, Levitsky & Way (2005) find that linkage (of authoritarian regimes to the Western democracies and multilateral organizations) is more influential than leverage (pressure from democratic countries over the authoritarian regimes) in the process of democratization of authoritarian countries. Linkage to democratic countries and IOs, among else, shapes the preferences of domestic (economic) actors that tend to adhere to the international norm to secure trade or investment flows (ibid.).

Another norm, developed in the context of liberalization and democratization is the one of election monitoring. The rise of the international election monitoring in the 1990s has been studied by several scholars (Beaulieu & Hyde, 2009; Hyde, 2007; Kelley, 2008). Kelley (2008), using Finnemore & Sikkink's norm cycle approach, finds that especially in the emerging stage of election monitoring, the activities of IOs, international and regional NGOs have been of utmost importance. Namely, the proponents of the new norm "election monitoring", were able to frame the norm in the context of the already established normative structures of human and democratic rights, and in this way give legitimacy to a practice that basically means interference in domestic affairs by international bodies (ibid.). Another norm, similarly related to democratization and human rights, is the one of gender equality and its main policy instrument – gender quotas. Bush (2011) studies spread of gender quotas in conflict-torn and authoritarian regions. She finds it puzzling that these quotas have often been adopted where women have low status, such as in Afghanistan. She explains this through the direct international presence and pressure in these regions, such as through UN peacekeeping missions or international election monitoring bodies, among else, or through the mechanism of conditionality, i.e., in exchange for international aid or foreign investment (ibid.).

A contrasting field to the one of security and democratization, in terms of the absence of state monopoly - is the field of environmental governance. And here too, IOs have played a very important role. Meyer et al., (1997b) research the process through which environmental regimes came to being from nongovernmental associations to international (intergovernmental) organizations. They find that essential for the rise of environmental regimes was the UN system, especially the creation of UNEP, which "provides arenas that encourage mobilization" around interests that transcend national ones (ibid.: 629). The authors best describe the influence of IOs in shaping national environmental policy-making by saying that "formalized national ministries arise only when enough international conferences and organizations exist for ministers to attend [...]" (ibid.: 639). Busch et al., (2005) look into the global diffusion of environmental regulatory instruments, such as environmental strategies, eco-labels, energy taxes and free access to environmental information. While across cases international actors accelerated the diffusion process, IOs played more important role in the diffusion of environmental strategies, whereas for the rest of the instruments, EU institutions and harmonization on EU level, seem to be the most important driver for the EU-wide diffusion (ibid.). The diffusion of environmental strategies was a reflection of the international norm on sustainable development, whose establishment started with the 1992 UN Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) and the Agenda 21 (Busch & Jörgens, 2005). Besides the UN, the promotion activities of the OECD, and for some countries, the conditionalities imposed by the World Bank seem to be really relevant for the diffusion and

adoption of environmental sustainability strategies. Busch & Jörgens (2005) analyze also the international spread of environmental ministries. In line with Meyer et al. (1997b), they too, argue that the accelerations in the spread coincide with some outstanding international events that institutionalized exchange of experiences and communication among countries. They argue that the accelerations in the 1970s, and then again later in the 1990s, can be linked to events such as the UN Conference of Human Environment in 1972 in Stockholm, the creation of the UN Environmental Programme in 1972, the creation of the OECD Environmental Policy Committee, or to the UNCED in 1992 in Rio de Janeiro (ibid.: 874). In this policy field, scholars have also researched diffusion of different norms and practices related to climate change, such as Common but Differentiated Responsibilities (Qiao-Franco, 2020), plastic bag policies (Knoblauch et al., 2018), or emission trading schemes (Müller & Slominski, 2017), among others.

In the field of science and education, Finnemore's seminal work (1993; 1996) on state science bureaucracies and the role of UNESCO in their promotion is another valuable contribution, if not the most valuable one in terms of shifting the analytical focus in policy transfer theory away from the state and to the IOs as main actors. IOs are since seen more clearly as principals rather than agents on the international arena. Finnemore (ibid.) examines demand-driven and supply-driven explanations in the world-wide spread of state science bureaucracies (such as national scientific research councils) in the period between the 1950's and 1970's. While for forerunner countries, such as the United States and the United Kingdom, she finds demand-driven explanations to be sufficient, i.e., these countries adopted state science bureaucracies as a response to a domestic demand; for many other developing countries who followed suit with the adoption, the promotion activities of UNESCO played crucial role in the transfer of these novel science institutions. Although the study focuses on transfer of bureaucracies, i.e., the establishment of national research councils as novel institutions, Finnemore (1996) links them to a more general norm - a new science norm emerging during the Cold War requiring states to take over in the administration of science. Namely, science gets perceived as a matter of national interest and should hence be directed by states, and not international bodies (ibid.). Jakobi (2009, 2012) delves into the role of IOs in the diffusion of education policies linked to the global norm of lifelong learning. She considers policies concerning preschool, adult and higher education as a reflection of this norm (Jakobi, 2009: 105). Her main findings indicate that IOs, such as the OECD, the EU and UNESCO, are the main explanation for the dissemination of the norm, but that for the actual implementation and policy reform concerning these policies, the domestic preconditions, such as the country's wealth are more relevant in explaining the outcome (Jakobi, 2012). Zapp (2021) analyzes the role of IOs in global education governance. He focuses on the three leading IOs that determine global education

policy, namely the World Bank as the most resource-rich, the OECD and the UNESCO as the least funded but nevertheless influential IO in this field. He finds that besides diffusion of norms, especially by providing authoritative and policy-relevant knowledge, IOs shape public policies in the field of education worldwide, speaking of the establishment of a novel, science-based mode of global education governance (ibid.: 4).

In the field of social policy, the spread of the pension reform in the 1990s has taken a whole lot of attention in the diffusion literature. (Brooks, 2005) emphasizes the importance of, both ILO and the World Bank as influential IOs in this field. However, she clarifies that because of the clear resource advantage of the World Bank over the ILO, vast amounts of World Bank resources were dedicated to dissemination of ideas and projects, with which the World Bank version of the structural pension reform became the text for policymakers around the world (ibid.). In the social policy field, the international spread of cash transfer programs (Béland et al., 2018; Howlett et al., 2018a; Leutelt, 2016), social protection floor (Seekings, 2019), social policies and welfare spending in general (de Oliveira, 2019; Obinger et al., 2013; Strang & Chang, 1993), have also awakened the interest of diffusion and transfer scholars.

Other fields with studies on diffusion of international policies with involvement of IOs are: diffusion of global health norms, such as HIV/AIDS related norms, with main reference to UNAIDS (Clark, 2013; Collins, 2013); special education policies (Yoo & Palley, 2014); lobbying rules (Crepaz, 2017); microfinance institutions (Oikawa Cordeiro, 2020); food policies (Milhorange, 2020a), among else.

II.2. IOs as creators

As shown in the previous sub-section, the literature on IOs' role in shaping policy choices through the transfer/diffusion of global norms, values, policies and practices is extremely rich.

Very often, in the transfer/diffusion literature, the diffusion of different types of items, be it policies, norms, guidelines, bureaucracies, practices etc. are described under the common denominator of "norm diffusion", or "policy diffusion". This is because it is very difficult to separate between the different transfer items. Certain policies or policy instruments will most often reflect some broader norm which has already been transferred before or is in the process of transfer. For example, the spread of female quotas as a policy instrument reflects the norm of equality and human rights (Bush, 2011); the spread of science bureaucracies in the 1960's reflected the norm of state responsibility to science (Finnemore, 1993); spread of carbon tax comes together with the norm of sustainability, spread of marine protected areas comes with the environmental conservation norm, etc. Scholars have nevertheless intended to make

certain distinction between different items of transfer. Stone (2004) distinguishes between “soft” forms of transfer, by which she understands the spread of norms and knowledge, from “hard” forms of transfer, by which she understands the transfer of policy tools, structures and practices (ibid.). She sees “soft” transfer as a necessary complement to “hard” transfer (ibid.: 562). Zapp (2021) refers to IOs’ influence being studied as operating through “hard governance” through mainly financial and regulatory instruments, as well as “soft governance” through agenda-setting and persuasive tactics (ibid.: 1).

This present study argues that although IOs have been researched through both forms of transfer (“soft” and “hard” transfer), the role of IOs in *designing* policy items has gone under-researched. Basically, the role and the actual activities of IOs in modifying the content (and with-it transmitted values) of the originally picked-up version of the transferred item, has not been covered. The IO’s role in this case, is not only the typical one of main promoter but also of a designer of the policy instrument. Normally, an IO does not invent originally the policy but initially picks up the notion of it from few forerunner countries. This process follows largely the mechanism described by Finnemore’s seminal work on UNESCO and the spread of science policy bureaucracies (1993). From here on, the challenge is to examine whether the IO only popularizes the item, or also changes the initially picked-up version so that it produces new, more “appealing” version of the item. When referring to the agency of IOs, Finnemore uses the terms “popularize”, “actively promote” or “actively assist” (ibid.). But this study considers that beyond active promotion, IOs can actually be assigned the role of *designers* of policies.

IOs’ power and authority

This study sees IOs as influential autonomous actors on the world political stage (Barnett & Finnemore, 1999), who are, in addition to that, not seen only as spreaders of good norms and values, but whose actions and influence should not go unquestioned. In this regard, the study finds especially useful the approach developed by Barnett & Finnemore (2004) in identifying IOs as “social creatures”, active participants in world politics, and not just as structures of norms, principles and procedures through which states can act (ibid.: 2). These authors borrow from the rich sociological research on organizations and bureaucracies in order to explain IOs’ behavior. Namely, bureaucracy is a “distinctive social form with its own internal logic that generates certain behavioral tendencies” (ibid.: viii) which are then applied to the realm of IOs. In this regard, by looking at IOs as bureaucracies, one would avoid the normative bias of perceiving IOs always as the designated welfare-improvers, but one would have different expectations – namely, seeing IOs as good servants to the world society that can also “produce undesirable and self-defeating outcomes.” (ibid., ix). Thus, the “IOs as bureaucracy”

approach is valuable for the transfer/diffusion literature through the way it gives IOs agency in the transfer process especially through the concepts of power and authority.

In comparison to the realist perception of power as coercion, here power is understood as the “production, in and through social relations, of effects that shape the capacities of actors to determine their own circumstances and fate.” (Barnett & Finnemore: 29). This approach to power that “shapes capacities”, takes away the monopoly over this term from the realist school of thought. In this regard, one can argue that the IO in question in this study, still does exercise power over the single state, although there is not a coercion or any other visible kind of conditionality. This being said, it becomes completely acceptable, from a policy transfer perspective, to be sensitive to the fact that IOs may exercise power over states even when voluntary mechanisms for policy adoption are at play, such as learning and/or emulation, for example. Now, where does IOs power come from is best explained through the concept of authority. When it comes to modern authority, legitimacy and impersonality are the key qualities that would render one as authority, as compared to the earlier perceptions of authority, where being a leader would suffice in defining one as such (Barnett & Finnemore, 2004: 21). To be authoritative, IOs must be seen to serve a legitimate social purpose in an impartial and technocratic way; the greater the appearance of depoliticization, the greater the authority associated to the IO, and this comes along with the specialized knowledge or expertise the IOs possess. The authority of IOs comes very often with their expertise (ibid.: 24-25). Recent studies place the source of expert authority of IOs not so much in their impartiality, but on knowledge asymmetries and especially if the IOs are perceived to be effectively addressing global challenges (Liese et al., 2021).

It stays a fact that many scholars locate the heart of IOs’ power in the control of knowledge, i.e., in the ability to transform information into knowledge (Barnett & Finnemore, 1997, 2004; Zapp, 2020; Liese, 2021); giving the information a meaning and in this way not only regulating but also constituting social reality (Barnett & Finnemore, 2004). Scholars that analyze IOs as bureaucracies focus often on their source of power and authority, often taking as such the expert authority, and hence delve into the sources of this authority. The literature on IOs’ power and authority and their exercise, could thus provide important hints on the means through which IOs conduct policy transfer and potentially change the transferred item.

Barnett & Finnemore (1997) examine three ways in which IOs exercise power as authorities, which could also shed light to the role IOs play in cases of policy transfer. They examine how: 1) IOs classify the world, creating categories of actors and actions; 2) fix meanings and 3) diffuse new norms, principles, and actors (ibid.: 710). Firstly, classification is power. The ability to classify objects, persons and actions determines their definition and identity. Barnett &

Finnemore (1997) use the example of UNHCR and the evolving definition of “refugee”, which is not a straightforward category, and people belonging to it have different rights compared to political asylum-seekers, migrants or displaced persons. (ibid: 74). Secondly, fixing meanings is inter-related to classification. The authors use the example with the redefinition of “security”. Namely, they claim that it is IOs’ “fault” that security was redefined after the Cold War to mean not only military security, that puts states, state properties and state officials in the focus; but also economic, environmental and political security, where individuals and their well-being are the main beneficiaries. Similarly, they argue that the concept of “development”, its meaning, who gets to do development and who gets to be the object of development, was also largely determined by IOs (Barnett & Finnemore, 1997: 711-712). Finally, the established rules and norms are ought to be transferred, and it is IOs’ stated purpose to transmit norms that define acceptable and legitimate state behavior (ibid.: 713). The authors, however, note that IOs’ norm diffusion role is of expansionist nature, and that especially developing states are the norm diffusion targets of IOs after the Cold War, where “modern”, “market-oriented” values are being exported through different mechanisms¹⁵.

Zapp (2020)’s work also provides interesting hints on the ways in which IOs’ (expert) authority could be operationalized. He studies the three most relevant IOs in the field of global education governance (the World Bank, OECD and UNESCO) and analyzes their role as expert authorities in three successive steps of what he calls the “knowledge cycle”, namely knowledge production, knowledge dissemination and knowledge transfer. He refers to knowledge production when he speaks of the impressive increase of scientific publications issued by these IOs; knowledge dissemination is the spreading of the produced knowledge through conferences, reports, TV, radio or social media; and knowledge transfer happens when this knowledge reaches policymakers (ibid.).

IOs as policy designers

Basically, these scholars when speaking of IOs’ and the way they exert their (expert) authority upon other actors, they distinguish between one pro-active and creative role of IOs, and another one, which is focused on dissemination and spreading. While it is impossible to analyze these roles separately when analyzing IOs involvement in policy transfer, it is nevertheless worth pointing out and identifying these different manifestations. Exactly this

¹⁵ Marier (2017) also finds evidence that the influence of transnational actors may be less strong in industrialized countries than in less-industrialized ones (ibid.).

proactive role of IOs in, not only promoting and disseminating, but also in creating has been underexplored in the policy transfer research. In a voluntary IO-to-country policy transfer process, one would intuitively sum up the role of the IO to the one of active promoter of the transferred policy, rushing to immediately focus on the adoption process and the outcome from the transfer. But the role of the IO in creating something new in this transfer, identifying and naming this new – has not been explored enough. The present study defines this “new” as *IOs as policy designers*. This study claims that IOs could design new or re-design existing policies by, for example, making the policy more “technical” to project neutrality, frame the policy narrative to the “appeal” of the adopting countries, or generalize the policy to make it applicable globally.

Barnett & Finnemore (2004) discuss in detail how an IO, such as the IMF in their case, can achieve objectivity and impartiality by quantification: “[w]e value policymaking of this kind not just because we think it will give us good policies that will accomplish our goals; we value it because we see it as disinterested and objective” (ibid.: 69). Analysis with numbers and models seem universal, impartial and fair; and in this regard, quantification solves the problem of distance and distrust (ibid.: 69). The authors, however, go on saying that quantification and statistical measures shift the focus of public policies towards the manipulation of that number, and in this way, the creation of these statistical measures, in effect do not only describe but remake the world (ibid.: 71). Zapp (2020), similarly, discusses quantified reporting in education policy as an “attempt to institutionalize evidence-based policymaking” (ibid.: 4). This is being influenced by the OECD and the World Bank, IOs with the strongest economics in education tradition (ibid.).

Brooks (2005) looks into the role of international financial institutions in influencing policy paradigms. Her study focuses on the role of the World Bank in the global diffusion of multi-pillar pension reform and finds that, counter-intuitively, the pension privatization reform was not widely adopted as a result of conditionalities imposed by the World Bank, as it was the case with the macroeconomic stabilization plans in the 1980s and 1990s. This was achieved with “soft power”, deriving from the appeal of the one’s ideas and ability to shape preference of others. The World Bank has used the appeal of the market-oriented paradigm in developing countries and countries in transition. Market-oriented paradigm was therefore “appealing” because of the attractiveness of the macroeconomic ends associated with it, especially higher growth rates, increased savings and better capital markets (ibid.: 279). Furthermore, Brooks (2005) finds that the appeal of the market-oriented paradigm was further enhanced by the generalization of the pension reform model by the World Bank. Namely, although this model was pioneered by Chile, after a while it was not known as “Chilean model”, but as the “World

Bank model”, a broad three-pillar design that minimized the political and cultural association of the model with the authoritarian regime of Pinochet and enabled its spread far beyond Latin America (ibid.: 279). Similar intervention from the World Bank in changing the content of the transferred item is documented by Jenson & Nagels (2018). They study the transfer of cash transfer program (CCT) from Mexico to the rest of Latin America and find that the gender equality component present in the original version of the CCT was downplayed by the World Bank in its promotion activities so that many late adopters actually adopted the WB version of the CCT without much practical considerations for gender empowerment (ibid.).

* * *

In sum, this part of the chapter showcased the different roles IOs can have in a policy transfer. IOs can act not only as promoters but also as creators of transferred items (policies). Although IOs pick-up a version of the policy from forerunner countries, beside only promoting this existing version, through the activities of the IOs, the policy content and narrative surrounding the initial version may be undergoing some changes. Based on the arguments from the literature on IOs’ agency and authority, in voluntary policy transfer process, the IOs may influence the policy transfer by making the policy more “technical”; making the novel policy more “appealing” through the usage of, for example, market-oriented paradigm; making it more “general” so it can be applied globally, etc. With these strategies, the IOs could appeal to the preferences of, both, political and expert elites at the same time, and assure the adoption of the transferred policy instrument. This study will deal empirically with this *creative agency* of the IOC-UNESCO in a separate chapter.

III. Other actors in policy transfer

In addition to IOs, the literature identifies different categories of actors engaged in the policy transfer process, such as elected officials, political parties, bureaucrats/civil servants, pressure groups, policy entrepreneurs and experts, corporations, think tanks, nongovernmental organizations, consultants, etc. (Dolowitz & Marsh, 2000: 10). The present section therefore provides an overview on several of these categories of actors that are most often met in the policy transfer literature.

Elected officials and career civil servants

The importance of considering elected officials as a separate category from civil servants in the policy transfer process lies in their motivation for which they adopt policy innovations. Robertson and Waltman (1993) find that career civil servants and specialists are concerned

about the long-term effectiveness and performance of the adopted policy, whereas officials dependent on electoral cycle are worried about political symbolism and the short-term perception of success for which they can claim credit (ibid.: 33)¹⁶. Besides the motivation for the transfer, one other element often discussed in the policy transfer literature is the relational nature of the policy transfer when civil servants are involved. Both, Haas (1980) and Wolman (1992) emphasize the importance of the direct contacts of government agencies' employees with their peers in different countries; often bypassing their respective foreign ministries (Haas, 1980: 357). Wolman (1992) describes how policymakers learn about foreign policies when civil servants and individual ministries take trips abroad; involving visits for general reconnaissance purposes or more formal exchange programs with substantial stay in a foreign country (ibid.: 30). Besides these formal channels, equally important is the informal learning when the visiting officials carry home with them anecdotes and evidence of policy innovations; with the information flow especially accelerated if the countries share a common language (ibid.: 31).

Political parties

The role of political parties as actors in policy transfer processes has been investigated predominantly for European parties and in the context of the European integration. Because of their significance as political actors, political parties are often analyzed as the final adopters themselves (whereas, for example the civil servants' role in the transfer is only then recognized when they have transferred the received knowledge to the policymakers at home). For example, Paterson and Sloam (2005) use policy transfer framework to determine policy learning of communist successor parties in Eastern and Central Europe from their sister social-democratic parties in Western Europe. They analyze political party programmes to determine programmatic change of the communist successor parties in their transition period (ibid.: 40). Senninger and Bischof (2018) do not focus on transfer between political parties in different countries, but transfer between political parties active on different levels in the European Union. They examine whether and how policy issues addressed by political parties at one level occur on the agenda of political parties at another parliamentary venue (ibid.: 143). Not disregarding the importance of the political parties in policy transfer processes, due to the apolitical nature of the policy under analysis in this present study, the study does not expect to extensively deal with political parties as key actors.

¹⁶ They exemplify political symbolism with Milton Friedmann's critique on the British government in borrowing his idea of 'monetarism' to cover anything that Mrs. Thatcher "expressed as a desirable object of policy" (ibid.: p.34).

Pressure groups and social movements

Similar to political parties, pressure groups could be analyzed as the final adopters themselves; but also, as one of the many actors involved in the transfer to state institutions as final adopters. An example for the first case is offered by McAdam & Rucht (1993) in their study on cross-national diffusion of social movement ideas and tactics between the American and German New Left movement in the 1960's. Using the transfer approach, they investigate the role of direct relational and nonrelational channels of transfer of information between the activist-transmitters and activist-adopters. Hoberg (1991) on the other hand considers the role of activists when analyzing the US influence on Canadian environmental regulation. He finds activist-driven emulation (as opposed to elite-driven emulation) to be characterized by media exposure, enlarged scope of conflict and pressure campaigns on policymakers. Hoberg (ibid.) finds the presence or absence of activists to be an extremely important determinant of whether emulation is likely to occur. He adds that in some cases Canadian regulators "had knowledge" of the stricter American programs, but since no activists made an issue out of it, they were free to ignore these American developments (ibid.: 127). The latter confirms that there is more to a process transfer than a mere cognitive or informational transaction. Knowledge may be there but if other contextual conditions are not met, as in this case - lack of sufficient salience of the problem domestically, the transfer will not happen.

Experts and epistemic communities

Experts are actors of utmost importance for policy transfer because of their crucial role not only in the process of policy transfer but probably even more so in the production of knowledge as such. Although every actor produces some kind of knowledge in the transfer process, experts are still the designated producers of knowledge that is instrumental for policymaking. For that reason, it is important to provide more discussion on the nature and function of experts and epistemic communities in the policy transfer process. In the policy transfer literature, however, there is not a clear definition of expert; if experts are necessarily scientists; or, if an epistemic community is a group of experts external to or part of the government. For example, Dolowitz and Marsh (1996) use "experts" similar to "policy entrepreneurs" and refer to "epistemic communities" as a group of "experts from inside and outside the government" who spread ideas (ibid.: 345, 346), which is a vague and unspecific designation for such important transfer actors. As one of the most prominent researchers of epistemic communities, Haas, P. (1989) analyzes the role of epistemic communities in influencing the international agenda on pollution control, and in directing states to introduce such measures in the Mediterranean region. Epistemic communities consisted in this case of "high-ranking UNEP officials and mid-

level government officials from various countries [...] and from a variety of disciplines and backgrounds [...]” (ibid.: 384, 385). He then goes on and explains that UNEP also made alliances with the marine scientists from the region and included them in this epistemic community (ibid.: 385). In a later work, Haas P. (2000) refers to “transnational scientific networks” when he speaks of epistemic communities (ibid.: 343). In other words, epistemic communities may not necessarily consist of (only) scientists and can have members from inside and outside the government. In Haas P.’s seminal work from 1989 one can distinguish characteristics that can help identify an epistemic community: “...specific community of experts *sharing a belief in a common set of cause-and-effect relationships as well as common values to which policies governing these relationships will be applied*” (emphasis added); “...large community of scientists who *share a faith in the scientific method*” (emphasis added); “thought collective” etc. (Haas, P. 1989: 384). In other words, epistemic communities share consensual knowledge (Stone, 2000: 58), defined by Haas, E. (1990) as: “the sum of, both, technical information and of theories about it that command sufficient agreement among interested actors at a given time to serve as a guide to public policy” (ibid.: 74). Finnemore (1993), however, calls for cautiousness in identifying characteristics of epistemic communities, saying that having scientific credentials does not automatically mean that one acts as an “expert” or as a part of an expert community, meaning that one needs to take into consideration the political and organizational context before making such claims. She exemplifies this through UNESCO’s promotion activities in the spread of state science bureaucracies in the 1960’s, where UNESCO’s main officials, besides being scientists, their motivations “derived from their status as international bureaucrats rather than from professional norms in the science community or principled beliefs about science. In fact, these scientists were challenging existing norms in the science community, norms about state-science relations” (ibid.: 594).

Building on Hass’ conceptual development of epistemic communities, the work of Dunlop (2014, 2015) has been very crucial in empirically linking epistemic communities to actual policy change through the mechanism of learning. Dunlop (2014) goes further and discusses different types of experts that lead to different types of learning. She distinguishes four ideal types of learning and applies them in the field of ecosystem services policy: *epistemic learning*, where the mode of interaction is cooperative but asymmetrical, with decision-makers being taught by the experts; *reflexive learning*, where interaction is cooperative and symmetric, and knowledge is used to further discussion, question and recreate received wisdom; *learning through bargaining* with competitive symmetric interaction, where knowledge use is political or symbolic; *learning in the shadow of hierarchy* with competitive asymmetric mode of interaction, and hierarchical mechanisms strong enough to force knowledge use (ibid.).

Because of the nature of the policy instruments analyzed in this study (especially MSP which is considered as expert-driven policy innovation of technical character), the suggestion that there are different types of learning relationships between experts/epistemic communities and decision-makers is worthy of consideration. Namely, these ideal types translate further into the different roles experts may have in the policy transfer process.

Think tanks and NGOs

Although presently very relevant, the role of civil society organizations, such as foundations, think tanks and NGOs, in the policy transfer research has not been automatically evident. Namely, to see policy transfer occur these organizations need formal political actors (Stone, 2000: 66). These transfer actors are also peculiar since although they are analyzed as a separate category, they can't actually achieve much unless they are part of a wider network, such as policy network, epistemic community, advocacy network etc. In this regard, Stone (2000) analyzes think tanks' role in the spread of ideas about privatization and situates their ability to transfer ideas in the fact that they represent a pool of knowledge and expertise, have well-developed advocacy and networking capabilities. However, she concludes that while think tanks provide some of the necessary conditions for transfer, such as drawing lessons and developing own knowledge, this knowledge is not a sufficient condition for transfer, i.e., it is not a causal force for transfer. Hence, Stone (ibid.: 66) describes civil society organizations as policy entrepreneurs for transfer, locating their potential in them being parts of and providing access to larger network/s. In another 2010 study, Stone identifies non-governmental organizations as being better at "soft transfer" of broad policy ideas, which complement the "hard transfer" of policy tools and instruments transferred by state actors (Stone, 2010: 270). Recent study reveals the role of think tanks in the spread of urban transportation policies in Latin America (Silva Ardila, 2020). This study discusses think tanks as part of a larger epistemic community of think tanks and technical experts cohering around the idea of bus-based system as efficient mode of transport (ibid.). Shifting the focus slightly from the evident importance of transnational civil society networks, Acharya (2012) brings into the debate local NGOs' and their contribution to the vertical diffusion of transnational norms. His study cements the importance of civil society organizations in policy transfer, not only as members of global networks where ideas take shape and flow horizontally, but also as actors who contribute to the vertical spread of norms, their "localization" and faster adaptation to the domestic context.

Networks

With the ever-increasing globalization, networks have established their influence on the international scene and are constitutive part of every international policy transfer or diffusion process (Cao, 2010; Pal & Spence, 2020). Networks of different forms and features have awakened the interest of policy transfer and diffusion scholars: from advocacy coalitions and policy networks, to discourse coalitions and epistemic communities (Abbott et al., 2014; Hadjiisky et al., 2017; Legrand, 2015). Stone (2000) speaks of several types of networks and provides neat overview of their defining characteristics. For example, she defines *policy communities* as “stable networks of policy actors from both inside and outside government that are highly integrated with the policy-making process” (ibid.: 51). She further distinguishes transnational policy communities where transnational groups of experts and practitioners share expertise and information through regular interaction, and with it, they form common patterns of understanding regarding certain policy (ibid.: 50). *Advocacy coalitions*, on the other hand, incorporate elements from policy communities but emphasize the importance of “deep-core beliefs” among the members of advocacy coalitions (Stone, 2000: 58). Those are fundamental beliefs that are developed during childhood, reflect one’s personal philosophy and are resistant to change (Weible & Sabatier, 2005: 197), such as left versus right political ideology, attitudes towards collaborative vs. top-down decision-making, or, attitudes towards individual freedoms vs. social equality (Weible et al., 2004). Stone (2000) mentions also Hass’ *epistemic communities* and how they also resemble policy communities with the difference that the latter place greater emphasis on the interplay of interests, whereas the former on the role of knowledge and expertise in decision-making (ibid.: 58). Building on Stone’s work, recent study on global policy networks in policy transfer process (Pal & Spence, 2020) uses global events as indicators of ‘networks in action’ to closely determine several defining aspects of global policy networks. In sum, information, ideas and knowledge are transferred through networks, as they serve as channels for communication and exchange, or facilitators of policy transfer; but also, networks are arenas where common beliefs are shaped, resources are shared, and power relations are operationalized serving as the main driving force for a policy transfer to happen.

IV. Content and Context of Transfer

IV.1. Content of transfer: types of transferred items

Policy diffusion studies are reflection of the rise of comparative policy analysis studies. As such, the initial diffusion studies were not interested on the content of the transfer, but with the timing, geographical proximity and resource similarities of the countries involved in the

diffusion. Basically, these studies were trying to explain the pattern of the spread rather than the substance (Dolowitz and Marsh, 1996: 344-345). Policy transfer research emerges also from the comparative politics literature, but it is, however, concerned not only with the process of transfer, but with the content too. Dolowitz and Marsh (2000) ask “what is being transferred”, and while admitting that almost anything can be transferred from one political system to another, they differentiate several categories of transferable items: policy goals, policy content and policy instruments (all three together are constitutive parts of policies but can be transferred separately), policy programs, institutions, ideologies, ideas and attitudes and negative lessons (ibid.: 12). They note the importance to distinguish between policy and policy programs, since the first are more general statements of intention and can be made of several specific courses of action (or programs) in their process of operationalization (ibid.). Without going into discussion on the exact differences of each category at this point, it is important to note that the transfer/diffusion literature saw it necessary to make a distinction between the transfer of more general items, such as ideas and norms, less general policies and guidelines, and the transfer of more specific policy programs and policy instruments. Karch (2007) posits that the content of transferred policy *per se* can contribute very much to the understanding of the transfer process. Policy content can reveal a lot about the actors involved in the process, it can be influenced, but it can also predetermine which political actors would mobilize for action, helping us understand why transfer occurs in the first place (ibid.: 72). Highly politicized policies attract interest groups in the process whose actions might influence the final content of the adopted policy, whereas the content of more technical policies would be more determined by the efforts of executive branch officials (ibid.).

In what follows, a discussion is provided on the main forms or items of transfer met in the transfer/diffusion literature, namely: transfer of policies, policy instruments, institutions and norms¹⁷. To avoid repetition with the discussion on the role of IOs in policy transfer, studies

¹⁷ The literature distinguishes between positive and negative transfer too. The negative transfer would mean consciously deciding not to adopt certain policy if, for example, governments “learn” that the transferred policy is not the most adequate. The Canadian government in the 1970s decided not to adopt American auto-emission standards regarding them back then as too restrictive (Hoberg, 1991). Although the negative transfer or negative lesson-drawing (Stone, 2017) has not awakened much research interest as the positive one has, it is an interesting phenomenon which nevertheless helps explain policy processes (ibid.). Dolowitz and Marsh (2000) speak also of “transfer of policy failure”, and in their case, a transfer has happened, but it is an unsuccessful one. The country has adopted a policy which has elsewhere been “successful”, but at home it has not achieved the aims set by the adopting government or is not perceived as successful by the key actors in the policy area (ibid.: 17). They find three factors to be determining for an unsuccessful transfer: *uninformed transfer* when the adopting country did not have the complete relevant information regarding the policy and how it operates in the country of origin; *incomplete transfer* when the adopting country adopts part of the policy and leaves out crucial elements; and *inappropriate transfer* when the social, political and cultural context of the adopting country is not similar to the one in the country of origin (ibid.; emphasis added).

will be considered that provide valuable insights on the transfer of different types of items that were not previously mentioned. In this regard, studies that refer to country-to-country transfers (and not exclusively IO-to-country) will also be included, in order to better address the issue of transfer content. Transfer content is thus the focus of the following discussion disregarding the involved transfer actors. Furthermore, a literature has been selected that depicts the variations in the content of the transferred items throughout the process, which is why predominately single case, or small-N studies have been selected which as a rule focus in more detail on the actual (change in) transfer content.

Policies as transferred items

Several decades of theoretical and empirical research leaves us with a large number of studies that tackle public policymaking influenced by policy transfer processes in different areas. The analysis of policies unfolds often times through the analysis of the separate programs or instruments they are made of, but always within the context of a broader policy or policy model. The separate section on policy instruments following this one, reviews literature that focuses specifically on the transfer and diffusion of single policy instruments.

Maybe one of the most widely studied policies from the last decade is the world-wide diffusion of the pension privatization reform. Weyland (2004, 2005, 2009) and Brooks (2005) are probably one of the most prominent policy diffusion scholars that have researched this field. This policy has attracted a lot of attention because of its unusual region of origin – Latin America and its subsequent spread to many European countries. Furthermore, scholars have found the s-shaped temporal pattern, geographical clustering and the very apparent dissimilarities of the countries adopting the Chilean model, to be puzzling in terms of finding the predominant factors that explain this widespread. After Chile introduced the model in 1980s, its content immediately spread to the neighboring Latin-American countries, and it is not until 1990s that it spreads to European (post-communist) countries. While the conditionality loans of the international financial institutions would explain the spread of the model to European post-communist countries, the diffusion in Latin America was already under way when the financial institutions came to the scene, so their influence here is moderate. Weyland (2009) finds that instrumental arguments about the Chilean success and the actual usefulness of the policy in solving pressing existing problems in many Latin American countries, such as ageing population, growing budget deficits and collapsing social security systems, was the key to mobilize political support for its adoption (ibid.).

Similarly interesting phenomenon are the social policy reforms and the widespread increase of social protection measures in low- and middle-income countries in the 1990s and 2000s. Unlike the pension reform, however, where one predominant model was relevant for the transfer in (especially) Latin America, different sets of social protection policies, instruments and programs targeting especially the most vulnerable, will be popping up and spreading world-wide. Unlike the pension privatization, which was linked to structural economic reforms, the expansion of the public provision of social security measures was assigned more to international interdependencies (Bender, 2014).

In the last two decades, following the happenings on the international agenda, environmental, climate change and renewable energy policies have strongly awakened the interest of policy transfer scholars. Busch and Jörgens (2005) discuss the spread of national environmental strategies from the 1980s to the early 2000s in the form of environmental plans and sustainable development strategies (ibid.: 868). Up until 2003, 140 countries have formulated such national environmental strategies. In terms of content, the authors find the Dutch model from 1989 to be of high significance especially for industrialized countries. With the UN Conference on Environment and Development and the Agenda 21 from 1992, this policy innovation becomes internationally institutionalized and a way to operationalize the principle of sustainability (ibid.: 869). For some countries, such as the Central and Eastern European countries, the dominant mechanism behind the adoption of these mechanisms is the imposition or economic conditionality from primarily the World Bank (ibid.: 870). In this regard, the content of the environmental strategies also reflects the transfer mechanism and the dominant actors behind the process. Namely, the environmental strategies imposed by the World Bank and other aid donors are regarded as a prerequisite for cost-effective environmental investments (ibid.: 870); these strategies are clearly distinct from the sustainable development strategies promoted by the United Nations (ibid.: 871) which attempt to set separate goals for all three dimensions of sustainable development (ibid.: 868). In addition, there is also the fact that in terms of their content, the UN strategies do not require radical changes, which explains why very few countries adopted new and ambitious environmental goals or undertook far-reaching institutional adaptations. They were easily integrated into the existing regulatory system without immediate and serious consequences (Busch et al., 2005: 156-157). Additionally, diffusion and transfer of energy and climate policies have attracted a lot of attention among scholars too (Albrecht & Arts, 2005; Bromley-Trujillo et al., 2016; Cia Alves et al., 2019; Kammerer & Namhata, 2018; Stadelmann & Castro, 2014; Steinbacher, 2015).

Policy instruments as transferred items

As one very typical social policy instrument, conditional cash transfer programs (CCT), especially the Brazilian “Bolsa Escola” and the Mexican “Progresa”, are widely discussed as blueprints for similar programs in many African and Asian countries (Béland et al., 2018; Bender et al., 2014; Jenson & Nagels, 2018). In an insightful study on the transfer of the CCT instrument from Mexico to Peru, Jenson & Nagels (2018) describe how what originally meant to be a policy instrument designed to promote gender equality, turned to be a policy instrument that reinforced the materialism and neo-colonialism in the adopting country. These authors follow the change in the content of the original Mexican version of the CCT from the 1997 (known as *Progresa* or *Oportunidades*), which was picked-up (mainly) by the World Bank and promoted intensively to other Latin American countries. The original Mexican version was designed to contribute to poverty reduction and gender empowerment by giving the women in the family more decisive power over the received cash transfer. The authors find that since the World Bank found that the gender empowerment outcome is not really being achieved or measurable with this instrument, the objective of gender equality was downplayed in the further promotion activities after the 2000s. This led to the adoption of this instrument in Peru, Ecuador and Bolivia with very little considerations for gender equality principles, but predominantly for poverty reduction objectives. The biggest downsize, they find, is when the instrument got adopted in Peru it actually reinforced long-standing norms of maternalism by imposing conditions on mothers to receive the benefits and by disempowering men rendering them irresponsible. In addition, by trying to “modernize” the behavior of indigenous mothers, this instrument actually represents a form of neo-colonialism (ibid.: 336-337).

Bender et al. (2014) discuss similarly the transfer from Brazil to Mozambique of a best-practice model for the fight against adult illiteracy. Besides the best intentions of both parties, the program was emulated but not in its full essence. Some important elements regarding the implementation of the program, such as the involvement of domestic universities for the training of teachers, were ignored and so this very important component of the model could not be continued after Brazilian experts left Mozambique (ibid.). In another case concerning the transfer of public services performance management tool from Chile to Mexico, besides having the full insights into the Chilean process, the Mexican government ended up adopting radically different version of the tool. Interinstitutional conflict around the goals of the instrument between two different Mexican ministries, is pointed out as one of the main reasons for the final alteration of the adopted tool, which ended up being stand-alone mechanism not integrated into the broader Mexican system for measuring performance of public administration (Bender et al., 2014).

Filling a gap in the research on diffusion of pension reform, which interestingly enough has focused predominantly on developing countries from especially Latin America, Marier (2017) covers the case of the transfer of the Swedish pensions reform to Norway through several main policy instruments. With a meticulous process tracing, Marier (2017) finds that the adoption of the Swedish model was a partial adoption (ibid.:444). He finds that, nevertheless, the Norwegian policymakers designed many context-specific solutions themselves mainly due to the fact that the Norwegian policy capacity is extremely strong. Implying that in industrialized countries the influence of transnational actors may be less strong than in less-industrialized countries (ibid.).

Busch and Jörgens (2005) analyze the diffusion in the late 1980s and early 2000s of two competing policy instruments meant to promote renewable electricity, namely feed-in tariffs and quotas. While for the first instrument, the German model was most influential, for the spread of quotas the standards were subsequently dictated by the European Commission (EC). Considering the predominance of the market paradigm in the late 1990s and the subsequent EC directive on the introduction of quotas as market-based mechanism, the horizontal transfer process of the feed-in tariffs (based on learning from the German model) was halted at the expense of the vertical transfer of quotas (ibid.). Similarly, Gullberg & Bang (2015) study the transfer of green certificate schemes (GSC) from Sweden to Norway in the late 2000s, a tool that also promotes renewable energy production and involves trading of certificates. Similar to the transfer of quotas explained above, being a market-based mechanism facilitated largely its transfer. Namely, the fact the instrument is designed to function independently from yearly budget allocations, mobilized strong backing from broad coalition of stakeholders, securing thereby cross-partisan support (ibid.).

Emission trading schemes (ETS) are another environmental policy instrument that has been often discussed in the transfer/diffusion literature (Müller & Slominski, 2017; M. Paterson et al., 2014). In a detailed study on the transfer process of ETS from the EU to Australia, Müller and Slominski (2017) address one interesting phenomenon of negative lesson-drawing regarding this policy instrument and its content. Namely, they find that although the Australian government has learned about certain drawbacks of the European model, it would still go on and adopt those elements to minimize political opposition even at the cost of policy effectiveness (ibid.: 52). Such example is the adoption of generous compensations to affected industries (trade exposed energy-intensive industries) even though there were studies showing that this type of compensations turned to be problematic in Europe (ibid.). Mainly focusing on analysis of patterns through large-N studies, researchers have analyzed the

transfer of: sustainable energy portfolio standards (Chandler, 2009), net metering (Stoutenborough & Beverlin, 2008) or energy conservation tools (Goyal, 2021), to name a few.

Institutions as transferred items

In a widely cited study on international diffusion of national research councils, Finnemore (1996) analyzes the mechanism behind the spread of state bureaucracies. Based on her meticulous descriptions of the activities of UNESCO in the popularization of these councils, one gets an idea of what it actually means to establish novel state bureaucracies based on a foreign model. The process of transfer of bureaucracies involved not only transfer of legislations, but through UNESCO's experts and advisors, it also included where necessary the subsequent operating regulations, budgets and organization charts for the new research councils (ibid.: 62). In many East African countries, these institutions were established from scratch, some of the main national authorities haven't even heard about science policy bureaucracy before, and yet in three years from the initial visit of UNESCO's advisors these bureaucracies have been installed in the adopting countries (ibid.: 64).

Dolowitz (1997) when analyzing the transfer of the welfare-to-work system from the US to Great Britain, focuses also on the transfer of specific institutions and not only on instruments and programs. He finds, for example, that the training and enterprise councils (TECs and LECs) introduced in the 1990s by the British government as part of the welfare-to-work system, transfer the structure and design of the American private industry councils (PICs). He points to one interesting phenomenon in policy transfer, namely the drawing of negative lessons (learning what NOT to adopt) and the subsequent improvement of the transferred policy by the second adopter (learning from the mistakes of the predecessor). British government decided to select its TEC directors from the business elite, as the participation of lower-level business personal in the US proved to be detrimental to the performance of their councils (PICs). Similarly, the rapid implementation of the US councils reflected negatively on their performance, which is why the British ones were introduced in stages over a period of several years (ibid.).

When analyzing the spread of environmental policy innovations, Busch and Jörgens (2005) focus on institutions too, by tracing the diffusion of environmental ministries and agencies in industrialized countries starting from the 1970s to the early 2000s. While predominantly tracing the diffusion pattern of these institutions and the mechanisms behind it, the authors also emphasize that in terms of mandate, in the early stages, both ministries and agencies were considered as equal alternatives where agencies would have equal executive competencies with ministries. In the later stages of the environmental institutionalization, however, ministries

become the gold standard for institutionalizing environmental protection, and very few developed countries (USA continues to be one of those) have actually left environmental protection in the hands of environmental agencies. Presently, environmental ministries have more competencies, address broader range of environmental issues, prepare and implement laws, regulations and programs; whereas agencies conduct research, inform the public and provide advice to responsible ministries (ibid.: 872).

Douglas et al. (2015) analyzes the spread of drug courts in four U.S. federal states. One of their findings is that the provision of funding for the *planning* (original emphasis) for the drug court adoption process, also increased rate of adoption. They find that the latter happens because more funds for planning makes the assessment phase more systematic and hence increases the likelihood of learning becoming the predominant mechanism for the drug court adoption (as opposed to imitation or coercion) (ibid., 506).

Norms/ideas as transferred items

As it was already mentioned in the discussion to the IOs as transfer actors, large number of studies, have contributed to the understanding of the global spread of positive norms and values from different fields, such as peace and security, human rights and democratization (Beaulieu & Hyde, 2009; C. J. Bennett, 1997; Black, 1999; Greenhill, 2010; Hyde, 2007; Kelley, 2008; Levitsky & Way, 2005; Pevehouse, 2002; Risse & Sikkink, 1999; Simmons et al., 2006), gender equality (Bush, 2011), lifelong learning (Jakobi, 2009; 2012), science norms (Finnemore, 1993; 1996), environmental norms, among many others.

An example of a negative norm is presented by Dolowitz (1997) when discussing the transfer of attitudes and ideas that come along with the transfer of the welfare-to-work employment system from the USA to Great Britain. Two of those transferred key attitudes are “blaming the victim” which revived a one more traditional attitude of the British government, namely that “if you are not employed it’s your own fault”; and the second one is “dependency”, namely the belief that welfare recipients become overly dependent on the benefit system and can’t get out of it. The adoption of this rhetoric has happened gradually and in conjunction with the transferred policies, allowing for a shift in popular values which made these policies and legislative changes eventually more acceptable for the public (ibid.).

IV.2. Context of transfer: inhibiting and facilitating factors for policy transfer

Because of the complexity and individuality of each case studied, it is not possible to provide an exhaustive list of all the factors that influence policy transfer. It is however widely accepted that there can be facilitating and inhibiting factors for the transfer. These factors can be of very general nature, such as the wider social and political context in the adopting country, but also of a very specific one, such as the inter- or intra-institutional dynamics of the organizations involved in the transfer process. When we discuss a country as the final adopter, then one could also divide the inhibiting/facilitating factors to be of international or domestic nature. Furthermore, the literature also distinguishes facilitating and inhibiting factors of transfer related directly to the nature of the transferred item, such as its complexity or its regulative/distributive nature.

When Dolowitz & Marsh (1996) discuss “*What Factors Constrain Policy Transfer*”, the first factors they mention are the ones related to the nature of the transferred item, emphasizing especially its complexity as a factor influencing the transfer process (p. 353). According to Rose (1993, cited in: Dolowitz & Marsch, 1996), the transferability of a policy would depend on several dimensions, such as: the number of its goals, where policies with single goals are more easy to transfer; the link between the actual “problem” and the adopted policy as a “solution”, where the more direct the link is perceived to be, the likelier the transfer; the side-effects from the adopted policy, where the less side-effects the policy is perceived to have, the likelier the transfer; the information about the policy, where the more accessible information about the policy there is, the likelier the transfer; and the policy outcomes, where the more predictable the outcomes from the policy are, the likelier the transfer. (ibid., 353).

Again, citing Rose, Dolowitz & Marsh (1996) make a reference to the other important factors that influence the transfer but are not directly related to the nature of the transferred item. Through Rose’s words: “Policy makers are inheritors before they are choosers [...]” (Rose, 1993; cited in: Dolowitz & Marsch, 1996: 353), the scholars remind to several other dimensions that influence the policy transfer. Namely, that the novel policies are not adopted in a policy vacuum and that they have to be introduced in an existing policy environment. In other words, *past policies and policy commitments* (ibid., emphasis added) would condition the adoption of the transferred policy. *Institutional and structural constraints* are another inhibiting factor that influence negatively the policy transfer, as for example when transferring a policy from a country with a federal structure to a country with a unitary system or the other way around. *Common political ideology and shared values* between the originating and adopting country are another factor listed by Dolowitz & Marsh (1996) in addition to the *technological*

preparedness and *economic resources* of the adopting country (ibid.) (emphasis added). In their later work from 2000, *cultural proximity* and *common language* of the originating and adopting country are added too as enabling factors for policy transfer (Dolowitz & Marsh, 2000: 9). Holzinger & Knill (2005) would also consider the *international embeddedness* of the adopting country, or its linkage into transnational networks, as an important factor. The latter enables transnational communication, and it thus becomes of high relevance for the higher degree of policy similarity between countries. These two scholars would also consider the *number of adopting countries* as a factor that determines policy convergence among countries, where the higher the number of countries that have adopted certain policy, the higher the likelihood that the policy would be adopted by even more countries (ibid.: 793). Busch et al. (2021) discuss *national embeddedness* of international bureaucracies to the degree to which the latter are rooted in national debates and decision-making processes. One way to do this is by having a presence in the country, having field offices that liaise with national decision-makers and other stakeholders. In this way, the IOs are better able to “recognize windows of opportunities and capitalize on them by framing advice to policymakers’ preferences” (ibid).

In the sections that follow, a literature review of empirical studies will be provided on the different factors that influence policy transfer. They will be presented as: factors related to the nature of the transferred item, contextual factors of predominantly domestic character and contextual factors of predominantly international character.

Factors related to the nature of the transferred item

In a systematic study, Makse & Volden (2011) would focus explicitly on the role of the policy attributes in the diffusion of policy innovations. For this reason, they select 27 policy innovations from the field of criminal justice policy. The scholars analyze the following five policy attributes: *relative advantage*, referring to the degree to which the new policy is better than the previous one in terms of costs and benefits of adoption; *compatibility*, referring to the degree to which the new policy is consistent with existing values, experiences and interests so that it does not require changes in statutory state law; *complexity*, referring to how difficult to understand and use the new policy is perceived to be; *observability*, referring to the degree to which the outcomes from the new policy are observable to foreign policy-makers; and finally, *trialability*, referring to the degree to which a policy may be experimented with, in other words, if it can be tried and abandoned when inefficient at a low political cost (Makse & Volden, 2011: 111; original emphasis). Not surprisingly, the scholars would find that all attributes but complexity are positively associated with the faster spread of the policy innovation. They also find that learning as a transfer mechanism increases with higher observability. Another very

relevant outcome from this study is the point that the policy attributes can change over time. So, for example, for early adopters, the relative advantage of the policy in terms of its *potential* impact may be of higher relevance, whereas for later adopters the *actual* impact of the policy may be more relevant, as the learning from others' experiences has increased (ibid.: 122; original emphasis). The authors would finally emphasize that the attributes of a policy cannot be observed in isolation as factors relevant for the policy transfer/diffusion. Namely, policy attributes may change over time and along the transfer process, depending on the influence exerted by different actors, such as policy entrepreneurs or experts that can make even very complex policies understandable and adoptable (ibid.).

Nicholson-Crotty (2009) too, focuses on policy characteristics and their influence on policy diffusion. He analyzes 57 policies that have diffused across the U.S. states between 1850 and 2001 and argues that the salience and complexity of the policy are the key attributes to be considered (p. 195). He defines as a *salient policy* the one that is important to a significant part of the population either because it concerns them directly or because it indirectly touches areas of higher relevance. He goes on identifying two elements of saliency: the degree to which the policy itself touches (US Americans') core values and concerns, and the degree to which the interest groups have managed to convince the population about the relevance of the policy for their core values (ibid.). The author defines as *complex policies* the ones with administrative and technical complexity, however, he finds the latter to be more relevant for the actual adoption. Hence, he finds as complex, the policy that requires higher level of technical expertise to connect policy problems to policy solutions, i.e., the one that requires specialized knowledge and training to avoid uncertainties around the outcome of the policy (ibid.).

Studying the spread of energy and climate change policies in the U.S., Bromley-Trujillo (2016) finds that the salience of the policy, as well as the distribution of the costs and benefits from the policy are very important for the adoption (in addition to contextual factors). In this case, she finds that the more salient the policy is, the higher the relevance of the state ideology and partisanship (e.g., Democrats vs Republicans) for the policy adoption (ibid.: 548). On the other hand, the adoption rate would also depend on who bears the costs from the policy change resulting from the policy adoption. For example, *net metering programs* place burden on the industry and less on the state, *renewable portfolio standards* are low-cost options for the state but puts some energy sectors in advantageous position and others in a completely unfavorable position, whereas in the case of *green power purchasing* the state bears the costs (ibid.: 548; emphasis added). This on the other hand would imply that in addition to the ideology, the

strength of the lobby and environmental groups would also play an immense role for the final outcome from the policy transfer process.

Weyland (2009), in a seminal study, compares the diffusion of, both, the pension privatization reform and the health reform across Latin American countries. He finds that the *specificity* of the transferred policy model in each case has played an important role in the spread of these items. Namely, in the case of the pension privatization reform, the originating policy was the specifically regulated 'Chilean model' which was a form of ready-to-use pension privatization model. Weyland (2009) finds that although some of the most advanced Latin American countries have modified some elements of this model (such as Costa Rica, a country with long-standing expertise and established practices in this field), the core innovation of the Chilean model was nevertheless widely adopted. This, on the other hand, has not been the case with the health care reform. Due to the absence of a clear model, a far larger degree of adaptation and modification of the policy has been recorded (ibid.: 220). This study showcases the relevance of the specificity of the transferred policy for the degree of its adoption. In this case, the more specific policy model for pension reform has been more completely adopted than the more broadly defined health care reform.

Marier (2017) studies in detail the transfer of the Swedish pension reform to Norway. He finds that one of the determining factors for the partial, but nevertheless successful transfer of some of the Swedish pension instruments is the previous presence of similar mature program in Norway. However, besides the presence of a previous policy experience being a favorable condition for the transfer, he concludes that due to the redistributive (as opposed to regulatory) nature of the program, which involves lots of governmental resources and higher public and political scrutiny, it was still not possible for a complete transfer to take place. This is illustrated through the lengthy negotiations process in Norway which involved many stakeholders before the changes to existing pension reform were duly implemented (ibid., 445).

Busch et al. (2005) find that especially in the case of the energy taxes, a policy instrument of redistributive character where the winners and losers are easy to be identified in advance, the spread was especially slow and did not reach a critical mass (ibid: p. 164). Whereas instruments such as environmental strategies or eco-labels that do not induce any fundamental policy change would spread significantly faster (ibid. 164).

Volden (2006) analyzes the various types of policy changes of children's health insurance program produced during the diffusion of this policy throughout different federal states in the

US. He finds that the policy versions that involved lower program costs were to spread more successfully than the ones with higher costs (ibid.).

Factors related to the domestic context of the adopting country

Lenschow et al. (2005) develop an analytical framework that focuses specifically on the treatment of the domestic factors relevant for cross-national policy diffusion and policy convergence, which they empirically test it in the field of environmental policy. They distinguish three central factors in this regard, namely, culture, institutions and economic development, operationalized respectively through: dominant religious tradition (culture), prevailing orientation towards public/private relations (institutions) and level of economic development (economy) (ibid., 797)¹⁸.

Vogel (2001) digs especially into the relevance of culture and religion as determinants for the emergence and spread of contemporary environmentalism or green politics and policies. Vogel (2001) finds several linkages between the stronger environmental ethics and Protestantism, such as the notion of ascetic discipline, high value on individual morality and consistency, egalitarianism and nature as a spiritual value. He argues that, for example, although eastern religious traditions would place very high value on nature too, they would be promoting a higher degree of passivity which in return does not lead to effective environmental activism or regulatory controls (ibid. 32).

Simmons & Elkins (2004) would find that culture, and more specifically religion, is the main determinant for the spread of liberal economic ideas too. They focus on monetary and financial

¹⁸ They note, however, that the relevance of these factors will depend on what actually is being transferred, i.e., what is the degree of policy change required by the adopted policy innovation. In this regard, they also distinguish three dimensions of change, namely: change in the basic goals and ideas of a policy, change in the instruments applied, or change in the setting or 'calibration' of these instruments (ibid., 798; original emphasis). The authors then argue that the diffusion and convergence of general ideas and principles would depend predominantly on the cultural (religious) similarities between the countries: some religions would apply more eco-centric view to nature, other religions are more anthropocentric and thus with less caring attitude towards nature (ibid., 808-809); the spread and convergence of policy instruments would depend predominantly on the public/private relations, namely statist countries would prefer regulating policy instruments in form of bans and prohibitions, liberal-pluralist countries would go for market-based policy instruments, such as taxes, levies or emission trading schemes, whereas neo-corporatist states would go for instruments based on negotiation and trust, such as voluntary agreements (ibid. 809-810). They lastly claim that the diffusion and convergence of the settings around the policy instruments (primarily focused on the question "can we afford this?"), would predominantly depend on the level of economic development of the countries. Namely, when choosing the calibration of a policy instrument, countries would have to decide between taxes, fees, or subsidies, i.e., who bears the final cost from the policy instrument, which is finally a decision that needs to consider the current level of economic development and the potential benefits of market access once the instrument has been adopted. As a rule, the more costly instruments would spread faster among more affluent countries (ibid.: 810).

policies, especially on the liberalization and/or restriction of capital accounts, current accounts and exchange rate regimes. As a proxy for culture, the authors choose common dominant language, common colonial heritage and common dominant religion. The authors thus suggest that the countries would curtail their decisions regarding economic policies by systematically considering the choices of their cultural peers (*ibid.*).

Gilardi (2010) focuses on the predominant political ideology and partisanship of the adopting country as a determining factor for the successful or unsuccessful adoption of a policy innovation. He takes the spread of the unemployment benefits cuts in eighteen OECD countries as his case study for policy innovation. In this regard, his analysis shows that governments on the right side of the political spectrum will adopt benefit cuts if the evidence suggests that it is not excessively disadvantageous for reelection, but that also they would be more likely to dismiss the evidence that the reductions are actually not beneficial for the unemployment performance. Contrary to that, left governments seem to pay more attention to the policy consequences of the benefit cuts than to elections results, and hence more likely to adopt policy innovations because of their performance per se and not the political outlook (*ibid.*: 661). Similar to Gilardi (2010), Gullberg & Bang (2015) find that the policy choice taken by the Norwegian policy-makers to adopt the Swedish green certificate schemes instead of EU's feed-in-tariffs, was influenced to a large extent by the higher popularity of the first option in both Sweden and Norway, which in return was very promising for the future reelection (Gullberg & Bang, 2015: 110). Other scholars, such as Grossback et al. (2004), Matisoff & Edwards (2014) or Butler et al. (2017) would also focus on political ideology and partisanship as a primary determinant for policy adoption, focusing especially on the spread of policy innovations across the U.S.

Radaelli (2005) looks into the political context as a determinant that shapes the spread of the regulatory impact assessment (RIA) in the EU. RIA is an instrument that originates in the U.S. and is meant to provide for a "better regulation" and "good regulatory governance" (*ibid.*, 924; original emphasis). Interestingly, he finds that there has not been a convergence when it comes to the spread of the RIA among EU countries, explaining this by looking into their different political contexts. Radaelli (2005) operationalizes political context through four elements: type of bureaucracy, government's capacity to handle distributional conflict, policy processes, and actors' preferences (*ibid.*: 924)¹⁹.

¹⁹ When talking about types of bureaucracies, he refers to bureaucracies where efficiency and expertise are most important principles (as for example in the U.S.), as opposed to bureaucracies where formality and respect for legitimate procedures are the predominant principles of functioning (as for example in several EU countries). Implemented by an independent and expert regulator, RIAs, in their original

Economic variables, such as level of economic development or degree of economic liberalizations seem to be predominant in studies that focus on the spread of market-oriented policy instruments, among others, on cost-efficient renewable energy instruments (Cia Alves et al., 2019; Stadelmann & Castro, 2014), or set of environmental policy instruments (Arbolino et al., 2018). Many other studies would address multiplicity of domestic factors as equally relevant for the policy transfer/diffusion.²⁰

Factors related to the international context of the adopting country

Albrecht & Arts (2005) investigate the convergence of climate policies in Europe. The authors argue that the main driving force behind their spread is the global climate change regime established with the adoption of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in 1992 and the Kyoto Protocol from 1997. Not disregarding the domestic factors, the authors find that transnational communication happening under the umbrella of the climate change regime is the main mechanism for the adoption and convergence. More specifically, this would be a consequence of *transnational problem-solving* when countries experience similar problem (in this case climate change) and come together to solve it; and also, a consequence of *international policy promotion*, when international entities promote common policy models which then get adopted from the majority of these countries (ibid.: 899; original emphasis).

version, would be more applicable in the first type of bureaucracies. When speaking of the capacity of the government to solve conflicts, he mainly refers to the institutional arrangements that determine who have the “say” in policy formulation and implementation. So, for example, in the UK this would be the executive branch, whereas in Denmark there are more actors involved, which would eventually have an impact on the content of the adopted RIA. Speaking of policy processes, Radaelli (2005) makes the point that there will be a significant difference in the content of the adopted RIA (if it gets adopted at all!) where there is highly fragmented regulatory process with various points of contact and negotiation between administration and politics (such as in Germany and Italy), compared to policy process with more previous coordination at the executive level (such as France). He then points to the preferences of the many actors involved in the policy formulation process, such as for example, if politicians are rent seeking, if they act in the public interest or want to be reelected by pushing for good quality regulation (ibid., 935). All of these determinants are very different in the U.S. and in the EU context. (ibid.).

²⁰ For example, Brooks (2005) in her study on diffusion of pension privatization analyses demographic pressures, financial costs, incentives to reform and existing political institutions (ibid., 273). Volden (2006) on the spread of health insurance programmes talks about political, demographic and budgetary similarities as main conditions for policy convergence (ibid.). Holzinger et al. (2008) would test the relevance of several domestic variables for environmental policy convergence, among else, of the domestic political demand for comprehensive environmental policy, as well as presence of environmental problems through CO2 emissions per capita, population density and energy use (ibid.: 565-566). Whereas, Ward & Cao (2012), similarly, find the green taxes’ spread to be conditioned as much by the left-right and environmental position of the legislative organs as well as by the power of the energy-producing sector, among else (ibid.).

Holzinger et al. (2008) focus similarly on the spread and convergence of environmental policies in twenty-four industrialized countries in the period between 1970 and 2000. They find that especially international harmonization and transnational communication are the main determinants for the high level of environmental policy convergence, basically considering elements of obligatory (international harmonization) and voluntary (transnational communication) adoption of policy innovations. The authors find strong correlation between environmental policy convergence and especially EU membership (effect from international harmonization) as well as to common membership in other international institutions (effect from transnational communication) (ibid.: 578-579).

Focusing specifically on the question of accession to IOs as a determinant for policy transfer, Carroll (2014) compares three IOs, namely the European Union (EU), the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and the World Trade Organization (WTO). He finds this correlation to be especially strong in the case of the EU accession. Furthermore, the 'breadth' of the transfer seems to be largest for the EU and the OECD than for the WTO, a consequence of the fact that these two organizations cover broader political scope (compared to the WTO which covers only trade), so the accessing countries would adopt policies from different fields in order to be able to access them. For the WTO, however, the 'depth' of the transfer is larger since the new members would sign greater number of agreements in the field of trade in order to access this organization (ibid.: 293). Similarly, Cao (2009) too, finds a direct link between the increased similarity in economic policies among countries that share membership in IOs such as the WTO, OECD and the EU.

Not only participation in formal entities such as established international organizations, but also participation in networks or epistemic communities can be an important international determinant for transfer and adoption of a given policy. In his seminal work from 1989, Peter Haas focuses exactly on the role of epistemic communities in converging governmental interests in issues related to marine pollution in the Mediterranean Sea. Haas, P., (1989) defines epistemic communities as: "...specific community of experts sharing a belief in a common set of cause-and-effect relationships as well as common values to which policies governing these relationships will be applied." (ibid.: 384). In a later work, he would identify these communities as transnational scientific communities (Haas, 2000: 343). In terms of influencing policy transfer and diffusion, this would mean that countries where these communities are active would actually be adopting similar policies for pollution control, and with it, they would be complying with the established environmental regime for the protection of the Mediterranean Sea. Haas (1989) finds that the epistemic community that consisted of UNEP officials, government officials and marine scientists from the Mediterranean region,

actually managed to influence many of the countries from the region to adopt pollution control policies. Haas (1989) finds that the influence the epistemic communities exert is due to their knowledge and power (p. 402). The first one, by showing the governments the complexity of the pollution problem and the need for a wholistic and coordinated approach to solve it, and the second one, by actually having access to the ministries (such as the ministries for environment and foreign affairs) and the policy formulation processes through their individual members (Haas, 1989).

Geographic proximity to other countries is another important determinant. Geographic proximity has been found to be very influential for the process of adoption of novel policy solutions (Lee & Strang, 2006; Weyland, 2005). In Weyland's words "proximity prompts imitation" (2005: 266). So, when analyzing the spread of the pension privatization reform world-wide, he speaks of geographical clustering which resembles a "[...] wave caused by a pebble tossed into a lake, [...]" (ibid.: 266). He finds the first geographical clustering to be happening with the spread of the Bismarckian social insurance scheme, originating in Germany and firstly emulated by the rest of the European countries, such as Sweden, before reaching Latin America at the beginning of the 20th century with the adoption by Chile. After Chile, Weyland identifies a second geographical clustering with the Chilean model getting adopted across Latin America, starting with Argentina and Peru, countries that actually share their borders with Chile (ibid.: 266-267). However, geographic proximity cannot be regarded in isolation. It is especially true that countries close geographically share often cultural identity. Weyland (2005) too, refers to "geographic and cultural proximity" to identify the factors that gave salience to the new pension model (ibid.: 285). Lee & Strang (2006) analyze public sector downsizing in twenty-six OECD countries in the period from 1980 to 1997 and find that geographic proximity along with established trade relations with the proximate country to be the key driver for the spread of this practice. They define spatial proximity by the common border and the proximity of the capital cities of the analyzed countries (ibid.: 894).

Because of the complexity of the phenomenon studied by policy transfer and diffusion, most of the times scholars would consider the importance of both domestic and international factors. Aklin & Urpelainen (2014) who study the global spread of environmental ministries. According to their findings, countries that undergo democratic transition (domestic factor) have strong incentives to establish environmental ministries when the saliency of environmental issues is strong internationally (international factor) (ibid.: 764). So, in this case, democratizing countries are not more likely to establish environmental ministries in comparison to other countries, unless there are permissive international factors (ibid.: 778).

* * *

The presented literature review on the domestic, international and factors related to the nature of the transferred item, points to several elements from each group of factors that stand out as relevant for the present study. They are summarized in Table 1 and will be used for the empirical analysis of this study.

Nature of novel policy	Domestic factors	International factors
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - level of institutional change that the policy requires - the complexity, specificity and costs the new policy implies - regulatory vs. distributive character of the policy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - culture (common language, religion and colonial heritage) - existing policy experience - salience of the policy domestically - institutional context 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - international embeddedness of the adopting country (membership and accession to IOs and/or epistemic communities) - geographic (and cultural) proximity and - salience of the political issue internationally

Table 1: Relevant factors for policy transfer

V. Elements in Policy Transfer Theory: Causal Mechanisms

In the policy transfer literature, there are several classifications of the different causal mechanisms that explain policy transfer. Causal mechanisms can be defined as the causal linkages through which structural changes and ‘modernizing forces’ affect domestic policies so that policies change and convergence across countries occurs (Busch & Jürgens, 2005: 862). There are different classifications of these causal mechanisms, but in general they come down to the following mechanisms: learning, emulation, competition and coercion. In what follows, theoretical and empirical studies will be reviewed that deal in more detail with each of these causal mechanisms contributing to a better understanding of how they actually work in practice.

V.1. Learning

Meseguer (2005) defines learning as a: voluntary act that implies a change of beliefs in the light of experiences of others (ibid.: 72). She identifies two important dimensions that would distinguish learning from the rest of the mechanisms, and especially from emulation with which it is mostly confused. Those dimensions are, for one, that “[...] learning is *purposive*: a problem is set, and a solution is sought.”, and two, “[...] a solution is chosen on the basis of *observed experience* and a *better understanding* of which policies may lead to particular outcomes.” (Meseguer, 2005: 73; original emphasis).

Paraphrasing Meseguer's (2005) definition, learning is a purposive act, that involves observing others' experiences and better understanding of the particular outcomes from policies when making decisions about their adoption. Although this definition provides some degree of clarification about the learning as causal mechanisms, it still not clear what kind of "outcomes" are considered. Or learning about what kind of "outcomes" is relevant for a policy adoption to happen. In her work, Meseguer (2005) offers a hint in the very last paragraph, saying that learning should be further expanded as learning not only about the *policy consequences* but also about the *political consequences* from the adopted policy (ibid.: 79; emphasis added). Maggetti & Gilardi (2013) complement this position by offering more specific understanding of the type of consequences/outcomes the adopters would look into for learning to happen. Learning in their view means that "policies in one unit are influenced by the consequences of similar policies in other units" (ibid., p.4). According to these authors, when considering adoption of a policy, policymakers learn about the success (read: consequences/outcomes; my note) of the foreign policy in terms of: a) the goals it is designed to achieve, b) the challenges regarding its implementation and c) its political support (ibid., p.4).

Continuing in similar direction, the work from Gilardi (2010) on the diffusion of unemployment benefit cuts analyzed elsewhere in this study, identifies learning not only about *policy outcomes* but *political consequences* too. The policy outcome that an adopting country will be looking into before adopting this policy is the unemployment rate, namely, if the adoption of benefit cuts decreases unemployment rate or not. The political consequences that the adopting countries will be interested in is the electoral performance, namely, if the adoption of benefit cuts affects electoral performance unfavorably.

Glick & Friedland (2014) introduce the concept of *policy knowledge diffusion* where they focus on the channels of information transfer 'earlier in the process' of diffusion (ibid.: 958). They therefore shed light on some of the techniques employed by policymakers in the process of learning about foreign policies. Similar to Meseguer (2005), they speak of learning whenever policymakers actively search for foreign solutions. In their empirical study on policy diffusion in the U.S., they find that reports from policy researchers tasked by policymakers to look into foreign policies, are the main indicator for 'active searching' and learning. Namely, the authors distinguish if and to what extent these reports *mention* foreign policies, describe them as *good practices* or use detailed *case studies*. In this way, they would estimate the policy/ies that would potentially have the highest influence on the domestic policy action.

In yet another study on diffusion of hospital financing reforms in OECD countries, Gilardi et al. (2009) find clear evidence of learning. Their main finding is that the adoption of these reforms

in the OECD countries from the early 1980's until the early 2000's, is influenced by the performance of the policy. In the case of hospital financing reforms, that would be the better control of public health expenditures, or better said, if there was evidence of milder rise or decrease in health expenditures, the policy was likely to diffuse (ibid.: 550, 568). Expectedly, they find that learning becomes more dominant over time, namely, the more countries have gained experience with the policy, the more later adopters can learn from their experience. They also find that learning is more likely to happen when the existing policy is not very effective, and when there are few obstacles in the domestic institutional arrangements.

On another note, Volden (2016) speaks of learning about negative policy performance. Normally, countries look into successful foreign policies as a solution to domestic problems. He answers what will happen if countries learn about the failure of a policy which they already have. In other words, if *policy abandonment*, in contrast to *policy adoption*, can also diffuse with learning (ibid.; my emphasis). This is a different concept from 'negative transfer' (Holzinger & Knill, 2005; Stone, 2017; my emphasis) which refers to *policy adoption not happening* because the foreign policy proved to be not successful. Volden (2016) finds evidence that the policy failure by one government will actually lead to policy abandonment of the same policy by other states. He exemplifies this through certain welfare policies that in some U.S. states have failed to reduce poverty and were thus abandoned by other states too. He finds policy abandonment to spread especially strong among ideologically similar states (ibid.: 69).

V.2. Emulation

Emulation is widely discussed concept in the policy transfer and diffusion literature. It is often considered together with learning and often it is defined in reference to learning.

Meseguer (2005) contrasts emulation to learning, by saying that: "emulation is usually driven by motivations other than problem solving and does not entail reflection on causal paths leading from policies to outcomes." (ibid.: 73). Emulation is in this regard a symbolic act where politicians take "blind" action following certain trends, seeking to enhance their status, "modernity" or credibility (ibid.: 79; original emphasis). The study from Elkins & Simmons (2005) sheds additional light on the differences between learning and emulation, although they refer to the latter as adaptation. In learning, actors are genuinely interested in the merits of the novel policy in terms of its efficiency or in terms of its potential to improve their institutions, whereas in adaptation they are interested only in the subsequent benefits associated with the adoption (ibid: 46). Similarly, Braun & Gilardi (2006) distinguish *policy effectiveness* and

payoffs. Both elements, effectiveness and payoffs, need to be considered when looking for the mechanisms at play in the adoption process. A policy is effective when it delivers intended outcomes, i.e., it does what it is designed to do, whereas payoffs can be associated with expected votes, for example. Politicians are therefore interested in policies but also in votes. The authors link learning predominantly to effectiveness, saying that learning enables decision-makers to update their beliefs on the effectiveness of a policy. Whereas emulation (or symbolic imitation as the authors prefer) is linked to payoffs. Emulation does not alter beliefs on effectiveness of a policy, but it alters the size of the payoffs associated with policy alternatives by rewarding the behavior that conforms with socially valued policies (ibid.: 312). Bender et al. (2014) refer to *learning* as a mechanism that follows the “logic of consequences”, similar to coercion and competition, whereas *emulation* follows the “logic of appropriateness” (ibid.: 16; original emphasis). Logic of consequences means choosing by evaluating consequences of alternative scenarios, whereas logic of appropriateness involves evoking an identity or role to a specific situation” (ibid.: 16; same in Gilardi, 2012: 22).

A similar concept found in the literature which captures the essence of emulation is *symbolic imitation*. For example, Braun & Gilardi (2006), among other mechanisms, discuss symbolic imitation. According to them, symbolic imitation is grounded on the idea that policymakers will adopt certain policies to demonstrate that they are acting in an adequate manner (ibid.: 311) and avoid criticism (ibid.: 312). ‘Socially valued practices’ provide legitimization to governments towards their internal stakeholders and towards the public (ibid.; my emphasis). Symbolic imitation happens when policies can be adopted as instruments of legitimization rather than for problem-solving (Braun et al., 2007: 44). In this regard, practices that reflect the ‘latest expert thinking or those with the most prestige’ are adopted through symbolic imitation (Braun and Gilardi, 2006, p. 351).

In his study on the spread of freedom of information legislation (FOI), Bennet (1997) finds the adoption for *legitimation* purposes to be the predominant explanatory variable. He discards the presence of learning by showing that the evidence from early adopters about the performance of the policy has actually been very anecdotal at the time as to produce a learning effect. He finds, however, that the pioneering states have been constantly making exaggerated claims for the benefits of the FOI. The Swedish “open government” system, for example, has been cited often and regarded together with the American model as exemplars of open democratic participation. Bennet (1997) does not disregard the many interactions between the governments happening at international level as a possible learning channel, however, he describes the nature of the international debates as purely rhetorical as to provide essential

evidence for evaluation of the FOI's performance. He concludes that the adoption of FOI was used as ammunition in the domestic political struggle (ibid.: 229).

It is worth discussing here what is the role of *shared socialization* in the transfer/diffusion process since it is a concept that has actually been discussed as a separate diffusion mechanism but still most closely linked to learning and emulation. This kind of approach can be found in the work of Braun & Gilardi (2006) where they discuss shared socialization through the mechanisms of *common norms* and *taken-for-grantedness*, and in the work of Holzinger & Knill (2005) through the mechanism of transnational communication, or, more specifically, as *trans-national problem solving*.

Common norms get developed with shared socialization and *repeated interaction* in networks or international bodies (Braun & Gilardi, 2006; original emphasis). The common norms would thus give actors the same view about the effectiveness of policy alternatives (ibid.: 310). In other words, under common norms, the belief over the effectiveness of one policy alternative over the other would get homogenized. Now, intuitively, acting according to common norms would imply acting out of appropriateness and social acceptance. As a matter of fact, in another work, Gilardi (2012) says that "emulation can be understood as norm diffusion" (ibid.: 22). However, under the concept of shared socialization, governments homogenize their view about the *effectiveness* of policy alternatives (!) which kind of implies that they consider policy consequences, i.e., a process of learning unfolds. The fact that the common norms shape their view on the effectiveness of policy alternatives, as defined by Braun & Gilardi (2006), is nothing else but bounded learning. So, common norms should not be discussed as separate diffusion mechanism, but the existence of common norms should be considered as a contextual factor that influences the transfer/diffusion process under one of the four main mechanisms, although probably always counting with the presence of learning.

Similar happens with *taken-for-grantedness*. It posits that *over time* some practices become the obvious thing to do (Braun & Gilardi, 2006: 311; my emphasis). These practices are automatically being assigned with very high effectiveness and, if alternatives are considered at all, they are assigned with very low effectiveness. A taken-for-granted policy is difficult to emerge because of the different preferences that policymakers normally have, but an ideal example of it would be the women suffrage (ibid.: 311). Again, it seems like *taken-for-grantedness* is an outcome of long-lasting common norms. It speaks more about the global salience of an issue than explaining the actual reason for adoption.

Finally, *trans-national problem solving* is a form of learning that involves “[...] joint development of common problem perceptions and solutions to similar domestic problems and their subsequent adoption at the domestic level.” (Holzinger & Knill, 2005).

This present study will *not* consider these concepts as separate causal mechanisms for policy transfer/adoption. They will however be considered as a complement to the discussion on international contextual factors, especially regarding international embeddedness and global salience of the issue at stake.

V.3. Competition

There are several forms of competition discussed in the literature: economic competition as its clearest form, political and social competition. *Economic competition* occurs when states react to one another in an attempt to attract or retain resources (Maggetti and Gilardi, 2013, p. 5). Busch & Jörgens (2007: 73) identify as *political competition* the one where states aim to adopt the role of international leaders or early followers to influence international policy developments and, with it, minimize adaptation costs (same in Bender, 2014, p. 16). Less researched is the *social competition* or “structural equivalence” (Busch and Jürgens, 2007, p. 74, my transl.) which describes the relationship between two parties towards a third one, where the two parties observe and imitate each other to maintain stable relations with the third one (ibid.).

Swank (2006)’s study on the spread of tax liberalization across OECD countries finds the *economic competition* to be the explanatory mechanism for this phenomenon. Namely, in order to attract and retain mobile assets, policymakers would reduce tax burdens on capital. Testing for *learning* and *emulation* too, he finds no substantial evidence that the late adopters have systematically implemented the tax reforms due to their relatively good performance in the U.S. as the pioneering country. He finds even less evidence on emulation, defining the latter as the propensity to copy policies from cultural peers. The main conclusion being that competitive pressures conditioned by domestic political economic institutions were the main driver for the diffusion of tax liberalization reforms across the OECD in the period 1981-1989 (ibid.).

Similarly, Elkins et al. (2006), in their study on the diffusion of bilateral investment treaties (BITs) in the period 1960-2000, find that *economic competition* for foreign direct investments is the predominant explanation for the diffusion. They test for *learning* and *coercion* additionally and find some evidence for both. The authors find some evidence for learning,

i.e., that decision-makers of late-adopters were able to draw conclusions on the effects from the BITs before adopting them. They find that while in the 1960s there was no evidence about their efficacy, and in the 1970s and 80s the BITs had actually negative or zero effect, it is in the 1990s where there is obvious evidence about their benefits. In this regard, they would conclude that the adopters in the 1990s would have had enough evidence to learn from. However, learning does not explain the adoption by earlier adopters. They consider as coercion when there are conditionalities imposed from financial institutions, such as the IMF. The results show that although the adoption of BITs would not be a formal loan condition, subtle pressure in terms of required balance-of-payments on the money borrower's side, would still classify as some form of coercion (ibid.: 833).

Similarly, in a study about the global diffusion of a wider set of economic liberalization policies, Simmons & Elkins (2004) will confirm that *competitive pressure* coming from major competing countries (countries with similar GDP and similar trade relations) is the main driver for this phenomenon. But that also certain degree of *learning* is evident, when the experience and available data from the most "successful" countries in economic policymaking serves as a new information with which to update domestic beliefs in direction favorable for more liberalization (ibid.).

Holzinger & Knill (2005) speak of *regulatory competition*, in essence very similar to *political completion*. A condition for it to occur is economic integration between market economies. Namely, countries need to be economically interdependent, as for example through international trade, in order for regulatory competition to happen. The most common policy field for regulatory competition is trade policy, especially process and product standards where pioneers (normally economically influential countries) and early adopters could set the rules and lower further adaptation costs (ibid). Such is the example of the U.S. in lowering trade tariffs under the North American Free Trade Agreement, in order for the rest of the countries to follow suit (Dobbin et al., 2007: 457). Policy fields not directly related to products or production processes would go through low pressures from international markets and would rarely be subjects to regulatory competition. Such examples are policies in the field of bird or nature protection (Holzinger & Knill, 2005: 789). Although intuitively it seems that regulatory competition would provoke a race-to-the-bottom, namely that the market pressure would drive countries to adopt similar policies that are the lowest common denominator in terms of regulation, there are also cases of race-to-the-top. The latter is especially true when it comes to product standards, when high-regulating countries are able to justify higher standards but are able to also enforce them, for example, in front of the WTO, or EU-wide (ibid.: 789-790).

V.4. Coercion

Finally, coercion occurs when countries are forced to adopt certain policies by other more powerful actors, such as states or international or supranational organizations (Bender, 2014, p.11). The literature discusses different forms of coercion. As a *hard coercion* one would classify the use of or threat from physical force of one country or organization over another weaker country. Manipulation of economic costs and benefits, as well as monopolization of information or expertise, in order to influence policy change in another country, would be treated as a hard form of coercion (Simmons et al., 2006: 790). Coercion involves power asymmetries that the strong countries use to impose preferred policy changes in weaker countries (ibid.) and in this regard strong countries can act alone, as part of alliance or through another entity. The point is that the weaker countries end up adopting policy that they otherwise would not have adopted (ibid.). There may be multiplicity of reasons why stronger countries want to influence policies in weaker ones, such as enhancing national and international security, financial stability, or protecting own investments (Dobbin et al, 2007: 455).

Softer forms of coercion, and those that will be considered in this study are conditionality and international harmonization (Holzinger & Knill, 2005). The most common form of coercion is conditionality, when countries need to adopt certain policies to get certain resources, as for example the conditions that poor countries need to fulfill to access loans from the International Monetary Fund (IMF). The countries are not literally forced, but the cost for not adopting is too high which leaves them without a choice. The similar is the case with international harmonization. Here countries are legally required to adopt certain policies because of an existing international agreement they have signed. This mechanism presupposes the existence of interdependencies and externalities that can come at higher cost if the country does not adopt some mandatory policy. Such externalities are loss of image, economic sanctions, loss of share in international trade etc. However, there are scholars who would disagree that conditionality is a form of coercion, since the countries often accept IMF loans because they actually need these imposed conditions, or that governments may secretly favor imposed conditions when faced with political opponents and need to justify helplessness (Dobbin et al, 2007: 455).

One needs to consider, however, that there isn't a transfer that is completely voluntary; weighing costs and benefits, as well as certain forms of international pressure will always be present. This study, however, traces the predominant mechanism behind the adoption and whenever countries have actual choice not to adopt without high costs, it will be considered

as a voluntary transfer. This said, tracing elements of conditionality behind the decision to adopt is not excluded.

* * *

In sum, this section discussed four different causal mechanisms used to explain policy transfer. Those are learning, emulation, competition and coercion. The following table summarizes the main characteristics of the four causal mechanisms:

Learning	Emulation	Competition	Coercion
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - (actively) searching for a solution of an existing problem - better understanding about the policy outcomes of a policy - better understanding of the political outcomes of a policy - interest in the merits of the novel policy in terms of its efficiency - interest in the merits of the novel policy in terms of its potential to improve their institutions - <i>mention</i> foreign policies, describe them as <i>good practices</i> or use detailed <i>case studies</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - symbolic imitation without considering causal links between the adopted policy and its outcome - adoption out of legitimation purposes - adopting due to 'latest expert thinking' or out of 'prestige' - interest only in the subsequent benefits associated with the adoption 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - to attract or retain economic resources (economic competition) - to adopt the role of international leaders or early followers to influence international policy developments (political competition) - two parties observe and imitate each other to maintain stable relations with the third one (social competition) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - to fulfill a condition imposed by an influential international organization or other entity (conditionality) - legally obliged to adopt a policy because of international agreements

Table 2. Main elements of the four causal mechanisms. Own elaboration

VI. Quick Take

This chapter offered a broad discussion on the main theoretical approach in this study, the policy transfer theory. It did so by explaining in detail the four constitutive elements of the theory: actors, content of transfer, context of transfer and causal mechanisms, through relevant theoretical and empirical studies. On the section on *actors*, the analysis offered a broad overview on different policy transfer stakeholders with special focus on IOs. IOs are the main players in the policy transfer happening in the case-study of this present research, so additional attention was paid to them and their role in policy transfer processes. The section on *transfer content* provided a discussion on the different items that can be transferred. The main types of content (or items) discussed in the literature are the ones of transfer of policies, policy instruments, institutions and norms. Policy instruments were given slightly more attention since the studied item in the empirical part of the present study is a policy instrument.

The section on *transfer context* divided the arguments according to the different categories of inhibiting and facilitating factors identified in the literature: factors related to the nature of the policy, domestic factors and international factors. This rich discussion enabled the identification of the most important factors that influence policy transfer, and which will be traced in the empirical part of this present study. Finally, the section on *causal mechanisms* offered different theoretical approaches and operationalizations of the four main mechanisms used to explain the reasons behind a policy adoption, namely, learning, emulation, competition and coercion. Based on the different argumentations presented, the main defining elements for each causal mechanism were identified and presented in a table. This makes the mechanisms much more traceable and distinguishable preparing them for application in the empirical analysis of the present study.

CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

I. Rationale for the selected methodology

In recent years, several countries from the South-East Pacific region have included MSP in their national ocean policies. In order to provide answers regarding these adoptions of MSP as a novel policy, the process of the policy transfer from the promoter to the adopter needs to be understood. The focus of the study is thus less on the outcome – extent and forms of adoption of the MSP, and more on the transfer process itself, best analyzed through a policy transfer approach. The policy transfer theory studies processes in order to describe and explain circumstances and reasons for adoption of policy innovations, focusing on the process and content of transfer in single cases (Holzinger & Knill, 2005, pp. 767-768).

This study applies single case study methodology with elements of process tracing. Drawing on the theoretical assumptions of policy transfer theory, the study applies elements of process tracing to unpack the transfer process. In this regard, the study focuses on the actual mechanistic process behind the transfer, the one that considers both the IO and the single state as actors made of individuals and organized entities²¹ that act and interact, which in the existing empirical studies involving policy transfer remains often in a black box. The study relies on the understanding of process tracing as described by Beach & Pedersen (2019). According to these authors, process tracing does not study the effect of a cause on an outcome, but the link between cause and outcome in a productive continuity. It shifts the analytical focus to what happens *in-between* the hypothesized cause and outcome (ibid.p.1). The authors argue that “mechanisms are *not* causes but are causal processes triggered by causes and that link them with outcomes in a productive relationship” (ibid.). The process tracing method speaks of *trigger* as the event/activity that sets off mechanisms leading to certain *outcome*. In this case study, the assumed trigger is the IOC-UNESCO (and its activities), the outcome is the adoption of the novel policy (MSP) on country level (Colombia). Following this, the triggered process flow is under investigation. The following model combines both the Policy Transfer Theory and Process Tracing elements to present the main concepts in form of a process flow.

²¹ These can be more formal institutions such as ministries, or informal groups or networks whose essence is more than the sum of the individuals comprising them.

Transfer context with inhibiting/enabling factors

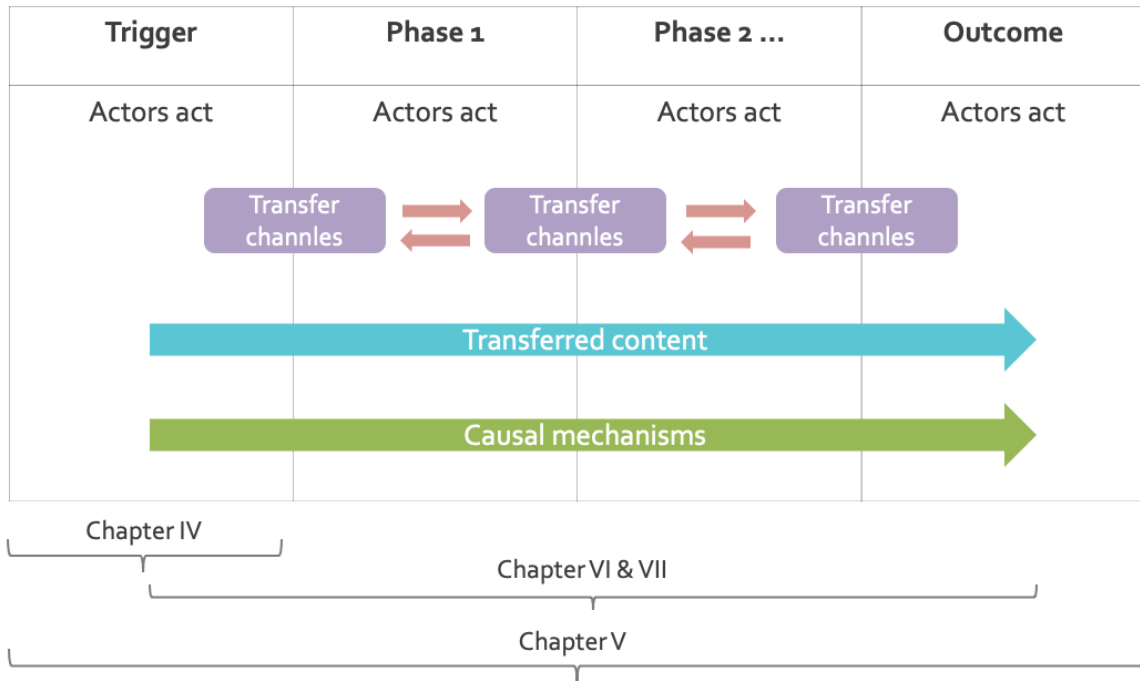


Figure 2. Model combining policy transfer theory and process tracing elements

The research was designed so as to provide insights into all constituting elements of the policy transfer theory for the selected case study in order to be able to provide a probable description and explanation of the process flow of policy transfer from the originator to the adopter. The empirical analysis consists of several elements: identification of the main **actors** involved in the process of transferring MSP-related knowledge in the studied region and in Colombia; identification of the main knowledge-transfer **channels**; identification of the **causal mechanisms** in place that put those actors and channels in action; identification of the main **contextual factors** that facilitate the transfer; identification of the adopted policy **content** by the country (Colombia).

The first empirical chapter (Chapter IV) deals with the most important actor for the MSP policy transfer, namely the IOC-UNESCO as its promoter. It sheds light on its agency in promoting and shaping MSP as a public policy and, in this regard, it also uncovers important MSP transfer channels and factors of international nature. Chapter V further identifies regional and local actors relevant for the MSP policy transfer process, the channels through which they interact and the domestic factors relevant for the adoption in Colombia. One important outcome of the analysis in Chapter V is the tracing of the process of MSP knowledge transfer from the originator to the adopter (multilevel process flow of policy transfer of MSP from the IOC to

Colombia). Chapter VI focuses more specifically on the causal mechanisms behind the transfer and Chapter VII on the adopted policy content.

Data collection and analysis

The empirical part of the study was conducted based on data from interviews, grey literature and scientific publications collected altogether from 2019 until 2023.

At the beginning of the process of thematically focusing my research, I got acquainted with the different theories of environmental governance, the Ecosystem Approach and the Socio-Ecological Systems (SES) on different levels (from marine protected areas to regional seas) and in different contexts (European as well as Latin American). Therefore, a lot of the consulted materials at the beginning were related to the EA, SES, to the Regional Seas, and the different instruments for their operationalization (MSP, ICZM, MPAs or LMEs).

In the process further, I have consulted documents and materials from the IOC-UNESCO, other IOs (e.g. UNEP, FAO, UNESCO and other UN agencies) with their relevant international instruments (conventions, protocols, programs), as well as regional organizations (e.g., Regional Seas, CPPS, EU); collected materials from Colombian institutions (different ministries, agencies, academic institutions and NGOs), as well as from institutions from Peru, Panama, Ecuador and Chile. I have additionally visited online events and fora organized by the IOC and Colombian institutions (e.g. Invemar and MarViva), visited online courses offered by the IOC, MSPGlobal and Colombian institutions (e.g. Invemar), followed YouTube channels (e.g. IOC, Invemar and CCO) and Twitter (X) accounts (e.g. Dimar, Invemar, CCO, Ministry of Environment, IOC) to better get familiar with the work of these institutions as well with the international and the Colombian context in the realm of marine governance. A large body of scientific literature on Colombia and the region regarding environmental and marine resource management was consulted to better understand the pressing issues close to my research topic. A comprehensive list of the consulted materials and literature categorized along institutions and themes can be found in Appendix C to this study. The list in Appendix C has more than 400 entries complementary to the reference list and does not include the interviews which are elaborated in a separate section below.

For different analytical parts different types of data were used as the main source of information. Depending on the analytical approach in each empirical chapter, the data (from the interviews and other data) was either used as a direct source of information or it went through a process of coding for more systematic analysis. So, for example, in chapter IV, the

main approach is to code the data in order to build new postulations (identifying narratives), in chapter V the data is predominantly used as a direct source of information without coding, whereas in chapter VI the data is coded to test existing postulations. The coding is done with Quantitative Content Analysis (QCA) applied with the help of the MAXQDA software. More information on the analytical approach and the analyzed material can be found in the respective empirical chapters.

II. Interviews

For this study, 23 interviews were conducted starting from September 2020 until June 2022. Because of the global Covid 19 lockdowns, the interviews were conducted online.

All interviews were done in Spanish as the native language of the respondents²². From the 23 interviews, 15 are done with Colombian representatives, 3 with Panama, 2 with Peru, 1 with Ecuador, 2 with regional organizations (regional NGO MarViva and the IO CPPS). Additional to the 23 interviews, three informal conversations were conducted where the respondents mainly expressed their opinion and so notes were taken from the conversations and used as a general input for further research, but they were not recorded²³. There was additional e-mail correspondence with the IOC-UNESCO and other country representatives where upon request some of my questions were answered and primary data was provided but are not counted as interviews.

The interviewees were selected so that they represent the key actors and sectors involved in the Colombian marine and coastal planning²⁴. Marine and coastal affairs are in the hands of

²² Whenever I cite from the interviews in this study, I use my personal translation in English. In some cases, for the sake of authenticity of some expressions, after the English translation I use the exact words in Spanish in parenthesis.

²³ Two of these respondents are from Colombia, one from the academia (area: coastal and marine ecosystems) and the other from the nongovernmental sector. The third respondent is high-ranking Ecuadorian public official.

²⁴ To identify the individuals to be reached out from each institution, I did online research and used the snowball sampling technique. For the first approach, especially important were the online MSPGlobal events from where I was able to identify the persons of interest (normally panelists or attendees) and their institutional emails. Similarly, the CEMarin online data base helped me identify academics with expertise in the field, as well as the websites of the main Colombian universities with departments in marine and coastal research. Nevertheless, moving personal contacts of Colombian friends and colleagues, to which I am deeply grateful, has helped me get the initial informal conversations and interviews. After that the snowball sampling approach was mainly used so I was able to refer to a certain person in my email to the person of interest and, in this way, increase the chance for positive response. The people I have interviewed were in this regard very helpful and cooperative and this analysis could not have been possible without their input and support. In total, I have reached out to 32 institutions (the many universities I have reached out to are counted as one institution/sector under 'academia'), 88 persons belonging to these institutions, with whom I exchanged 370 emails. More detailed overview

several governmental institutions in Colombia, and they were all reached out. Representatives from the academia and from the nongovernmental sector were also included as actors knowledgeable about the topic and with practical experience around marine and coastal planning in Colombia. Similar approach was applied in the selection of the actors from the rest of the countries in the region²⁵. The response rate to my request for interviews is ca. 30%.

The following table provides the list of the institutions interviewed from each country, as well as their interview number which will often be used for the in-text citations.

Country	Type of institution	Name of the institution	Interview date	Interview No.
Colombia	Governmental institutions	Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development	October 2020	I.1
		Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development	May 2022*	I.2
		Colombian Ocean Commission (CCO) (2 respondents)	November 2020	I.3a/I.3b
		Maritime Authority – Dimar (under the Ministry of Defense)	February 2021	I.4
		Department of National Parks (linked to the Ministry of Environment)	March 2021	I.5
		Department of National Parks (linked to the Ministry of Environment)	March 2021	I.6
		Fisheries Authority – AUNAP (under the Ministry of Agriculture)	May 2022	I.7
		National Hydrocarbons Agency – ANH (under the Ministry of Mines and Energy) (4 respondents)	May 2022	I.8
		Ministry of Transport	May 2022	I.23

about the persons and organizations reached out to be able to come up with the 23 interviews are shown in Table 01 and 02 (Appendix A.2) for Colombia and the region respectively.

²⁵ Because not many people are familiar with MSP in the region, this study uses only the name of the institution the interviewees belong to, without naming their position in order to protect their identity. On some occasions, for some statements from the interviews, even the institution is not being mentioned, either because the respondent asked for that explicitly or because according to my judgement it may identify the person in question. Most of the persons interviewed have higher coordinating positions and decision-making power within their institutions. By the time of the writing of this chapter, these are most of the key persons involved in the furthering of MSP (or key persons from sectors concerned with MSP) in Colombia and the region.

	Research center under a ministry	Research institute – Invemar (linked to the Ministry of Environment) (2 respondents)	November 2020	I.9a/I.9b
	Non-governmental institution	NGO MarViva (2 respondents)	December 2020	I.10a/I.10b
	Academia /Independent experts	Marine and coastal area	September 2020	I.11
		Marine and coastal area	February 2021	I.12
		Marine and coastal area	February 2021	I.13
		Marine and coastal area	April 2021	I.14
Ecuador	Governmental institutions	Ecuadorian Navy – Ministry of Defense	May 2022	I.16
Panama	Governmental institutions	Ministry of Environment	May 2022	I.17
		Ministry of Environment	May 2022	I.18
		Authority for Aquatic Resources (ARAP)	May 2022	I.19
Peru	Governmental institutions	Institute of the Sea (IMARPE) linked to the Ministry of Production	May 2022	I.20
		Directorate of Hydrography and Navigation of the Peruvian Navy (DIHIDRONAV)	May 2022	I.21
Regional	International organization	International Organization CPPS	June 2022	I.15
	Non-governmental institution	NGO Marviva	May 2022	I.22
*In a meanwhile there was a change in the leadership of the Ministry of Environment and of its Directorate for Marine and Coastal Resources (DAMCRA) so another interview was conducted to have the more recent position of the Ministry on record. The statements from the first representative are also considered for the analysis.				

Table 3. List of the 23 conducted interviews in Colombia and the region

The guidelines were originally sent to the interviewees in Spanish language. Each interview lasted in average 40 minutes, which transcribed equal to an average of 4.700 words. The total amount of analyzed text from the transcribed interviews sums up to ca. 66.000 words, or ca. 250 pages of text not counting the respondents that sent me their answers per email or notes from informal conversations. The interviews were conducted with informed consent, respecting the rules of good scientific practice and data protection. More information on this is contained in Appendix A.1 (Procedure for conducting interviews and Consent Form).

The research design of this study is very closely linked to the applied theory. So, the main elements of the theory (actors, channels, causal mechanisms, content and factors) are reflected in the interview guidelines as well, so that the primary data from the interviews correspond to these elements and can thus be objectively categorized (Table 4).

Interview questions in original language (Spanish) and in English	Corresponding theoretical concept
1. ¿Cuáles son los antecedentes en su país en manejo marino costero? 1. What is the experience in your country with marine and coastal management?	Transfer context
2. ¿Cuáles son los antecedentes en la relación de su país con la COI-UNESCO? 2. What is the relationship of your country with the IOC-UNESCO?	Transfer context + Transfer actors
3. ¿Cuáles individuos y/o organizaciones juegan un papel importante en la llegada y difusión de la PEM en su país? 3. Which individuals and/or organizations play an important role in the arrival and diffusion of MSP in the country?	Transfer actors
4. ¿Cuáles eventos y/o espacios son importantes para la llegada y difusión de la PEM en su país? 4. Which events/platforms are important for the arrival and diffusion of MSP in the country?	Transfer channels
5. ¿Cuáles son los prerrequisitos (de índole doméstico e internacional) que facilitan la llegada y difusión de la PEM en su país? 5. Which are the requirements (of domestic and international nature) which facilitate the arrival and diffusion of MSP in the country?	Transfer context
6. ¿Qué considera como 'nuevo' o 'innovador' en la metodología PEM? 6. What do you consider as new and innovative about the MSP methodology?	Causal mechanisms + Transfer content
7. Si es el caso, ¿qué es lo que su organización adopta de la metodología PEM? 7. If it is the case, what does your organization adopt from the MSP methodology?	Transfer content
8. ¿Por cuáles razones se adopta PEM en su país? 8. Why does your country adopt MSP?	Causal mechanisms
9. ¿Cuál es el papel del sector privado y de la sociedad civil en el área de manejo marino costero, inclusive en actividades de PEM, en su país?	Transfer content
10. ¿Cuáles son los desafíos u obstáculos para el manejo marino costero adecuado en su país? 10. What are the challenges and obstacles for the adequate marine and coastal management in your country?	Transfer context

Table 4. Interview guidelines

III. Case selection

There are three main criteria for selecting the case of the policy transfer of MSP to Colombia. The first two are of theoretical nature, they are based on two important theoretical assumptions related to factors that enable policy transfer, namely international embeddedness and prior policy experience. A case was selected where these theoretical assumptions are present. The

third one is to correct for the Global-North-centered research on MSP, by focusing on a country from the Global South.

One of the most important theoretical assumptions of the policy transfer theory says that the higher the international embeddedness of a country, the more likely the transfer to this country will be. In the last three years IOC-UNESCO has intensified the promotion of MSP through the initiative MSPGlobal. It selected two regions for this purpose, namely the West Mediterranean region and the South-East Pacific region. The MSPGlobal initiative in the South-East Pacific region is the one that is really interesting for voluntary policy transfer research²⁶. There are five countries in this region where MSPGlobal is active (Colombia, Ecuador, Panama and Peru) and at a cross-country level there is certain homogeneity on a cause-outcome level. The assumed trigger is present: IOC-UNESCO is active in the region with the MSPGlobal initiative, and all of these countries are more or less in the same stage of adoption of MSP. This present study chooses Colombia because it has better international embeddedness and better experience with similar policy instruments.

International embeddedness and previous similar policy experience are defined as favorable conditions for policy transfer by the policy transfer theory, as elaborated in the previous chapter. Now, if these conditions are present in the case of Colombia, it is to be expected that the adoption of MSP is more likely to be fast and complete. And so, this would have made Colombia an uninteresting case if we were interested in the cause and outcome only. However, having the analytical focus on the process *in-between*, is what actually justifies the selection of Colombia as a case-study. Namely, higher international embeddedness means more IO-to-country interactions that facilitate tracing the transfer process and more insight in the *black-box*. This case study represents a unique opportunity in time to look into the types of interactions, interaction channels, activities and perceptions of actors involved in these interactions at the moment of “impact” of a foreign policy into the “orbit” of an adopting country. This argument is reinforced by the fact that the IOC-UNESCO is one very under-researched IO, whose importance and visibility due to its role in MSP promotion and in the UN Ocean

²⁶ If one wants to look into the MSP transfer process triggered by IOC-UNESCO and MSPGlobal, the West Mediterranean region would not be an adequate case-study. Namely, in this region, there are EU-member states that are anyway obliged to adopt MSP as a policy instrument through the EU MSP Directive, so there is a completely different trigger and causal mechanism for those EU countries, i.e., imposition instead of voluntary adoption. The north African countries in the same region are not tied by the EU MSP Directive, but considering how closed and interconnected the Mediterranean Sea is, the bare proximity and interaction with the EU members, means that the hypothesized trigger (presence of MSPGlobal) might not play a role here, not least because of possible EU conditionality or other forms of political pressure over these countries to engage with MSP, for example.

Decade, will be anything but decreasing. Choosing a country that has long-lasting established relationship with the IOC-UNESCO, provides more insight into the means of interaction with this IO and to a better understanding of its role as a policy supplier in general.

At the same time, compared to the other countries in the region, Colombia has more prior policy experience in the field of marine and coastal governance. Prior policy experience means more reference points within the same case (as in within-case comparison) to determine (change in) actors, setting or policy content of the new policy as compared to the existing one, which again gives more elements that help unpack in more detail the transfer process behind the new policy innovation.

One additional aspect that speaks in favor of selecting cases from the Global South is the skewed research on MSP in favor of industrialized countries, especially from Europe and North America (Albotoush & Tan Shau-Hwai, 2021). Besides the research on MSP, the policy transfer research itself is also skewed in some sense against less industrialized countries. Marsh & Sharman (2009) also note that when it comes to case selection in the policy transfer research, there are fewer regional or small-*N* studies outside the Europe and the North Atlantic, with the rest of the countries being considered in diffusion studies if they are part of global data sets²⁷ (ibid.: 280). Although there is some recent focus on countries from the Global South in the policy transfer literature²⁸, it is still far from enough to thoroughly understand these processes and their drivers in cultural contexts different from the ones in the Global North.

After having presented the theoretical framework (Chapter II) and the application of the main theoretical concepts in the methodological and research design of the study (present chapter), this study continues with an analysis of the agency of the IOC in the MSP policy transfer process (chapter IV), before continuing with the rest of the actors and other elements relevant for the transfer process to Colombia to unfold (chapters V, VI and VII).

²⁷ There are some valuable exceptions. For example, for Latin America, there is the wide-studied diffusion of the pension reform (Brooks, 2005; Weyland, 2004, 2005).

²⁸ Such as, research on Latin American countries as suppliers of conditional cash transfer programs for other Global South countries (Béland et al., 2018; Howlett et al., 2018b; Saguin & Howlett, 2019); as well as the more recent research on Brazil's role as a supplier of different policies and instruments (de Oliveira, 2019, 2020; Milhorance, 2020b; Oikawa Cordeiro, 2020) and some focus on policy transfer to African countries (Eta & Mngo, 2021; Lindsey & Bitugu, 2018; Seekings, 2019).

CHAPTER IV: THE AGENCY OF IOC-UNESCO IN SHAPING MARINE SPATIAL PLANNING AS A NOVEL POLICY SOLUTION²⁹

I. The importance of agency in policy transfer

This chapter explores the agency of the IOC-UNESCO in the shaping of MSP as a novel policy innovation. To do that, the study draws on the policy transfer scholarship and the scholarship on international organizations (IOs) as bureaucracies.

Policy transfer theory explains the process of adoption of policy innovations (D. P. Dolowitz & Marsh, 2000; Marsh & Sharman, 2009). Policy transfer can happen when countries actively look for policy solutions and adopt policies applied by other countries. But very often, countries adopt policy innovations not because they are in a need of a policy solution, but primarily because the policy innovation is strongly promoted by an IO, or, in the words of Martha Finnemore, it is 'supplied' by an IO (Finnemore, 1993).

In the complex policy transfer process, many factors play a role. When speaking of policies promoted by IOs, the agency of IOs comes to the fore. According to the international bureaucracies' literature, IOs are influential actors on the international scene. And, it is through authority and power that they exercise their agency. In these ways, IOs frequently legitimate and facilitate their own expansion, influence, and intervention in the affairs of states and nonstate actors (Barnett & Finnemore, 2004: 33).

IOs exercise power by classifying the world, promoting and fixing meanings, and diffusing norms (Barnett & Finnemore, 2004). IOs have the ability to identify, shift and classify definitions. For example, when the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) defines which persons are to be identified as refugees, or when the International Monetary Fund (IMF) categorizes countries according to their level of development (ibid., 32). IOs fix meanings when they name or label the social context and in this way establish the parameters of acceptable action, such as defining or redefining what 'development' or what 'security' is (ibid.). Furthermore, IOs are also articulating and transmitting norms and best practices that define what constitutes acceptable and legitimate state behavior (ibid.).

²⁹ This chapter has already been published in Jones, C. (Eds.). (2024). *Governing Oceans*. Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar Publishing. <https://doi.org/10.4337/9781035315598>.

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The source of power and authority of IOs is seen in their perceived 'rationality' as entities that function according to pre-established rules and procedures (Barnett & Finnemore, 1999: 707) and in their control over information and technical expertise (Barnett & Finnemore, 2004; Barnett & Finnemore, 1999; Liese et al., 2021). Both of these render IOs an appearance of impartiality and depoliticization when exerting their agency (Barnett & Finnemore, 2004; Barnett & Finnemore, 1999).

Drawing on these theoretical postulations and considering the important role of the IOC-UNESCO in the world-wide spread of MSP, in this chapter, I try to answer: *To what extent does the IOC-UNESCO exert an agency in shaping of MSP's understanding and policy content?* With this, I explore the potential of IOC-UNESCO to frame or reframe understandings and definitions around MSP. For this purpose, I investigate selected IOC-UNESCO publications and identify relevant narratives and policy elements that may point out to this agency of the IOC-UNESCO.

To identify relevant MSP narratives, I analyze four reports from MSP conferences organized in 2006, 2017, 2019 and 2021 by the IOC-UNESCO³⁰. The reports are authored by the IOC-UNESCO as the leading institutional author or by members of its staff³¹. Namely, I considered that these main conferences are a good proxy for the central debates that surround MSP and indicate IOC-UNESCO's understanding of MSP at the time they took place. Since they occur in four different points in time, they reflect the MSP narratives from its very beginnings as a marine policy instrument, thus giving the opportunity to also capture shifting narratives. Some of the analyzed conference reports contain to a large extent statements from the invited conference panelists. However, the mere structure of the reports, as well as the selection and presentation of the information in the reports are all indications about what is considered relevant and worth presenting by the reports' authors. It is worth noting that the findings relate only to what is presented in the reports but can be taken as an indicator for IOC-UNESCO's understanding of MSP.

³⁰ In this study, the reports are cited respectively as: Ehler & Douvere, 2007; IOC & DG MARE, 2017; IOC-UNESCO & European Commission, 2019; IOC-UNESCO & European Commission, 2021. At the moment of writing of this chapter, the latest conference report from 2022 has been published, but this could not have been included in the analysis.

³¹ The first (2006) report is written by Charles Ehler and Fanny Douvere, both are IOC-UNESCO's staff members at the moment of the report writing; the second (2017) is edited by Charles Ehler - IOC-UNESCO staff member; the final two reports (2019 and 2021) are not explicitly attributed to specific authors but were developed by the MSPGlobal team (information obtained through personal email correspondence with a member of the MSPGlobal coordination team from 13.07.2022). MSPGlobal is an IOC-UNESCO initiative and the core of its coordination team (Mr. Julian Barbière, Mr. Alejandro Iglesias Campos and Ms. Michele Quesada da Silva) are, at the moment of writing of the reports, IOC-UNESCO staff-members.

To identify change in relevant MSP policy elements, I analyze the two core MSP guidebooks from 2009 and 2021 published by the IOC-UNESCO as the leading institutional author or by some of its staff members as individuals³². The guidebooks are meant to be the guidelines to design MSP in countries interested in adopting it. For example, the first MSP ‘step-by-step’ guidebook from 2009 was translated in six languages and is a highly cited source from policy-makers who have or are adopting MSP in their countries. The guidebooks thus reflect most closely MSP’s policy content, and so, tracing possible changes and modifications in the policy elements in these guidebooks would be an indicator of potential policy-shaping agency of the IOC-UNESCO.

II. Methodological approach to the chapter

For the empirical analysis in this chapter, I use an interpretative approach to answer the research question. The main presupposition of this approach is that there is not one objective truth that the researcher observes and makes knowable, but depending on contextual factors, the beliefs of the participants in the research and those of the researcher, there can be potentially multiple truths about different social, political, cultural and other human events (Schwartz-Shea & Yanow, 2011: 4). And so, attending to those different truths, i.e., understanding them and making them knowable, happens through the interactions between the researcher and the researched as the researcher seeks to interpret those events and make those interpretations legible (ibid.)

To provide for trustworthiness of the research process and findings, I provide for transparency of my sense-making process by documenting the cognitive process of data analysis (i.e., reflexivity), as well as transparency in the data analysis stages and techniques I apply as a researcher (Schwartz-Shea & Yanow, 2011: 99-106).

To answer the research question, I rely predominantly on Qualitative Content Analysis (QCA)³³ as the main method, and in addition I occasionally conduct lexical search and include considerations about the communication style or the organizational structure of the reports. While with the QCA I detect relevant aspects, ideas or themes spreading across larger text segments, lexical search is a simple tool I use separately from QCA to determine whether certain words or phrases that reflect concepts relevant for the research are present in the

³² In this study, the guidebooks are cited respectively as: Ehler & Douvère, 2009 and UNESCO-IOC & European Commission, 2021.

³³ While the abbreviation QCA is used for two different methods, namely, Qualitative Content Analysis and Qualitative Comparative Analysis, I always refer to the former when using it in this study.

documents and with what frequency. By considering the communication style, I capture some aspects which cannot be captured by QCA and I deem them important for the analysis, such as size of the reports, visualization tools, use of longer text paragraphs vs twitter-like messages, etc., which contribute to the shaping of the narrative in addition to the textual data.³⁴ The interpretative approach is visible in the process of constructing the coding frames and in identifying and assessing the MSP narratives and policy changes.

II.1. Qualitative Content Analysis (QCA)

Qualitative Content Analysis (QCA) is a method that ‘systematically describe[s] the meaning of the qualitative material’ in the selected documents (Schreier, 2012: 1). It is done by assigning successive portions of the material (read: text segments) to codes of the coding frame developed by the researcher (ibid.: 1-19), whereby the construction of the coding frame lies at the heart of this method. The codes, differentiated into categories and sub-categories, reflect the aspects or themes relevant for the research. This process of assigning text segments to codes is defined as coding. The QCA is thus a data-reducing method, where the material is reduced to codes which are defined in more abstract terms than the content of the material itself (ibid.). In this way, QCA helps to systematically analyze the selected material in relevant aspects.

QCA is applied when the researcher engages in ‘some degree of interpretation to arrive at the meaning of [the] data’ (Schreier, 2012: 2). The latter is a process ‘in which we bring together our perception of the material with our own individual background: what we know about a topic, the situation in which we encounter it, how we feel at the time, and much more’ since ‘[m]eaning is not a given, but we *construct* meaning’ (ibid.: original emphasis). The coding frame in QCA is used to describe the meaning of the codes and is used to identify their frequency, co-occurrence and timing (Mende, 2022: 343). However, these codes are not simply objectively performed reductions of data, but they add value and interpretive meaning to the data (ibid.). Namely, ‘a code is a researcher-generated construct that symbolizes and thus attributes interpreted meaning to each individual datum for later purposes of pattern

³⁴ For example, the first (2006) report is by far the longest of all four with a total of 83 pages. The way this report is written is also distinguishable from the rest. It delivers its content through different thematic chapters and elaborated paragraphs, so the reader gets the impression of this report being of a more institutional character. Whereas, the 2019 and 2021 reports, for example, deliver their content by paraphrasing or citing statements from individual conference panelists, which is why most of the coded text segments are in the form of Q&As and twitter-like messages, and less as regular text paragraphs. These two reports contain more infographics and photographs too. The 2017 report is a mixture of both reporting styles. These elements become relevant for the assessment of the first narrative.

detection, categorization, theory building, and other analytic processes” (Saldaña, 2012, In: Mende, 2022: 344).

In a way, there are two important sub-processes in the QCA that happen almost simultaneously, namely the creation of the coding frame and the coding or assigning of text segments to the codes of the coding frame. QCA is an iterative process where through several coding cycles the researcher goes back and forth from the material to the coding frame, refining the categories and sub-categories and their definitions, so that all the material can systematically fit into the same coding frame (Schreier, 2012: 194-218). The coding frame is being constructed through the initial coding cycles. The final, or, refined coding frame is then applied to the whole material in a final step known as main coding (ibid.). After the main coding is finished, preferably by using different analytical and visualization tools³⁵, the researcher can draw conclusions on the frequency, co-occurrence and timing of the codes.

II.2. Constructing the coding frames

The cognitive process (reflexivity)

In structuring of the coding frames, (or in other words, the defining and labeling of the codes), I was informed by previous knowledge about the ecosystem approach (EA) and ecosystem-based management (EBM). Namely, at the beginning of my PhD study, I did a very broad literature review on these two principles trying to understand their differences, but also the way they are interpreted and applied in environmental governance scholarship (Alexander et al., 2019; Dominguez-Tejo & Metternicht, 2018; Engler, 2015; Grumbine, 1994; Kelly et al., 2019; Kirkfeldt, 2019; Larkin, 1996; Long et al., 2015; Söderström et al., 2016). So, it came sort of naturally for me to look for the constitutive elements of these principles in MSP too. Such are, for example, integrating local knowledge and social aspects in the management of natural resources, management at a proper temporal and geographical scale, cross-sectoral integration and inter-disciplinarity, among others. After all, at least by definition, these principles are expected to be at the core of MSP, as enshrined in documents from the CBD, the EU, or the IOC-UNESCO for that matter (Altvater & Passarello, 2018; Secretariat of the CBD, 2012). While coding, I was sensitive in identifying the presence or absence of these elements in MSP, and some codes in the coding frames do reflect that (for example, in the coding frame for the conference reports there is the code ‘ecosystem-based management’, or

³⁵ For this purpose, I apply QCA in this study with the help of the MAXQDA qualitative data analysis software.

'MSP – a tool for the EA', or, the codes 'stakeholder engagement', 'adaptive management', 'cross-sector integration' etc.).

Further debates that have informed me while creating the coding frames are the blue economy and blue growth debates and their contribution in advancing the importance of ocean resources and application of MSP worldwide, but also the risk these development models may pose to the environment and people's wellbeing if steered inadequately (N. J. Bennett et al., 2015, 2021; Cisneros-Montemayor et al., 2019; Flannery et al., 2019; Jones et al., 2016; Keen et al., 2018; Mulazzani & Malorgio, 2017; Schultz-Zehden et al., 2019; Silver et al., 2015; Voyer et al., 2018). Being previously informed by the environmental governance scholarship, I hold a more critical position towards these models regarding their sustainability and I was interested to see how the selected documents treat these paradigms too (for example, this becomes evident through the code 'blue economy').

For similar reasons, while coding, I was sensitive in identifying how the documents treated the environment vs growth debate. So, for example, in the coding frame for the guidebooks, there are codes distinguishing between environmental, social and economic data considered relevant in the MSP process (codes 'environmental considerations', 'socio-economic considerations' and 'maritime sectors' respectively). Furthermore, considering the rising critique that MSP fails to completely integrate the human dimension in marine planning (Ehler & Douvère, 2007; McKinley et al., 2019; St. Martin & Hall-Arber, 2008; Tafon, 2018), it became relevant for me to address the question of human well-being too, or, to see whether/how the social and cultural dimension of sustainability was incorporated in the selected MSP documents (so, for example, I have operationalized the latter through the code 'socio-economic dimension to MSP').

Whereas the previously mentioned debates sensitized me more in the process of constructing the coding frame for the MSP conference reports, for the coding frame for the guidebooks, as a starting point for the structure of the frame, I used the steps or stages in the process of development of MSP as described in the first technical guidebook for MSP from 2009 (Ehler & Douvère, 2009). This is evident from the labels of the codes in this coding frame, such as, 'pre-planning', 'planning', 'plan development' etc. But I was also informed by the previously mentioned debates, which is visible through the presence of the code 'blue economy'.

Some themes rose from the documents themselves due to their importance (read: frequency). I determined inductively, for example, the codes related to areas beyond national jurisdiction (ABNJ), transboundary MSP, or, global ocean governance.

The technical process

I used two document sets (conference reports and guidebooks) analyzed with separate coding frames to respond to the question. Both coding frames are made of categories and sub-categories with their respective definitions and examples (see Appendices B.1 and B.2 respectively for the coding frame of the conference reports and the guidebooks).

The development of the coding frames is a step-wise and a time-consuming process. Since there was no second coder, testing for validity of the coding through inter-coder agreement was not possible. I instead achieved this by leaving enough time to pass between the coding sessions, so that I could look at the texts every next coding session with 'new eyes' as objectively as possible (Schreier, 2012)³⁶. The final coding frame is produced by consecutive adjustments. So, the adjusted coding frame was applied again to the whole material in a stage known as "main coding" (Schreier, 2012: 194-218). The final coding frames are both of medium complexity (Schreier, 2012: 65-66). Namely, they contain categories that each have at least two sub-categories. The text segments are assigned only to the sub-categories (and not to the categories) (see Figure 3 and 5 for the general structures of the two coding frames; for the complete coding frames, see Appendices B.1 and B.2).

The coding frames satisfy the criteria of *unidimensionality*, i.e., each code captures only one aspect of the material; *mutual exclusiveness*, i.e., each text segment is assigned to only one code; *saturation*, i.e., each code has been assigned at least twice³⁷; and finally, *exhaustiveness* since each text segment of the material³⁸ has been assigned to at least one code (Schreier, 2012: 72-77).

³⁶ For example, when coding the conference reports, firstly, I looked into each report separately with enough time distance and did some orientational coding to identify main categories in every report. In a second round, I looked comparatively in more detail into the first two reports (2009 and 2017), since after the orientational coding I noticed the largest differences between them. I then gradually adjusted the coding frame at this stage as I integrated the other two reports one after the other.

³⁷ Except for the code 'MSP and climate change' in the conference reports, which is assigned only once, but I left it nevertheless in the coding frame as it indicates an absence of this aspect from the conference reports (!)

³⁸ Read here: 'each text segment of the relevant material'. It is important to note that not the complete text from the documents was considered as relevant for the research. For example, the introductory or concluding chapters of the documents were not coded, as they contain snap-shots of the aspects which are then repeated and elaborated in the main body of the document which was considered for coding.

III. MSP narratives

The final coding frame for the conference reports consists of three main categories: “General context”, “MSP-specific context” and “MSP process and characteristics”, further divided in sub-categories (see Figure 3). “General context” captures more general aspects that do not directly refer to MSP but give a broader introduction to the field of marine resource management, including main concepts, challenges and pressing environmental issues in this field. The text segments coded under this category provide the broader context within which the MSP debate arises, such as ecosystem-based management of natural resources. “MSP-specific context” refers to aspects related to the international debates directly linked to MSP in particular, providing a more up-close context about the relevance of MSP, such as MSP and the blue economy, MSP and ocean governance, MSP and the ecosystem approach, transboundary MSP etc. The category “MSP process and characteristics” refers to aspects linked to the practical application of MSP, such as text segments discussing the stages or phases of MSP (e.g., planning, implementation, evaluation etc.), or to the main defining elements of MSP (e.g., cross-sector integration, stakeholder engagement, adaptive management etc.).

Code System	203
General context	0
ocean & biodiversity	9
ecosystem-based management	13
MSP-specific context	0
MSP and ABNJ	6
MSP and Blue economy	11
MSP and ocean governance	11
MSP - tool for EA	3
transboundary MSP	15
MSP and Climate Change	1
MSP process and characteristics	0
MSP case reports	17
MSP allocates uses	11
socio-economic dimension to MSP	4
stakeholder engagement	26
data	5
cross-sector integration	7
capacity development	13
adaptive management	8
costs/benefits	3
authority and legislation	7
planning and analysis	5
monitoring and evaluation	15
implementation	3
Other	10

Figure 3.: Coding frame for the conference reports with names of the categories and their sub-categories, as well as the number of text segments assigned to each sub-category. The coding frames are designed by the author with the help of the MAXQDA software.

After the coding is finished, based on the frequency, co-occurrence and timing of the categories and sub-categories across the documents (Mende, 2022), I identify the MSP narratives. For the identification and assessment of the narratives, in addition to QCA, I occasionally consider the structure and communication style of the reports, as well as lexical search. Within the analysis I identify three MSP narratives:

III.1. “MSP – Ubiquitous”

According to this narrative, MSP evolves *from* being a technical ecosystem-based management tool for spatial distribution of marine areas in the 2006 report *to* becoming the ‘go-to’ strategy for sustainable ocean governance for every coastal country in the later reports.

The analysis captures several tendencies that showcase this development. One of them is related to the code ‘MSP allocates uses’. This code is assigned to segments where MSP is discussed as a tool for ecosystem-based management that allocates uses to solve space conflicts: MSP “...is about analyzing and allocating parts of the three-dimensional marine space to specific uses...” (Report 2006, p.24), or: “MSP is place- or area-based and can provide a practical approach to long-term ecosystem-based management...” (ibid.). The analysis shows the disappearance of the code ‘MSP allocates uses’ after the 2006 report.

Ten out of eleven text segments assigned to this code belong to the 2006 report, speaking of disappearing of this ‘way of seeing’ of MSP in the posterior reports. At the same time, this code is one of the five most frequent ones in the 2006 report, speaking of its relevance in the latter. This prevalence points to the main understanding of MSP in the 2006 report as being, first and foremost, a technical instrument that can be used to allocate more efficiently human uses in the marine space. Importantly, there is an intent to clearly delimit the role of MSP in that it must be complemented by other measures to reach overall strategic objectives: “...[MSP] cannot be used to control the performance or behavior of human activities in terms of the production of goods and services. *Other tools or management measures* [...] must be used in conjunction with marine spatial planning.” (Report 2006, p. 24: emphasis added).

A second tendency shown with the analysis is that, relative to the 2006 report, several new codes appear for the first time in the 2017 report captured under the category ‘MSP-specific context’. The code ‘MSP allocates uses’ loses relevance and so is the predominant seeing of MSP as a technical instrument for space allocation. Whereas, ‘MSP-specific context’ shows that discussions about ‘blue economy’, ‘transboundary MSP’ and ‘ocean governance’ appear

for the first time in the 2017 report³⁹. Even more so, taking the final three reports together, the codes ‘blue economy’ and ‘transboundary MSP’ appear as most frequent ones in all of them, pointing not only to new framings around MSP but to the overall higher relevance of these new framings. They show up more often than ecosystem-based management as the predominant framework that determined MSP’s function in the 2006 report.

These new agendas are elevating the role of MSP from a technical to a more strategic level. MSP from the later reports can be used for fulfilling plenty of international commitments: “[...] MSP is expected to apply an ecosystem-based approach which contributes to achieving targets of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) [...]. The ecosystem-based approach also allows to plan for achieving the SDG 14 targets [...] and [for] conservation of at least 10% of coastal and marine area, which is also an Aichi Biodiversity target. Additionally, the participatory planning process [...] contributes to achieving other SDGs targets, such as participatory decision making and partnerships for sharing knowledge, expertise and resources to support the achievement of sustainable development.” (Report 2021, p.9). In this regard, the 2017 report has a separate session on ‘The Connection between MSP and Global Governance Goals’.

It is furthermore important to note that the category ‘MSP-specific context’ fully substitutes the category ‘General context’ from the 2006 report (see Figure 4). Important here is that ‘General context’ reflects the strongest environmental components of the whole coding frame, as it is more broadly discussed under the second narrative.

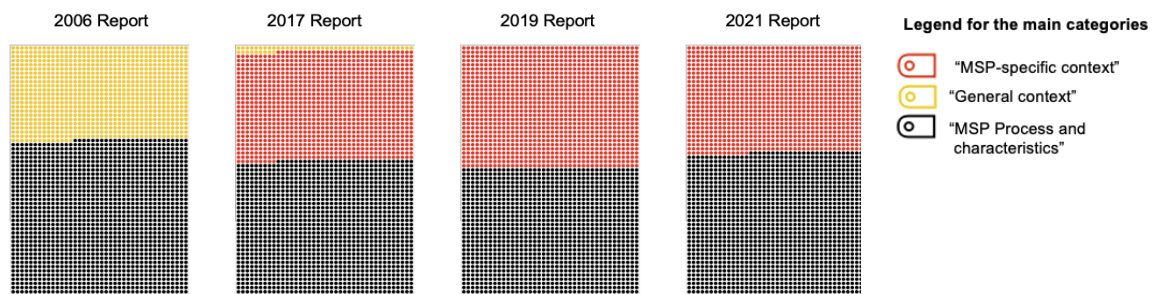


Figure 4.: Distribution of the three main categories across the four reports

³⁹ The code ‘Blue economy’ refers to discussions about the blue economy, blue growth, economic growth, ocean economy and the different maritime industries, including considerations about MSP’s role as a tool for blue economy and experiences from countries in that matter. ‘Transboundary MSP’ refers to cross-border cooperation in MSP processes involving the territory of more than one country, including experiences from countries in that matter. ‘Ocean governance’ refers to discussions about sustainable development of oceans with references to SDGs, including discussion about MSP as a tool to achieve sustainable ocean governance and SDGs, as well as global ocean governance initiatives such as cooperation and partnerships between countries or organizations to achieve sustainable management of oceans. The exact code definitions with examples can be seen in Annex 1.

A third tendency captured by the analysis is that MSP is expanding fast and world-wide. While in the 2006 report, MSP needs introduction and a justification for its rationale, the following reports have even separate sessions dedicated to the development trends around MSP, the achievements of the MSPglobal initiative and its scaling-up strategies. For example, two out of four sessions in the 2021 report are: 'Presenting MSPglobal results' and 'Scaling up MSP worldwide', whereas the 2017 report has a session on 'The world-wide Status and Trends of MSP'.

This tendency is also exemplified through the many case studies reported in the recent conference reports. The code "MSP case reports" captures the text segments that generally describe how MSP works or is being developed in specific countries without going in depth into specific MSP issues. An example is the following: "[...] Namibia is only starting its MSP process. The 1500 km of Namibian coast is already protected by national parks except for a few coastal areas of small communities and ports. Principal activities include..." (p.7, Report 2017). This code appears for the first time in the 2017 report, where it is also the most frequent one. This means that the reporting around MSP shifts from the conceptual and theoretical level evidenced in the 2006 report (for e.g., through the category "General context") to a more applicable level where different stakeholders from different parts of the world share their MSP experiences. Namely, while the very few case studies from the 2006 report come from developed countries (e.g., UK, Germany, Australia, Canada), the later reports involve case studies from different parts of the world, including countries from Latin America, Africa, East Asia, Europe, as well as from Small Island Developing States (SIDS), showcasing MSP's global reach especially among developing countries.

A fourth tendency captured by the analysis are the different communication strategies of the reports. Namely, the recent conference reports witness a 'campaigning style' of MSP communication, in line with the main objective of the IOC/EC 'Joint Roadmap to *accelerate* MSP worldwide' (European Commission & IOC/UNESCO, n.d.; emphasis added). The Executive Agency for Small and Medium Enterprises (EASME) and expert communicators from MSPglobal and EU's MSP platform, developed a guide called *Communicating MSP* in October 2020, meant to ensure a "broad, open and silo-breaking style of communication on MSP" (EASME/IOC-UNESCO, 2021).

The 2019 and 2021 reports already reflect elements from this communication style. They namely have more distinguished reporting style with very short summaries from the statements of the panelists, colorful design, different lettering styles and catchy twitter-size key messages: "You too can take part in the MSPGlobal journey!" (Report 2019, p.3), or, "You are the end users of the MSPGlobal initiative" (Report 2019, p.2). The three reports (2017, 2019 and 2021) have far less plain text; they have predominantly shorter paragraphs in boxes,

infographics and photographs from the conferences' panelists. This strategy is aligned with some of the conclusions of the internal evaluation on the strategic positioning of the IOC-UNESCO from 2021, where it is highlighted that the work of IOC-UNESCO stays often 'invisible' and that this should be improved by better visibility strategy to strengthen the recognition of IOC's brand (UNESCO IOS, 2021, p.9).

The fifth tendency in the latest conference reports is the emphasis of the need not only for national but for transboundary MSP developed through cross-border cooperation. This reflects the general tendency of regionalization of marine affairs. The regional approach is considered to most properly address marine issues that are most often of a transboundary nature.⁴⁰

In the 2006 report MSP is largely perceived as an instrument applied on national or sub-national level. The only supranational elements considered in this report are international conventions that to some extent can influence the content and development of the *national* MSP (Report 2006; emphasis added). There is no mention of coordinating with neighboring countries in the development of the national MSP, or less so, a reference to regional MSP.

This changes dramatically from the 2017 report on. The very first priority of the IOC/EC Joint Roadmap, is the "transboundary maritime/marine spatial planning" (European Commission & IOC/UNESCO, n.d.). One of the first outputs of the IOC/EC Joint Roadmap, the MSPglobal initiative's very main objective is the establishment of pilot projects for regional MSP cooperation in the Western Mediterranean and the South-East Pacific regional seas, which for the majority of the countries in these regions is their very first encounter with MSP. The regional pilot projects are mainly financed by DG MARE to test and strengthen practices of MSP cross-border cooperation with non-EU Member States (p.37, 2017 Report). It is expected that the regional exchange of data and knowledge sharing among neighboring countries would provide a higher political drive for the adoption of MSP (ibid.).

In addition, the relevance of transboundary MSP is visible through the structure of the reports too. The 2017 report has a panel on "MSP and cross-border cooperation", whereas both panels in the 2019 report relate directly to cross-border cooperation: "Regional visions for MSP and Sustainable Blue Economy" and "Challenges of cross-border/transboundary MSP".

In sum, according to this narrative, MSP may have started as a technical instrument for space allocation. It has, however, been elevated to being *the* strategic mechanism for sustainable ocean governance on national, regional and international level. Showcasing MSP's

⁴⁰ For example, UNEP's Regional Seas Programme, the Regional Fisheries Management Organizations (RFMOs), the management of Large Marine Ecosystems (LMEs), and many more international organizations and initiatives involving cross-border cooperation in marine affairs have regional jurisdictions determined by the characteristics of the specific species or ecosystems they are trying to regulate.

widespread expansion and acceptance globally through simplified and open communication style, the most recent reports manage to paint MSP as the obvious solution for many governments' ills in the sphere of marine governance.

III.2. "MSP – Good for Business"

This narrative reflects on the relationship between MSP and the blue economy, as well as MSP's place in the environment vs. growth debate. The findings are predominantly drawn from the QCA analysis, especially through the category 'MSP and Blue economy' (found only in the last three reports), and from lexical search.

In identifying this narrative, I used the interpretations of the concept 'blue economy' from Voyer et al. (2018)'s study (building on Silver et al., 2015). Namely, these scholars identify four different interpretations of blue economy internationally: Oceans as natural capital, Oceans as livelihoods, Oceans as a driver of innovation and Oceans as good business⁴¹. MSP finds its place in all of these interpretations, being observed as a "universal tool towards achieving a Blue Economy across all four lenses" (Voyer et al., 2018: 17).

My analysis finds most elements of 'Oceans as good business' in the conference reports. A distinguishing element of this blue economy interpretation is the focus on securing economic growth from the ocean through the development of different maritime industries in a manner somewhat sensitive to environmental considerations (Voyer et al., 2018). The main elements of this blue economy interpretation are found in all three final conference reports.

The blue economy concept is used in reference to development of certain economic sectors, such as, aquaculture, renewable energy, oil and gas, tourism and fisheries (p.11, Report 2021; p.10, Report 2017; p.24, 25, Report 2017); As a part of the panel 'MSP Toward Sustainable Blue Growth' in the 2017 report Blue Growth is praised for its 'potential to create jobs, growth

⁴¹ Under 'Oceans as natural capital' themes related to environmental protection, MPAs, EBM, climate change mitigation and community wellbeing are the predominant ones, where the analyzed documents mainly came from environmental NGOs; under 'Oceans as livelihoods' themes related to human health and safety, livelihoods, poverty alleviation, food security and income/employment generation were the more frequent ones, with documents coming from development organizations, FAO and countries in the Global South, such as the SIDS and the Caribbean countries; in 'Oceans as good business' the predominant themes were related to the different sectors or maritime clusters of the 'blue economy', their economic valuation and growth strategies, with publications coming from the OECD, EU, industry and business groups; finally, 'Oceans as a driver of innovation' refers to new ways of using the oceans, where the main themes are related to investment, R&D, innovative financing and private sector involvement, with the main publications coming from the EU but also from the Australian government where the emphasis is on a stronger role for science in addressing challenges to economic growth (Voyer et al., 2018).

and investments’, and the MSP processes as means to achieve ‘certainty and sustainability of [the] ocean economies’ (p.24, Report 2017). In the 2019 report, in the opening remarks from one of IOC-UNESCO’s high-ranking official – Julian Barbière, “MSP has shown its compatibility with Blue Economy when it gives, for example, legal certainty and security for business development.” (p.2, 2019 report).

In line with Voyer et al. (2018)’s understanding of ‘Ocean as good business’, the reports point to some environmental sensitivity in the process: “...MSP can identify where aquaculture can take place with minimum environmental impacts...” (Report 2017, p.25); “...whenever we develop economic activities in the sea, we need to know about environmental impacts...” (ibid., p.24); “...A “desperate need” exists to move [gas and oil exploration] into remote areas, in a sustainable manner, that mitigates risk to complex environmental issues/potential impacts...” (ibid., p.10).

In addition, there are few elements in these reports from Voyer et al. (2018)’s ‘Oceans as drivers of innovation’ in the mention of using marine space for new ‘uses’ such as biotechnology and renewables (Report 2021, p.11; Report 2019, p. 2), or, in making general references to the innovation and investment potential of the blue economy (Report 2017).

Besides the one brief mention of small-scale fisheries (p.11, Report 2021) and brief reference to global food and energy demand (p.2, Report 2019), Voyer’s ‘Oceans as livelihoods’ discourse is absent. While environmental protection concerns are included in the reports, they are nevertheless not prioritized, and so, the ‘Oceans as natural capital’ discourse is also largely absent.

Interestingly enough, the reports show a shift away from the use of the term ‘blue growth’ towards ‘sustainable blue economy’, showcasing sensitivity to the criticism of ‘blue growth’ in being of a more extractive instead of developmental nature (for this criticism : Cisneros-Montemayor et al., 2019). A lexical search has shown that while the 2017 and 2019 reports use both terms ‘blue economy’ and ‘blue growth’, the latter declines in use in the 2019 report, whereas in the final 2021 report, only the term ‘(sustainable) blue economy’ is present. Even more so, in the final 2021 report the MSPglobal coordinator – Alejandro Iglesias Campos, speaks of the need to build ‘a more sustainable, equitable and fair blue economy’ (p.7, 2021 Report). This reflects a more general transition in the international debate, such as EU’s or FAO’s shift away from ‘blue growth’ towards ‘sustainable blue economy’, or, ‘blue transformations’, respectively. Namely, in a recent 2021 communication from the European Commission on a new approach to sustainable blue economy, the word is of “shifting the focus

from ‘blue growth’ to ‘sustainable blue economy’” (European Commission, 2021) to help achieve the objectives of the European Green Deal and replace “unchecked expansion” with clean and climate-friendly activities in the marine environment (ibid.). Similarly, FAO has been using the term ‘blue growth’ quite extensively in relation to the sectors of fisheries and aquaculture. With its Blue Growth Initiative, FAO seeks to maximize economic and social benefits while minimizing environmental degradation in these sectors (FAO, 2017). Recently, however, FAO speaks often of a ‘blue transformation’ in the field of fisheries and aquaculture in a very similar context to the usage of ‘blue growth’ (FAO, 2021). FAO’s intention to move away from ‘blue growth’ was also expressed in a statement by a FAO representative on the 15th of December 2021, at a conference organized by the Forum Umwelt und Entwicklung, Fair Oceans and Brot für die Welt on the topic “Oceans under increasing pressure” (personal observation).

Informed by the main critique against the ‘blue economy’ and ‘blue growth’ development models as ones that prioritize economic over environmental and social/cultural considerations (N. J. Bennett et al., 2015, 2021; Cisneros-Montemayor et al., 2019; Silver et al., 2015), this present analysis further checks if the conference reports reflect this tendency too.

Indeed, the analysis shows the disappearance of the ecological themes present in the 2006 report through the disappearance of the category ‘General context’ and its codes ‘ecosystem-based management’ and ‘ocean & biodiversity’ in the posterior reports. These two codes showcase environmental degradation, ecological importance of ocean and marine resources, notions of ecocentrism, discussions about ecosystem-based management or the ecosystem approach, and emphasizing the need to achieve a balance between conservation and sustainable use. Some examples are: “[...] Fisheries are collapsing. The loss of marine biodiversity is profoundly reducing the ocean’s ability to produce seafood [...]” (Report 2006, p.32), or, “[...] There are many causes of the problems, including: •Overexploitation of marine resources, e.g., over fishing •Habitat loss and physical alterations to habitat [...]” (ibid.).

Regarding the strived balance between conservation and sustainable use, in the more recent reports the pendulum has been shifting towards ‘sustainable use’, leaving ‘conservation’ slowly out of the equation. Namely, a lexical search has shown some evident decline in the use of the word ‘conservation’ in the reports. While in the 2006 report the words ‘conservation’ or ‘conserve’ are used 83 times; in the 2017 report it is 26 times, whereas in the 2019 and

2021 reports their use declines with two (2) and three (3) hits respectively per report.⁴² To assure that this loss in the mention of nature conservation could have been compensated by the use of 'sustainable development' as a concept that per essence integrates the dimension of environmental protection, I did another lexical search for the term 'sustainable development'. And so, it turns that 'sustainable development' too appears less frequently in the last two reports. In the 2021 report, the adjective 'sustainable' was attached far more often to 'blue economy' or 'ocean economy' (nine out of 17 times) than to 'development' (two out of 17 times). In the 2019 report, there is no word of 'sustainable development' but only of 'sustainable blue economy'.

Regarding the neglected social/cultural dimension in the blue economy development model (N. J. Bennett et al., 2015, 2021; Cisneros-Montemayor et al., 2019; Silver et al., 2015), similar critique exists against the current MSP application. It is seen as a process nonreceptive to socio-cultural information in the marine field, as it is for economic, ecological and administrative one (McKinley et al., 2019).

Specifically, the main tool for conducting MSP is the Geographic Information System (GIS) (Ehler & Douvère, 2007). These GIS technologies and the maps they provide have invaluable role in data aggregation and visualization of complex ecosystem interactions. By being the main tool used for the development of future scenarios for development of marine areas they help structure the MSP decision-making process (St. Martin & Hall-Arber, 2008).

This being said, being a spatial analysis tool, the *where* will always take the center-stage in MSP. At the same time, there are socio-cultural issues which are not always spatially determined. For example, they can be of spiritual, or of affective character and can be related to visual aesthetics, seascapes, infinite horizons which are not easily representable on spatial maps (Tafon, 2018: 7)⁴³. On a typical GIS map, the local (fishing) communities are relegated to terrestrial locations and are considered as sites of impact, whereas their "at-sea" interactions, interests and dependencies are left invisible (St. Martin & Hall-Arber, 2008). Similarly, while sites of mining, off-shore energy development, tourism or recreational fishing are mapped on a GIS map, it is left to the imagination knowing how these spaces and activities are linked to the onshore locations and local communities. Hence, there is a so called

⁴² Note that this numbers are expressed in absolute terms. The reports are of different length. For example, the last two reports (2019 and 2021) are way shorter than the first two reports (2006 and 2017).

⁴³ Another common example is the case with the local fishing communities whose relations with the marine resource itself are not visible on a map. For example, information concerning which fishing communities use what kind of fishing gear, what kind of species they fish, which areas they rely upon or for which areas they dispose local knowledge of, is a 'missing layer' on a GIS map (Ehler & Douvère, 2007, 2009; St. Martin & Hall-Arber, 2008).

'cartographic silence' that fails to represent the complex human relationships to locations and natural resources at-sea (ibid.).

Now, while the 2006 report discusses somewhat the need to include the 'human dimension' in MSP, this gets largely neglected in the posterior reports. In the 2006 report this is captured through the code 'socio-economic dimension to MSP', which refers to discussions about the involvement of the local communities and their local knowledge and experiences in MSP data collection and planning processes. Three out of four text segments in this code come from the 2006 report. An example that captures the essence of the issue is: "...[the] socio-economic information...is expressed as the presence or absence of particular activities, e.g., fishing, mineral extraction, dredging, and shipping. Documenting these activities in space is clearly important to spatial planning and decision making, but once reduced to layers in the GIS, these activities are severed from the communities that they support and/or from which they originate." (Report 2006, 54-55); "...[M]ethods to better document the connections between offshore locations and onshore communities need to be developed along with socio-economic layers generally. It also points out the need for greater community-level participation in marine spatial planning." (Report 2006, p.55).

The 2017 report addresses superficially this problem by mentioning the need to include social scientists to increase sensitivity to the social and cultural issues (Report 2017, p.20). Besides this, the importance of integrating local knowledge, or, being open to information that is not spatially representable and of non-scientific nature, remains unaddressed in the posterior conference reports.

In sum, the blue economy narrative is present in the final three reports and showcases the high potential of MSP towards the realization of its objectives. Blue economy is seen as a model, first and foremost, good for business and economic growth. Simultaneously, while there are some environmental considerations, overall, there is a sharp decline in environmental and socio-cultural themes across the reports.

III.3. "MSP – Participatory and Efficient"

According to the IOC-UNESCO, MSP is a '*public process* of analyzing and allocating the spatial and temporal distribution of human activities in marine areas to achieve ecological, economic and social objectives that are usually specified through a *political process*' (IOC-UNESCO, n.d.: emphasis added). MSP being public and political process brings to the fore the relevance of stakeholder involvement and public participation, as well as the degree of (de)politicization of the problems meant to be solved with the MSP.

This narrative reflects on the position projected by the conference reports regarding these issues. The findings predominantly rely on the interpretation of the category 'Stakeholder engagement'.

'Stakeholder engagement' is the only category present in all four reports and the most frequent category in the whole coding frame, pointing to its universal importance for MSP (!). It captures considerations on the importance and forms of engaging different stakeholders and/or the public in the MSP process, including experiences and specific initiatives in this regard. The category is, however, significantly less important in the first (2006) report compared to the rest of the reports. Namely, in the 2017 report it belongs to the top five categories by frequency, whereas in the 2019 and 2021 reports it is the most frequent category.

Inspired by matters of better regulation of marine areas and ecological problems, MSP is underpinned by the logic of regulatory efficiency and natural resource management (Ritchie & Ellis, 2010: 702). Now, while the ecological objectives in MSP are usually based on scientific evidence and have tangible targets that bring to the process an element of objectivity, at the stage where the framing of the problems and solutions happens, subjectivity, power and contestation play the most important role (ibid.). This is way, by its own nature, MSP is a conflictive process, where different parties negotiate around limited resources. So, the question arises if the MSP process goes through a process of actual depoliticization, with its political or conflictive elements artificially smoothed away. After all, MSP is being described as a 'rational' one, or, its main outcome – the space distribution, as an 'efficient' one.

Critics of MSP will say that MSP is a reflection of the post-political era we live in (Tafon, 2018). Namely, post-political practices frame issues as neutral, being beyond politics and no longer contestable (Flannery et al., 2019: 203). In this way MSP is nothing but *logical* technocratic exercise for allocating space in an *efficient* manner (ibid.: 205: emphasis added). This goes in line with the position of Fanny Douvere, a high IOC-UNESCO official (and the second author of the 2006 Report and the MSP guidebook from 2009), when describing MSP as a rational process (Douvere, 2008) or when speaking of *efficient* MSP participatory process (Pomeroy & Douvere, 2008, p.819, emphasis added). 'MSP is not a win-win situation, rather it is all about trade-offs' (2017 Report, p.10).

In this regard, both, the 2006 (p.13, 19) and the 2017 report (p.16, 33) refer to MSP as a rational process that increases the efficiency of the use of ocean space. The 2006 report speaks of allocating space in a rational manner to minimize conflicts of interest (ibid., p.19), and of MSP contributing to regulatory and information efficiency (ibid., p.27), whereas, the

2017 report speaks of MSP as a process that rationalizes the complexity of ocean use (ibid., 33). The two latest reports, from 2019 and 2021, do not employ this terminology when referring to the MSP process.

In a post-political era, the “political contradictions are reduced to policy problems to be managed by experts and legitimated through participatory processes in which the scope of potential outcomes is narrowly defined in advance.” (Wilson & Swyngedouw, 2014: 6). This tendency of predetermining the outcomes of the MSP process even before the process has started, is visible in the 2006 report: ‘Stakeholders should be properly informed to enable them to play their full roles, e.g., the pros and cons of different activities or options.’ (Report 2006, p.51). This, on the other hand, inevitably reminds us of the concept ‘social preparation’ described by Pomeroy & Douvere (2008: 820), as a mean to empower stakeholders so as to achieve ‘behavior and attitude changes so that MSP process can be sustainable’ (ibid.).

The ‘top-down’ designation of ‘relevant’ stakeholders is also a way to predetermine an outcome of a negotiation process. So, for example, the 2017 report speaks of selecting stakeholders to ‘ensure any potential conflicts are represented’ (p.10), or, involving stakeholders ‘which are directly affected’ (ibid.), implying a pre-existing position about where a conflict in the process may arise, or about which stakeholders will directly be affected from the MSP process. This kind of suppositions leave away opportunities for less visible or less known stakeholders to join the process, and may be especially damaging if countries with different cultural and societal context are adopting MSP by way of copying western notions of what a ‘relevant stakeholder’ is.

MSP experts call for prudence in the selection of stakeholders, since too many of them will slow down the process, but too few would mean some key stakeholders are left out (Pomeroy & Douvere, 2008, p.819). In this line, the 2006 report states: ‘[a] balance is needed. Stakeholder engagement should inform and support, but not to be the sole determinant of any MSP scheme. That should be achieved through the leadership of politicians and the planning team’ (Report 2006, p.51). According to statements in the 2017 report: encouraging fast MSP adoption needs smaller group of stakeholders, representing the most influential ones, but, if the MSP plan is to be of high quality and implemented, then it is important to consider those stakeholders who do not have a loud voice (p.10) (!). These statements signal urgency in adopting MSP at the cost of involving all interested or affected stakeholders.

All reports refer to the engagement of the active MSP stakeholders, disregarding the interests and motivations of those who for different reasons did not become part of the process. The

latest 2021 report is the only one that contains a clear message on initiatives to tackle the issue of the inclusion of coastal local communities and NGOs in MSP processes as actors ‘who do not have the capacity to engage in MSP, and very often do not understand the relevance of MSP until it is too late.’ (Report 2021, p.12).

Some interesting tendencies are noticed in the diversity of stakeholders. Namely, while at the first MSP conference the main participants are scientists and MSP practitioners from the governmental sector, the later conferences invite participants from the private and NGO sectors too.

This narrative is painting MSP as a participatory and efficient process. While we witness an almost mantric use of ‘stakeholder engagement’ in MSP, the goal seem to be getting as efficiently as possible to the predetermined end-result of the MSP process⁴⁴. While this tendency is more evident in the first two reports, there are at least some considerations about (lacking) inclusiveness and importance of stakeholder diversity in the posterior reports.

This part of the analysis has managed to identify three main MSP narratives reflected in the selected publications from the IOC-UNESCO with the potential to shape the understanding of MSP as a public policy and contribute to its world-wide diffusion. In what follows, the analysis focuses on the potential of IOC-UNESCO to shape the actual content of MSP as a public policy.

IV. MSP’s policy content

This section takes the two MSP guidebooks published by the IOC-UNESCO and analyses them with QCA. The coding frame for the guidebooks consists of five main categories (Figure 5) that mainly correspond to the stages of marine spatial planning. The category “Context” does not belong to any MSP stage and captures the themes that showcase the international debates within which MSP is being understood and applied, such as blue economy, global ocean governance, climate change, regional cross-border cooperation etc. The category “Pre-planning” refers to the steps being taken before the actual MSP planning stage kicks in, such as the setting of goals and guiding principles, establishing MSP authority, etc. The category

⁴⁴ This has also been proven empirically in a study on 12 MSP cases around Europe (Jones et al., 2016). The findings indicated that contrary to its integrative function, MSP was used to advance nationally important *sectoral priorities* under the Blue Growth paradigm, and where *top-down processes* tend to dominate the decision-making. Conflicts by stakeholders were ‘planned-away’ or aligned to ensure the achievement of the strategic sectoral objectives set by the governments (*ibid.*; emphasis added).

“Planning” encompasses the MSP stage where the actual planning occurs. Here, text segments are included that discuss technical tools for adequate data collection and development of trends and scenarios about the possible future uses of the ocean. The category “Plan development & implementation” is the final stage of the MSP planning cycle. It consists of text segments with elaborations on the main output of the MSP process, namely, the marine spatial plan, its content, implementation, monitoring and the feeding of these results into the next planning cycle. “Stakeholder participation” is a stand-alone category as an activity (at least theoretically) present throughout the whole MSP process. It is assigned to text segments discussing the importance and forms of engagement of stakeholders in the MSP process.

Code System	328
● Stakeholder participation	22
▼ ● Context	0
● Transboundary MSP	6
● Global ocean governance	17
● Blue economy	10
▼ ● Pre-planning	0
● MSP Principles and goals	30
● Financial considerations	9
● Timeframe & Boundaries	9
● Work plan and team	14
● Institutional arrangements	17
● MSP communication	5
▼ ● Planning	0
● Maritime sectors	6
● Data collection & management	11
● Social considerations	10
● Environmental considerations	13
● Trends & scenarios	30
▼ ● Plan development and implementation	0
● Plan development and approval	17
● MSP measures	17
● Implementation and compliance	23
● Monitoring and Evaluation	24
● Adaptive management	9
● Terms and clarifications	15
● Other	14

Figure 5: Coding frame for the guidebooks with names of the categories and their sub-categories, as well as the number of text segments assigned to each sub-category. The coding frames are designed by the author with the help of the MAXQDA software.

To showcase potential change in MSP policy content, the two guidebooks are discussed comparatively. To integrate the findings from this study and steer them towards answering the general research question, I will be discussing here selected policy issues that have proven

relevant during the analysis (e.g., through higher code frequency), but that also relate most closely to the identified MSP narratives from the previous analysis⁴⁵.

The two guidebooks are quite similar when it comes to the presence of the main categories. The only difference in this respect is that the 2021 guidebook has 'Context' as additional category which is not present in the 2009 guidebook. It consists of the sub-categories 'Blue economy', 'Transboundary MSP' and 'Global Ocean governance' (see Figure 5). This means that while the 2009 guidebook sticks explicitly to the elaboration of the standard stages that lead to operationalization of MSP, the 2021 guidebook sees the need to additionally frame MSP under these current debates. This confirms the findings from the conference reports' analysis, where in the more recent reports MSP was also framed under these debates.⁴⁶

In what follows, a discussion is provided about three novel policy elements introduced with the new guidebook and which are considered to have the potential to modify the existing MSP policy content.

IV.1. Operationalizing the Blue Economy

Operationalizing the blue economy through the concept of 'multi-use' is a novel policy element that appears in the 2021 guidebook. The discussion of this policy element is mainly based on the interpretation of the code 'Blue economy'.

⁴⁵ In addition to the issues discussed here, other policy novelties identified with the analysis are, for example: inclusion of mechanisms for operationalization of climate change in MSP; elevating 'cross-border cooperation' as a guiding policy principle on the level with Ecosystem Approach and Participatory Approach; stronger emphasis on capacity development as a mean for better MSP implementation; emphasis on ex ante and ex post MSP evaluation as a mean for better MSP evaluation with tools for their operationalization (and not only ex-post as in the older guidebook); efficient MSP communication strategy to the wider public as a mean for successful compliance (and not only good communication among stakeholders).

⁴⁶ The relevance of different categories is somewhat different in the two guidebooks. The 2009 guidebook gives most relevance to the category "Plan development & implementation", whereas the 2021 guidebook has "Pre-planning" and "Planning" to the fore front. This can be explained by the fact that the 2021 guidebook reflects the new developments in MSP coming from the gathered experiences and practices of countries world-wide who have started adopting and using MSP. Having more insights from the pre-planning and planning stages compared to implementation is very expectable considering how new MSP as a policy instrument is. On the other hand, the prevalence of "Plan development & implementation" in the 2009 guidebook can be explained by two factors: one, considering that MSP was primarily inspired by marine zoning practices in few forerunner countries, large part of the 2009 guidebook discusses zoning and spatial measures drawing on these existing experiences (zoning gets coded under "Plan development and implementation"); and two, implementation, compliance, monitoring and evaluation (also coded under "Plan development & implementation"), are pretty much standard steps across all natural resource management practices, and so, the 2009 guidebook could have been drawing from other resource management areas to discuss many concepts and make recommendations linking them to MSP.

While 'blue economy' in the conference reports was linked to the economic development of maritime industries (with some environmental considerations), in the 2021 guidebook there is a more moderate understanding of the blue economy. The word here is of blue economy, for whose achievement a plenitude of institutional factors needs to be considered, and the existence of rich natural resources is only one of the many factors for its realization (p.24, Figure 2.2, *ibid.*). The guidebook lists many challenges for its realization including governance issues but especially threats to ecosystem services as the most important ones (p.23, Table 2.1, *ibid.*).

The blue economy is closely discussed through the novel concept of 'ocean multi-use'. The latter is introduced as a new term in the 2021 guidebook and refers to the joint use of the same ocean space/resources in close geographic proximity by two or more users combined in one of the four dimensions: spatial, temporal, provisioning and functional (p.24, *ibid.*). Although the general idea of having multiple uses and users in a given ocean space is nothing new, the 2021 guidebook provides examples for viable ocean multi-uses and multi-use platforms (Table 5.4, p.101, *ibid.*) and technical recommendations for policy-makers, regulators, academia and industry on how to implement the concept of ocean multi-use, such as joint licencing procedure through entire life cycle of the multi-use, mainstreaming of 'multi-use' on all relevant policy level, clear legal frameworks with liability rules for present and future users, etc. (Table 2.2, p.25, *ibid.*).

In sum, the blue economy concept is one of high importance in the 2021 guidebook too. Relevant for policymakers is that the blue economy is becoming more operational through the concept of 'ocean multi-use'. Compared to the blue economy narrative from the conference reports, here, we witness more moderate (less growth oriented) understanding of the concept.

IV.2. Bringing the 'Socio-Cultural' to MSP

The discussion of this policy element is mainly based on the code "Social considerations" that captures the segments containing a 'social' element. Like the first conference report, the 2009 guidebook speaks about the missing 'human dimension' of MSP. Everything that cannot be expressed through a space dimension is left uncaptured by maps and is likely to not get considered in the decision-making. The 2009 guidebook suggests mapping 'social landscapes' and especially inclusion of local communities in the collection of the necessary data (2009 guidebook, p.56).

Picking up on these issues and enriching them, the 2021 guidebook elaborates on the importance of including local communities and improving their capacities in the process (p.37, 2021 report). Like 'social landscapes', it speaks of 'seascapes' and 'seascape assessment'. The latter is a 'method for assessing, characterising, mapping and describing the relationship between people (culture), place (natural environment) and how that informs the setting for everyday life' (ibid., p.92). It suggests its usage in MSP to tailor decisions about the location of certain infrastructure projects depending on the which seascapes and how are they valued by the people (ibid.). Compared to the 2009 guidebook which does not explicitly include social criteria when deciding on the most adequate MSP scenario, the 2021 one list 'seascapes' as additional criterion when deciding which MSP future scenario is most viable for the planned area (ibid., p.102). Namely, spatial data is relatable and contributes to the improvement of socio-cultural conditions by providing information on, for example, traditional land tenure, past uses of the coast and seas, underwater cultural heritage, religious and other socio-cultural areas, etc. (ibid., p. 91).

The 2021 guidebook goes even further by bringing the concept of 'social justice' to the fore when discussing the rights of vulnerable groups to participate and benefit from MSP. Vulnerable groups refer to poor communities, women and marginalized ethnic groups, which should be involved since the beginning of the process at adequate scales of planning, setting their non-negotiable thresholds (ibid., p.36). MSP outcomes should in this regard not worsen the condition of any stakeholder group (ibid.). The guidebook suggests indicators to measure the impact from the MSP process over vulnerable groups, such as direct effects over their income, indirect effect from tax revenue from MSP activities, security concerns, and their power and voice in the process (ibid.).

In sum, picking up on the 2009 guidebook, the 2021 guidebook offers several novel policy elements that enrich the MSP process by including socio-cultural aspects. Suggestions for their operationalization are provided through frameworks and examples on how to work with 'seascapes' and consider the interests of 'vulnerable groups' in the MSP process. Compared to the identified MSP narratives in the conference reports, the socio-cultural dimension here is far from neglected.

IV.3. More inclusive stakeholder participation in MSP

This policy element is assessed mainly based on the category 'stakeholder participation'. Very similar to the identified MSP narrative in the older conference reports (2006 and 2017 reports), the mode of stakeholder participation presented in the 2009 guidebook is constructed and

tailored to efficiently achieve a preconceived end-result: “[...] involving too many stakeholders at the wrong moment or in the wrong form can be very time consuming and can distract you from the expected or anticipated result. To involve stakeholders effectively (e.g., leading toward expected results) and efficiently (e.g., producing expected results at least-cost) [...]” (p. 43, Guidebook 2009). The participatory process here does not seem to be designed to achieve inclusiveness. The 2009 guidebook suggests the MSP planning authority to categorize stakeholders according to their ‘relevance’ or ‘entitlement’ based on the preconceived beliefs of the authorities: “Not all stakeholders are necessarily equally important or relevant where MSP is concerned. On a scale of importance, you might want to give some stakeholders more weight than others. [...] Stakeholder analysis can assist, for example, in identifying who is likely to be supportive or potentially hostile to MSP.” (p. 44, Guidebook 2009). The 2009 guidebook even provides a list of criteria to assess the importance of stakeholders, one of which is the ‘compatibility of the interests and activities of the stakeholders’ (ibid.). This position implies that if some stakeholders are ‘hostile’ towards MSP, or have ‘incompatible interests’ with the authorities or other stakeholders, they should be given less entitlement and possibly not included in the process (?!).

By contrast to the 2009 guidebook, the 2021 guidebook avoids mentioning this type of prioritization of stakeholders. Stakeholders here are ‘individuals, groups or organizations who are (or will be) affected, involved or interested (positively or negatively) by the marine spatial plan (2021 Report, p.69). Opposite of the 2009 guidebook where MSP was ‘rational’ and the stakeholder participation ‘efficient’, the 2021 guidebook points out that it is ‘important to be aware of representation, power and many other social dynamics when designing a stakeholder engagement strategy...’ (ibid., 71). The guidebook suggests a rights-based approach of participation by considering different formats of engagement to provide fair opportunities to access the MSP process. For example, it calls for a so called ‘nested approach’, where communities are approached locally in so called hot-spot areas (in case they are not interested in the complete MSP management area, or cannot go to the bigger cities), and whose inputs will be incorporated in the overall strategy (ibid.). In the 2021 guidebook, along with the relevant maritime sectors the coastal communities are also often discussed as the most obvious MSP stakeholder: ‘[...] in the early planning phases of MSP, discussions and debates typically take place around which coastal or at-sea developments the different sectors and coastal communities want – and which they want to avoid.’ (ibid., p.72). MSP is often referred to as a ‘public process’ or a ‘public policy’, and so often examples are given from developed countries on involving the general public (and not only directly concerned stakeholders) through processes of public participation or public consultation (ibid. p. 69, p.115.).

To sum up, the novel MSP policy elements here are a big improvement from the ones from the 2009 guidebook in the direction of making the MSP process more inclusive. There are suggestions, guidelines and practical examples on how to reach out and engage more and diverse stakeholders in the MSP process, which may be disinterested at the beginning. Coastal communities are considered as important stakeholder together with the maritime sectors. This confirms some of the tendencies from the latest conference reports when it comes to increased stakeholder diversity and concerns regarding lacking participation of communities and NGOs in the MSP process.

V. Quick Take

With this analysis I aimed to explore the potential of the IOC-UNESCO in framing and reframing of understandings and definitions around MSP and with it examine its agency in shaping the understanding and policy content of MSP. In what follows, the results are being summarized with some inputs regarding implications for the world-wide diffusion of MSP as a public policy.

The MSP narratives as projected in the IOC-UNESCO conference reports produce a framing of MSP as a 'must-have-now' marine policy instrument. MSP is reframed from being technical tool for marine space allocation to an all-in-one strategic mechanism for achieving national, regional and international marine governance targets. Reporting on high adoption rates from different corners of the world increases MSP's attractiveness as it shows it is being tried out by many countries and in different contexts. The campaigning communication style of the later reports reinforces this narrative as well. Furthermore, MSP is being strongly reframed under the blue economy agenda and away from the ecosystem-based management framework. The former links MSP to economic growth, making the outcomes from the policy seem more direct, measurable and easy to 'sell at home'. After all, using a market-oriented paradigm has traditionally been the main mean for IOs to make favored policies appealing to new adopters⁴⁷. Putting stakeholder participation as one of MSP's core principles gives MSP an image of highly participatory and democratic process making it easy for the new adopters to sell it at home. At the same time, especially in the older reports, MSP is presented as an efficient and rational process signaling low political costs for its planning and implementation.

⁴⁷ One example is Brooks (2005) which focuses on the role of the World Bank (WB) in the global diffusion of multi-pillar pension reform and finds that the WB has used the 'appeal' of the market-oriented paradigm to make the policy attractive for new adopters (ibid.: 279).

The MSP guidebooks provide more technical information to interested policy-makers, making MSP as a policy more specific and operational. The identified policy elements from the guidebooks reinforce some of the MSP narratives identified in the conference reports. The blue economy agenda is one of the most important ones in this regard appearing for the first time in the 2021 guidebook. This guidebook shifts the debate from a more conceptual to a more operational level on how to practically achieve blue economy objectives through MSP, making them an important policy element of MSP. At the same time, blue economy is being presented in more neutral terms and not so explicitly growth oriented. Similarly, the stakeholder participation, while being central in the identified narratives from the reports, it represents central policy element in the guidebooks too. However, compared to the older (2009) guidebook and the older (2006 and 2017) conference reports, the content of this policy element changes in the 2021 guidebook. Namely, the guidebook suggests operationalizations of the whole process of stakeholder participation which make it more democratic and inclusive. An important novel policy element of MSP central in the later guidebook is the emphasis on justice, inclusivity and integration of socio-cultural aspects with suggestions for their operationalization in the MSP process. This evidences the latest process of reframing of MSP in the new guidebook from being rational and efficient to just, equitable and inclusive policy. The guidebooks also define problems (e.g., what is 'use-use' or 'use-environment' spatial conflict), identify the responsible actors to solve them (e.g., by suggesting which institutions may be maritime authorities), and the appropriate solutions to those problems (e.g., suggesting MSP measures, such as zoning, quotas or licensing procedures).

The analysis has shown that the IOC-UNESCO frames and reframes meanings and definitions around MSP, exerting agency in shaping MSP's understanding and policy content. This on the other hand has possible effects over its wider popularization. Consequently, this IO owns a potential to influence changes in the way we govern our seas and ocean. To what extent it realizes its potential and in which direction these changes go, remains to be seen.

CHAPTER V: POLICY TRANSFER OF MARINE SPATIAL PLANNING TO COLOMBIA – THE DOMESTIC INSTITUTIONAL SETTING

I. Introduction

This chapter examines the policy transfer process of Marine Spatial Planning (MSP) to Colombia. It identifies the key actors, channels of interaction, and the domestic factors that either facilitate or hinder this policy transfer. While Colombia serves as the primary case study, the chapter occasionally incorporates information from neighboring countries (Panama, Peru, and Ecuador) to enrich the discussion and provide a broader regional context.

The data for this chapter is derived from interviews, as well as grey literature from ministries and other public institutions across the region's countries; publications from IOs (IOC-UNESCO, EU, OECD, CPPS), NGOs (MarViva, WWF), scientific publications, e-mail correspondence with international and national public officials; information accessed from the internet (websites, news articles, YouTube videos); information from online events from the IOC-UNESCO/MSPGlobal on international, regional and country level; courses and seminars from actors relevant for the research (e.g., INVEMAR). Appendix C contains a list with more than 400 entries that provide more detailed overview of the material and literature that informed me to conduct the analysis (please note that the list is complementary to the reference list and to the interviews).

Through the review of the literature and materials I was able to first identify the main actors in Colombia (and the region!) relevant for the governance of marine and coastal areas. By consulting these actors' documents, reports and publications and by leading informal conversations with local practitioners and scientists, I was able to determine what their main activities are and how does the institutional setting for marine governance in Colombia look like. Based on these inputs, I was able to assume how the potential "flow" of the policy transfer process may look like, namely "who" may have brought MSP first to the country and how the knowledge about it was further transferred. Based on these assumptions, I was able to design my questionnaire to check for these assumptions, provide or check the information I already had about contextual factors relevant for the transfer, as well as get information about the "linkage" between the different actors (check Table 4. Interview guidelines and Figure 2. Model combining policy transfer theory and process tracing elements).

While my initial assumption was that the policy transfer is linear, or in other words, the knowledge about the policy was transferred from one actor to the next which eventually led to

policy adoption (Actor A -> Actor B -> Actor C) especially with the information from the interviews, I was able to correct this. Namely, this research finds not one but three transfer processes of MSP happening in the course of a decade in Colombia. All three have the IOC-UNESCO as the original emitter. In two cases the main actors are public institutions (CCO/Dimar and Invemar), whereas in the third case the main actor is an NGO (MarViva). In all three processes, the MSP as a planning approach has been practically 'adopted' and applied with differences in content reflecting the different interests and nature of the main actors in each process (see Chapter VII on this). It is important to note that these applications of MSP are either of local nature (NGO MarViva) or experimental (Dimar and Invemar). In Colombia one still cannot say that MSP is being officially applied as a public policy instrument. MSP in Colombia exists since 2020 at a policy level, where it is identified as an instrument to be applied for marine and coastal planning in the near future and for which guiding documents should be developed. MSP does not exist on a level of regulations and so its application is not yet binding.

Although we do not yet speak of official nation-wide adoption of MSP, the political will is present (MSP exists on a policy level) and at least two different public institutions have MSP pilot projects and are experimenting with MSP. However, only one of these public institutions is currently taking the lead in the adoption of MSP as a national public policy and this transfer process is becoming the 'official' path to MSP adoption in Colombia. This chapter thus examines the process flow of the MSP policy transfer in Colombia by focusing especially on the domestic context that conditions the transfer. The next chapter (VI) examines the policy transfer by focusing on the international factors that condition the transfer and identifies the mechanisms that explain the adoption; chapter VII then provides a comparative analysis of the practical application of MSP in Colombia.

In the scheme below the three policy transfer processes are presented in the form of a multilevel process flows. The green path represents the transfer process through the NGO MarViva; the yellow one represents the transfer process through INVEMAR, a research center of the ministry of environment; and the orange path is the 'official' transfer process through the Colombian Ocean Commission (CCO), an inter-ministerial body with strong linkages to the ministry of defense, and the maritime authority DIMAR, an institution under the ministry of defense. Chronologically, MarViva was the first institution to apply MSP in Colombia, followed by INVEMAR, and then by DIMAR.

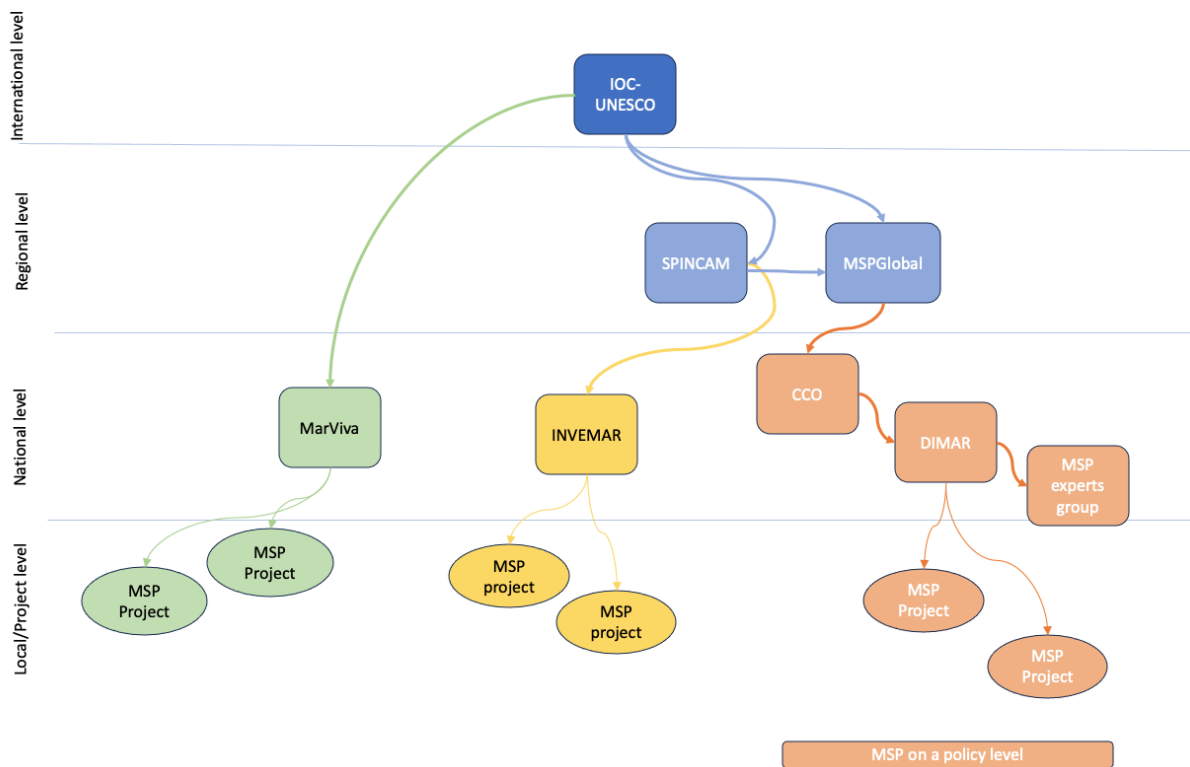


Figure 6. Multilevel process flow in the transfer of MSP from IOC to Colombia

Firstly, this chapter provides an overview of the national policy context relevant for the MSP policy transfer. Then the analysis of the three different process flows unfolds. As elaborated in Chapter III: Methodology, this study uses process tracing as its main methodological approach, while at the same time, the policy transfer theory provides the main elements for the analysis. This is why, as first, the process flow will be discussed with the best chances to become the official path for nation-wide MSP adoption, namely the one through CCO and DIMAR. Then the process flows of INVEMAR and MarViva will also be analyzed. To unlock the ‘black box’ of the process flows, information from interviews and documents is being used. Finally, this chapter presents the determining domestic factors that hinder or facilitate the transfer processes. In the case of Colombia, the institutional context, especially the institutional tensions, as well as the existing policy experiences are at the forefront when it comes to domestic determining factors.

II. Three different policies governing one ocean

‘Hay tres cosas distintas y un ser verdadero que es el océano’.
There are three different things for one true being, which is the ocean.

Interview with the Department of National Parks, Colombia, 2021

This sub-chapter provides an overview of the current dynamic situation (with occasional historical context) presenting the most important actors and their policies to governing the Colombian seas and coasts. As it may become evident to the keen-eyed, in the Colombian context the word is of, not one policy, but *policies* for the coastal and marine area. As a matter of fact, currently there are three such policies. The two main sectors governing this area in Colombia are the environmental and the defense sector. The ministry of environment emits one of these policies in 2000, while the remaining two are considered as multisectoral policies. These two are emitted in 2007 (with an updated version in 2017) by the Colombian Ocean Commission (CCO), an inter-ministerial body, and in 2020 by the National Council on Economic and Social Policy (CONPES), a supra-ministerial entity, respectively.

II.1. The National Environmental Policy for the Sustainable Development of Ocean Spaces and Coastal and Insular Zones of Colombia (PNAOCI)

The Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development

Before diving into the policy emitted by the ministry of environment, it is worth looking into the general structure and some of the developments the Colombian environmental sector has faced since its creation. Here, it is important to mention that there are three main environmental authorities in Colombia⁴⁸. First and foremost, there is the ministry of environment as the central governing entity which emits the policies. Then there are the regional environmental authorities (Corporaciones Autonomas Regionales' - CARs) which execute the environmental policies on the level of *departamentos* (the political-administrative units in which Colombia is divided). And then, finally there is one more environmental authority which functions on several levels, namely, the Department for National Natural Parks ('Departamento de Parques Nacionales Naturales' - PNN). It is an institution attached to the ministry of environment with its own area of governance – the administration of national parks and protected areas, including marine protected areas (I.1, 2020; I.5, 2021).

⁴⁸ The institutional structure of the environmental sector is slightly more complex than the simplified presentation in the text. The Law 99 from 1993 that established the Colombian Ministry of Environment also established the National Environmental System (SINA). The Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development (MADS), the regional autonomous corporations (CARs), the territorial entities, the National Authority for Environmental Licenses (ANLA), the Special Administrative Unit of the National Natural Parks (PNN) are all part of the SINA. Part of SINA are also the environmental research institutes: Institute of Hydrology, Meteorology and Environmental Studies (Ideam), Institute of Marine and Coastal Research "José Benito Vives de Andrés" (Invemar), Institute of Biological Resources Research "Alexander von Humboldt", the Amazon Institute for Scientific Research "Sinchi" and the Pacific Environmental Research Institute "John von Neumann" (IIAP) (Díaz Salgar et al., 2022, p.19-20).

The Colombian Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development (hereinafter: ministry of environment) was created in 1993 with the General Environmental Law (*Ley 99 de 1993*) as ministry of environment. It dissolved the National Institute of Renewable Natural Resources and Environment (INDERENA), a governmental agency created in 1968 to protect the environment and natural resources (DNP, 2013; Steer et al., 1997). The ministry has gone through several important changes in the last two decades which has had a strong impact over the marine and coastal governance in Colombia.

In 1994, one year after the establishment of the Ministry as such, with the Decree 1868, a special Sub-directorate for Marine and Coastal zones was created as part of the Ministry. The same Sub-directorate disappears, however, few years later, when in 1997 with the Decree 1687 it got merged with several other agencies under the General Directorate for Ecosystems, part of the Ministry (DNP, 2013). The issues related to marine and coastal affairs were thus handled under this general Directorate for Ecosystems for several years to come.

In the year 2002, the Ministry of Environment becomes Ministry of Environment, Housing and Territorial Development. Although formally the marine and coastal issues were handled under the Directorate for Ecosystems, merging so many different areas and functions into one entity (environment plus housing and territorial development) has resulted in stagnation in the treatment of the environmental problems in general, including the marine and coastal questions. Becoming a political area of lesser importance, the Directorate for Ecosystems had insufficient budget and not enough personnel (2 to 4 persons) to be able to fulfill its function even modestly (DNP, 2013, p.28). Added to this, the Directorate for Environmental Policy under the Colombian National Planning Department (another national level institution different from the ministry of environment) was also dissolved, and its functions were divided among other directorates. This has resulted in a period (2002 – 2007) of a so-called 'shrinking of the environmental institutions' in Colombia ('reducción de la institucionalidad ambiental') (ibid.). This period has proven to be critical for the Environmental Policy for Ocean and Coastal Zones (PNAOCI) of the ministry of environment.

The National Development Plan 2010 – 2014 'Prosperity for Everyone'⁴⁹ will become the first development plan that addresses marine and coastal affairs and brings some fresh winds in

⁴⁹ National Development Plan is the document that serves as the basis and provides the strategic guidelines of the public policies formulated by the Colombian President and his government. Its preparation, dissemination, evaluation and follow-up is the direct responsibility of the Colombian National Planning Department (DNP).

The National Development Plan (PND) is the formal and legal instrument through which the Government's objectives are outlined, allowing the subsequent evaluation of its management.

this area of governance. The laws that were issued as a result of the Plan (such as Law 1450 from 2011) will explicitly protect important ecosystems such as coral reefs, mangroves, and seagrass beds in Colombian marine areas (Lastra Mier & Vergara, 2019). The same law extends the jurisdiction of the regional environmental authorities ('Corporaciones Autonomas Regionales' CARs) of the coastal *departamentos* over the coastal zone up until 12 nautical miles (I.6, 2021), including not only land but territories under water, such as transition zones of low tide waters ('zona de bajamar') and offshore waters ('franja de mar adentro') (ibid.). This meant that the coastal areas and their natural resources are now under the jurisdiction and can be protected by the CARs. Namely, by then there was no institution directly responsible for their protection. Another regulation born from this Plan, the Decree 1120 from 2013, officially defines the environmental coastal units (UACs) by applying the ecosystem approach, with which these become the main management units in the marine and coastal zone. The same decree also establishes that there will be special management plans for these units called POMIUACs⁵⁰ (ibid.; I.1, 2020).

The national development plan 'Prosperity for Everyone' brings other positive developments too. In 2011 with the Law 1444, the Ministry of Environment, Housing and Territorial Development will become Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development. But most importantly, the marine and coastal affairs will get their own directorate, namely the Directorate of Marine, Coastal and Aquatic Resources (DAMCRA) (DNP, 2013). The reason for this 'change of mind' of the Colombian government and the 'restoration' of the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development, lies mostly in the disastrous effects of the *El Niño* phenomenon in 2010 – 2011 (Díaz Salgar et al., 2022). Back then, *El Niño* affected around 4 million Colombians (around 9% of the total population) with economic losses amounting to ca. US \$7.8 billion, owed to destruction of infrastructure, flooding of agricultural lands and payment of government subsidies (Hoyos et al., 2013).

The same national development plan also called for the two main institutions with policies concerning the Colombian coastal and marine waters, namely, the ministry of environment and the Colombian Ocean Commission (CCO) to coordinate. Namely, it called for the implementation of one integrated updated policy for the development of the marine and coastal zones of Colombia (DNP, 2011). The lack of coordination is an important trait of Colombian marine and coastal governance which will follow us along this analysis and will be one determining factor for the policy transfer of the MSP.

⁵⁰ POMIUAC = Plan de Ordenamiento Marino Integrado de la Unidad Ambiental Costera, in English: Plans for territorial planning and integrated management of coastal areas.

PNAOCI, its origins and state-of-the-art

The first policy for the Colombian marine and coastal areas was issued in the year 2000 by the Colombian Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development (back then Ministry of Environment). It is the “National Environmental Policy for the Sustainable Development of Ocean Spaces and Coastal and Insular Zones of Colombia” (hereinafter: PNAOCI for its Spanish acronym)⁵¹.

PNAOCI is a response to the international commitments Colombia has taken by signing the Rio Declaration and the Agenda 21 on sustainable development from 1992. Here, especially relevant is the Chapter 17 on the protection of the oceans and the marine environment. Among the other international conventions Colombia has ratified, the strongest push for the development of the policy has come from the commitments of the Convention on Biological Diversity from 1992, as well as the Jakarta Mandate to the Convention from 1994 (I.1, Ministry of Environment; I.6, Department of National Parks; Lastra Mier & Vergara, 2019) which promulgates internationally for the first time the integrated management of coastal zones (I.1, Ministry of Environment; Lastra Mier & Vergara, 2019). The signatories to the Convention and the Jakarta Mandate committed to develop national policies for coastal zone management before the year 2000 (DNP, 2013, p.28). Before PNAOCI in 2000, there was no specific policy or legislation that regulates or protects the coastal and marine areas in Colombia. A general obligation to protect those areas was deriving from the 1974 Decree Law, known as the National Codex for Natural Resources with the objective to protect the environment, where only three out of 340 articles were dedicated directly to the protection of the marine and coastal resources. Colombian regulation and policies concerning coastal and marine areas are therefore relatively new (Lastra-Mier & Vergara, 2019).

Although PNAOCI is issued by the ministry of environment, it got approved by the National Environmental Council (Consejo Ambiental Nacional), an intersectoral body where members from different ministries and other concerned institutions coordinate policies, plans and programs concerning the environment and natural resources in Colombia. It is made of nine ministries, the National Planning Department and civil society representatives (DNP, 2020).

The general objective of PNAOCI is the sustainable development of the oceanic and coastal spaces, whose integrated management will contribute to the improvement of the wellbeing of

⁵¹ PNAOCI is an acronym from *Política Nacional Ambiental para el Desarrollo Sostenible de los Espacios Oceánicos y las Zonas Costeras e Insulares de Colombia*.

the Colombian people, balanced economic development and conservation and preservation of the marine and coastal ecosystems (Ministerio del Medio Ambiente, 2000)⁵².

PNAOCI uses the ecosystem approach, seeking the balance between the protection of the environment and the economic development of the marine and coastal areas. This policy promulgates the integrated coastal zone management (ICZM) as its main methodology for the management of marine and coastal areas. PNAOCI, in this way, contributes to the territorial planning in Colombia ('ordenamiento territorial') by taking an environmental approach ('ordenamiento ambiental') (Ramírez Martínez et al., 2021).

One very interesting element of PNAOCI is the identification of coastal environmental units ('Unidad Ambiental Costera', hereinafter: UAC). UACs are spatial units whose borders are defined based on the ecological characteristics of the geographical area. The ecosystem approach is used for their definition and is independent from the borders of the political-administrative units in which Colombia is divided (the so called 'departamentos'). A territorial unit such as the UAC includes land and sea areas, and its limits are determined with a methodology (ICZM) that considers the ecological connectivity of the main ecosystems in that area that require unified management. Examples for these ecosystems are mangroves, coral reefs, transition forests, beaches and cliff systems, coastal lagoons etc. (Rodríguez et al., 2013). The ICZM methodology was developed by the research institute INVEMAR and the ministry of environment (I.1, Ministry of Environment). The territorial units UACs are a sort of Colombian innovation (Lastra-Mier & Vergara, 2019; I.1, Ministry of Environment) since in most of the neighboring countries in the region the coasts are governed according to the respective political-administrative entities the coastal zone geographically belongs to, such as cantons or provinces (I.1, Ministry of Environment)⁵³.

⁵² PNAOCI proposes the following thematic areas: (i) Territorial Environmental Planning of Ocean Spaces and Coastal and Island Zones; (ii) Sectoral Environmental Sustainability; (iii) Rehabilitation and Restoration of Degraded Marine and Coastal Ecosystems; (iv) Conservation of Protected Marine and Coastal Areas; (v) Conservation of Species; (vi) Evaluation, Prevention, Reduction and Control of Terrestrial and Marine Sources of Sea Pollution and (vii) Risk Management for the Prevention and Response of Disasters in Ocean Spaces and Coastal Zones (translated from Spanish. Source (DNP, 2020).

⁵³ In Colombia the situation is different. For example, a coastal *departamento* (Colombia's main territorial administrative unit) can have more than one UACs on its territory (e.g., *departamento de Chocó* has three UACs on its territory), or some UACs can spread over the territory of two coastal *departamentos* (e.g., *UAC Estuarina del río Sinú y el Golfo de Morrosquillo* spreads into the *departamentos de Antioquia* and *Córdoba*) (Lastra-Mier & Vergara, 2019). In the case of the latter, where the environmental units spread over two or more *departamentos*, a joint committee ('comisión conjunta') with representatives from the environmental authorities of both *departamentos* is established to develop and implement the management plan for the shared UAC (I.11, Independent expert). In total, there are ten UACs covering Colombian coasts, including one UAC for the Colombian archipelago in the Caribbean *San Andres, Providencia y Santa Catalina* (Lastra-Mier & Vergara, 2019).

The official regulation of the UACs comes to life in 2011, and in 2013 the development of management plans for these units also becomes a legal obligation for the coastal authorities. Those management plans are the most important policy instruments of PNAOCI and are officially called Plans for territorial planning and integrated management of coastal areas, or, also known by their Spanish acronym – POMIUACs⁵⁴. It is important to note that the instrument POMIUAC, i.e., the planning instrument for the coastal zone, is hierarchically superior to some other instruments for territorial planning in Colombia. So, for example, the plans for the management of the river basins (Spanish acronym: POMCAs) should be coordinated with the POMIUACs, and furthermore, the environmental directives of the POMIUACs must be considered in the development of the general plans for territorial development ('plan de ordenamiento territorial - POT') issued by the Colombian municipalities (Lastra-Mier & Vergara, 2019). In this way, PNAOCI influences the general territorial planning in Colombia.

In addition to the regulation of the environmental units (UACs) and their management plans (POMIUACs), the methodology for the development of the POMIUAC, namely the abovementioned ICZM developed by INVEMAR, also becomes a legal norm in 2017. So, starting from 2000 when the policy PNAOCI comes to life, it basically takes almost two decades for this policy to get operationalized through regulations and official policy instruments (Ramírez Martínez et al., 2021).

Besides management units for the Colombian coastal zones (UACs), the policy PNAOCI also contemplates offshore management units - the so called oceanic environmental units, or 'Unidad Ambiental Oceanica - UAO'. Those are, however, included in the policy but are far from being operationalized to the degree of the coastal units. The only environmental territorial planning happening in offshore waters currently is related to the establishment and management of marine protected areas (i.e., Ministry of environment, 2022).

Marine Spatial Planning in PNAOCI

Since MSP (in Spanish: 'planificación espacial marina – PEM') is a more novel policy instrument, it is not being mentioned in PNAOCI as such. Very close to it, however, is the ICZM methodology applied for the management of the environmental units (UACs) and which is central to PNAOCI. According to a representative of the Ministry of Environment, ICZM is no different from MSP, and having ICZM already established in the country, an additional

⁵⁴ POMIUAC = Plan de Ordenamiento Marino Integrado de la Unidad Ambiental Costera

instrument is not needed (I.1, Ministry of Environment, 2020). In a 2022 interview, the Ministry softens its positions and finds the methodologies to be complementary and that the application of MSP would not exclude ICZM (I.2, Ministry of Environment, 2022).

II.2. The National Policy of the Ocean and Coastal Spaces (PNOEC)

The Colombian Ocean Commission

The National Policy of the Ocean and Coastal Spaces (hereinafter: PNOEC⁵⁵) is the policy of the Colombian Ocean Commission (hereinafter: CCO⁵⁶). The first guidelines for this policy were designed in 2002 by the CCO⁵⁷, and eventually in 2007, CCO releases PNOEC as the policy that treats the ocean 'wholistically and systematically' (CCO, 2018b). In the words of a CCO representative: PNOEC's aim is to unite the efforts of all the sectors related to maritime affairs which is the main difference with PNAOCI covering only the environmental sector (I.3a, CCO).

CCO is an intersectoral advisory body of the Colombian government linked to the Colombian vice-presidency. The serving Colombian Vice-president is at the same time the President of CCO (CCO, 2015). CCO has been restructured in the year 2000 (originally founded in 1969) with the sole purpose to design the PNOEC policy, and advise the government in matters related to it (CCO, 2007)⁵⁸. It as an intersectoral body incorporated by 17 core institutions. Besides representatives of the ministries, there are also representatives from: the presidential agency for international cooperation; the national planning department - DNP; the national department for science, technology and innovation – COLCIENCIAS; the maritime authority DIMAR; the navy; the Colombian university association – ASCUN; the research institute INVEMAR; and in addition, two presidential delegates are also invited, one from the sector marine economy and another from the sector of environmental NGOs (CCO, 2018a). The intersectoral work at the CCO happens through several fora, such as the national technical committees where around 60 Colombian institutions take part in different configurations depending on their topical interests (CCO Informe, 2018). For example, there are committees

⁵⁵ PNOEC = Política Nacional del Océano y de los Espacios Costeros

⁵⁶ CCO = Comisión Colombiana de Océano

⁵⁷ In the process, 'some of the most relevant ocean policies were consulted, such as the one from the United States, Canada, Australia and Chile, as well as Great Britain' (CCO, 2016, p.41).

⁵⁸ Although most of the interviewees recognize CCO as an advisory body to the government having a coordinating function for the ministries with a jurisdiction in the marine and coastal areas, it has also been recognized as an institution with a rising influence in this realm going beyond policy advisory role (Academic I.12, 2021; CCO I.3a, 2020).

on Antarctic matters, on the *El Niño* phenomenon, on marine pollution, on tsunami alert, specific committee on the PNOEC policy, committee on integrated coastal and marine management etc. Besides committees, there are also working groups, such as the group on illegal fishing, or also regular events, such as the national seminar on marine science and technology – SENALMAR (ibid.).

According to a CCO representative, the intersectoral nature of the PNOEC policy is assured through the intersectoral structure of the CCO (I.3a, CCO). Interestingly, one of the representatives of the Ministry of Environment, used the same argument to defend the intersectorality of their own policy PNAOCI. Namely, that the National Environmental Council that approved PNAOCI is as well an intersectoral body, where also CCO's Executive Secretary sits; and that at the end of the day, the same entities have adopted two different policies (I.1, Ministry of Environment). Lastra-Mier & Vergara (2019) say that PNAOCI is nevertheless a sectoral policy representing the environmental sector. It regulates coastal and marine areas from environmental perspective and is inspired primarily by the CBD. Whereas PNOEC considers many maritime sectors, and, in this way, it follows IOC-UNESCO's guidelines (ibid.). Following this line of argument, the representative of the Colombian Department of National Parks (PNN) had the impression that the 'CBD pulls in one direction and UNESCO in another' with the former promoting more strongly conservation and balanced use. Following CBD, the Colombian environmental institutions (Ministry of Environment, INVEMAR and PNN) came out with the PNAOCI policy, whereas CCO, following UNESCO has issued the ocean policy PNOEC (I.6, 2021, National Parks). As a matter of fact, in 2007, IOC-UNESCO published the ten national ocean policies⁵⁹ that deserve attention of practitioners and policymakers globally as good example of ocean policies that, at least on paper, apply the integrated or intersectoral approach (Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission, 2007). Among those policies is Colombia's PNOEC. On the reasons behind the creation of PNOEC, a representative from the Ministry of Environment said that despite already having PNAOCI it was decided that in front of the IOC-UNESCO, Colombia does not have an ocean policy. And so, since CCO is the focal point in front of the IOC UNESCO, the new policy was to be developed under CCO's umbrella (I.1, Ministry of Environment).

⁵⁹ The ten countries whose ocean policies are being published by the IOC-UNESCO as good examples are: Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, Colombia, Japan, Norway, Portugal, Russian Federation, United States of America.

CCO's ocean policy and its updates

The first version of PNOEC from 2007 goes through some actualizations, and so, currently the version from 2017 is the most recent one. The general objective of PNOEC 2017 is the same as PNOEC 2007⁶⁰ with the main difference that 'promotion of national maritime interest' comes to the front and 'promotion of sustainable development' gets mentioned near the end. The 'national maritime interests' are present in both versions, but in the 2017 version the list of 'maritime interests' is way longer. Namely, the more recent policy lists the maritime economic sectors (such as, transport, tourism, industry, fisheries, and aquaculture) as separate national maritime interests. This goes in line with the rationale for the new version, namely that between 2014 and 2017, CCO worked on updating PNOEC with strategies that will 'increase the competitiveness of the country through the development of its marine resources' (CCO, 2018a, 2018b). Worth mentioning is that the 2017 policy puts more emphasis to concepts such as 'naval power' and 'comprehensive maritime security' by adding them to the list of national maritime interests. Furthermore, while 'recognition of maritime culture' is present in both versions as a national maritime interest, in 2017 this element is extended by adding 'increasing maritime awareness and territorial appropriation'⁶¹.

These additions go in line with the main distinguishing feature of PNOEC 2017, which is the concept of 'Medium Oceanic Power' (Spanish: *Potencia Océanica Media*, or PMO). Hereby, the policy's ultimate goal is to: 'safeguard a healthy, safe, developed and prosperous territory for current and future generations that allows to turn Colombia into a Medium Oceanic Power that results in the increase of the quality of life of the inhabitants and the national development.' (CCO, 2018b)⁶².

⁶⁰ PNOEC's 2007 general objective was: promotion of sustainable development of the ocean and coastal spaces, as well as the promotion of the nation's maritime interests through the development of strategies that will guarantee the adequate administration, economic use, public benefit, environmental conservation, socio-cultural development, and the surveillance and control of these areas under Colombia's jurisdiction (CCO, 2007).

⁶¹ The complete list of Colombian National Maritime Interests includes: Sovereignty and integrity of the national maritime territory; Awareness, Territorial Appropriation and Maritime Culture; Marine and Coastal Environmental Resources, Maritime Education; Scientific, Technological and Innovation Research; Naval Power; Integral Maritime Security; Marine and Coastal Regulation; Maritime Transportation and Trade; Maritime Tourism and Recreation; Naval and Maritime Industry; Marine and Submarine Mining; and Fishing and agriculture (CCO, 2018b).

⁶² As central category in PNOEC 2017, PMO merits more explanation. Judging from the part of the document where the concept is introduced and explained, the policy takes a realist, geopolitical stance when it deploys the term oceanic or naval power. The origins of the concept naval power see the ocean as an object, as a mean to something. So, for example, the ocean is a resource, a mean for exchange and transport, mean for information, mean for domination and area of sovereignty (CCO, 2018b, p.51). Naval power is a form of smart power that combines hard and soft power to determine its relationship and influence towards other states. The policy uses these and similar theoretical concepts in the development of its policy strategies (ibid, p.52). Maritime powers with successful ocean policies worth

The principles of power and territoriality seem to dominate the discourse in PNOEC 2017. One of the interviewees who participated in the formulation of the PNOEC 2007, states that the first version from 2007 was more complete, and the latest version is 'oriented much more towards defense' (I.6, National Parks, 2021). The interviewee said that while in the 2007 version 52 institutions have worked on the policy, in the more recent policy, some issues did not get the deserved attention. Such are the material and immaterial cultural and the underwater heritage, or, the territorial rights of coastal indigenous populations, for example (I.6, National Parks, 2021).

The principle of maritime security comes also to the forefront in the new policy. More specifically, PNOEC's 2017 objective related to the marine and coastal governance includes clear security considerations by saying that the marine-coastal planning shall tend to make the different visions and policies compatible to achieve an integral spatial development and improve the well-being and *security* of the coastal populations (CCO 2018b, p.71, emphasis added). This is aligned with the definition of 'comprehensive maritime security'⁶³ given by the maritime authority DIMAR - body of the ministry of defense (Gonzalez et al., 2021). The group of authors Gonzalez et al., staff members of the CCO at the moment they publish their article, find the thematic areas in which PNOEC 2017 is divided⁶⁴ to also correspond to DIMAR's understanding of 'comprehensive maritime security' (Gonzalez et al., 2021). This underscores the alignment of CCO's and DIMAR's objectives.

According to the personal view of one of the interviewees, this change in vision in PNOEC 2017 compared to PNOEC 2007 is a result of two events. The fact that Colombia went through a very long armed conflict took a lot of the political attention away from the ocean and coasts, and so, with the start of the peace negotiation process in 2012 the country was able to concentrate on other matters of political priority, such as maritime affairs. The second event that made the ocean a priority, according to my interviewee, is the territorial dispute from 2012 with Nicaragua in front of the International Court of Justice regarding the maritime boundaries

looking at are United States, China, France, Portugal, or the EU in general (ibid, p.16). The category PMO is further operationalized through three variables: the definition of national maritime interests, as explained above; the emphasis on the importance of a territorial perception and hence territorial appropriation of the ocean and coasts; propensity towards a territorial vision for marine and coastal areas by the policymakers and the Colombian people alike (ibid.).

⁶³ Comprehensive Maritime Security is the joint management between the Colombian Maritime Authority and the users, aimed at minimizing the risk to man, the environment, and goods, derived from maritime activities. The beforementioned, guaranteeing compliance with international and local regulations, in order to safeguard human life at sea, prevent pollution of the marine environment and the protection of ships and port facilities. (DIMAR, 2018, p.65).

⁶⁴ The five thematic areas of PNOEC 2017 are: Integrity and Projection of the Maritime Territory; Economic Development; Strengthening of the Marine-Coastal Governance; Sustainable Use of Marine Biodiversity; Culture, Education and Maritime Sciences (CCO, 2018b).

of both states around the Caribbean archipelago San Andres and Providencia (Interview from 2020). In the 2014 evaluation of the PNAOCI, the National Planning Department also finds this later circumstance to be an important factor that raises the government's attention to the importance of the maritime territory and contributes to the visibility of these territories (DNP, 2013). The loss of territorial waters is a very important factor for the increased political importance of the ocean, according to one of the academics too (I.13, 2021).

Another distinguishing feature of PNOEC 2017 relates to the following: in the 2007 version, in the part dedicated to the management of the marine and coastal zones, the policy assigns respective responsibilities and actions, first and foremost, to the ministry of environment and to the maritime authority DIMAR, as the two principal institutions with jurisdiction in coastal and marine waters. It also identifies ICZM (methodology defined by the ministry of environment and INVEMAR, explained above) as the official methodology for integrated marine management⁶⁵ (CCO, 2007, p.38). PNOEC 2007 also refers to PNAOCI (the policy of the ministry of environment explained above) as a policy that provides the guidelines for the inclusion of marine and coastal ecosystems in the territorial planning (ibid.).

In comparison, PNOEC 2017 does not refer to any existing methodology or other policy for coordination purposes, nor does it assign actions to specific institutions when it comes to the planning of the marine and coastal zones. In this way, PNOEC 2017 stays vague and in a way lifeless without assigning actors to implement its different lines of actions. More importantly, by not linking its ocean policy to the other existing policies and/or instruments related to the marine and coastal areas (most of them designed by far by the ministry of environment and INVEMAR), CCO decouples the marine and coastal planning, first and foremost, from the environmental sector. The group of authors Gonzalez et al., CCO staff members, describes activities conducted by DIMAR as an example for the policy actions predicted in PNOEC 2017 (Gonzalez et al., 2021). In other words, implicitly, the maritime authority DIMAR, comes to the forefront when it comes to the implementation of PNOEC's policy actions regarding marine and coastal governance in Colombia. With the new version of their ocean policy in 2017, CCO gives the maritime authority DIMAR (part of the ministry of defense) a central role, while the role of the ministry of environment becomes weaker.

⁶⁵ In PNAOCI 2007, ICZM is acclaimed as the official methodology for integrated coastal management because it incorporates conservational ethic and socioeconomic objectives, it has a strong scientific base, while standing for active participation for the solution of problems (PNOEC, 2007, p.38).

Marine Spatial Planning in PNOEC

MSP is not explicitly mentioned in PNOEC either (as is the case with PNAOCI), but according to Gonzalez et al. (2021), staff members of CCO, the ‘marine-coastal planning’ predicted in PNOEC *is* actually MSP (p.51; emphasis added). The interview with the CCO confirmed this view (I.3b, 2020, CCO), indicating appropriation of MSP by the CCO.

PNOEC 2017 speaks of the establishment of the National Committee for Integrated Management of the Ocean and Coastal Zones as a central intersectoral body for the ocean and coastal planning in Colombia. As a matter of fact, as reported by the CCO representative during the interview, in 2016, CCO establishes this committee as the National Technical Committee for Integrated Management of the Marine and Coastal Territory⁶⁶ (I.3b, CCO, 2020). The establishment of the Committee is seen by the interviewee as a sign of early engagement of Colombia with MSP (I.3b, CCO, 2020).

Now, it is important to note that this type of national planning committee is not a new concept in Colombia. This type of committee is not only standard institution for MSP, but also for integrated coastal zone management - ICZM. Similar committee has been predicted as the central institution for ocean and coastal planning in the policy of the ministry of environment (PNAOCI) in 2000, and even earlier in the initial guidelines for PNAOCI from 1997 (!) (Steer et al., 1997). PNAOCI predicts the establishment of the committee by the end of 2001 as a common effort between the ministry of environment and the CCO in terms of its creation and coordination (Ministerio del Medio Ambiente, 2000, p.68). The purpose of the committee is to coordinate the concerned entities on national level in the development of policies and instruments for the marine and coastal areas (DNP, 2013). The need for the same institution has been reiterated in PNOEC 2007 (CCO, 2007, p.23) and then in PNOEC 2017 as well. However, in the latter, the difference is that the coordination and creation of the Committee is in the hands of CCO, leaving the ministry of environment out of the equation (CCO, 2018b, p.73)⁶⁷.

⁶⁶ The purpose of the Committee is to: “serve as a space for inter-institutional consultation to generate strategies, propose guidelines and monitor policies that contribute in improving the dynamics of the marine and coastal territory in Colombia, addressing issues of comprehensive planning of the national and cross-border marine and coastal territory, goods for public use, such as beaches, low tide zones and jurisdictional marine areas, as well as risk management due to phenomena of natural or socio-natural origin” (Secretario Ejecutivo de la CCO, 2021).

⁶⁷ Truth to be told, acting according to PNAOCI's action plan from 2002, one such committee was actually established in 2003 (my note: right at the beginning of the period of ‘shrinking environmental institutions’) under the lead of the ministry of environment, but until 2014 there is no information pointing to any of its activities (DNP, 2013). Meaning that although predicted so early in PNAOCI, this committee

According to Gonzalez et al. (2021), although this is not mentioned in PNOEC, the process of 'marine-coastal planning' is to be implemented by DIMAR as the authority with major competencies on national level in the control and management of the Colombian coasts and oceans (Gonzalez et al., 2021, p.51). According to the CCO representative: DIMAR is the national authority in marine-coastal affairs and so it is normal that they oversee the marine-coastal planning which is the same as MSP (I.3a, CCO). Based on this and using the MSP terminology, one could say that the National Committee established and coordinated by the CCO resembles a form of national MSP planning authority, whereas DIMAR is positioned as the national implementing authority of MSP. This is proven by the fact that the Colombian MSP experts' group formed under the instructions of the IOC-UNESCO in 2019 (more on this group follows further in this chapter) and led by DIMAR, realizes its activities under the above-mentioned National Committee (Email correspondence with a representative from National Parks, April 2021).

II.3. Colombia Sustainable Bioceanic Power 2030 (CONPES 3990)

The third (and last) policy that regulates the Colombian seas and coasts is the policy approved in 2020 by the National Council for Economic and Social Policy (*Consejo Nacional de Política Económica y Social* - CONPES). This policy is better known as CONPES 3990 because of the number assigned to the CONPES document containing the policy approval. All policies approved by the CONPES council are published by the National Planning Department of Colombia, the highest planning authority in the country, publishing, for example, the national development plans that contain the political priorities of the sitting government (DNP, 2023).

CONPES is the highest advisory body of the Colombian government in topics related to social and economic development and is made of all sitting ministers and the directors of other relevant administrative bodies. CONPES is a supra-ministerial body, presided by the President of Colombia. The naming of the members of the CONPES Council (the ones with and without a right to vote) is at the discretion of the Colombian government (DNP, 2021). The public policies approved by the CONPES council are a result of intersectoral work of all concerned ministries, and they include clear policy actions with measurable objectives, responsible entities for their completion as well as a timeframe for the actions (ibid.). When a certain policy is approved by the CONPES council, it has already funds assigned to it (I.14,

has not been made operational up until 2016, when one with similar function is established under the CCO.

2021) making its operationalization more probable. The work of the CONPES Council on a certain policy usually starts at the proposal of one or more ministries, when they propose a draft of the policy which is then worked on at the Council until its final approval (DNP, 2021). In the case of CONPES 3990, the document points to the especially important leadership of the Colombian vice-presidency in the policy formulation (DNP, 2020). The leading role of the Colombian vice-resident (at that moment, Marta Lucía Ramírez Blanco) in the process of formulation of the CONPES 3990 policy was also emphasized in the interview by the representative of the Ministry of Environment (I.1, 2020). Not to forget in this regard is the special relationship between the Colombian vice-president and the CCO. To say the least, CCO is presided by the Colombian Vice-president. One representative of the Department of National Parks, who has longtime experience working with CCO, said that the Colombian vice-president is in charge of the CCO and instructions regarding marine policy can come often from the top through CCO (I.5, 2021).

The fact that the sitting vice-president at the time CONPES 3990 was approved (Marta Lucía Ramírez Blanco) was a former minister of defense also gave leverage to the institutions and influential individuals related to this ministry to set the main course for the policy. As a matter of fact, one of the CCO representatives confirmed that CONPES 3990 has the same five objectives as PNOEC only distributed differently. Both, CONPES 3990 and PNOEC are thus intersectoral policies, says the CCO representative (I.3a, 2020).

As is the case with the rest of the policies, the CONPES 3990 policy needs to be translated into specific laws and regulations to become legally binding (DNP, 2021). However, it can be said that a CONPES policy is, if not in legal then in a political sense of a higher hierarchy than the ministerial policy (PNAOCI from the ministry of environment) or the inter-ministerial policy (PNOEC from CCO) since through the CONPES Council it has the approval of the national government. In other words, CONPES is the government in act (I.23, 2022).

Putting it simple, the rationale for the most recent Colombian policy for oceans and coasts (DNP, 2020) is to fix the 'misdeeds' and bring some unity between the two existing policies: PNAOCI of the ministry of environment and PNOEC of the CCO. However, in the process of drafting CONPES 3990's objectives, the influence of CCO officials and of the ministry of defense is notable.

In the process of entering the OECD⁶⁸, in 2014, Colombia was recommended to strengthen the integration and harmonization of its *sectoral policies* that impact the management of the coastal zones and its resources in order to achieve the SDGs (DNP, 2020, p.12; emphasis added). This showed that besides being approved by intersectoral councils (as is PNAOCI) or intersectoral committees (as is PNOEC) in practice they fail to provide for adequate intersectoral coordination. As mentioned previously, the National Development Plan 2010 – 2014 also calls for more integration between the two existing policies (DNP, 2011) and the DNP evaluation of PNAOCI from 2013 calls for more dialog between the ministry of environment and the CCO (DNP, 2013).

These two policies have come short in making full use of the potential of the Colombian oceans and marine resources and short in making use of the Colombian strategic position by having access to two oceans, being close to the Panama Canal and its interests in the Antarctic matters (DNP, 2020., p.3). CONPES 3990 criticizes the other two policies on failing to provide proper coordination among relevant sectors and government levels and failing to institutionalize the governance of Colombian coasts and oceans (ibid., p.9). Specifically, PNAOCI is criticized not to have given a proper follow-up to the existing planning instruments (POMIUACs) and policy actions, and PNOEC not to have designed policy indicators to follow-up and measure its efficiency (ibid., p.11). Based on policy evaluations and considering the recommendations of the OECD, the CONPES council issues the policy CONPES 3990 as a policy which is 'more strategic, superior in hierarchy and with more long-term vision compared to the other two policies' (DNP, 2020, p.13).

CONPES 3990 aims to make Colombia a *Sustainable Bioceanic Power* by the year 2030, through the sustainable and comprehensive use of its strategic position, ocean conditions and natural resources that contribute towards the sustainable development of the country (DNP, 2020, p.3). Compared to the concept PMO from the PNOEC policy, the concept of 'sustainable bioceanic power' steps back on the elements of power and territoriality⁶⁹. Another central concept for CONPES 3990 is the creation of National Bioceanic System, a crucial policy action

⁶⁸ Colombia becomes official member of the OECD in April 2020. The accession process started in 2013 (OECD, n.d.).

⁶⁹ The term sustainable bioceanic power shall be understood as the quality of a State that: (i) exercises sovereignty and takes advantage of its geo-ocean-political position, its marine ecosystems and its biodiversity; (ii) uses the access to the oceans and maritime lines; (iii) carries out sustainable and competitive maritime activities; (iv) has naval capability and oceanic national awareness; (v) defends national maritime interests; (vi) fully manages the continental and oceanic territory; (vii) leads and participates internationally in conservation and sustainably uses the oceans and marine resources for sustainable development and (viii) recognizes basic and applied research as the axis and means to know and understand the dynamics and the ocean resources of the State (DNP, 2020, pp.58-59).

to strengthen the marine governance in Colombia. The function of the National System is to coordinate not only the different sectors and institutions on a national level (which is the main focus of the National Committee predicted in PNOEC and established under CCO in 2016) but also across government levels, including local and sub-national entities involved in the marine and coastal governance, ensuring for adequate and timely involvement of communities and other concerned actors in the process of marine and coastal governance (DNP, 2020).

But this concept is also not new to Colombia. It was PNAOCI that in 2000 first contemplated the establishment of this kind of system by the CCO as an inter-ministerial body. It is not until now that CCO advanced with its establishment. The CCO representative stated her/his personal involvement in the creation of the Bioceanic System, which will give CCO a role much more important than the advisory role in marine affairs. However, when asked whether it is the same System predicted in PNAOCI, the representative mantra-like repeated that it is different because PNAOCI is a sectoral policy and CONPES 3990 is a multi-sectoral one (I.3a, CCO, 2020).

CONPES 3990 provides an assessment of the current situation in Colombia along the policy's five thematic areas⁷⁰ proposing responsible institutions and measurable actions that respond to the identified problems. One of the major problems identified by CONPES 3990 is, for example, the lack of adequate legislation regarding marine and coastal planning. So, even though there are already three policies for marine and coastal areas in Colombia, enacted laws and regulations that will make the policies binding are missing. Major mistake is, for example, that the General Law for Territorial Planning (Ley Orgánica de Ordenamiento Territorial 1454 de 2011) does not explicitly mention the marine and coastal territories, or the oceans for that matter, as separate categories that need to be planned for (!) (DNP, 2020, p.40). Similar problem is the enactment of the management plans of the coastal environmental units - the so called POMIUACs. Namely, for the ten environmental units in Colombia, although the management plans are formulated, they have not been enacted in nine out of ten cases (!) (DNP, 2020, p.41). CONPES 3990 thus exerts that amendments to existing legislation on territorial planning should be made and there should be more involvement of the Ministry of Environment in the following-up with the POMIUACs (ibid.).

⁷⁰ To achieve this objective, the policy establishes five strategic axes: (i) bioceanic inter-institutional governance; (ii) sovereignty, defense, and comprehensive maritime security; (iii) knowledge, research and maritime culture; (iv) planning and management of marine, coastal and island spaces, and (v) development of maritime activities and coastal municipalities (DNP, 2020).

The question arises, however, who stands behind this third policy, since seemingly the same institutions as with the other two policies 'coordinate' yet again to design a third policy. According to one of my interviewees, an independent coastal and marine expert who has had more relationship with CCO in the past, the idea for the CONPES 3990 policy came from the CCO's executive secretary Juan Manuel Soltau, or more specifically my interviewee said 'Soltau is the father of CONPES 3990' (I.14, 2021). The Rear Admiral has been CCO's executive secretary from 2013 until 2018 and right after that he has been appointed as director of DIMAR (ibid.). Being for six executive years in such strategic positions that gave him access to positions of high command including the Colombian president, has enabled him to accompany and direct the process around the third ocean policy CONPES 3990 (I.14, 2021). According to another interviewee, the Rear Admiral Soltau has also been the key figure in the formation and selection of the MSP group of experts in Colombia (I.6, 2021). According to the CCO representative, the executive secretary has had an important role in bringing the entities together to the table. It was especially important to reestablish the good relationships between, from one side INVEMAR and the Ministry of Environment with DIMAR and CCO, from the other (I.3b, CCO, 2020).

For CONPES 3990 to come to being at this point in time and in this form, the right preconditions had to be met for certain channels of influence to get going. Such is having a vice-president which is a former minister of defense that 'has the sea in her heart' but also a clear idea for the political direction of the CONPES 3990 prompted by this background (I.1, 2020). Additionally, there is this influential figure at the top of CCO (Rear Admiral Soltau) able to influence the agenda and manage to assign the Colombian seas and coasts the much-needed priority for political action steered by the vision of the ministry of defense. My interviewee, academic and coastal expert, sees CONPES 3990 as a pragmatic solution pushed for by the CCO's executive secretary to answer to the OECD recommendation and at least nominally overcome the tension between PNOEC and PNAOCI (I.14, 2021).

The CCO representative finds CONPES 3990 to be complementary to PNOEC but to lack a long-term vision, namely, its policy recommendations last until 2030 (I.3a, 2020). The representative of the ministry of environment too finds that CONPES 3990 intends to somehow involve all the relevant sectors in the marine and coastal planning but that it has a limited vision (I.2, 2022). Another interviewee, a director at the ministry of environment at the moment of the interview, finds that CONPES 3990 not only fails to integrate but provides for additional fragmentation in the marine governance realm of Colombia (I.1, 2020).

Marine Spatial Planning in CONPES 3990

Considering MSP, CONPES 3990 already mentions it explicitly as such in the assessment part. It lists the MSP pilot projects conducted by INVEMAR and DIMAR but only to point out that their application and harmonization with existing planning instruments from the municipalities has not been evaluated yet. Importantly for the policy adoption of MSP is the fact that CONPES 3990 stipulates under one policy action that DIMAR in coordination with the Ministry of Environment and the Ministry of Housing (responsible for Colombia's territorial planning) shall develop the general guidelines for MSP from 2020 until 2030 (!). According to the Ministry of Environment: CONPES 3990 takes into consideration DIMAR's activities in the furthering of MSP in Colombia, and therefore it 'plants' MSP in the policy by making several references to it although there isn't any regulation about it yet (I.2, 2022). In this way, CONPES 3990 confirms officially the 'entrance' of MSP in Colombia on a policy level, and the leading role of the maritime authority DIMAR in the upcoming process of its implementation.

II.4. The three policies at a glance

Colombia currently has three policies related to its marine and coastal areas. PNAOCI (2000) is the policy of the Ministry of Environment, and it considers elements that regulate the use and management of these areas while prioritizing the environment. There are some very important outcomes from this policy in terms of laws and regulations that have traced the development path of this governance area in Colombia. Such are the identification of environmental coastal units as main units for coastal management, the extension of the jurisdiction of the environmental authorities over the whole coastal zone until 12 nm, the requirement for these authorities to design and implement management plans to manage these units, and the official promulgation of the methodology that should be applied in the creation and implementation of these plans, namely the ICZM.

The second policy governing Colombia's oceans is PNOEC from the Colombian Ocean Commission. In the latest version (2017), CCO left lots of blanks when it comes to responsible institutions for the policy action and indicators for the measurement of the policy's effectiveness. Nevertheless, CCO continuously reiterates its integratory function in coordinating the different institutions related to the territorial planning of the marine and coastal areas. We also witness a new vision of the ocean as something that is rather objectified, needs to be (newly) discovered, appropriated, protected and exploited for economic development to direct Colombia in becoming a naval power. While the governance of coastal and marine zones is being decoupled from the ministry of environment, it is being aligned with the vision

of the ministry of defense. Territoriality, power, maritime security, maritime interests & co. are all elements that predominate in PNOEC 2017 and are related to the sector of defense and security.

Finally, there is CONPES 3990, which similarly to PNOEC, focuses on different maritime sectors and their development. CONPES 3990 points to many weak points of both policies and represents an effort to bridge the institutional disagreements. CONPES 3990 is in its approach, however, much more similar to PNOEC than to PNAOCI and the presence of CCO and its vision can be evidenced here too. CONPES 3990 softens, however, the language of territoriality and defense of PNOEC alluding more to the geostrategic position of Colombia and its marine resources as potential for economic development and regional leadership.⁷¹

Regarding MSP, while PNAOCI does not include it, its central element is another very similar methodology – ICZM. PNAOCI is, however, a very important policy that for the first time contemplates institutions that, although have failed to be established timely, their posterior creation is of crucial importance for the furthering of MSP in Colombia. Such are the National Committee for Integrated Management of Ocean and Coastal Space and the National System for Integrated Management of Ocean and Coastal Space. The Committee is established under CCO's umbrella in 2016, and the System is currently under development, also coordinated by CCO. PNOEC does not mention MSP explicitly either, but it is being interpreted as if it contemplates MSP through the term 'marine and coastal planning' implemented by DIMAR. CONPES 3990 explicitly includes MSP in one of its policy actions. A comparative summary of the policies can be found in Table 5 below:

⁷¹ To align its policy (PNOEC) more to the CONPES 3990, in 2021, CCO issued a document called 'Colombian Maritime Interests'. In it, CCO provides a matrix that brings together and aligns CCO's institutional strategies, the main thematic areas of PNOEC and the main thematic areas of CONPES 3990, all integrated through 18 Colombian Maritime Interests (Ramírez-Cabrales et al., 2021). This move also cements in a way CCO and DIMAR's leading position in the area of marine governance in Colombia, and with it also its leading position in the adoption of MSP. The 18 Maritime Interests are the following: Human talent and maritime community; Sovereignty and integrity of the national maritime territory; Infrastructure for insurance, integrity, maritime order and the state of law at sea; Comprehensive maritime and fluvial security; Maritime transport and trade; Maritime tourism and recreation; Naval and maritime industry; Marine and underwater mining; Fishing and aquaculture; Connectivity by sea; Public health and marine biosecurity; Marine-coastal planning; Marine-coastal environmental resources; Ocean governance; Maritime culture; Maritime education; Scientific, technological and innovation research; Submerged cultural heritage (ibid).

	PNAOCI (2000)	PNOEC (2017)	CONPES 3990 (2020)
Institution	Ministry of Environment	Colombian Ocean Commission	Council CONPES
Sector	Environmental sector	Intersectoral (with strong defense and security narrative)	Intersectoral
Thematic areas	(i) Territorial Environmental Planning of Ocean Spaces and Coastal and Island Zones; (ii) Sectoral Environmental Sustainability; (iii) Rehabilitation and Restoration of Degraded Marine and Coastal Ecosystems; (iv) Conservation of Protected Marine and Coastal Areas; (v) Conservation of Species; (vi) Evaluation, Prevention, Reduction and Control of Terrestrial and Marine Sources of Sea Pollution and (vii) Risk Management for the Prevention and Response of Disasters in Ocean Spaces and Coastal Zones	(i) Integrity and Projection of the Maritime Territory; (ii) Economic Development; (iii) Strengthening of the Marine-Coastal Governance; (iv) Sustainable Use of Marine Biodiversity; (v) Culture, Education and Maritime Sciences	(i) Bioceanic Inter-Institutional Governance; (ii) Sovereignty, Defense and Comprehensive Maritime Security; (iii) Knowledge, Research and Maritime Culture; (iv) Planning and Management of Marine, Coastal and Island Spaces; (v) Development of Maritime Activities and Coastal Municipalities
Thematic area directly linked to coastal and marine planning	(i) Territorial Environmental Planning of Ocean Spaces and Coastal and Island Zones	(iii) Strengthening of the Marine-Coastal Governance;	(iv) Planning and Management of Marine, Coastal and Island Spaces;
Presence of MSP	Not as such. ICZM is present	Not as such. Implicitly through the concept 'marine and coastal planning'	Explicitly. Formulation of general MSP guidelines is stipulated as one of the policy actions under the thematic area iv.
Enacted legislation linked to marine and coastal planning	a) Law 1450 (2011) extends the jurisdiction of the environmental authorities and binds them to develop management plans (POMIUACs) b) Decree 1120 (2013) regulates the establishment of the environmental coastal units (UACs) c) Resolution 768 (2017) enacts the technical guide ICZM developed by INVEMAR as the binding methodology for the development of the POMIUACs	N/A	N/A

Table 5. Comparison between the current ocean and coastal zone policies in Colombia

III. Policy Transfer Processes of MSP in Colombia

III.1. The 'official' policy transfer process of MSP

Table 6 below represents what is to become the 'official' path of the policy transfer process of MSP from IOC-UNESCO to Colombia. The scheme uses process tracing elements (trigger, activities, outcome) to represent the flow of the process of MSP transfer and adoption. The analysis below provides the context and elaborates on the relationship between the different parts of the process flow.

Trigger	Activity A	Activity B	Outcome
Arrival of the MSPGlobal project of the IOC-UNESCO in the South-East Pacific region (2018/2019) to accelerate MSP's adoption in the region.	<p>IOC-UNESCO sends information regarding the upcoming MSPGlobal project to the secretariat of the Colombian national focal point in front of the IOC-UNESCO – the Colombian Ocean Commission (CCO), with an invitation to join the project.</p> <p>IOC-UNESCO's staff member (MSPGlobal's project coordinator) visits CCO to discuss the institutional setting regarding the future of MSP in Colombia.</p>	<p>CCO's executive secretary sees the potential of MSP to further Colombia's national and maritime interests</p> <p>CCO assigns DIMAR as the national focal point of MSP and coordinator of the future activities regarding MSP, as an institution with which it shares same core values (defense, security, territoriality).</p>	<p>MSP is included in the new Colombian ocean policy (CONPES 3990) from 2020</p> <p>DIMAR and CCO (with the key role from CCO's executive secretary) form and select the members of the MSP experts' group for Colombia that are supposed to support DIMAR in the MSP implementation in Colombia.</p>

Table 6. Scheme of the Policy Transfer Process of MSP to Colombia with Process Tracing elements

CCO's relationship with the IOC-UNESCO

The policy transfer happens mainly as a result of the existing close relationship and the networks built through the years of close cooperation between IOC-UNESCO and the CCO. Namely, CCO is Colombia's representative institution in front of the IOC-UNESCO.

The Colombian Oceanographic Commission (Comisión Colombiana de Oceanografía) was originally created in 1969, and then restructured and renamed in the year 2000 into what today is known as the Colombian Ocean Commission (CCO). The origins of this institution in the late sixties are linked to the IOC-UNESCO. In the words of a CCO representative: 'CCO was created thanks to the IOC' (I.3b, CCO). Namely, as part of the International Decade of Ocean Exploration (1971-1980) and inspired by the Indian Ocean International Expedition, in 1968,

the IOC-UNESCO has initiated a regional program for Cooperative Investigations of the Caribbean and Adjacent Regions (CICAR) in the Caribbean. As the first regional effort in marine sciences in the region, the purpose of the program was to understand the ocean and related processes in the Greater Caribbean region (UNESCO, 2022). In order to respond to this call and integrate Colombia in the CICAR program, acting upon a recommendation of the IOC-UNESCO in 1969 Colombia founds the Colombian Oceanographic Commission. Its goal is to achieve marine scientific cooperation and transfer of marine technology. In this way, the Colombian Oceanographic Commission becomes Colombia's focal point at the IOC-UNESCO (CCO, 2018b, p.21). Responding to the important role the ocean started acquiring in the international context, with the Decree 347 from 2000, the Colombian Oceanographic Commission becomes Colombian Ocean Commission as the central institution whose main goal is to design Colombia's ocean policy, or the National Policy for Ocean and Coastal Spaces (PNOEC) (CCO, 2015).

'IOC is very important for the CCO and as a matter-of-fact Colombia has a very strong relationship with them.' (I.3b, CCO). 'The topics that are managed at the IOC are translated into respective technical committees or working groups at the CCO, as is the example with the Committee on Data' (I.3b, CCO). Furthermore: '...we are normally always among the countries that are part of the executive council of the IOC, and IOC is our main platform in ocean matters. It is where we present what Colombia is doing and where we pick up from the international level and bring it to the national' (I.3b, CCO). As a comparison to some other countries in the region, since 1969, Colombia has been a member of IOC's Executive Council in 22 terms, whereas Chile and Peru both 18 times, Ecuador 7, and Panama only once, besides having joined the IOC earlier than Colombia, except for Panama which joined the IOC in the same year (IOC-UNESCO, 2023). Furthermore, Colombia has had Vice-chairpersons in three terms, followed by Peru with one term, while the rest of the mentioned countries haven't had any Vice-chairpersons so far (ibid.).

There is another special linkage between CCO and the IOC through the organization IOCARIBE whose focal point is also CCO. Namely, recognizing the benefits from the CICAR program, the countries from the Caribbean region had an interest to create a successor organization. In this way, in the year 1975, IOCARIBE comes to life, as the regional subsidiary body of the IOC-UNESCO for the Caribbean and Adjacent Regions⁷² (UNESCO, 2022). 'The relationship between the two institutions is so strong that as a result we have the office of

⁷² IOC-UNESCO has three sub-commissions: WESTPAC for the Western Pacific Region, IOCARIBE for the Wider Caribbean Region and IOCAFRICA for Africa and Adjacent Island States.

IOCARIBE here in Cartagena (Colombia). And as a part of this arrangement between Colombia and UNESCO we also have staff from the CCO that supports IOCARIBE' (I.3b, CCO). CCO together with the Colombian Ministry of Foreign Affairs negotiated with IOC to have IOCARIBE's headquarters in Colombia, which is the case since the year 1985 (CCO, 2016).

CCO and IOC-UNESCO are interconnected not only on the Caribbean but also on the Pacific side. While the Caribbean region has IOCARIBE, the Pacific has the Permanent Commission for the South Pacific or CPPS (Comisión Permanente de Pacífico Sur). The CPPS is an intergovernmental organization created in 1952 with an agreement between Chile, Peru, Ecuador and Colombia, whose main objective is to strengthen their cooperation and political, technical, and scientific coordination for the conservation and sustainable use of the ocean (CPPS, 2023). 'Something the IOC does, and this is how we (CCO) see it, it applies the programs from IOCARIBE to the Pacific region through the regional organization CPPS. This is how we manage to address the issues on both regions' (I.3b, CCO). 'The CPPS is more formal organization and so the focal points are the ministries of foreign affairs. But one of the functions of CCO, together with the Ministry of Environment, is to support the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in its activities at the CPPS' (I.3b, CCO). One very important role Colombia (through CCO and other related institutions) plays in front of CPPS is related to the El Niño phenomenon, where Colombia had a historical importance in initiating and coordinating the regional project for the study of this phenomenon (CCO, 2016).

On their side, IOC-UNESCO and CPPS have started their relationship since 1984 when they signed a memorandum of understanding for a joint cooperation in the areas of oceanography, meteorology, and integrated management of coastal zones (I.15, CPPS). Especially important product of their cooperation is the SPINCAM project, implemented by the IOC-UNESCO through CPPS, from 2008 until 2021 (ibid.). The SPINCAM project is designed to establish a framework of integrated coastal management indicators in the countries of the South Pacific region (the abovementioned countries plus Panama) (UNESCO/FUST, n.d.). As it turns out, the relevance of SPINCAM for the here studied policy transfer processes is insurmountable, which is why it will be often referred to in this study in different contexts.

The origins of the policy transfer

This study traces the process of transfer of the policy instrument MSP from international to national level in Colombia. For that purpose, all interviewees (including those from neighboring

countries) were asked where they heard about MSP for the first time, or how it came to their country or the region in general.

Many of the interviewees identified the SPINCAM project as the source of MSP for their country or the South-East Pacific region in general. Most of them explicitly related the project with the IOC-UNESCO. For example, the INVEMAR representative said: 'I think it [MSP] definitely came [in Colombia] with SPINCAM.' They continued saying that the project [SPINCAM] came at the initiative of the IOC-UNESCO, and it was there where they [INVEMAR] could approach MSP and adopt it (I.9a, 2020). The CCO representative identified SPINCAM as 'the program of the IOC-UNESCO about marine spatial planning' (I.3b, 2020). Two other independent experts mention SPINCAM as IOC-UNESCO's project that dealt with marine and coastal planning and worth looking at if one wants to understand the process of transfer of these concepts in the region (I.11, 2020; I.14, 2021). One of the representatives of the Colombian Ministry of Environment found that especially the first phase of the project SPINCAM, was where valuable knowledge was generated on development of indicators for evaluating marine and coastal planning (I.1, 2020).

This was mostly the case with the rest of the interviewees from the countries in the region. Namely, the interviewee from the Ecuadorian navy also concisely answered that SPINCAM was the space of diffusion and promotion of MSP to Ecuador and the region (I.16, 2022). The representative from the ministry of environment from Panama identified phase III from the SPINCAM project as one of the initial encounters of the country with MSP (I.17, 2022). The Peruvian interviewee from the Institute of the Sea (institution under the Peruvian Ministry of Production, fisheries sector) recognizes SPINCAM as the most important cooperation between Peru and IOC-UNESCO and as the platform where they mostly learned about MSP (I.20, 2022). The CPPS representative also affirmed that SPINCAM together with MSPGlobal, both coming from IOC-UNESCO, are fundamental for the arrival of MSP in the region (I.15, 2022).

As mentioned briefly above, the SPINCAM project is implemented through the organization CPPS, but organized and supported by the IOC-UNESCO with funds from the government of Flanders (Belgium). SPINCAM stands for 'Southeast Pacific data and information network in support to integrated coastal area management'. It ran from 2009 until 2021 in three phases, with the objective to support the five countries from the South-East Pacific to develop long-term science-based strategy for the sustainable growth of their coastal zones (UNESCO, 2016). The project's main product is the integrated coastal area management (ICAM) indicator framework which enables scientific experts from these countries to map out the environmental

and socio-economic conditions of the coastal and marine areas in order to provide up-to-date policy-relevant information (ibid.). Especially Phase III of the project (2016 - 2020) includes MSP as a tool for coastal and marine management (I.15, CPPS, 2022) and is meant to operationalize the indicators, frameworks and capacities built in the previous two phases. Phase III is influenced by the blue economy and blue growth paradigms (Dahik & Iturralde, 2019).

Some interviewees identified, in addition to SPINCAM, also the MSPGlobal project as the source of MSP in their country. The CPPS representative, as mentioned above, identified both SPINCAM and MSP, as well as the representative of the Panama ministry of environment (I.17, 2022) and the Colombian representative from the CCO (I.3b, 2020). Some interviewees identified MSPGlobal as the main initiative where they first got to know about MSP. This is the case with the Colombian representative from the Fisheries and Aquaculture Authority AUNAP (which is under the Ministry of agriculture) (I.7, 2022), or the Colombian representative of the Department of National Parks PNN (linked to the Ministry of Environment) (I.6, 2021). The Peruvian representative of Directorate of Hydrography and Navigation DIHIDRONAV (institution under the Peruvian navy) identified MSPGlobal as the project with which MSP arrives to Peru⁷³ (I.21, 2022).

The MSPGlobal project (as explained in more detail in Chapter I), is a joint project of the IOC-UNESCO and the European Commission with the objective to accelerate the MSP processes globally. The first phase of the project was implemented from 2019 until 2022 and focused on implementing transboundary MSP projects in the South-East Pacific region and in the Mediterranean region. The MSPGlobal project builds on the results from the SPINCAM project, which is why one of the two regions selected for the MSPGlobal is the South-East Pacific (e-mail correspondence with MSPGlobal, April 2021). In addition, the coordinator of the MSPGlobal project until 2021 (Mr. Alejandro Iglesias Campos) was the coordinator of SPINCAM III phase too, in his role as representative of the Marine Policy and Regional Coordination Section of the IOC-UNESCO. Similarly, Ms. Michele Quesada da Silva, member of the same section of the IOC-UNESCO, was involved in both projects, SPINCAM and MSPGlobal. Both of them were occasionally referred by some of the interviewees as the persons responsible for MSPGlobal in the South-East Pacific region and some of them knew them personally because of the SPINCAM project (such as the representative of the Ministry of Environment of Panama or DIHIDRONAV from Peru).

⁷³ Although the interviewee did not explicitly identify SPINCAM, the Sechura case study, which is the SPINCAM case study in Peru, was mentioned as an example where MSP-similar approach was applied, namely the ICZM.

Few of the interviewees stated that they learned about MSP by taking courses in Spain or France some years before the MSPGlobal project (for example, this is the case with the representative of the Ecuadorian navy, or one of the Colombian academics). The regional coordinator of the NGO MarViva said he learned about MSP through the 2006 MSP guidebook and his personal interaction with the authors of this guide Charles Ehler and Fanny Douvere (I.22, 2022). And one interviewee said they were directly involved with MSPGlobal before coming to the institution where I interviewed them and that is how they learned about MSP (I.7, AUNAP).

Based on the evidence from the interviews, MSP becomes familiar to the countries in the South-East Pacific Region predominantly through the SPINCAM project, and/or later through the MSPGlobal project. Both are IOC-UNESCO's projects. The SPINCAM project, which mainly focuses on developing indicators and support tools for integrated coastal area management (such as data repositories and atlases), serves as the platform where MSP as a specific policy tool has been officially introduced. Besides the interviews, there is more evidence in this regard. Such is the presentation from Alejandro Iglesias Campos (MSPGlobal regional director) at one SPINCAM event in February 2016⁷⁴ about the SPINCAM III phase: 'an integrative approach for coastal and marine ecosystems towards blue growth'. One of its objectives is to increase synergies between the methodologies of integrated coastal area management and marine spatial planning (Iglesias-Campos, 2016; CPPS, I.15, 2022). As one of its main outcomes, SPINCAM III predicts 'Recommendations for the development of a regional MSP strategy and national MSP plans for sustainable blue growth' (Iglesias-Campos, 2016).

Now, MSPGlobal, on the other side, arrives in 2019 in the region with the introduction of the transboundary MSP project between Ecuador and Peru situated at the gulf of Guayaquil. While the MSP as an instrument was already *introduced* to key institutions in marine and coastal planning mainly through the SPINCAM project and courses offered by INVEMAR (as it will be elaborated below), MSPGlobal *accelerates* the MSP diffusion and MSP capacity-building⁷⁵ for Latin America and for Colombia.

⁷⁴ Namely, during one-week SPINCAM event in February 2016 in Belgium, organized by the IOC-UNESCO (UNESCO, 2016), different institutions from the five countries in the region have presented their advances on the SPINCAM project (mainly the ministries of environment, but for some countries also ministries of foreign affairs, the Peruvian Institute of the Sea IMARPE, the Colombian INVEMAR, the Panama Canal Authority etc.).

⁷⁵ During the first phase of the implementation of the MSPGlobal project (2018 – 2021), around 150 activities were undertaken with more than 5000 participants from 150 countries (IOC, 2021). For example, in total of 13 countries in Latin America (including the South-East Pacific Region), MSPGlobal

MSPGlobal as the trigger

The SPINCAM project serves as the platform for learning and exchange of information, knowledge and experiences among the countries from the South-Pacific region regarding integrated coastal management. By using the networks and institutional contacts established through this project, a transfer channel for MSP as a (novel) policy instrument comes to being. As the institution continuously present in SPINCAM because of its genuine interest for the issue but also because of its long-lasting expertise, INVEMAR is one key institution that largely contributes to the dissemination of knowledge around MSP to other practitioners in Colombia and in the wider region. Although DIMAR was also a technical focal point in front of SPINCAM, due to institutional tensions with the ministry of environment, it did not want to stay in the SPINCAM project (I.3b, 2020) leaving INVEMAR as the main technical expert representing Colombia together with the ministry of environment. Which is why DIMAR as a disseminator of knowledge around MSP appears at a later stage. Namely, its role in MSP-related knowledge and information exchange has been mentioned by the interviewees only after the start of the MSPGlobal project in the region and after it acquired its new role as the focal point for Colombia in front of MSPGlobal in 2019 (I.4., DIMAR, 2021; I.6, PNN, 2021).

After the initial transfer of the concept of MSP occurs in Colombia mainly through SPINCAM, the study finds the MSPGlobal to be the trigger for the official transfer of MSP as a policy instrument.

The transfer of the concept as such has happened before MSPGlobal and is evidenced in PNOEC 2017 where MSP is implicitly present under the term 'marine-coastal planning', as it was more broadly elaborated above. Another evidence is presented by the CCO interviewee who said: Colombia was talking about MSP even before MSPGlobal and even founded a special committee at the CCO in 2016, namely, the National Technical Committee for

has organized one or two capacity building workshops on MSP and the blue economy (Iglesias-Campos & Quesada-Silva, 2021). In addition to country-specific workshops, MSPGlobal organizes the international MSPForum and regional MSPForum. From the first kind, there have been five fora already and from the regional ones, there have been three including one for the Latin America and the Caribbean (MSPglobal, 2021b). Except for the fora, there are MSP international conferences too. There have been five international MSP conferences until now counting the very first international MSP workshop in 2009. The outreach of these events is, of course, remarkable, especially if the events are online. So, for example, during the first four MSPfora held in presence there have been more than 600 participants (Iglesias-Campos & Quesada-Silva, 2021), whereas the online regional MSPForum for the Latin America and the Caribbean had around 260 participants (MSPGlobal, 2021). To foster the communication and exchange on MSP among interested parties, MSPGlobal translates the different publications from the project in English, Spanish, Portuguese, French, Arabic, Russian, Chinese (Iglesias-Campos & Quesada-Silva, 2021).

Integrated Management of the Marine and Coastal Territories (I.3b, 2020). Furthermore, the interviewee continues that Colombia made voluntary commitments at the UN Ocean Conference in June 2017, among else, also in the area of marine governance including MSP (I.3b, 2020; CCO, 2017).

Although MSPglobal arrives as a regional IOC-UNESCO initiative it triggers the development of national MSP processes (Iglesias-Campos & Quesada-Silva, 2021). In addition to the different country-tailored workshops and events for knowledge and information exchange, as part of the MSPGlobal project, the countries in the region are asked to designate national focal points to the project. Even more, the participating countries select a group of experts, 8 to 10 individuals from different national institutions concerned with marine planning or with jurisdiction in marine areas (ibid. p. 18). The institution which is the focal point to MSPGlobal should be supported by the experts' group in advancing the MSP process at the national level (ibid.). And so, by the designation of this focal point and the selection of experts, we evidence further steps towards the adoption of MSP in Colombia. Not to forget is the official anchoring of MSP on a policy level in CONPES 3990, as elaborated above.

In the chain of institutional reactions for the MSP transfer, we have the scheme: 'IOC-UNESCO -> CCO -> DIMAR'. The question here arises what kind of actions lie behind this institutional reaction, or the 'black box', to use the terms of the process tracing approach. In the following, I provide evidence from the interviews that shed light on the linkages between the actors.

'We [Colombia] have been talking about it [MSP] on international fora in 2017, when in 2019 *we started receiving communiques* from the IOC-UNESCO saying that there will be a project initiative called MSPGlobal' (I.3b, CCO, 2020). 'We [CCO] said this is an important initiative for us [Colombia] but we will look at it if it is according to our marine and coastal interests and with what we already have developed in Colombia. And this is where *we [CCO] also included DIMAR as the technical focal point for MSPGlobal*. Why DIMAR? Because when we talk about tourism, we need to go to the ministry of tourism and to DIMAR, if we talk about offshore, we need to go to the ministry of mines but also to DIMAR. So, DIMAR plays a very important role in MSP ...' (I.3b, CCO, 2020).

When asked about the connection between international and national level institutions in matters of transfer of MSP, the DIMAR representative identified CCO as the first institution, and DIMAR as the second institution because of its role as the focal point in front of MSPGlobal (I.4, 2021). On the preconditions for the transfer to happen, the DIMAR representative,

continued more specifically ‘...well, *there was a visit from a representative of the IOC-UNESCO – Alejandro Iglesias, so he kind of identified the strengths of DIMAR in questions of marine-coastal planning, of integrated management of coastal zones and, well, the IOC put us [DIMAR] as the national focal point in front of MSPGlobal*’ (I.4, 2021). Another of my interviewees, member of the MSP experts’ group from another governmental institution, said she/he did not think it’s bad, but she/he ‘does not know how it happened to be’ that DIMAR, and not the ministry of environment, became the responsible institution for MSP in Colombia (I.6, 2021). One of the independent experts with long career in environmental institutions in the area of coastal and marine management, said that ‘sometimes there appears to be a confusion of roles and functions, which is why DIMAR was assigned as the MSPGlobal focal point although INVEMAR already had experience with activities related to MSP’ (I.11, 2020). In this regard, even the CCO representative emphasized that in practical terms the two Colombian institutions most important for the work and alliances with the IOC-UNESCO are DIMAR and INVEMAR, the former because of the collection of oceanographic data and the latter because of the biological data and the OTGA academy (I.3b, 2020).

The representative of the ministry of environment on the same matter said: ‘...*the IOC-UNESCO, well, its focal point is CCO, so CCO started bothering so we can get into the processes [of adopting MSP]. And this is where the marine spatial planning project which is done currently with the IOC-UNESCO [MSPGlobal], they [CCO] send it additionally to DIMAR, and DIMAR becomes the focal point, and they [CCO] take us [the ministry of environment] out of the process.*’ (I.1, 2020).

The INVEMAR representative said that in 2019, ‘as part of MSPGlobal, IOC-UNESCO started promoting so that the countries would acknowledge and adopt the MSP approach’. The interviewee continued: ‘This is how it [IOC-UNESCO] *came to Colombia and contacted its focal point* in Colombia which is the CCO, and they just began recognizing which institutions work with MSP and *they had DIMAR at hand*’ (‘tenían a la mano a la Dirección General Marítima’). (I.9b, INVEMAR, 2020).

One experienced academic in coastal research and planning, who also has experience working with the COO, found the process of “entrance” of MSPGlobal in Colombia to be untransparent. Although she/he is very much involved in this topic, only very few actors were informed about the project, ‘DIMAR is put as the focal point’ and ‘the rest of us only find out about it on Twitter, asking ourselves how one gets invited to such project’ (I.14, 2021).

Through the interview excerpts, the study offers an insight behind the 'black box' of the process flow. Namely, we have an IO, in this case the IOC-UNESCO that has the intention to accelerate the adoption of MSP in the South-East Pacific region (European Commission & IOC/UNESCO, n.d.). For this purpose, IOC arrives in the region with the MSPGlobal project, invites the countries from the region to participate through their focal points at the IOC, and also representatives of the IOC pay a visit to the countries' national focal points, which in the case of Colombia it is the Colombian Ocean Commission (CCO). While in the process flow the connection between the IOC and the CCO is logical, the assigning of DIMAR as the national technical focal point in front of MSPGlobal represents a sort of a puzzle. Some interviewees wondered why INVEMAR, or the ministry of environment were not given this role considering their expertise and long-lasting experience in marine and coastal planning in Colombia. From the interviews, two impressions arise which should be interpreted in the context of the long-lasting close relationship between CCO and the IOC-UNESCO: one, the IOC had a 'say' in the assignment of DIMAR as a focal point, and two, DIMAR was assigned as the focal point because of its closeness to the CCO under the umbrella of the ministry of defense.

Although CCO is defined as an inter-ministerial body, it is very closely linked to the Colombian ministry of defense. The predecessor of CCO – the Colombian Oceanographic Commission was founded in 1969 at the initiative of few visionary officials of the Colombian navy to integrate Colombia in the regional scientific project CICAR. And so, the first office of the Colombian Oceanographic Commission was in the premises of the Colombian Maritime Authority (DIMAR) – institution under of the ministry of defense. Later on, with the Decree 413 from 1981, it was established that the president, vice-president, and the executive secretary of the Oceanographic Commission will be appointed by the Commander of the Colombian Navy (CCO, 2015). Today, the executive secretary of CCO is always a high-ranking official of the Colombian navy (I.13, Colombian academic). In the words of one of the interviewees, CCO 'belongs' to the ministry of defense (I.7, Colombian Fisheries Authority, 2022). Another interviewee, closely familiar with the work of CCO, said that DIMAR and CCO are institutions with a military background, not in terms of being part of the military but having personnel with military education ('la CCO y la DIMAR son de conformación militar') (I.14, Colombian academic, 2021). The representative of the ministry of transport identifies CCO as a 'committee of the navy' and a 'social enterprise of the ministry of defense' (I.23, 2022). This historical context of close relationships and share of common institutional values, provides a probable explanation of the assignment of DIMAR as the national MSP focal point by CCO and IOC-UNESCO.

Information related to Peru sheds more light to the dynamic between the IOC-UNESCO and national institutions.

In Peru, the key institutions currently involved in marine and coastal planning are the ministry of environment, DIHIDRONAV – the Agency for Hydrography and Navigation which is the scientific body of the Peruvian navy, IMARPE – The Institute of the Sea which is a scientific body of the ministry of production focused especially on fisheries and DICAPI – the Peruvian Maritime Authority under the ministry of defense (I.20, 2022). DIHIDRONAV is the national focal point in front of the IOC-UNESCO and became the focal point for the MSPGlobal. Therefore, it is in charge from the Peruvian side for the implementation of the transboundary MSP project at the Guayaquil Gulf together with its Ecuadorian counterpart (I.21, 2022). IMARPE, on the other hand, is the main institution that together with the Peruvian ministry of environment was involved in the SPINCAM project from Peruvian side. These two institutions (IMARPE and the ministry of environment) are also the ones who have most experience with integrated coastal zone management in Peru (I.20, 2022).

Through a personal email communication with a representative from DIHIDRONAV, I obtained a document 'Memoria' describing the timeline of events related to the MSPGlobal project until August 2020 (Documento Memoria, 2020). During the very initial MSPGlobal events, such as the official global presentation of the project in Brussels in May 2018, or the initial meeting for the SPINCAM 3 project where MSP is also being presented to the SPINCAM audience, the institution representing Peru is IMARPE. In the document, it is also mentioned that DIHIDRONAV has not participated at any of these initial meetings (ibid.), fact also confirmed by another DIHIDRONAV representative in an interview (I.21, 2022).

So, the question arises, similar to Colombia, how come DIHIDRONAV became the focal point of MSPGlobal, and not for example IMARPE or the ministry of environment, as the more experienced ones in the matter. After all, IMARPE was initially representing Peru in front of MSPGlobal, which seemed logical because of its expertise in ICZM and existing involvement in the SPINCAM project. The last sentence of a paragraph describing the upcoming activities of the MSPGlobal pilot project in the South-East Pacific in the document 'Memoria' says: 'In this case, *upon decision of the IOC-UNESCO*, DIHIDRONAV was designated as the national focal point [for MSPGlobal]' (Documento Memoria, 2020, emphasis added).

My interviewee from DIHIDRONAV explained the following: 'After the pilot project for the Gulf of Guayaquil was announced, the countries presented their project leaders and Peru proposed IMARPE. In the document sent to the IOC-UNESCO about this, the IOC-UNESCO made some

comments and said that *the representatives of the project should be able to report to them directly*. In Peru, the focal point in front of the IOC-UNESCO is DIHIDRONAV. And so, finally, the IOC *comes and says*, well, the one who will be leading the project in Peru in this case will be DIHIDRONAV because it is my representative (read: national focal point)'. (I.21, 2022; emphasis added). The interviewee continued: 'For us [DIHIDRONAV] this came out of the blue' ('nos cayó del cielo') without knowing what MSPGlobal is, we were told to reach out and communicate with the two responsible persons Alejandro Iglesias and Michele Quesada' (I.21, 2022). This poses the question, why is an institution with which there are established bureaucratic channels preferred over an institution that has more knowledge and practice with the policy at stake. And what implications this will have when it comes to the practical implementation of MSP in future.

This clearly depicts the role of IOC-UNESCO in the establishment of MSP institutions in the countries, especially its role in the designation of the MSP authorities on a country level. In the case of Colombia and Peru, there is evidence that the IOC designated (Peru) or at least had an important 'say' (Colombia) in the designation of the focal point in front of MSPGlobal. The focal point, on the other hand, as it will be presented after this part, is the entity that forms the MSP experts' group and coordinates the activities of the other ministries and sectors regarding the (future) implementation of MSP on national level. The vision, values and institutional capacities of the institution that is the MSP focal point, on the other hand, can determine the future direction of MSP in the countries, and with it, the way how the seas in these countries will be governed. This will be more clearly shown in the analysis of Transfer Content (Chapter 6).

The MSP experts' group

'Listen, we will be working with MSP, and we need to form a group of experts' (Interview from 2021), is an impression of a member of the MSP experts' group regarding the process of arrival of MSP in Colombia. The establishment of an MSP experts' group is a prerequisite for the countries to participate in the MSPGlobal project (Iglesias-Campos & Quesada-Silva, 2021). The IOC-UNESCO asked the countries to form these groups involving representatives from the relevant maritime sectors while paying attention to gender parity. One of my female interviewees mentioned that she became part of the Colombian experts' group partly because of this reason. She is a proven expert in her field relevant to territorial planning but has heard about MSP only very recently, somewhere around 2019 (Interview from 2021). The function of the experts' group is to 'bring forward MSP in Colombia' (I.6, 2021) and the focal point in

front of MSPGlobal is the leader of the experts' group, which in the case of Colombia is the Maritime Authority DIMAR.

DIMAR is the Colombian Maritime Authority, an institution under the ministry of defense with the main function to control and coordinate the maritime activities in Colombian waters (DIMAR, 2024). Besides two representatives from DIMAR, the other members of the MSP experts' group are representatives from the two research centers of DIMAR (CIOH for the Caribbean and CCCP for the Pacific), the Fisheries Authority, the Colombian Navy, Department of National Parks, INVEMAR, the University of Antioquia, the Ministry of Housing, the Ministry of Environment and Ministry of Foreign Affairs (information received by email from May 2022). According to the CCO representative, the ministry of environment refused to join the group at the very beginning: 'we have invited them, but they did not want to join, but now they do want to start over the process and so we asked the IOC-UNESCO to support us to increase the size of the experts' group to twelve persons' (CCO, 2021). According to one Colombian academic with decade long experience in coastal research and planning, the diffusion of information around MSPGlobal and its activities in Colombia has been very limited and held in close circles. So, they would find out about the events of DIMAR, for example, only via Twitter (I.14, 2021).

When asked about the activities of the experts' group, one interviewee – member of the experts' group, said that by now (March 2021) they have attended meetings organized by DIMAR twice a year (Interview from 2022), but mostly the interaction unfolds through emails. So, they have received information about published articles, are asked to provide some information from their home institutions or are invited to participate at events and workshops organized by MSPGlobal (I.6, 2021). While enthused to work with the MSP group of experts, one interviewee revealed that DIMAR is advancing some spatial planning activities with the excuse that it already has the technical cartographic data and manages all data related to the ports and underwater cables. So, it had the intention to only *inform* the rest of the concerned sectors about these activities (Interview from 2021; emphasis added). The interviewee on another occasion informed me that they were not aware about many of the activities and events organized by DIMAR until the activities had already happened (ibid.). The representative of the ministry of environment expressed their doubts about the ability of DIMAR as a maritime authority to put such emphasis on the participation and integration element of the MSP (I.2, 2022). According to a timetable I have received by email from one of the interviewees about the MSP activities in Colombia realized in 2020 and the upcoming activities in 2021, looks as if in most of the cases the external MSP workshops are attended by DIMAR and/or its research centers. According to this source, the national focal points of

the countries in the region have worked on developing a regional roadmap for MSP and the Blue Economy in March 2021, which, as an upcoming activity, DIMAR plans to validate and promote at home. The timetable also lists national events where DIMAR presents its advances in MSP activities in specific locations in Colombia (PowerPoint slides with timetable received by email in April 2021). One of the interviewees in a personal opinion said that her/his impression is that the work of the experts' group does not advance much and that after MSPGlobal has finished there has not been much advance in terms of the furthering of MSP which process proved to be really slow (I.2, 2022).

While this gives the impression of DIMAR acting rather alone in the development of national MSP projects at the expense of coordinating with the rest of the institutions, this is also a snapshot of an early stage of adoption of a policy instrument, where the consolidation of resources and relationships among different institutions takes its time. However, considering the long history of flawed inter-sectoral coordination in Colombia, one needs to stay attentive to these developments.

III.2. Bottom-up transfer process (through non-political actors)

The policy transfer process through INVEMAR

INVEMAR (Instituto de Investigaciones Marinas y Costeras "José Benito Vives de Andrés") is the national research institute for basic and applied scientific research on natural renewable resources and marine and coastal ecosystems. Since 1993, Invemar is part of the Colombian National Environmental System (SINA) and is linked to the ministry of environment. As such Invemar also provides scientific advice and support to the Ministry, regional environmental authorities and local authorities with jurisdiction over the coastal zones (INVEMAR, n.d.).

INVEMAR's operations has been influenced by its past institutional form and function, when in 1963 it was established firstly as a German-Colombian scientific cooperation project on a university level (Justus Liebig University from Germany and Universidad de los Andes from Colombia). As such, even after 1993 when becoming assigned to the ministry of environment, INVEMAR continues with its predominantly academic-scientific work, which distinguishes it from the rest of the research institutes assigned to the ministry of environment⁷⁶. The tendency

⁷⁶ At the same time, INVEMAR's work is focused on scientific project-oriented research. This has 'atomized' its work and its ability to provide integral structural analysis of the marine ecosystems and nature – society relationships. The strengthening of its scientific networks with national and foreign universities, has come at the cost of weakening its administrative and 'public service' capacity to

to be less (financially) dependent from the ministry has given INVEMAR flexibility and independence in choosing its topics of interest, especially important in times of swift changes of political priorities⁷⁷ (Guhl Nannetti & Leyva, 2015).

This 'independence' from the ministry of environment and the wish to 'go its own way'⁷⁸ is reflected in the fact that while the position of the ministry of environment is that Colombia does not need MSP because it has ICZM (although this position gets softened in the last interview), INVEMAR accepts it, recognizes its benefits⁷⁹ and even experiments with the approach in at least four case studies starting in 2015, way before the MSPGlobal project.⁸⁰

The analysis has found the process flow of the MSP policy transfer through INVEMAR to be the following: IOC - > SPINCAM -> INVEMAR -> MSP adaptation and application in pilot cases.

The activities of INVEMAR in Colombia related to MSP start way before the MSPGlobal project and before the activities of DIMAR. INVEMAR is thus one of the first institutions in Colombia that interacts with MSP: "two years ago we felt we are the only ones working with MSP until last year IOC came with the MSPGlobal project" (I.9, 2020, Invemar). The first encounter of INVEMAR with MSP has happened through the SPINCAM project (I.9, 2020, Invemar). Namely, INVEMAR was the Colombian technical focal point in front of SPINCAM since the beginning of the project in 2009.

The close work with the IOC has made Invemar the pioneer in acquiring of MSP knowledge and its further dissemination in Colombia and the region. Additional to the SPINCAM project, INVEMAR's staff has also taken MSP courses and several of them have specialized in MSP at European universities (I.9, 2020, Invemar).

connect to the needs of regional and local authorities and to the other research centers from the SINA system (Guhl Nannetti & Leyva, 2015).

⁷⁷ This has proven very important in the period of 'shrinking environmental sector' in Colombia (see below). Namely, given the institutional weakness of the ministry of environment to act on marine-coastal issues, Invemar assumed a leadership role in the dissemination and implementation of the policy PNAOCI, although very focused on the issues within its competence (DNP, 2013, p.28).

⁷⁸ "In the Ministry we do not like it...when one acts from the Ministry and since INVEMAR is part of the Ministry, or let's say ,part off the Environmental System, I would say that we had to be consistent. They [INVEMAR] as a research institute are going the other way. But they are not aligning with DIMAR either. So both are doing a marine spatial planning on their own account." (Ministry of Environment, 2020).

⁷⁹ "Despite the fact that during the SPINCAM project Colombia said "no" to MSP "we will continue with our ICZM", we [INVEMAR] as a direct member institution at SPINCAM, we said that MSP serves, serves and helps us with the ICZM process, let's not leave it aside, we are not going to go against the ICZM regulations. On the contrary, let's look for ways to contribute more to ensure that ICZM analyzis get better in the marine area and that is what happened." (I.9, Invemar, 2020).

⁸⁰ The, at least, four locations where Invemar has applied the MSP methodology are in the following departments: Valle del Cauca (2015), Magdalena (2016), Cauca (2017) and Nariño (2018).

Due to its close work with the IOC and leadership in ocean-related research in the region, Invemar also becomes the regional training center for Latin America for the Ocean Teacher Global Academy (OTGA), a network functioning under IOC's umbrella⁸¹. In the later function it offered courses in Marine Spatial Planning and Integrated Coastal Zone Management starting from 2015⁸². The representative of the Colombian Ministry of Environment even said that MSP has been introduced to Colombia around five years ago especially through the OTGA courses offered by INVEMAR (I.2, 2022). Several of the interviewees knew about these courses offered by INVEMAR or they have participated as learners or lecturers (I.7, 2022, Aunap). 14 interviewees, representatives of Colombian institutions or independent experts and/or academics from the field have explicitly identified INVEMAR as one of the central institutions linked to MSP and/or institution central to diffusion and capacity-building around MSP⁸³. One of the academics stated: "I think that definitely Invemar was a very important factor for the diffusion of MSP in Colombia" (I.11, 2020). The representative of the Panama ministry of environment also named INVEMAR as the Colombian institution linked to MSP that also helped them a lot regarding data exchange for coastal planning (I.17, 2022).

The work and existence of INVEMAR is indispensable for the ocean governance in Colombia in terms of provision of data and research needed for decision-making, in terms of capacity building and dissemination of knowledge, policy-making and international representation and leadership of Colombia in ocean matters⁸⁴. INVEMAR's staff together with the ministry of

⁸¹ The OceanTeacher Global Academy (OTGA) is a global network of Regional and Specialized Training Centers (RTCs & STCs) that contributes to the IOC-UNESCO's mandate for technical training by delivering customized training for ocean experts and professionals to increase national and regional capacity in coastal and marine sciences, services, and management (IODE, 2023).

⁸² The courses in May 2015 and in August 2018 (both in Santa Marta, Colombia) are offered to experts and practitioners from Latin America in the area of marine sciences, coastal management, coastal geography, and other related areas with the objective to provide concepts and methodologies about ICZM and MSP and their better implementation in coastal and marine planning in Latin American countries. Presentations are offered mainly from experts from INVEMAR, but with case studies and experiences from other countries and institutions, such as the Colombian ministry of environment, Chilean ministry of environment, Ecuadorian ministry of environment, Peruvian ministry of environment, Aquatic Resources Authority of Panama, from the CPPS, from University of Uruguay, expert from the University of Sevilla with the participation of Alejandro Iglesias (IOC-UNESCO staff member and SPINCAM coordinator, whose alma mater is the Sevilla University). The materials from the 2015 course were acquired from INVEMAR upon filing a request for accessing public information in October 2020. The materials from the 2018 course were downloaded from the OTGA website in February 2021.

⁸³ As an OTGA member INVEMAR continues to offer online courses related to MSP with focus on MPAs, application of technical tools such as GIS, different indices or courses on both MSP and ICZM (IODE, 2023).

⁸⁴ Especially through Invemar's director and leading staff, and together with CCO Colombia has played a leading role in the planning process of the Ocean Decade (I.3, 2020, CCO) in order to establish cooperative alliances in marine research, develop national capacities and to position Colombia in the field of marine sciences worldwide (DNP, 2020, pp.20-21).

environment and other few visionaries dedicated to the topic of conservation and sustainable use of oceans have developed the first Colombian policy on marine and coastal areas and applied the ecosystem approach in the management of Colombian coastal zones. Invenmar's close work with the IOC make it one of the first institutions in Colombia to speak for and apply MSP. Their adaptation of MSP will be further analyzed and discussed in Chapter VII.

The policy transfer process through MarViva

MarViva is a regional environmental NGO, established in 2002 that promotes and applies MSP to strengthen local institutional capacities for sustainable management of the marine areas (MarViva, 2021). MarViva has headquarters in Colombia, Costa Rica and Panama and in Colombia it is especially active in the department of Chocó. MarViva plays two roles: one, technical-scientific role which relates to the collection and analysis of primary and secondary data about the local conditions of the analyzed area, and two, facilitating role where it guides and consults the local actors in the process of participatory creation of institutions for joint management of the area (I.10, 2020, MarViva). In the case of Panama, MarViva is relevant not only in the local context but for the future application of MSP as a public policy. Namely, the ministry of environment mentioned Marviva as the organization to be helping the ministry in the 'panamenization' and operationalization of the MSP methodology on a national level (I.17, 2022). In this regard, the expertise and influence of MarViva in MSP adaptation and application in the region is not to be underestimated.

The analysis has found the process flow of the MSP policy transfer through MarViva to be the following: IOC (Step-by-step Guide + personal interaction) → MarViva → MSP adaptation and application in the region of Chocó.

When asked why MarViva has started working with MSP, one Colombian representative of the NGO said it is because of their regional director who has been working with the methodology before (I.10, 2020, MarViva). The director confirmed "I was the promoter of that idea some years ago precisely as a result of the IOC-UNESCO publication. And when I was interacting with the UNESCO staff, with the author of the publication, it seemed to me that this was the way to plan the future of the seas, and I dedicated myself to studying a lot about it and then promoting it. MarViva was a great platform to do it, it had the means to do it. So, I dedicated myself to developing it in our countries."

In Colombia, MarViva is the first organization that started applying MSP, and furthermore, it is the only that has effectively applied it by producing actual management plan. In 2013, the

methodology was applied for the establishment of the exclusive zone for artisanal fisheries (ZEPA) and for the marine protected area with sustainable use DRMI Golfo de Tribugá. Later in 2014, MSP was applied for the establishment of the marine protected area with sustainable use DRMI Encanto de los Manglares, all of them in the department of Chocó (I.10, 2020, MarViva). Their adaptation of MSP will be analyzed comparatively in Chapter VII.

III.3. The policy transfer processes at a glance

This is a point in time to go back to the Figure 6 which visually represents the three transfer processes of MSP. First in time to apply the methodology is the NGO MarViva, followed by Invemar and then Dimar, each with few years distance. The origin of the transfer in all of them is the IOC-UNESCO, but the transfer processes have taken different paths. While the transfer in the case of MarViva is more straightforward, in the case of Invemar and Dimar it is dependent on existing networks and institutional relationships. Also, in the case of MarViva and Invemar the engagement with MSP, is something they do 'by choice', whereas in the case of Dimar it is something to do 'by duty'. IOC is not only the originator of MSP but also actively enables the transfer process and contributes to its direction, by for example, expressing preferences for Dimar as the national MSP focal point. In this regard, the transfer process through CCO/Dimar is set to become the path towards the official MSP adoption on a national level.

IV. Determining domestic factors behind the policy transfer processes

According to the policy transfer and diffusion scholarship, there are different types of factors that can determine the policy transfer process. The theoretical chapter to this study (chapter II) has categorized them into factors related to domestic context, to international context and to the nature of the transferred item. MSP is in its incipient phase of global diffusion. For this reason, the policy attributes that MSP acquires once adopted vary a lot from country to country, in terms of content, in terms of its legal nature and in terms of institutionalization. In this way, the nature of MSP will depend mostly on the domestic context. The factors from international nature will be discussed in the next chapter together with the causal mechanisms behind the policy transfer.

IV.1. Past policy experience

This part of the analysis intends to showcase to what extent the past policy experience of the receiving country could have an influence over the adoption of MSP. According to the policy

transfer scholarship, this links to the attributes of the transferred policy and its relationship with the domestic context. In this regard, one looks into the extent to which the new policy is consistent with existing domestic policy experiences and interests so that it does not require significant domestic changes such as modifications of statutory state law (Benson & Jordan, 2011; Makse & Volden, 2011; Marier, 2017).

When speaking of past policy experience and MSP, one immediately thinks of ICZM, MSP's predecessor. ICZM arrives earlier on the international stage with the Jakarta Mandate to the CBD from 1994, and as a matter of fact, in 1997 the IOC-UNESCO comes with an institutional strategy to support its members states in the adoption of Integrated Coastal Area Management (IOC-UNESCO, 2021). A decade later IOC publishes the highly cited MSP guidebook and one more decade after that, together with the European Commission, it published the roadmap for MSP acceleration world-wide.

Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) is a policy instrument very similar to MSP, but the commonalities and differences between them can vary depending on the context. According to some, the main difference is the area of application, since ICZM applies on the coastal zone whereas the MSP in offshore waters up until the outside limit of the Exclusive Economic Zone (this was named as the main difference between the two instruments by many of the interviewees too, for example). IOC-UNESCO finds differences in purpose too. So, for example, MSP reflects more the strategic vision about the use of the maritime space according to national priorities, whereas the ICZM needs to take into account more the local needs, requires more detailed data on a local scale and involves more specific management measures (UNESCO-IOC, 2021).

The influence of the past policy experiences over the adoption of MSP in Colombia is best depicted by the statements from some of my interviewees. According to INVEMAR, having ICZM already adopted on national level in Colombia, meant not to automatically accept MSP as a policy instrument. Namely, during the third phase of the SPINCAM project (2017-2020) when MSP was firstly officially introduced to the participating countries, Colombia did not see it necessary to change ICZM for MSP (I.10b, 2020). Several interviewees stated that both instruments are methodologically very similar, adding to it that Colombia already has ICZM translated into laws and regulations (I.1, 2020; I.11, 2020; I.13, 2021). The process of enacting of the ICZM methodology and the related elements, such as the environmental coastal units and their management plans, was a process that took almost two troublesome decades in Colombia, as stated by the representative of the ministry of environment (I.1, 2020). In this

regard, it was worth considering whether to dive into the process of adoption of another policy instrument and risking the same or similar hurdles of institutionalization and enactment.

Based on the interviews and the analyzed documents, articles and grey literature on the environmental and especially the marine and coastal governance in Colombia, two main factors were identified that speak directly to the past policy experience of Colombia with ICZM. This study identifies that the failure in the establishment of adequate institutions and the failure in enactment and implementation of laws as the two factors that explain the main problems of Colombia with ICZM, and in this regard provide more context for the adoption process of MSP.

IV.2. Adequate marine and coastal institutions

Adequate marine and coastal governance institutions are those providing for proper involvement, communication and cooperation of the different sectors (horizontal integration), different government levels (vertical integration) as well as communities and other stakeholders concerned with the marine and coastal affairs in a country. Although Colombian policies have (on paper) predicted such institutions, their establishment has proven difficult. Or, when established, the timely and proper involvement of different sectors and stakeholders has been problematic.

Related to the first situation, for example, PNAOCI in 2000 predicts the establishment of:

- *National Committee for the Integrated Management of Ocean Spaces and Coastal Zones* created and coordinated by the Ministry of the Environment, together with the Executive Secretariat of the CCO. The Committee will have the capacity to establish national maritime and coastal management policies and strategies and achieve concurrence at the start to reach consensus on the adoption of these policies. The Committee will be the national platform for presentation, agreement and harmonization of policies and programs related to the development of oceanic spaces and coastal zones, it will tend to ensure the political and administrative support of the Central Government, to resolve conflicts, promote cooperation between the entities and obtain required international support (DNP, 2013, p.32).
- *Interministerial Legal Group*. For compliance with the actions noted, the Ministry of the Environment and the CCO will promote the formation of the Group for consultation, analysis and evaluation of the current legal framework related to the integrated management of coastal zones, with representatives from the related entities (ibid., p.32).

- *System for the Integral Management of Oceanic and Coastal Spaces.* The Executive Secretariat of the CCO, in coordination with other entities that are considered relevant, will propose for approval of the National Government, a System for the ICZM, which includes effective inter-institutional coordination and agreement mechanisms, as well as frameworks for the delimitation of institutional competences and jurisdiction at the national and sub-national level (ibid.).
- *Regional Committees for Integrated Management of Coastal Zones.* The Committees will be responsible for coordinating and harmonizing the subnational and local plans of the ICZM for each of the units for territorial environmental planning, by following the guidelines established by the National Committee for the Integrated Management of Ocean Spaces and Coastal Zones. The *departamentos*, with the support of the ICZM Regional Committees, will support the strengthening of local executive capacities so that they accept a greater number and degree of responsibilities related to the promotion and development of integrated management plans for marine ecosystems and coastal resources (ibid.).

Theoretically, if established, these institutions could have provided for better horizontal integration and coordination between different ministries and sectors (through the National Committee); adequate vertical integration between different levels of the government (through the National System and the Regional Committees); better decentralization of the marine and coastal governance (through the Regional Committees); and adequate legal coverage of marine and coastal affairs (through the Interministerial Legal Group).

Instead, some of those have not been made functional at all (e.g., the National Committee has been 'revived' only in 2016 when a similar version of it has been established under the CCO); some Regional Committees have been established in some *departamentos* but with a limited function (DNP, 2013); the National System has not been established at all and the CCO is currently undergoing a process for the creation of the similar Bioceanic National System (I.3a, CCO, 2021).

The establishment of these institutions predicted in 2000 would have solved the main problems with the implementation of PNAOCI identified with the evaluation of the policy in 2013 by the Department of National Planning and pointed to by some of my interviewees. Those are namely, the lack of coordination and communication among the concerned institutions and stakeholders; the high degree of centralization in marine and coastal affairs where all the decision-making and responsibilities are located in Bogota and far from the coast and the seas; as well as the many legal loopholes, but also overlapping and conflicting

regulations and competences coming from the different entities with coastal and marine jurisdiction.

Another point is that, even inter-ministerial bodies that were established and functioning did not seem to provide what they preach. So, for example, a group of renowned environmental NGOs in Colombia, find that the National Environmental Council, an intersectoral body established under the Ministry of Environment, has also failed to play its role in successfully coordinating the different sectors in the development of policies, plans and programs related to the environment and natural resources (Mance, 2007). The same Council approved the ocean and coastal policy PNAOCI of the Ministry of Environment in 2000, and this circumstance was used by one of my interviewees, a representative from the Ministry, to showcase the intersectoral character of the policy (I.1, 2020). The regular and proper involvement of all relevant sectors in the period from the creation of the Council in 1993 until 2006 is, however, put into question by these NGOs who find very low participation rate in the Council of sectors other than the environmental one (Mance, 2007). On the other hand, the intersectoral committee for the ocean and coastal policy of the CCO, whose main function is to also provide for proper coordination of all interested stakeholders in the design and implementation of their ocean policy PNAOCI, has to also be put under the spotlight. While it has taken almost seven years (2000 – 2007) to design the policy in the intersectoral committee, which in some respect may speak in favor of the burdensome effort to involve all or most of the relevant sectors (DNP, 2013, p. 28), the policy does nevertheless provide the frame under which DIMAR and the Navy, both entities of the ministry of defense, define their actions and plans in the marine and coastal areas of Colombia (ibid.). Referring to the 2017 version of the policy, one of my interviewees said that the questions related to cultural and underwater heritage treated by the Ministry of Culture, as well as the questions related to territorial rights of ethnic communities treated by the Ministry of Interior, have not been represented adequately in the latest version of PNAOCI (I.6, 2021). Now, these findings may not speak directly against the inter-sectorial work of the committee but speak to the somewhat faulty inter-sectorial nature of the policy, which at the end of the day, is the final outcome of the work of this committee and what counts in terms of integral marine and coastal governance.

a) The shrinking of environmental institutions

The reasons for the failure in the establishment or the inadequate functioning of institutions designed as intersectoral are manifold. One of the most important ones is related to the long-lasting armed conflict in Colombia that has eroded the economic, social, political and

environmental capital in Colombia. So, for example, one of the main reasons for the failure of the ministry of environment to properly implement PNAOCI and establish the above-mentioned institutions in the first years of its creation is the 'reduction of the environmental institutions' that happens in Colombia from 2002 until 2007. It is the period where the ministry of environment is fused with housing and territorial development. While in the era of raging conflict the social questions prove to be of higher priority than the environmental ones, the investment and staffing of the environmental sector suffers tremendous decrease. So, for example, in this period, while the general funds assigned to the ministry have decreased, additionally, only 20% of this budget has been assigned to strictly environmental issues not considering investments in hygiene and drinking water (Mance, 2007, p.6). Additional to the high rotation rate of the ministers and vice ministers in the sector, the reduction of the staff has also been remarkable. So, for example, after 2002, the twenty-five experts from the Directorate for Ecosystems (which also addressed marine and coastal issues under the fused ministry) are reduced to only six at the end of 2005; whereas the ten special advisors to the minister and vice ministers have been reduced to only two (Mance, 2007, pp.6-7). Going beyond the period of 'environmental reductionism', while in 2000, 0.5% of the national budget was destined to the environmental sector, in 2012 it decreases to 0.32% (DNP, 2013, p.34). These figures are also stricking for the Colombian General Comptrollership stating in 2012 that the environmental sector has to urgently be enabled to face the "locomotives" of mining, housing and infrastructure since, in reality, the healthy environment is the main component for achieving sustainable development (DNP, 2013, p.34). This tendency has even worsened in the later years. The environmental sector is one of the sectors that receives least assignations from the national budget although the Colombian economy has been steadily growing throughout the years. From 2016 until 2020, the environmental sector has gone from receiving 0.33% of the national budget in 2016 to 0.24% in 2020 (Díaz Salgar et al., 2022, p.90). Although some of the entities part of the environmental institutional system in Colombia receive funding from sources other than the national budget, for many, such as the ministry of environment in Bogota, some of the research centers, as well as for the environmental authorities (CARs) in the smaller *departamentos*, the funds of the national budget are crucial for their functioning (Díaz Salgar et al., 2022).

This period of institutional shrinking has also had direct consequences for the coastal ecosystems and wellbeing of coastal populations. To name one example, large part of the coastal constructions done during this period were conducted without the proper environmental assessment because of the above-mentioned reasons. This has been one of the most important anthropic factors (including geological factors and rising sea level as natural factors) that has exacerbated coastal erosion in Colombia - currently severe problem

for the coastal ecosystems and populations especially on the Caribbean coast where the biggest coastal urban areas are (Arteaga Diaz, 2021).

b) The 'environment-defense' institutional rivalry

But, as if the armed conflict, poverty, political instability and other structural problems such as vulnerable, understaffed and underfinanced institutions, were not enough, in Colombia there is one more peculiar phenomenon which in this study I call the 'environment-defense rivalry'. This important factor additionally erodes the institutional social capital at the expense of the marine and coastal resources in Colombia. Put in simple terms, it is, an institutional rivalry between the ministry of the environment and entities linked to the ministry of defense, such as the Maritime Authority DIMAR and the CCO. It is a form of competition over which institution has the primacy in governing Colombian marine and coastal areas. Representatives from almost all institutions I have interviewed and from academia have provided evidence for the existence of this rivalry.

First and foremost, one gets the very first impression of the existence of this rivalry from the fact that those are the two institutions that have adopted their own separate ocean and coastal policy: the ministry of environment has PNAOCI and the CCO, which has special linkage to the ministry of defense, has PNOEC. Furthermore, the ministry of environment has the ICZM as coastal and marine planning instrument, whereas the CCO and DIMAR are increasingly involved and taking the lead in the adoption of MSP as their marine planning instrument.

In the conducted interviews for the evaluation of PNAOCI in 2013 by the DNP, evidence of a certain 'tension' between representatives of both institutions has been found, as well as a 'certain competition regarding the leadership in the marine and coastal issues' (DNP, 2013, p.33). When a decree from 2011 gave the Directorate under the ministry of environment specialized for marine and coastal issues DAMCRA (Dirección de Asuntos Marinos, Costeros y Recursos Acuáticos) the faculty to coordinate the National and Regional Committees for ICZM, some interviewees found that this would take the away CCO's faculty as a coordinating entity in these matters (ibid.). Either way, the evaluation finds that these two institutions have created policies which are partially superimposing instead of fostering teamwork and cooperation (ibid.).

The representative of the ministry of environment showcased this: 'The truth is that the two policies have created conflicts for all of us, so that the ministries, environmental authorities, the regional and local governments, we do not know what to do. From the ministry of

environment, we ask the rest of the ministries to report on PNAOCI, but CCO asks them to report on PNOEC.’ ‘We just spin around the two policies out of institutional egos, saying ‘my policy is the first’, ‘my policy is more important’, ‘my policy’, ‘my policy’...’ (I.1, 2020).

The representative of the Department of National Parks spoke of ‘environment-defense divorce’ and of ‘erosion’ in the relationship between these two institutions (I.6, 2021). One of the academics used often the Dragon Ball animation series as an analogy for the continuous conflicts these institutions get into when it comes to the governance of the marine and coastal areas. My interviewee spoke about a long-lasting conflict especially between DIMAR and INVEMAR, and that while CCO supports DIMAR, the Ministry of Environment supports INVEMAR decreasing even more the potential for inter-sectorial cooperation in this governance realm (I.14, 2021).

A representative from another institution in a personal opinion said: ‘The ministry of environment and DIMAR sometimes clash...I don’t know if because of different interests, but their needs clash’ (Interview from November 2020). The interviewee showcased this with the SPINCAM project and how, at the very beginning, DIMAR, the ministry of environment and INVEMAR were supposed to participate. ‘From one day to the next’, the interviewee said, ‘DIMAR decided it will exit the project, and so, for Colombia, SPINCAM ended up being a project from the predominantly environmental sector, the rest of the topics were left uncovered’ (ibid). Similarly, the interviewee mentioned the case with the ministry of environment not wanting to participate in the MSP group of experts, upon the invitation of CCO. Interestingly, however, the interviewee added that: ‘Sometimes reaching an agreement between these institutions is very complicated, and sometimes it is not even the institutions but their leaders that generate these problems’, pointing to the moment where DIMAR had a change in the leadership and vision before the ministry of environment has been invited to participate in the MSP process again (ibid.). My interviewee emphasized several times the intermediary role of CCO’s executive secretary (Rear Admiral Soltau) and of INVEMAR in cases of bringing DIMAR and the ministry of environment at the same table (ibid.). One member of the MSP experts’ group said that even in the election of the experts, CCO had to be cautious about these existing inter-institutional/inter-personal conflicts (Interview from 2021). The representative of the Department of National Parks put this simply: institutions are made of people; there are people who are committed to make things work, and the ones who are not. In those cases, we wait until they leave, so we can set forth with our work (I.5, 2021).

Offering more evidence for the environment-defense rivalry, the representative of INVEMAR, during the interview in 2020, said that for some years now INVEMAR and DIMAR have been

conducting MSP-like activities, but have managed to come and talk to each other only this year (2020). INVEMAR saw the necessity to coordinate because DIMAR has been approaching the marine planning on a sectoral level, i.e., 'oriented towards vigilance and control', whereas the environmental elements have 'fallen by the wayside' ('se han quedado desdibujados'). The INVEMAR representatives are thus hoping for joint work and for the soon realization of a common project with DIMAR. DIMAR has rich high resolution spatial information to which INVEMAR could contribute with biological and environmental information, 'sometimes left aside' by DIMAR (I9.b, 2020).

c) Sectoral approach in marine management

But why exactly these two institutions 'claim their rights' in the management of coastal and marine areas? Well, not only in Colombia but also in the other countries in the region, environment and defense are the two sectors that per essence have more genuine interest in the adequate planning of marine and coastal areas (I.6, 2021). The ministry of defense because of its *raison d'être* to protect the territoriality and sovereignty and hence its continued physical presence in the area through the Navy, and through the Maritime Authority DIMAR in matters related to control and surveillance of Colombian waters, management of ports, transportation lanes, underwater cables etc. The ministry of environment because of its *raison d'être* to protect the coastal and marine ecosystems (through the activities of the ministry of environment and the regional environmental authorities) and manage marine protected areas (through the activities of the Department of Natural Parks and the regional environmental authorities). Both institutions need for that matter to collect information and data, conduct proper research and provide scientific base for decision-making in this governance area. The Maritime authority Dimar has CIOH and CCCP as its research centers and the ministry of environment has INVEMAR for this purpose, all of which have their genuine interest in the governance of marine and coastal areas and resources.

In the last decade or so, the representatives of the environmental sector are forced to renegotiate their position about the sanctity of the natural resources. Instead of the safe ground in standing for 'conservation and protection of the environment', with the CBD in 1993 and the operationalization of the concept of sustainability, the pendulum was moved towards 'protection and sustainable use of natural resources', and sadly, in the last years, even reaching somewhat 'sustainable use' of the natural base is considered to be environmental enough. In addition to this general shift in paradigms, acting for exclusive environmental protection becomes irrational (ironically happening under conditions of exacerbated climate change). And so, the environmental (movement/awareness/sector) is not only losing on

strength but also on spheres of influence. This is the case with the marine and coastal natural base. The coasts and seas, being an invisible element for most of the inhabitants in the country and especially for the centers of political power in the capitals, have been a sphere of interest of the environmental sector. So, it is not a coincidence that the design of ICZM as a policy instrument initially had the aim to protect the environment, with one of the very first cases being the application of the instrument to protect the Great Barrier Reef in Australia. The regional representative of the NGO MarViva also finds it interesting, and this is shown also in the case of Colombia, that when speaking of the entrance of MSP in the countries in the region, it is the environmental sector that initially shows more interest for it. And by environmental sector he refers to the ministries of environment or related entities (in the case of Colombia it is INVEMAR) and the environmental NGOs (in the case of Colombia, one of the most influential NGOs in this respect is MarViva Colombia). He finds the reason for this to be the fact that the natural resources and hence the environmental sector play a significant role in the development of the countries (I.22, 2022). However, now that the coasts and seas are becoming a priority of many other sectors, the environmentalists are losing ground in this area too.

Part of this rivalry against the team 'environment' by the institutions in the team 'defense' lie in the perception of the latter about the former not wanting to cede ground on the need to protect and conserve while disregarding the other maritime uses, and especially their potential for Colombia's growth and geopolitical positioning. The representative of the environmental NGO MarViva said that although the environmental sector represents for some the 'umbrella' for further actions, speaking of Latin American countries, he/she says that he/she sees the environmental as a 'sector' because of its marked sectorial approach in terms of conservation, or, because of their 'conservationist approach' (I.22, 2022). The respondent added that the Latin American countries have a rooted sectoral approach in addressing marine and coastal issues and overcoming it has proven to be the biggest challenge (ibid.). The representative of the Colombian ministry of environment used the word 'ambientalistas rojos', or red environmentalists, to refer to the way the members of the ministry are being seen by other governmental sectors (I.1, 2020), implying them being seen as somewhat nonconformists. The representative of the ministry continued saying that everything that even mildly sounds 'environmental' is being seen as if it is the responsibility of the ministry of environment and its related institutions, although the environment is a cross-cutting area of governance. The representative further confirmed that what is currently seen as the main area of governance of the environmental sector is conservation (I.1, 2020).

This 'sectorialism', or the tendency to present the area of governmental activity of the environmental institutions as 'sectorial' reinforces the already existing sectorial approach in governing the marine and coastal areas in Colombia.

My interviewees were pointing to this sectorial style of governing on many occasions. The Ministry of Environment, pointed to DIMAR doing territorial planning on its own way for areas where the ministry of environment already has management plans (POMIUACs) (I.1, 2020, I.2, 2022), or, without properly integrating the environmental perspective, as the INVEMAR representative pointed out (I.9b, 2020). To coordinate with DIMAR in coastal planning processes was termed as 'a little bit difficult' by the ministry of environment (I.2, 2022) and it will probably get more difficult considering the new government elections (ibid).

There is similar line of argumentation on the team 'defense' as well. For example, the CCO representative insisted on PNOEC being intersectoral whereas PNAOCI being a policy coming from the environmental sector which is why another ocean policy (PNOEC) was needed to fill the void (I.3a, 2020). Priorities may be set differently in both policies, but this strong line of argumentation over the nonexistent intersectoriality in PNAOCI ignores the fact that many of the intersectoral institutions designed by PNAOCI are taken over by PNOEC in 2007! Among others, such is the above-described National System for Integrated Management of Ocean and Coastal Spaces (also listed above) (DNP, 2013, p.29). Interestingly, when asked if the National Bioceanic System that CCO currently works on is the one contemplated by PNAOCI in 2000 but under different name, the interviewee chanted it is different because PNAOCI is a sectoral policy and PNOEC is multisectoral (I.3a, 2020). According to the description of the National Bioceanic System in CONPES 3990 (p.60), the purpose and structure is the same as the National System in PNAOCI.

IV.3. Enactment and enforcement of marine and coastal laws

The deficiencies in the territorial planning related to marine and coastal zones are a well-known problem in Colombia (Botero et al., 2022; González et al., 2021; Marín Barraza & Botero Saltaren, 2016). One of the biggest issues is the fact that the General Law for Territorial Planning from 2011 (Ley Órganica de Ordenamiento Territorial – LOOT, Ley 1454 de 2011) does not mention oceans, marine and coastal zones, or islands as separate territorial categories that should be succumbed to territorial planning (DNP, 2020, p.39). In the legislation for territorial planning the territory is divided in rural and urban and in this regard, there is a legal loophole when it comes to marine and coastal zones (Marín Barraza & Botero Saltaren, 2016). Besides the several initiatives (13 initiatives from 1995 until 2015) to legislate

some aspects of territorial planning in this governance area (such as human settlements, tourism, maritime transport), these initiatives have not been successful in that they haven't passed the Congress. The reasons for this are that besides initially using the discourse of aiming to do territorial planning for environmental protection and for the wellbeing of local inhabitants, most of the actual content of the legal initiatives intends to change the public nature of the beaches and coastal zones for the benefit of private individuals and companies (ibid.). Namely, the initiatives are related more to the change in the use of land or coastal zones without planning for long-term strategies or mechanisms for sustainable environmental protection or mitigation of climate change-related risks (González et al., 2021). And so, while on one hand it appears to be a good thing that the Congress rejects them, on the other hand this speaks of the even bigger urgency for establishing proper legal framework for coastal and marine planning in Colombia, since the drive for misusing of the legal void is evermore rising.

According to Botero et al (2022), as well as explicitly stated by several of my interviewees, it is not sufficient to have policies, but they need to be put into practice preferably through adequate legislation (I.1, 2020; I.2, 2022; I.11, 2022). Policies are broader instruments, and therefore are easier to be agreed upon and emitted with less hurdles (although in the case of Colombia even formulation of policies has proven burdensome!). In other words, policies are not obligatory, but laws are. Even the fact that Colombia has three somewhat competing ocean policies is not a problem big enough for its coastal and marine governance, as they still need to be put into laws to become obligatory and implementable. The case with PNAOCI is exemplary. Almost 20 years after the adoption of the policy issued by the ministry of environment, the minimal legal requirements are finally there for its implementation. Eleven years after its adoption, the coastal environmental authorities were finally given the proper jurisdiction over the coastal zone to undertake the proper planning measures of the environmental coastal units (UACs). And this would have probably not happened hasn't it been for the disastrous consequences of *El Niño* in Colombia in 2010 - 2011. But even today, although for all coastal environmental units (UACs) the management plans (POMIUACs) are there, most of them cannot be enforced since they have not been put into laws by the regional governments of the respective *departamentos* (!). And this is largely owed to the before mentioned legal void regarding the lacking regulation for territorial planning of marine and coastal zones. So, basically while it is obligatory to have the management plan POMIUAC, the environmental authorities and the regional and local governments are struggling on how to implement them, since POMIUACs have to be integrated, first and foremost, with the municipal plans for territorial planning (POTs) which, as mentioned, do not distinguish marine

or coastal zones⁸⁵. According to one of the coastal management experts, a reason for this stall in the implementation of the management plans is also the very long *process of prior consultation* ('consulta previa') with the indigenous and communities of African descent - a legal requirement in Colombia in cases of approval of the management plans or, also for example, in cases of establishment of marine protected areas (I.11, 2020). Similarly, one of the academics, with vast knowledge in coastal and marine jurisprudence, finds the failed implementation of the management plans to be related to the inadequate implementation of the processes of citizen participation enshrined in the Colombian constitution (I.12, 2021).

The legislative procedure in Colombia is another hurdle to the creation of adequate legal framework for the Colombian seas and coasts. So, Botero et al. (2022) find that very small percentage of bills get approved by the Colombian Congress (only 20% of the bills related to coastal planning, which is the focus of their analysis). In half of the archived cases, the reason was a procedure called "transit of legislature", which stipulates that a new bill must have its first debate in the same legislative period it was submitted (20 July of the present year until 20 June of the following year), whereas three other debates and a conciliation procedure must happen in the following legislative period; otherwise, the bill must be archived (ibid., p.7). Another similarly difficult obstacle to overcome is because of the 'accumulation' principle, where a posterior bill can be archived if there is already one bill in the process with a similar scope (ibid.). In general, they find that most of the Latin American countries are lacking integral coastal laws and regulate the use of their coasts on a sectoral base, i.e., per economic sector and for environmental protection purposes (such as parks and protected areas) (ibid.).

Botero et al. (2022) find that there are more legislative proposals from the executive branch regarding the coastal and marine planning, than from the legislature (ibid.). Considering the

⁸⁵ Strictly speaking, the mistake of the Organic Law for Territorial Planning (LOOT 1454 from 2011) in not mentioning coastal zones as sperate category for territorial planning has been corrected with the Decree 1120 from 2013 with which the environmental coastal units (UACs) have been delimited and the management plans for these units were made obligatory (POMIUACs). This decree defines coastal zone and the criteria for their delimitation. It gives the jurisdiction of the environmental authorities over the coastal zone for the purpose of environmental territorial planning. In this regard, the coastal zone can go up until 200 m water depth isobath, or up until 12 nm if the former is too narrow (Lastra-Mier, 2019). However, because of the sectorial approach in territorial planning in Colombia, the coastal municipalities have not appropriated the notion of environmental territorial planning, which should in their view be conducted by the environmental authorities. In this regard, although it exists since 2013 as a regulation for environmental planning of the coastal territory, the concept of coastal zone and integral territorial planning of the coastal zone in its full potential is not exploited by the coastal municipalities in their Plans for Territorial Planning (POTs). (YouTube_Lastra-Mier 2021: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y_pNhDUZENs&list=PL3Ww6Pblz26PRT0h2MP25jfbIIOCeAsre&index=8). This leads to sectorial territorial planning of the coastal zone by the municipalities, for example, focusing only on constructions to attract more beach tourism disregarding environmental or social factors, or disregarding impacts beyond the visible beach or coast.

lack of interest of the Congress to legislate in this matter, it is up to the executive branch to act regarding the coastal and marine planning legislation in Colombia (ibid.). From the executive branch, especially the President of the Republic is the one with proactive role. In the political system of Colombia, the President of the Republic has several rights and privileges that allow him to dictate the legislative and political agenda; such are the exclusive right to initiatives related to the national budget, the structure of ministries, salaries of civil servants, external tariffs, or the right to send urgent petitions to the Congress which must be addressed with priority (Milanese, 2008, p.10 - 11). The role of the President as the political and legislative agenda-setter influences the policymaking as well as the enactment of laws in the field of marine and coastal areas. Interviewees from the academia, as well as from the ministry of environment, the Fisheries Authority and the CCO, mention the vulnerability of the institutions and policies in the coastal and marine realm of governance in the face of the political will of the sitting president and its government (I.1, 2020; I.3a, 2021; I.7, 2022; I.12, 2021; I.13, 2021). While the seas and coasts were invisible for the political leaders for long time in Colombia, now the risk is they will be exploited for private interests if proper political and legal frameworks are not established.

The period of the 'reduction of the environmental institutions' under the government of Alvaro Uribe in Colombia is just one example of the vulnerability of the institutions when faced with the political will of the sitting government. Another example is the process of approval of the policy CONPES 3990. Namely, according to one of my interviewees, the negotiation of the policy started in 2015 right after OECD recommended the better coordination of the existing marine and coastal policies in Colombia. However, it took five years until it got finally approved by the CONPES Council in 2020 when the government had the political will to do so. Parallel to this, at the very same time, CCO was working on the latest actualization of its PNOEC policy, which it managed to approve much faster since CCO's policies do not need to be approved by the government as CONPES documents do. Now, after CONPES 3990 got approved, CCO needs to work on another actualization of its policy to adjust it to the policy actions predicted in CONPES 3990 (Interview from November 2020). This waste of time and financial and political resources could have been avoided if CONPES 3990 was released earlier and if there was better coordination and communication between these processes in the first place. Even the very first version of the PNAOCI policy took seven years to come to life, starting from 2000 and being finally approved in 2007, speaking again for the difficult period many institutions have faced in the intention to normally function and give issues other than questions of internal security the much-needed political relevance.

But maybe more important to the creation of new institutions and putting regulations in practice is the acceptance of these institutions by the communities in a wider sense, but also by the local level governing entities such as the municipalities, which are at the end of the day the final implementors of the policies. A representative from the ministry of environment explained that it took a long time until the local entities finally understood and accepted what the environmental coastal units are and how to design their management plans, and that now they will be very confused if they additionally have to participate in MSP processes (I.1, 2020).

V. MSP in the region

The INVEMAR representative mentioned that the official stance of Colombia regarding MSP up until the end of the SPINCAM project was to not automatically adopt the policy (I.10b, 2020). Similarly, the CCO representative also mentioned that once the MSPGlobal arrived in the region and the invitation was sent from the IOC-UNESCO to participate in the project, Colombia had to firstly evaluate how well MSP relates to Colombia's maritime interests and to what Colombia has practiced until now in terms of marine and coastal planning (I.3b, CCO, 2020).

Compared to Colombia, according to one of the INVEMAR representatives, countries in the region that did not have those advances in terms of existing laws and regulations on ICZM, such as Ecuador, Peru, Chile, and Panama, have showed more explicit interest in adopting MSP (I.10b, 2020). From the conducted interviews with some of these countries, it was noticeable that they spoke clearer language when it came to their intention and interest in adopting MSP.

Panama

The representative of the ministry of environment of Panama confirmed this by saying that Panama wants to officially adopt MSP to correct its mistake regarding the integrated coastal management practices until now. The representative refers to the fact that Panama did not manage to officially regulate ICZM until the date although there were separate projects that implemented the methodology (I.17, 2022). The intention and the political will to adopt MSP was clearly stated during the interview with the ministry of environment, whose Directorate for Coasts and Seas is the responsible institution for MSP in Panama (I.17, 2022; email correspondence from May 2022 with the Panama Maritime Authority).

Furthermore, MSP is already present in Panama's National Ocean Policy from 2020. It is termed 'ordenamiento marino espacial' and together with integrated coastal zone management it is assigned with specific policy actions for their implementation (Gobierno de la República de Panamá, n.d.). This means that in the hierarchy of policy elements, Panama has positioned MSP as a more strategic element compared to Colombia where MSP is present only at a policy action level. According to the Panama ministry of environment although the Ocean Policy is created by an intersectoral commission, the largest interest for it comes from the ministry of environment (I.17, 2022). In this regard, Panama is different from the other countries in the region where the ministries of defense and their maritime authorities are taking the lead in the creation of the ocean policies and in MSP.

As in Colombia, MSP in Panama is at a very initial stage (only on policy level) and still needs to be translated into regulations in order to be implemented. Most proximate action for furthering MSP in Panama is the implementation of a large transboundary project funded by the GEF that applies the methodology MSP in the Pacific Central American Coastal Large Marine Ecosystem – PACA, involving several countries from the region (I.17, 2022).

Peru

Peru is undergoing institutional changes towards better and more complete implementation of ICZM as it was lagging behind the other countries in the region (Barragán & Lazo, 2018). Currently, there is an important base in form of general environmental laws, strategies and some ICZM instruments and guidelines issued by the ministry of environment, but a national policy on ICZM (ibid.) or national ICZM legislation that would make ICZM binding is still lacking (I.20, 2022, Fisheries Authority, Peru). In Colombia, as already elaborated, ICZM is institutionalized, with the accompanying elements for its implementation already translated into binding regulations.

The Peruvian Maritime Policy does not mention MSP, but 'integrated management of marine and coastal zones' in its policy actions (Marina de Guerra del Perú, 2020, p.86) confirming the familiarity with ICZM (I.20, 2022). But the interest for adopting MSP is clear. In an informal conversation, a Peruvian high-ranking public official told me that the ministry of environment is interested in MSP and is currently cataloguing MSP policy experiences from other countries to be able to come up with MSP guidelines adapted to Peru (notes from conversation from 2022). Even more, based on the Peruvian Maritime Policy, a Multisectoral Strategic Plan should be developed which may result in marine spatial plan (UNESCO-IOC, 2021). While this is a distant possibility, it nevertheless shows the interest for adopting MSP.

Similar with the Colombian case, the ICZM in Peru is policy area of the ministry of environment. While the ministry of environment also has interest in MSP, with the arrival of the MSPGlobal project, MSP as a new policy area is assigned to DIHIDRONAV – institution attached to the ministry of defense. MSP-related activities are first applied in Peru with the MSPGlobal project (2019-2021) whose transboundary pilot project for the region is at the Gulf of Guayaquil⁸⁶ involving Peru and Ecuador as bordering countries that share this area (I.21, 2022). From my interviews with DIHIDRONAV, IMARPE and the informal conversation with Peruvian public official, the interest and need for adopting MSP is explicit and MSP is mainly seen as opportunity for more adequate coastal and marine governance (I.20, 2022; I.21, 2022; notes from informal conversation from May 2022).

Ecuador

Ecuador is the only country in the South-East Pacific region to already have an MSP plan on a national level. In terms of MSP policy adoption, it is the most advanced country in the region. According to the representative of the Ecuadorian navy, the first ICZM-related activities in Ecuador go back to 1986 with the ‘Project for Management of Coastal Resources’ implemented by the ministry of environment (I.16, 2022), confirming similar tendencies in the region where ICZM is a policy instrument related to the environmental sector.

When asked about the reasons for such progress in terms of MSP in Ecuador, the representative of MarViva, an NGO present in the region, answered that the receptiveness to MSP in Ecuador is owed to a successfully completed project in ICZM (the above-mentioned one) for more than two decades, that included the communities as main stakeholders in the process (I.22, 2022). So, Ecuador has long and positive experience with ICZM and now continues with adopting MSP. The very first remark of the representative of the Ecuadorian Navy, before answering my questions was to clarify the difference between ICZM and MSP, where the former focuses on the management of the coastal zone and the latter on the marine area (I.16, 2022), proving to perceive both methodologies as (spatially) complementary and not competitive, which was not always the perception in Colombia.

⁸⁶ This site was chosen for the MSPGlobal’s pilot project in the region out of several reasons. The Gulf of Guayaquil is important for both countries because of its fishing resources, but also development of aquaculture and the need to protect the mangroves as important ecosystems especially for the Peruvian coastal populations. Except for environmental reasons and for the food security of especially coastal populations, this area is of utmost importance for both countries out of political reasons too. The Gulf of Guayaquil was a battle site in the armed conflicts between these two countries that signed a peace agreement in 1998 and in 2010 they finally agreed on their maritime boundaries (Documento Memoria).

Ecuador has nine ocean policy strategies forming the National Ocean and Coastal policies (Comité Interinstitucional del Mar, 2014) and the ninth strategy is explicitly dedicated to MSP (I.16, 2022; Comité Interinstitucional del Mar, 2014). As is the case with the rest of the countries, the MSP is being addressed in an intersectoral committee, but the leadership of the ministry of defense through its related entities with maritime jurisdiction, is evident in the structure of the committee (see Table 7 below for more comparative information).

However, besides this progress taking place in terms of MSP adoption, there are many problems regarding the MSP planning process and its implementation, in terms of proper stakeholder participation or interinstitutional coordination (Iturralde & Samaniego, 2021; Vélez Altamirano, 2021). Namely, this tendency, of ministries of defense ‘taking-over’ the area of influence in the coastal and marine areas from the ministries of environment is present in almost every country in the region (with the exclusion of Panama). Iturralde & Samaniego (2021) speaking for Ecuador, say that in the last decade, new institutional structures for the governance of marine and coastal areas have been required due to the rising importance of these areas for the country’s economy (ibid). Similarly, one of the key developments in the Colombian Maritime Interests is the emphasis on the furthering of the maritime sectors for economic development (Ramírez-Cabrales et al., 2021). In the same vein, the rationale for the new version of CCO’s ocean policy is to ‘increase the competitiveness of the country through the development of its marine resources’ (CCO, 2018b, 2018a). Table 7 summarizes the main elements and provides a better comparison between the four countries in the region.

Country	Ocean/Maritime Policy	Institution	MSP
Colombia	a) PNAOCI from 2000 b) Política Nacional del Océano y de los Espacios Costeros (PNOEC) from 2017 c) Colombia Potencia Bioceánica Sostenible 2030 (CONPES 3990) from 2020	a) Ministry of environment b) Colombian Ocean Commission (CCO) - multisectoral institution c) National Council for Economic and Social Policies (CONPES) - multisectoral institution CCO and the Maritime authority DIMAR, both (directly or indirectly) linked to the Ministry of Defense have the leadership in this policy area. CCO is the national focal point in front of IOC-UNESCO; DIMAR, Ministry of Defense is national focal point in front of MSPGlobal.	a) No MSP but ICZM b) No MSP c) Yes, MSP is present on policy level in CONPES 3990. It is part of one policy action from the strategy Planning and management of marine and coastal areas and islands. The action consists in developing guidelines for the furthering of MSP under the leadership of the Maritime Authority. Colombia still does not have MSP on national level. It is in early stage of its development with MSP applied by single institutions of local or experimental nature.

Panama	National Ocean Policy 2022	<p>Intersectoral commission for the formulation, development and monitoring of the National Ocean Policy from 2018 (the Ministry of International Relations has the role of its executive secretariat)</p> <p>The Ministry of Environment has the leadership in this policy area.</p> <p>The Panama Maritime Authority (independent statal entity) is the national focal point on front of the IOC-UNESCO; The Directorate for Coasts and Seas, Ministry of environment is the national focal point in front of MSPGlobal.</p>	<p>MSP is present on policy level. The policy includes marine spatial planning and integrated coastal management with their own lines of action under one of the policy's strategic areas (Science, Technology and Innovation)</p> <p>Panama still does not have MSP on national level. It is in early stage of development. On a project level transboundary MSP is planned to be applied in the region in 2022 for the LME PACA.</p>
Peru	National Maritime Policy (2019-2030) from 2019	<p>Multisectoral Commission for the State Action in the Maritime Area (COMAEM) from 2017.</p> <p>The Ministry of Defense – Peruvian Navy, has the role of its executive secretariat.</p> <p>The Ministry of Defense has the leadership in this policy area.</p> <p>Directorate for Hydrography and Navigation (DIHIDRONAV), Ministry of defense is the national focal point in front of IOC-UNESCO and MSPGlobal.</p>	<p>MSP is NOT present on policy level, but ICZM is.</p> <p>Peru still does not have MSP on national level. It is in early stage of development.</p> <p>Transboundary MSP pilot project at the Gulf of Guayaquil involving Ecuador and Peru was implemented in the first phase of MSPGlobal (2019-2021).</p>
Ecuador	National Ocean and Coastal Policies from 2014	<p>Interinstitutional Committee of the Sea from 2011.</p> <p>Presided by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs with the General Directorate for Maritime Interests (ministry of defense) acting as its technical advisory body.</p> <p>The Ministry of Defense has the leadership in this policy area.</p> <p>The Oceanographic Institute of the Ecuadorian Navy, Ministry of Defense is the national focal point in</p>	<p>MSP is present on policy level. Ecuador already developed national MSP plan as a result of the policy: Coastal and Marine Spatial Plan 2017 – 2030 (2017)</p> <p>Transboundary MSP pilot project at the Gulf of Guayaquil involving Ecuador and Peru was implemented in the first phase of MSPGlobal (2019-2021).</p>

		front of the IOC-UNESCO; the General Directorate for Maritime Interests, Ministry of Defense is the national focal point in front of MSPGlobal	
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Table 7: Ocean policies and MSP in the region, a comparison

VI. Quick Take

This chapter elaborates the MSP policy transfer processes happening in Colombia and analyzes the main factors of domestic nature that contribute to the adoption of MSP. The very first introduction of MSP to Colombia, as is the case with the other countries in the region, happens through the environmental sector, namely one through the NGO MarViva and the second through the research center linked to the ministry of environment Invemar. The third transfer process happens through CCO and Dimar, both entities linked to the ministry of defense. While the first transfer is more straightforward and led by personal motivations of the NGO's director, the other two are more complex, owed to existing networks and institutional relationships. In all of them, the originator of the policy is the IOC-UNESCO. In the case of the final two, for the processes to happen crucial role play the close relationship between the IOC and Invemar, and the IOC and CCO, respectively. Except of being the originator of the process, IOC exerts an agency in the determination of the leading MSP institution.

While the actual causal mechanisms behind the transfer process will be analyzed in the next chapter, this chapter presented factors of domestic nature with some explanatory power for the process of MSP adoption in Colombia. In Colombia, the past policy experience with ICZM, planning instrument similar to MSP, has had a determining role in the way the transfer process unfolds. The established institutionalized application of ICZM has proven, on one side, to be an obstacle for the acceptance of a similar instrument, especially for the institutions belonging to the environmental sector that have developed it. On the other side, the failure of the environmental sector to fully implement their ocean policy (PNAOCI) and the ICZM, drives other institutions (linked to the defense sector) to look at MSP as an opportunity to increase their control in the governance of marine and coastal areas.

In Colombia, we see as a main trait the inability of the institutions in the realm of coastal and marine governance to 'act what they preach'. The interviews and the analyzed documents have shown inability to enact policies and establish adequate institutions in this governance realm owed to a complex set of factors, some very typical for Colombia (environment-defense

rivalry) but others typical for the region. The sectoral approach in governing marine areas and the inaptitude for inter-sectoral coordination is a common institutional trait in the region.

All of this needs to be regarded in the context of the 'environment-defense rivalry' existing in Colombian marine governance and related to the 'competition' of those two sectors to have 'more say' in the planning of Colombian coastal and marine areas. The increased economic and geopolitical relevance of the marine areas in this region needs to also be regarded as part of this equation, shifting political priorities towards the ocean and motivating sectors other than the environmental one to step in. Increased illegal fishing from foreign industrial fisheries, territorial disputes with bordering countries, as well as making these areas 'safer' from natural and human-provoked hazards, give reason for more involvement of the defense sector. The latter effectuates its jurisdiction not only by exerting its main functions of control and vigilance but also in terms of primary data collection and research. In addition to these factors of domestic nature the next chapter offers better insight into the international ones.

CHAPTER VI: EXPLAINING COLOMBIA’S MSP ADOPTION

I. The causal mechanisms behind the policy transfer

This chapter *explains* the policy transfer of MSP to Colombia by focusing on the causal mechanism behind the policy transfer and the international enabling factors behind it. The analysis of the causal mechanisms behind the transfer process was done mainly based on the information from the interviews. Most of the information on causal mechanisms was acquired through the question “Why does your country adopt MSP?”. However, the complete text of the interviews was considered for the analysis as well. The approach used for the analysis is qualitative content analysis (QCA) implemented with the MAXQDA software.

The coding process took several stages. At first, the texts of the interviews were approached with deductive reasoning, having in mind the four main causal mechanisms in the policy transfer scholarship: learning, emulation, competition and coercion (see discussion in Chapter II). The main elements of each of these mechanisms are summarized in Table 8 below. Basically, the four main mechanisms were the initial four main categories of the coding frame. So, when looking into the text of the interviews, I was being sensitive to the following elements:

Learning	Emulation	Competition	Coercion
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - (actively) searching for a solution of an existing problem - <i>mention</i> foreign policies, describe them as <i>good practices</i> or use detailed <i>case studies</i> - better understanding about the policy outcomes of a policy - better understanding of the political outcomes of a policy - interest in the merits of the novel policy in terms of its efficiency - interest in the merits of the novel policy in terms of its potential to improve their institutions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - symbolic imitation without considering causal links between the adopted policy and its outcome - adoption out of legitimation purposes - adopting due to 'latest expert thinking' or out of 'prestige' - interest only in the subsequent benefits associated with the adoption 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - to attract or retain economic resources (economic) - to adopt the role of international leaders or early followers to influence international policy developments (political) - two parties observe and imitate each other to maintain stable relations with the third one (social) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - to fulfill a condition imposed by an influential international organization or other entity (conditionality) - legally obliged to adopt a policy because of international agreements

Table 8. Main elements of the four causal mechanisms
Own elaboration. Based on the discussion in Theoretical Foundations

During the process of coding, I assigned segments from the interviews (the segments could go from one sentence to one whole paragraph, if it reflects the same idea) to one of the four

categories depending on the fact if they contained the elements in the table. For example, if an interviewee said MSP's adoption is the new 'fashion', I would code the segment under emulation. Or, if an interviewee seems to have identified a problem that can be solved with MSP, I coded the segment under learning. This being said, it was possible to have interviews with text segments belonging to different causal mechanisms. Determining for the importance of each causal mechanism is the frequency of the mentions taking the interviews all together. For the definitions, examples and exceptions from the main categories, check the coding framework in Appendix B.3.

However, during the first coding session, for many text segments that seemed relevant (because of the way they were emphasized, or because of their high frequency across the interviews), I could not find a suitable category. During the first coding session I identified two main tendencies: one, the predominance of the mention of international actors and international agendas influencing the adoption of MSP, and two, most of the interviewees expressed a *need* for MSP to solve different types of existing or anticipated issues in the marine governance realm in their countries. This was surprisingly for me since, influenced from the scientific debate and some stronger statements from respondents, I was expecting to see MSP adopted out of prestige (emulation), or maybe even under certain pressure (coercion). But the postulations of the policy transfer theory are clear: if there is an expectation that MSP could solve given policy problems then "learning" has been taking place. At the same time, I figured that the different international elements are either acting as *facilitating factors* that exist independently from MSP but favor its adoption, or are purposeful actions that enable MSP's adoption, which I termed *learning channels*.

Following this, in the next coding session, I wanted to distinguish between the object of learning (what is the learning about) and the learning channel (how does the learning unfold). Namely, when speaking about the need to adopt MSP, the interviewees mentioned different types of problems. These types of problems thus turn into 'objects of learning'. The logic is that the interviewees have learned that MSP can be a solution to these specific types of problems. Following this, 'learning' as a category is subdivided into Learning objective and Learning channels. In addition to this, I was not being able to find elements that can be assigned to the category 'coercion'. But I found elements that reflect similar but 'less harsh' relationship, and so I substituted 'coercion' with a term of my own - 'instruction'. So, finally, the main coding framework on the Causal Mechanisms has learning, emulation, competition and instruction as main categories. The final coding framework with the categories and their respective sub-categories is presented in the Figure 7 below. For the complete coding framework check Appendix B.3 to this study.

Actor		Learning (about) (20)*							Instruction (5)	Emulation (3)	Competition (2)
		Institutional impact	Outcome			Process	Outcome and Process				
		Improve multi-sectoral coordination (6)	Achieve multiple goals (6)	Plan to increase maritime activities (6)	Solve user conflicts (4)	Increase decision-making efficiency (3)	Enrich existing instrument (3)	Absence (functional) instrument (5)			
Colombia	Maritime Authority DIMAR	x		x		x			x		
	Colombian Ocean Commission	x									
	Research center INVEMAR						x		x		
	Environment Ministry I		x						x	x	
	Environment Ministry II						x			x	
	National Parks I	x	x				x				
	National Parks II	x	x	x	x				x		
	Fisheries Authority	x	x		x						x
	Academic I							x			
	Academic II							x			
	Academic III	x				x		x		x	
NGO MarViva		x		x							
Region	Research center of the Navy (DIHIDRONAV) Peru		x						x		
	Institute of the Sea (IMARPE)							x			

Peru											
Environment Ministry Panama I					x			x			x
Environment Ministry Panama II				x							
Maritime Authority Panama			x								
Ecuadorian Navy			x								
NGO MarViva Regional			x								
CPPS Regional IO			x								

Table 9. Causal mechanisms for MSP policy transfer per institution (Colombia and the region)

*The numbers in the parenthesis refer to the number of actors mentioning the respective learning object (the number of total mentions independently of the actors is presented in Figure 8)

I.1. Learning as a causal mechanism

In order to better understand the mechanism at place, I distinguish between object of learning and learning channels. Paraphrasing Meseguer (2005)'s definition, learning is a purposive act, that involves observing others' experiences and better understanding of the particular outcomes from policies when making decisions about their adoption. When considering adoption of a policy, policymakers learn about the success of the foreign policy in terms of: a) the goals it is designed to achieve, b) the challenges regarding its implementation and c) its political support (ibid., p.4). Elkins & Simmons (2005) say that in learning, actors are genuinely interested in the merits of the novel policy in terms of its efficiency or in terms of its potential to improve their institutions (p.46). Other elements that make 'learning' as a causal mechanism distinguishable from the rest are listed in Table 8.

This study finds evidence about four different objects of learning: learning about the outcome of a policy; learning about the policy process; learning about outcome and process together; and finally, learning about the institutional impact from the policy. Table 9 above shows the results of the analysis distinguishing between these learning objects.

Learning about the outcome of a policy is an element that is often looked for in order to prove the presence of the causal mechanism 'learning'. Compared to the other three it has the strongest presence in the interviews. Text segments that reflected on one or several possible outcomes from MSP as a reason to adopt this novel policy have been considered as evidence for *learning about outcome*. In total, three tendencies were evidenced grouped under three separate sub-codes: first, MSP is/should be adopted to achieve multiple goals, such as better fisheries management, marine protected area (MPA) management, better management of the shipping sector, for achieving blue growth, for conservation and sustainable use of marine resources (10 mentions across all interviews)⁸⁷; second, to plan for the ever-increasing maritime activities (6 mentions)⁸⁸; and third, to solve use conflicts (6 mentions)⁸⁹ (see Figure 8). From this long list of possible outcomes, it becomes evident that the expectations from MSP in Colombia and the region are quite high. Now, MSP is a new policy, which means there is not much evidence out there about its actual success after implementation. Although

⁸⁷ An example of this sub-code is the following: "By law, in 2024-2026, the Department of National Parks must update the management plans [for the marine protected areas]. Then it is time to link MSP inputs into these management plans to protect marine areas, that would be essential." (I.5, 2021, National Parks, Colombia)

⁸⁸ "MSP is a process that must be carried out for adequate national maritime development, and although marine uses have not yet saturated the space, MSP must be projected into a future with greater demands and pressures on the resources of the Ecuadorian sea." (I.16, 2022, Ecuador Navy)

⁸⁹ "Our position on MSP is that we need a comprehensive and participatory model that allows us to solve multiple socio-environmental conflicts that we currently have in marine spaces that are related to the human activities that we have at sea." (I.10a, 2020, MarViva Colombia).

learning is present, it does not happen based on experience from other countries but based on the predominant MSP narratives (!). As evidenced in the empirical chapter about IOC-UNESCO's MSP narratives (Chapter IV), the narrative about MSP being the panacea for all governments' ills in the marine sector, seems to have proved its presence in the region too.

Learning about process has been identified in statements that link the adoption of MSP with the decision-making process. Namely that the adoption of MSP would make decision-making in the marine policy realm more efficient⁹⁰. In total, there have been three mentions by three different institutions (see Table 9). DIMAR Colombia finds the models that analyze the spatial conflicts to bring more guidance and support in the decision-making (I.4, 2021), whereas the environment ministry of Panama finds the efficient decision-making based on science to be most appealing (I.17, 2022). Again, by MSP being a new policy, there could not have been a process of learning based on real experience but on 'words on paper' and narratives. Here again, another MSP narrative found in the IOC-UNESCO conference reports speaks in the same direction. Namely, presenting MSP as a participatory tool while at the same time as highly efficient one, seems to have found its way among state level practitioners and policymakers too.

Learning about outcome and process involves text segments about the need to adopt MSP considering the outcomes meant to be achieved with it, but also the planning process. I have noticed two main tendencies in this regard: one, the need to adopt MSP because there is not such instrument in place at all⁹¹ and/or because the existing one is not functional⁹² (5 mentions both together) and, two, adopting MSP to enrich existing instruments (9 mentions)⁹³ (see Figure 8). When identifying a lack of such instrument or a lack of functional instrument, as well as determining the potential benefits it can have when combined with existing instruments, the interviewees demonstrate knowledge about MSP as a policy instrument, in terms of its outcome and the process behind it. Interestingly, the Colombian actors that consider MSP's adoption to complement existing instruments are all belonging to the environmental sector

⁹⁰ "So, let's say that we are going in that direction because we have seen that it [MSP] has been a very effective planning tool attached to science to be able to have a more realistic perspective when making decisions and focusing on resources." (I.18, 2022, Min. Environment, Panama).

⁹¹ "Because we don't have, we don't have a current instrument. In reality, this approach seems very important to us from the point of view as a country. That we do not have an instrument that helps us focus precisely on the issue of space planning." (I.20, 2022, Institute of the Sea, Peru).

⁹² "MSP is being implemented as a methodology addressing the serious problems of territorial planning in Colombia for some years." (I.12, 2021, academic, Colombia).

⁹³ "The fact that we try to apply the MSP methodology has allowed us to generate inputs that were not available before for areas of spatial conflict." (I.9b, 2020, INVEMAR, Colombia); or, "I would believe that there is a need to use this intersectoral approach [MSP] in those areas [offshore], also because of the cross-border issues. And towards the coastal area, I would believe that it is more of an exercise to strengthen and update the instrument, to bring it into line with what is already being worked on." (I.2, 2022, Ministry of Environment, Colombia).

which is the “owner” of the present instrument – ICZM. This reflects the position of the environmental sector not to back off completely from its instrument. But also, their readiness to adjust to the mainstream (proven by the later interview with the Colombian ministry of environment in 2022) and choose the MSP elements that will allow for the existence of both instruments on the Colombian marine policy scenery. Another interesting tendency is seen for the sub-code “Absence of (functional) instrument”. Namely, among the Colombian actors, it is only the representatives of the academia who “dare” to express the fact that the existing instrument is not functional, and that MSP may be an opportunity to start new. Panama and Peru find that adopting MSP will fill the policy void, as their experience with ICZM (see discussion in Chapter V) is not as established as in Colombia.

Learning about the institutional impact has proven to be most frequently mentioned in the interviews as a single reason to adopt MSP (12 mentions)⁹⁴ (see Figure 8). The evidence in this regard speaks especially to the characteristic of MSP to provide for multi-sectoral coordination. I have found this evidence among interviewees from Colombia, representing six different institutions from different sectors (see Table 9). This speaks to the discussion provided in Chapter V about the flawed inter-sectoral coordination and the environment-defense rivalry, two phenomena perceived by almost all interviewees as crucial for the unsuccessful marine and coastal management in Colombia. MSP is in this regard perceived as the solution in that it provides a novel platform to sit together and start anew. “[MSP] is an initiative that has allowed us to organize the entities, because organizing and coordinating entities is a bit complicated. Being able to have them all on the same page [...] so that the interests of each one are organized in the same scenario, so we can talk not about the ministry of the environment, or about Dimar, or about anything, but about Colombia - is a bit complicated [...]” (Interview from 2020, Colombia).

⁹⁴ An example of this sub-code is the following: “And for that reason, the need was clearly to be able to agree on what each one of us was doing. And let's say that that was the prerequisite for the entrance of MSP in our country. The need to be able to carry out an adequate application of the different policies around the use of marine-coastal ecosystem services.” (I.7, 2022, Fisheries Authority, Colombia).

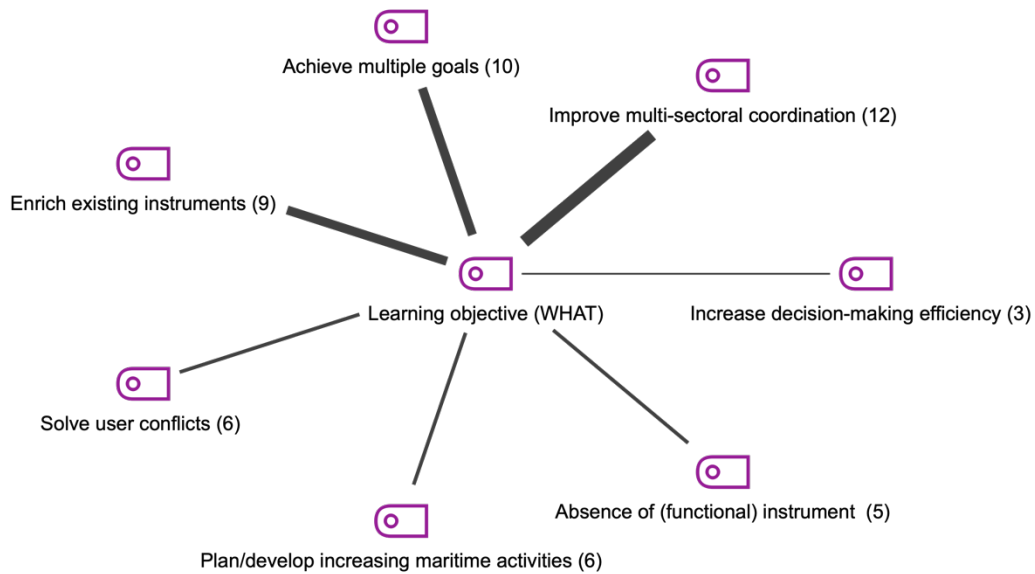


Figure 8. Distribution of the sub-codes of “Learning objective” with total number of mentions. (Thickness of line represents the weight of the sub-code)

Learning channels

Once evidence of learning about MSP taking place has been found, the question arises about *how* does learning happen and what evidence is there in the interviews for this. Glick & Friedland (2014) introduce the concept of *policy knowledge diffusion* pointing to the channels of information transfer ‘earlier in the process’ of diffusion (ibid.: 958), which precisely fits the MSP case.

This present study found evidence of learning channels which can be categorized as: SPINCAM - regional problem solving (24 mentions); visiting courses and events (18 mentions); consulting IOC-UNESCO’s MSP guidebook (11 mentions); looking into experiences of other countries (3 mentions); and general references to learning⁹⁵ (2 mentions). See Figure 9 below for visual presentation and Table 10 for an overview of the importance of each learning channel per institution.

⁹⁵ Such an example would be: “...at that point we were in the process of learning and implementing what we have learned about MSP.” (I.9a, 2020, INVEMAR, Colombia)

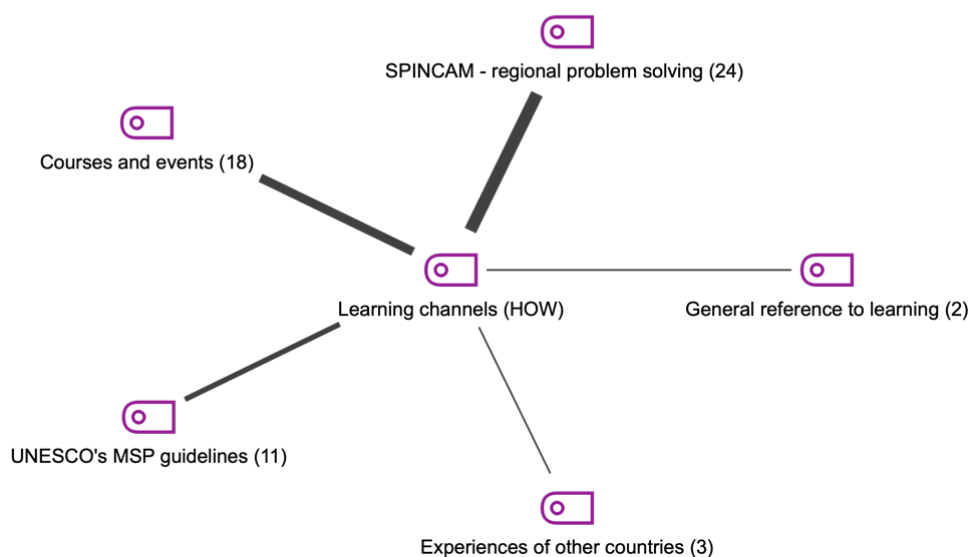


Figure 9. Distribution of the sub-codes for “Learning channels” with total number of mentions. (Thickness of line represents the weight of the sub-code)

The most important MSP learning channel found in this study is the *SPINCAM project*. It is designed to establish a framework of integrated coastal management indicators in the countries of the South Pacific region. It is an IOC-UNESCO project implemented in the course of several years through the regional organization CPPS (Permanent Commission for the South-East Pacific). The project has served as the platform for *regional problem-solving* (Albrecht & Arts, 2005; Braun et al., 2007) and knowledge transfer. The different workshops and activities implemented under the SPINCAM framework have proved to be the main platform for knowledge sharing and training in the area of coastal and marine management for the countries from the region and have been fundamental for the establishment and advancement of integrated coastal management tools, such as the ICZM⁹⁶. In this respect, SPINCAM is the main channel through which a systematic knowledge on coastal and marine planning, or more specifically on MSP⁹⁷, has been transferred to most of the actors. It is,

⁹⁶ “It is true that when we present the background of MSP in our country, we mention the activities that have been carried out in SPINCAM. It was the first project that helped us map and know the correct location of corals in the Pearl Archipelago. Indeed, they were the first projects that helped us map where the marine-coastal resources are. Afterwards, we have made progress with mapping the mangroves, the beaches, the turtles and we are currently monitoring and geographically locating algae and corals, which are resources we have, but we do not know their complete location.” (I.18, 2022, Min. Environment, Panama).

⁹⁷ “As a result of that project [SPINCAM] of many years, from 2008-2009 to this year, we got very close to the IOC-UNESCO, to its methodologies. And initially the project started with integrated management of coastal zones, and with the evolution of the project, about 4-5 years ago we began to approach [...] the topic of MSP is. So from SPINCAM we began to get a little closer to the MSP methodology.” (I.9b, 2020, INVEMAR, Colombia); “[...] my first experience with the IOC-UNESCO processes with Integrated Management and Marine Spatial Planning occurred in the formulation of the SPINCAM project since 2009, from which complementary courses were developed at the University of Andalusia in Marine Spatial Planning in 2014.” (I.16, 2022, Ecuador Navy).

furthermore, a platform that facilitates the formation of future MSP trainers and disseminators of MSP-related knowledge⁹⁸.

Visiting of courses and events (outside SPINCAM) is the second most important learning channel for MSP in Colombia and the region. Under this code, text segments were assigned where the interviewees have mentioned visiting courses and events on MSP-related subjects, organized by or with the collaboration of the IOC-UNESCO and which are not part of SPINCAM. Those are events predominantly part of the MSPGlobal project, but also related activities on national level, such the meetings of the national MSPGlobal experts' group⁹⁹, as well as the courses organized in Colombia by INVEMAR, and lately also the courses and meetings organized by DIMAR¹⁰⁰. Visiting MSP courses at universities in France and Spain¹⁰¹ have also been mentioned. As shown in Table 10, representatives of six institutions from different sectors (including academia) in Colombia have mentioned this as their learning channel, as well as representatives from Peru, Panama, Ecuador and the two regional organizations CPPS (intergovernmental organization) and MarViva (regional NGO). In this way, visiting courses, workshops, meetings and other events organized by or in cooperation with the IOC-UNESCO prove to be the second most important diffusion and learning channel about MSP in Colombia and in the region.

Consulting IOC-UNESCO's guidelines is the third most important learning channel. This is not surprising, as the flagship IOC-UNESCO guidebook from 2006 is the most cited MSP publication by policymakers worldwide¹⁰². From Table 10, it is evident that it is mentioned as a learning source in Colombia as well as in the region¹⁰³. Besides the academia, the two other

⁹⁸ "This project [SPINCAM] helped us a lot to be able to focus not only on the information and the indicators needed for coastal management and MSP, but it also gave us many tools, a lot of training on the issue of how to disseminate, how to disseminate this information and how to introduce it into management plans." (I.20, 2022, IMARPE, Peru).

⁹⁹ "[One of the important platforms for MSP diffusion in Colombia] is the MSPGlobal-supported experts' group that meets every two months [...], additionally INVEMAR organizes training for formation of MSP experts [...]" (I.7, 2022, Fisheries Authority, Colombia).

¹⁰⁰ "[...] Likewise, we participate in the different activities promoted by the MSPGlobal, such as the dialogues, the online seminars, and the technical seminars. And when it comes to Dimar, their the centers also do their events for MSP diffusion and socialization." (I.4, 2021, DIMAR, Colombia).

¹⁰¹ "[...] we have attended different trainings, and XY is one of the experts in the subject, she has had the opportunity to study in Spain for some months y and do a specialization course in MSP." (I.9b, 2020, INVEMAR, Colombia).

¹⁰² "The UNESCO guide, the one by Ehler and Douvere, caught my attention a lot [...]. I studied it all, in detail." (I.14, 2021, academic, Colombia).

¹⁰³ "We are following the IOC UNESCO guide that is published, but we have to, as some say here, *panamenize* it or adapt it to the national environment and that is what we have pending. " (I.17, 2022, Min. Environment, Panama, emphasis added); "I was the promoter of that idea a few years ago precisely as a result of a UNESCO publication. And when I was interacting with the UNESCO staff, with the author of the publication, it seemed to me that this was the methodology, the way to plan the future of the sea and I dedicated myself to studying a lot about it and then promoting it. MarViva was a great platform to do it, it had the means to do it." (I.22, 2022, MarViva, regional NGO).

institutions that have emphasized consulting it are belonging to the environmental sector. This becomes interesting when considered in relation to the discussion below regarding the novelty of MSP. Namely, as it will be shown, in Colombia predominantly the environmental sector and the academia consider MSP not to be novel per se, but very similar to ICZM¹⁰⁴.

Three of the interviewees from the region (see Table 10), as well as one Peruvian public official with whom I had informal conversation, have mentioned the *experiences of other countries* when learning about or adapting MSP-related elements. Two of them explicitly emphasized the active searching of policy solutions for marine management in other countries¹⁰⁵.

In sum, it is to be concluded that the most influential learning channels originate at the IOC-UNESCO. Those are the SPINCAM project, the MSPGlobal project with their events and workshops and the MSP guidebook from 2006. On a national level, events organized by national actors (INVEMAR and DIMAR in Colombia, or, the ministry of environment in Panama) are either directly linked to the beforementioned projects of the IOC in the region (for example, the events by DIMAR are largely related to the MSPGlobal project), or, are developed under IOC's umbrella (for example, many of the courses offered by INVEMAR are part of the IOC's Ocean Teacher Global Academy (OTGA), where INVEMAR is a regional training center).

Actor		Learning channels				
		SPINCAM - regional problem solving (10)*	Courses and events (12)	UNESCO MSP guidelines (5)	Experiences of other countries (3)	General reference to learning (2)
Colombia	Maritime Authority DIMAR		x			
	Colombian Ocean Commission	x	x			x
	Research center INVEMAR	x	x			x
	Environment Ministry I	x		x		

¹⁰⁴ “[...] we have reviewed UNESCO guides, and I reviewed the IOC-related topics. Well, in the end, for us [ministry of environment], the marine spatial planning process is included in the process of planning of the coastal environmental units [UACs].” (I.1, 2020, Min. Environment, Colombia).

¹⁰⁵ “[...] and that is when we began a coordinated work of what tools are currently being applied, what the experiences of other countries are like, how we could advance in the entire issue of marine spatial planning. As AUNAP we do not actually have a history of more than three years.” (I.7, 2022, Fisheries Authority, Colombia).

	National Parks II		x	x		
	Fisheries Authority		x		x	
	Independent expert	x				
	Academic III	x	x	x		
Region	Research center of the Navy (DIHIDRONAV) Peru		x			
	Institute of the Sea (IMARPE) Peru	x	x		x	
	Environment Ministry Panama I	x	x	x		
	Environment Ministry Panama II		x			
	Ecuadorian Navy	x				
	NGO MarViva Regional		x	x	x	
	CPPS Regional IO	x	x			

Table 10. MSP learning channels per institution (Colombia and the region)

*The number in parenthesis refers to the number of actors mentioning the respective item (the number of total mentions independently of the actors is presented in Figure 9)

While the most influential learning channels originate at the IOC-UNESCO, the active searching for policy solutions cannot be evidenced from the interviewees. Thus, the MSP policy transfer is **supply-driven** (driven by the IOC) and not demand-driven (driven by the adopting country because of its active search for solutions). The supply-driven transfer of policy solutions by the IOC is not a novelty. Similar happened with the adoption of national research centers in several African countries in the 1960s, a result of UNESCO's promotion and assistance in the process of their establishment in the adopting countries - a case well studied in Finnemore's seminal work on UNESCO (Finnemore, 1996). Putting it visually, in this present case-study, once IOC brought MSP to their front porch, the countries in the region have opened their doors for the promising instrument. The reason for opening the door is what the causal mechanisms try to explain. We have seen by far that learning has taken place. Using the beforementioned metaphor, once MSP stood at the front porch and IOC rang the bell, before opening the door, the host examined the 'visitor'. In fact, by examining, the host realized that the 'visitor' can actually be useful in many or different ways, by solving or alleviating existing problems. We have seen WHAT was examined (outcome, process, both outcome and process, and the institutional impact of MSP), and HOW it was examined (exchange and learning through established networks and platforms, projects and publications). And, in this way we have seen that the main learning channels lead back to the IOC-UNESCO.

However, considering the fact that MSP is a pretty novel policy worldwide, there is not much evidence of its efficiency. Very few countries can provide evidence of the ability of MSP to achieve its proclaimed policy goals. Most of the countries that apply MSP are currently in the process of its first-cycle implementation (one cycle lasts usually 5 years), i.e., the evaluation stage has not yet taken place, let alone the experience with several cycles of MSP. So, although learning has happened, and the need for such policy instrument is clearly expressed and knowledge about some of its core characteristics exist - we are speaking of **narratives-based learning** and not **evidence-based learning**. This is one important contribution of this study to the policy transfer and diffusion scholarship, which does not make this distinction when it comes to learning. Since most of the learning channels lead back to the IOC, the narratives are also tightly related to this organization.

Namely, two of the three IOC-UNESCO MSP narratives identified in Chapter IV are confirmed by the interviewees too. 'MSP ubiquitous' which narrates MSP as a solution to many policy problems in the marine sector has been evidenced here. Namely, especially *learning about outcomes* (see the respective codes in Table 9) is influenced by this narrative. The interviewees speak in this regard of MSP getting adopted to solve different spatial conflicts between users and between users and the environment¹⁰⁶, to regulate increasing maritime activities¹⁰⁷, improve shipping management¹⁰⁸, fisheries management¹⁰⁹ and management of

¹⁰⁶ "There is a difference between management and planning. The management points more towards the current activities that are generating strong interactions and possible socio-environmental conflicts that may arise. In [marine spatial] planning, I already have a complete coordination scheme of everything that could generate a possible conflict." (I.7, 2022, Fisheries Authority, Colombia).

¹⁰⁷ "So, also within our institutions we also have to internalize that the MSP is an opportunity for territorial planning, for conflict resolution, but also for the productive activities of the local communities." (I.6, 2021, National Parks, Colombia); "The countries of the Southeast Pacific region consider the coastal marine zone to be of great importance, as they are areas where a number of activities and actors converge, and whose economy depends on the sustainable use of their resources and ecosystems. This has led to countries generating policies and adaptations of tools - including marine spatial planning - that allow them to manage these areas and their resources in their territories." (I.15, 2022, CPPS).

¹⁰⁸ "In Colombia as such, the PEM begins as a need to organize the shipping sector in the face of the different positions of port development in Colombia." (I.7, 2022, Fisheries Authority, Colombia).

¹⁰⁹ "Particularly at the Fisheries Authority, we use it [MSP] to be able to advance fisheries management processes both in the Pacific and in the Colombian Caribbean, where [...] fishing interacts with different actors, [...]. We apply it [MSP] to be able to understand and even to be able to guarantee the sustainability of the fisherman in the use of fishing resources in artisanal and industrial fisheries." (I.7, 2022, Fisheries Authority, Colombia).

MPAs, provide for economic growth¹¹⁰, better educational outcomes¹¹¹, increase cross-border marine planning¹¹² etc. This wide spectrum of objectives assigned to MSP are also at the core of the 'MSP ubiquitous' narrative present in the IOC's MSP conference reports.

The IOC narrative 'MSP participatory and efficient' has also been evidenced in the text segments coded under learning. This narrative presents MSP as a rational process that increases the efficiency of the use of ocean space. This is evidenced through the text segments under *Learning about process*.^{113 114 115} Furthermore, one of the core elements of this MSP narrative is the stakeholder engagement and participation in the MSP process. This narrative theoretically speaks in favor of stakeholders from different sectors, such as the public and private sectors, academia, NGOs, but the narrative reflects the experiences of more advanced countries where the private maritime sector has more influence in this realm. In the case of Colombia and the region, it is the public sector through the different ministries that are the principal actors and that need to coordinate to make MSP work. In this regard, the element of MSP being participative and enabling coordination, finds resonance especially in the learning about MSP's institutional impact. As it was discussed above, the improvement of multi-sectoral coordination is the most often mentioned reason for the adoption of MSP in Colombia. And multi-sectoral coordination is primarily understood as achieving better coordination between the different ministries with jurisdiction over coastal and marine areas (such as the ministry of environment and the ministry of defense with their related entities, but

¹¹⁰ "The economic pillar in our country [Panama] depends on the benefits from both seas and oceans. The Canal itself is the most important economic source for the country and its development and the service it provides worldwide depends on a healthy ecosystem. Considering the provision of tourism services as well, this tool [MSP] has convinced us that it can be useful to really carry out sustainable development attached to the blue economy and that it will guarantee that we can really be a competitive country so that these benefits will not get lost for the next generations." (I.17, 2022, Ministry of Environment, Panama).

¹¹¹ "For what reasons is MSP adopted in your country? You mention several points such as 'education must be a priority', what do you mean [...]? R: Yes. For example, if the fishing gear used in an area has to be changed because it is better for proper management, the fishers should be taught how to handle it. What we have to teach is what you must do according to the regulations, so that everything goes well. It is very important to educate so that they understand what they are doing." (I.21, 2022, DIHIDRONAV, Peruvian Navy).

¹¹² "I would believe that there is a need to use this intersectoral approach [MSP] in those [offshore] areas, also because of the cross-border planning" (I.2, 2022, Ministry of Environment, Colombia).

¹¹³ "So, let's say that we are going in that direction because we have seen that it [MSP] has been a very effective planning tool attached to science to be able to have a more realistic perspective when making decisions and focusing on resources." (I.18, 2022, Panama).

¹¹⁴ "[...] when applying this methodology, it [MSP] gives the greatest argument for why decisions are made, or why you define one use as being preponderant over another one, or why you limit this one because it has more impact on something. So, when applying the MSP methodology, seemed to us that it has greater support, regarding the definition of incompatibilities, so to speak." (I.4, 2021, DIMAR, Colombia).

¹¹⁵ "[...] marine spatial planning appears that is much more instrumental, and we [Colombia] said, well, we want results, they are not long-term, but they are results, let's join in. And perhaps that is why, I would believe, that is why it is the public entities and the most conservative ones that have opted for this leap. Because less reconciliation is required, less uncertainty, it is a much more conservative and less chaotic." (I.14, 2021, an academic, Colombia)

also the ministry of mines, ministry of agriculture etc.). Other type of stakeholders, such as the local and indigenous communities, as well the private sector (real estate and tourism sector, commercial fisheries, oil and gas drilling, mining, transport) were also mentioned by several interviews as important to be involved in MSP, but the emphasis is nevertheless on the adequate coordination between different ministries and public entities¹¹⁶.

According to the information from the interviews, the narrative 'MSP-good for business' is present in a milder form. The core characteristics of this narrative, namely attracting investments and increasing economic growth, are not explicitly present as such¹¹⁷. This being said, it is important to mention that considerations about increasing maritime activities are clearly present (sub-code: Plan for rising maritime activities), as well as notions of sustainable economic development (see discussion on MSP as an innovation). And as explained above, the influence of the private sector should not be underestimated (especially in coastal areas)¹¹⁸ as it is yet to become an important actor that influences marine planning in Colombia in offshore waters (besides offshore oil and gas drilling, aquaculture and offshore energy are also gaining on importance). Although the concept of blue economy and blue growth are mentioned sporadically in the interviews, they are nevertheless present in Colombia's policy landscape¹¹⁹.

1.2. Instruction as a causal mechanism

This study introduces a new type of causal mechanism which involves elements of following someone's instructions when taking certain decision, such as adopting a certain policy. The decision is made owed to characteristics that can be attributed to the instructor (and not to the policy per se). This is the case, for example, if the instructor enjoys high authority in the eyes

¹¹⁶ "This tool [MSP] is considered as an organizing and standardizing instrument, so to speak, of all the processes that are sometimes carried out independently of each of the sectors. For example, the aquaculture and fishing sector does its planning, the mining sector does its planning. When they begin to unite and we begin to see the conflicts of use in an organized way, there will be a better coordination and harmony, and establishment of what are the best conditions both for the resources and for the people who use them." (I.4, 2021, DIMAR, Colombia).

¹¹⁷ Neither the representatives of the Colombian Ministry of Transport or the National Agency for Fossil fuels (under the Ministry of Energy and Mines) were familiar with MSP. Especially the latter was an indication for me that the oil and gas sector could not have had much influence at this stage of MSP's adoption in Colombia. The concept of 'blue growth' or 'blue economy' did not appear much in the interviews. From Colombia, only the representative of the Colombian Fisheries Authority (under the Ministry of Agriculture) referred to this concept explicitly several times when discussing the benefits from MSP, as well as the representative of the Ministry of Environment expressed the familiarity with the concept but only once asked about it.

¹¹⁸ The tourism and real estate sector have been mentioned several times by the interviewees as negatively influencing the environmental and social conditions of the coastal ecosystems and communities.

¹¹⁹ For example, reference to these concepts can be found in CCO's PNOEC policy from 2017, CCO's publication "Intereses Marítimos Colombianos" from 2021, in Colombia's National Development Plan "Colombia Potencia Mundial de la Vida 2022-2026" from 2023, to name a few.

of the one who receives the instructions. Different to this is coercion, where, as explained in the theoretical framework to this study, influence comes from more powerful external actors in the form of conditionality or other forms of (political) pressure to adopt a given policy. In this case, there is not a political pressure or conditionality coming from the IOC, but actions and recommendations which considering the authority of this organization, as well as the close relationships and built networks between IOC and the domestic institutions, are almost impossible not to follow or adopt.

Through this mechanism the role of IOC as an authority comes to the fore. We witness here social and hierarchical relationship between the IOC as the superior actor and the countries as the subordinate actors (Liese et al., 2021: 356), especially evident from the Peruvian case. The IOC exercises its authority by ordering or requesting certain actions, while the countries voluntarily defer to the respective instructions and do what the IO asks (ibid.). The source of this authority lies in its expertise (expert authority) of the IOC and its embeddedness in the region, as it will be discussed in the final chapter.

In total, there have been eight mentions with elements of this causal mechanism by five different interviewees (check Tables 8 and 9 for more detail). Such elements are present in the statement from DIMAR, "...Well there was a visit from a representative of the IOC - Alejandro Iglesias, so there he sort of *identified the strengths* of Dimar in terms of marine-coastal planning, in terms of integrated coastal area management and therefore the *IOC nominated us* to be this national focal point for the MSP program Global." (I.4, 2021, DIMAR, Colombia, emphasis added).

Or, in the statement from National Parks Colombia: "And also, the funniest thing is... we alone cannot, or rather, we could, but as if we need an external referee such as UNESCO that arrives with the MSP saying, 'come on, brother, sit down, give it a try and so on'. So it could be that in that diplomatic part...I mean, it seems to me that it can be very positive. That's how I feel." After asked why MSP is getting adopted in Colombia, the representative said, "I suppose it was *because of the directive given by UNESCO*." (I.5, 2021, National Parks, Colombia).

Similarly in Peru, the representative from DIHIDRONAV (entity of the Peruvian Navy) said: "So, therefore, the IOC *comes and says*, well, the one who is going to lead the project in Peru in this case is going to be DIHIDRONAV because it is my representative." Similarly, here: "Then they [IOC] *sent us an email and told us* to contact these two people [Alejandro Iglesias and Michelle Quesada, MSPGlobal coordinators in the region] who are in charge and make the necessary coordination. Well, with Alejandro I already had some pretty good contact, so

we started working. And *he told us everything we had to do.*” (I.21, 2022, DIHIDRONAV, Peru, emphasis added).

I.3. Emulation as a causal mechanism

Emulation can in some forms be difficult to distinguish from learning, and therefore the study provides a broader discussion on them both in Chapter II (Theoretical Framework) before separating the most distinguishing elements that help operationalize them (Table 8). The main element of emulation as a causal mechanism is that it is a symbolic imitation that does not consider a causal link between the adoption and the outcome but does it because the policy is of ‘latest expert thinking’ or ‘out of prestige’. Elements of emulation have also been found in the interviews. In total, there have been six mentions by three different actors (check Table 9 for more detail).

Such is the statement of the representative of the Colombian Ministry of Environment: “[...] from the ministry of environment [...], we believe that...these issues have moved by waves of fashion. Well, the integrated management of coastal zones was fashionable, which was the first of this kind and then the integrated management of biodiversity and the integrated management of water resources appeared [...]. It took us [Colombia] thirteen years to be able to regulate and seventeen to have a guide [on ICZM]. In other words, a long process. When we get people beyond our ministry to understand it, assimilate it, and not fight with the idea that they have to do it, we try to introduce the European wave of marine spatial planning.” (I.1, 2020, Ministry of Environment, Colombia).

Similarly, a Colombian academic commented in this manner: “I have commented on it like this. All the scientists and academics were on the ICZM ship when the MSP appeared. Given that this ICZM boat was very big and was going very slow, and we don't know where it was going, the vast majority jump to the other boat, it seems like a very nice yacht, very fast, which like all yachts, is luxurious and has no content, but well, we all want to be on a yacht. So, that's my graphical view of what happened with marine spatial planning. For me it still lacks much content, it still lacks much strength. The same thing happens in Colombia.” (I.14, 2021, an academic, Colombia).

I.4. Competition as a causal mechanism

The main distinguishing elements of competition as a causal mechanism is that the adoption unfolds in order to attract more investments in the country (economic competition). The prospect of increasing economic growth and attracting foreign investments by adopting MSP

is not very present in the statements of the interviewees. In two occasions, however, elements of the casual mechanism are evidenced (check Table 9 for more detail).

The representative of the Panama ministry of environment said: “The economic pillar in our country lies in the benefits that both oceans provide us. The [Panama] Canal itself is the most important economic source of the country and its development and the service it provides worldwide depends on a healthy ecosystem. As well as the tourist service that the country wants to provide, which is why this tool [MSP] has convinced us that it can be useful to really carry out sustainable development attached to the blue economy and that it will guarantee that we can really be a competitive country [...]” (I.17, 2022, Ministry of Environment, Panama).

However, evidence for existing motivations to increase competitiveness and regional leadership can be found alone in the concept ‘Colombia bi-oceanic power’ referring to Colombia becoming leader in the region because of its rich marine resources and geopolitical position (Ramírez-Cabrales et al., 2021; CCO, 2018). In this regard one could argue that elements of economic and political competition could also be at place behind the process of MSP adoption (after all MSP is framed by the IOC under blue growth narrative!). Nevertheless, to avoid going into speculation in a process that is still ongoing, the analysis of the causal mechanisms is based on the conducted interviews and represent a snapshot of a period in time (2020 – 2022) where only very few persons and institutions are involved in the initial part of the process of MSP adoption in Colombia. This does not mean that after some years, other mechanisms could not be in place that could exacerbate the final adoption, such as attracting of private investments in offshore energy production, aquaculture, gas and oil drilling, or the still contested, deep sea mining.

1.5. International facilitating factors for MSP adoption

Being a supply-driven policy process, MSP’s adoption in Colombia is only possible because of international factors. IOC’s presence in the region and its long-lasting relationship with Colombia is a *conditio sine qua non* for the adoption. All of the identified causal mechanisms are linked to the IOC and its agency in Colombia and the region. Especially it has been shown how strong IOC’s influence is in the provision of the learning channels which allow learning to happen and the adoption to unfold. Under the causal mechanism ‘Instruction’, IOC’s direct influence was also showcased. These elements are international factors that *enable* the adoption process. But there also are international factors which exist independently from MSP, but still somehow contribute to the policy adoption indirectly, and those will be presented in this present sub-chapter.

International obligations are the ones countries has towards the international community after the signing of certain international agreements or are defined as condition that countries need to fulfill in order to enter certain international organization. Both of these cases are present in Colombia and have proven to have indirect influence in the adoption of MSP.

One of the most important international agreements that have shaped the development of the coastal and marine management is the Convention on Biological Diversity from 1991. Namely, the very first coastal and marine policy issued by the ministry of environment (PNAOCI) in Colombia is a result of the access to this Convention (I.1, 2020, Ministry of Environment). The signatories to the Convention and the Jakarta Mandate¹²⁰ committed to develop national policies for coastal zone management before the year 2000 (DNP, 2013, p.28). The establishment of the National System of Protected Areas by the Department of National Parks in Colombia is also a result of the signing of the CBD (I.6, 2021, PNN). Furthermore, the Jakarta Mandate is also important because it introduces MSP's predecessor – ICZM, to the international stage. So basically, the adoption of CBD and the Jakarta Mandate further the institutional setting for integrated marine and coastal management in Colombia. As early as 2010, with the Decision 29 of CoP X, the CBD starts referring to MSP as one of the instruments that can be applied for conservation and sustainable use of marine resources and the achievement of the Aichi targets. This has facilitated the inclusion of MSP on the national agendas of the signatory states (I.15, 2022, CPPS). Or, according to the representative of the Colombian ministry of environment, MSP getting included under the umbrella of the CBD, provides an additional incentive for countries with international commitment under this convention to also consider application of MSP (I.2, 2022).

Another facilitating factor for MSP is the conditions imposed to Colombia upon the entrance in the OECD. Although adoption of MSP is not a condition per se, the integration and harmonization of sectoral policies (PNAOCI of the ministry of environment and PNOEC of the CCO) were the main requirement (DNP, 2020, p.12). As a result of this, the latest ocean policy in Colombia - CONPES 3990 is issued by the Colombian government, and here, for the first time MSP appears on the level of policy action. CONPES 3990 is formulated to answer to OECD conditionality, and it has opened a window of opportunity for the introduction of MSP on a policy level.

Additional to international obligations are the *voluntary commitments* by the countries in the region. From some of the interviewees' statements, one could notice their intrinsic motivation and pride in taking leading roles in different areas of the international ocean agenda. The

¹²⁰ The Jakarta Mandate on Marine and Coastal Biodiversity, adopted on the CBD CoP in 1995.

representative of CCO in Colombia and the Panama ministry of environment spoke of the voluntary commitments of their countries at the UN Ocean Conference, Our Ocean Conference, the UN Ocean Decade and the SDGs. In the words of the Panama representative: “There is not an obligation in adopting MSP, the countries set their own voluntary targets to show they are leaders in the marine and coastal management” (I.17, 2022). The CCO representative showing CCO’s investment in the international ocean agenda and its early interest and recognition of MSP’s potential said that Colombia has made several voluntary commitments at the very first UN Ocean Conference in 2017 on questions on education, marine pollution, sustainable fisheries, marine research and governance, where MSP is included in the latter (I.3b, 2020).

The Colombian engagement in the UN Ocean Decade is remarkable for the region and internationally. The United Nations’ Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (2021 – 2030), whose leading institution is the IOC-UNESCO, is implemented in Colombia by the CCO. For that purpose, in 2021, CCO established an intersectoral technical committee for the ocean decade, act officially acknowledged by the executive council of the IOC-UNESCO (CCO, n.d.). Colombia, is one of the 37 countries in the world, and together with Chile and Brazil the only South American countries with established national Ocean Decade Committee (OceanDecade, n.d.). Besides the national implementation of the ocean decade, since 2020, CCO together with INVEMAR is involved in the implementation of the decade’s regional actions in the basin of the Western Tropical Atlantic, as members of the Western Tropical Atlantic Regional Planning Group (ibid.)¹²¹ Further leadership is shown in the field of harmful algal blooms (HAB), namely, Colombia is the president of the Caribbean HAB group in front of the IOC-UNESCO (I.3, 2020).

In this regard, the genuine interest of some of these institutions (or better said, the people working there) in engaging in international ocean initiatives can be a very important facilitating factor for policy adoption, especially if, as in the case of Panama and Colombia, those institutions are key actors in the marine and coastal policy realm and could, relative to other national institutions, easily influence the promulgation of such policies. If there were more such statements at the moment the interviews were conducted, one could argue that political competition as a causal mechanism may also be in place in the region, i.e., the desire to take international leading role in ocean initiatives as the guiding motivation for MSP’s adoption.

¹²¹ The Ocean Decade is present across several ocean basins through regional structures that play a key role in guiding regional activities to support the development of programmes, projects and activities that will be endorsed as “Decade Actions”. Besides the Western Tropical Atlantic, there are four more regions around the world. (UN Ocean Decade, n.d.).

II. How innovative is MSP?

The question ‘What’s new in MSP?’ was posed to the interviewees in order to be able to check for the actual *need* behind its adoption¹²². Namely, if the policy instrument is not seen as novel but is still being adopted, then some other mechanism (and not learning) is at place behind the adoption. In this regard, through the following analysis the study checks the validity of the analysis on the Causal Mechanisms. This analysis gives an insight into how MSP is perceived in Colombia and the region giving an initial impression of how it may be applied in the region in the future.

In order to analyze if and which ‘novel’ MSP elements the respondents have identified, I have used the categorization of innovations from Merrie & Olsson (2014). Namely, they study the emergence and spread of MSP from 2000 until 2010 as an innovation for stewardship of social-ecological systems. In this regard, they take three conceptualizations of innovations, namely, classical innovations, social innovations and social-ecological innovations, and identify elements of MSP that correspond to each of these three categories. By applying geospatial tools for spatial planning, MSP represents a classical innovation; by additionally considering cross-sectoral coordination and stakeholder engagement MSP classifies as social innovation; and when considering all of the above in order to maintain healthy ecosystems, MSP classifies as socio-ecological innovation (ibid.).

So, these three concepts already gave me the main categories and their definitions for the coding with QCA. I have only added the category ‘not an innovation’ to be able to check for this possibility too. Same as with the coding on the causal mechanism, I have been assigning text segments from the interviews (one sentence to one paragraph, as long as the idea stays the same) to these four categories. Table 11 contains the types of innovations I have considered (which are my categories for the QCA) whose definitions I have refined in posterior coding cycles based on the information from the coded material.

Technical innovation	Social innovation	Social–ecological innovation	Not an innovation
MSP is seen as novel because of the technical tools it provides that make the process of planning more efficient. Such are tools for	MSP is seen as novel because it puts emphasis on	MSP is seen as novel because it tries to reach a balance between	MSP is not novel but very alike ICZM or zoning but in offshore waters.

¹²² Many of the interviewees were explicitly asked this question and so their answers are being directly considered in the analysis. Some gave unspecified answer especially when the responses were sent by email so there was no opportunity for clarification and their answers were not taken into account (such are, for example, the responses from the Ecuadorian Navy, or the Maritime Authority in Panama). But in some cases, the answer to these questions was contained in the rest of the statements although the respondent was not explicitly asked to answer it. Such are, for example, one of the very first interviews with the Colombian Ministry of Environment, or the interview with INVEMAR.

better identification and analysis of spatial conflicts and incompatibilities; production of visual maps and matrices for spatial conflicts; models for creating future spatial use scenarios etc.,	multisectoral coordination.	conservation and sustainable use.	
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Table 11: Identifying elements for the four types of innovations
Own elaboration based on Merrie & Olsson (2014) and information from the interviews

In the initial coding cycle, I found that from the 23 interviews, information about the ‘novelty’ of MSP was contained in 15 of them. So, these 15 continued in the following coding cycles. In one of the later cycles, the novel elements that did not fit in any of the four categories, were categorized under “Other”. It was possible for one actor to find MSP novel in different ways. Summary of the analysis is provided in the Table 12 below, but for more details check the complete coding framework in Appendix B.4.

Actor	Technical innovation	Social innovation	Social–ecological innovation	Not an innovation	Other elements considered novel
DIMAR	✓				
INVEMAR	✓				
Min Environ. Colombia I				✓	Scheduling the use of the same space. Indicators for monitoring the territorial planning
Min Environ. Colombia II	✓	✓		✓	
National Parks				✓	
AUNAP	✓		✓		
Independent expert				✓	
Academic I				✓	
Academic II				✓	
MarViva			✓		
DIHIDRONAV Peru	✓	✓			
IMARPE Peru	✓				Cyclical approach. Indicators for territorial planning
Min Environ. Panama					Science-based neutral objective
MarViva Regional	✓	✓	✓		
CPPS Regional IO		✓	✓		Cyclical approach

Table 12. Summary of the responses ‘what’s new about MSP’ per institution

Based on the responses, MSP is mostly perceived as being innovation of a technical character. Namely, 7 interviewees have identified MSP or some of its elements as a novel, due to its technical characteristics^{123 124}; followed by the perception of not being innovative (such statements were found in 6 interviews)^{125 126 127}, followed by being a social innovation (4 interviews)^{128 129} and socio-ecological innovation (4 interviews)^{130 131}. Several interviewees have identified novel elements in MSP that cannot be classified in any of the four categorizations above, such as development of indicators for territorial planning¹³², planning in cycles¹³³,

¹²³ “We consider innovative [in MSP] what is done regarding the identification of [use] conflicts and incompatibilities and the definition and analysis of future conditions. That whole part of... the technical aspects of the matrices and the comparison in pairs and the results that come out from these analyzes when looking at incompatibilities, it seemed innovative to us and the results are quite interesting. That would be for the most part...and the [identification of] future conditions.” (I.4, 2021, DIMAR, Colombia).

¹²⁴ “Above all, [the innovative in MSP is] the way how to work and present the maps. That is very interesting, both for what the current state [of space use] is like and how it continues into the future. And how can it be presented to the interested parties so that they see that their activities are not conditioned.” (I.21, 2022, DIHIDRONAV, Peru)

¹²⁵ “I think that the methodologies [MSP and ICZM] ...well, I don't know, I mean, when I look at the ICZM everything is already there... And sometimes I think... I worry that the [MSP] approach is more sectoral, more productivist. So it sort of says “yes, we are going to increase the problems a little bit so that is why we are going to do Marine Spatial Planning.” it gives me the impression It has an extractivist cut, because “we are going to extract minerals, we are going to extract hydrocarbons, we are going to add more transportation, we are going to add such things,” and it worries me [...] In other words, we finished the continental territories, now we are going to finish the marine territory. If not used well, that could happen.” (I.5, 2021, National Parks, Colombia).

¹²⁶ “To be honest, there is little that is new [in MSP], all of these methodologies contain common elements that were introduced with the Integrated Management of Coastal Zones ICZM, such as comprehensiveness, transversality, citizen participation in decision-making among others.” (I.12, 2021, academic, Colombia).

¹²⁷ “I had that same concern, what is innovative about Marine Spatial Planning? I mean, we have been talking since 1972 about these topics, and now they show us something else that seems to be the same thing, but they tell us that it is different.” (I.14, 2021, academic, Colombia).

¹²⁸ “For me, conceptually, both instruments [MSP and ICZM] are quite complementary, almost similar. Methodologically, there are elements that are worth complementing, such as conflict analysis and the coordination between sectors, and how to create slightly stronger intersectoral processes. Those would be two of the strongest points to consider.” (I.2, 2022, Min. environment, Colombia).

¹²⁹ “Q: What is new about MSP? A: It seems to me that, perhaps it is obvious, but the fact that it [MSP] is multisectoral seems to me to be essential for it to be successful.” (I.22, 2022, MarViva Regional).

¹³⁰ “I believe that the approach [MSP] was created with the intention to coordinate the different interests and visions of the actors who have interests in the sea, as a strategy to achieve the main objective, which is to promote the conservation and sustainable use of marine and coastal resources. So, this is the intention in implementing a methodology that would allow all those people to come together to organize the human activity at sea and guarantee the sustainability of marine and coastal resources. I think it also comes from an idea of recognizing that there are no resources without people, this division between natural resources and socio-cultural systems is very artificial. So, I think that the methodology is born to put the two objectives in a joint horizon.” (I.10a, 2020, MarViva Colombia).

¹³¹ “Q: What is new about MSP? A: The inclusion of the multisectoral vision necessary to solve the problems that our countries face, as well as making visible the link between sustainability of the marine environment and economic activities.” (I.15, 2022, CPPS).

¹³² “From the beginning that we knew about this whole approach, we were very interested in the technical part because of the competence of our Institute. We were very interested in the topic of information management. How information can be used to provide indicators, to be able to form indicators that are directly applicable to the subject of decision making.” (I.20, 2022, IMARPE, Peru).

¹³³ “One of the things that mattered a lot to us from the beginning is this cyclical nature of MSP. The idea that from time to time everything should be reviewed, not only the planning, but even the information because we know that, at sea, the systems are very dynamic, the situations change from

scheduling the use of same marine space between different users¹³⁴, and science-based decision-making.¹³⁵

It is worth looking at what the main institutions that already apply MSP on a project or experimental level in Colombia think of it as an innovation. Those are, namely, INVEMAR, DIMAR and MarViva. Both, DIMAR¹³⁶ and INVEMAR¹³⁷ emphasize the potential of MSP as a technical tool, especially in the analysis of user conflicts through the use of matrices and conflict maps. On the other hand, the representatives of the NGO MarViva in Colombia¹³⁸, find it to be a social-ecological innovation through its promotion of conservation and sustainable use of resources (although the emphasis is on sustainable use), or a way to bring different actors together interested in guaranteeing the sustainability of the marine and coastal resources. This is an important finding, since it gives an idea in which direction the MSP as a nation-wide policy could develop. In this sense, the perception of DIMAR is especially relevant as it is the technical focal point for MSP in front of the IOC-UNESCO and the institution in charge of its furthering and future implementation in Colombia.

Another interesting finding is that the Colombian environmental sector (the Ministry of Environment and National Parks) and the academics and independent expert find MSP to be nothing new. All of these respondents find that MSP is nothing different from ICZM, procedurally it has the same stages with the only difference that it is applied further offshore. Some of the interviewees expressed even a concern about MSP having an 'extractivist cut'¹³⁹ or openly criticize it¹⁴⁰. The position of the Colombian Ministry of Environment is more 'hostile' in 2020 in a way that it categorically rejects MSP as an innovation¹⁴¹ although it recognizes

one year to the next. So, the issue of [reviewed] information, to introduce it into the planning is very important due to the dynamic nature [of seas]. " (I.20, 2022, IMARPE, Peru).

¹³⁴ "What was interesting, and we tried to incorporate? Regarding marine spatial planning, at least the UNESCO guide said that there were temporal regulations. [...] Our vision was a little more to delimit geographically here you can and cannot [do certain activity], and we did not see, let's say we had not contemplated the idea that one could have zones of temporalized activities." (I.1, 2020, Min. environment, Colombia).

¹³⁵ "I think it is not the innovative thing, but rather the neutral and equitable objective of MSP [that matters]. In the end, the decision that is sought to be made does have a procedure that calls on all the key actors and is based on science. And, tries to find the best answer and meeting point." (I.17, 2022, Min. Environment, Panama).

¹³⁶ See footnote 123.

¹³⁷ "[...] the analysis of overlay in [space] uses and activities, as well as generation of maps for use conflicts". (I9a, 2020, INVEMAR, Colombia).

¹³⁸ See footnote 130.

¹³⁹ See footnote 125.

¹⁴⁰ "[There is] not much new. It seems to me that there is much rhetoric in MSP. A lot of "ecosystem-based management but there should be an oil platform there" or "What can be done about the corals, it's sad. Yes, I know, I will map them there and tell you how many had died, but at least you have the oil platform." In other words, MSP does not convince me at all." (I.14, 2021, academic and coastal expert, Colombia).

¹⁴¹ "At the end, the marine spatial planning process does not go any further, it is not doing anything different from our process with the POMIUACs. Of course, one can do marine spatial planning, when

some interesting elements that can be useful, such as the developed indicators for territorial planning or the fact that the marine areas can be planned not only spatially but also temporally. After changes in the leadership at the Ministry, the second interview from 2022 shows one more 'softened' approach towards MSP, and while MSP is similar to ICZM as the main approach for the environmental territorial planning, the position is that MSP does have something innovative in terms of 'conflict analysis' (indicator for technical innovation) and the emphasis on 'stronger intersectoral processes' (indicator for social innovation)¹⁴². Interesting, but nothing surprising, is the position of INVEMAR. Although it officially belongs to the environmental sector, different from the position of the Ministry or National Parks, for example, it embraces MSP more directly. This can be contributed to its institutional independence from the Ministry especially in terms of funding, but also operationally, as well as its close relationship to the IOC-UNESCO, as it is discussed in Chapter V.

In general, except for the more elaborated statements from the environmental NGO MarViva, the perception of MSP as a socio-ecological innovation goes unnoticed. And even in their case, there is a caution of not being to conservationist, the environment does not have a priority, but a balance is looked for. This is one important indicator of how the application of MSP may evolve in the region as a public policy instrument. While on the international agenda promoted by the IOC-UNESCO and the EU, MSP is defined as a tool for ecosystem-based management, we see that in practice it is being decoupled from the ecosystem (Merrie & Olsson, 2014). Similar tendency has been confirmed in the analysis of the IOC conference reports in Chapter IV, where the narrative of MSP being efficient and good for achieving blue economy objectives overtakes the framing of MSP as an ecosystem-based management tool.

In the most environmentally friendly version of MSP in the region, namely the one from the environmental NGO MarViva, the word is of 'conservation and sustainable use'. Now, there is nothing wrong with this narrative as long as the maintaining of the ecosystem structure and function stays nevertheless the main priority, as a true ecosystem-based approach demands (Merrie & Olsson, 2014). Namely, one needs to firstly conserve to be able to sustainably use. The Colombian MarViva representative chose their words carefully in order to not be interpreted as 'conservationist', saying that 'there are no resources without people' (I.10a, 2020). The regional representative of MarViva swings the pendulum even further away from conservation by saying that the value of MSP is that it offers a 'vision which is not too extractivist nor too conservationist, it is something in-between', or, that it tries to 'maximize

one sees it, in slightly deeper waters [...]. But the procedure should be the same. A process of diagnosis, characterization, zoning, and management measures to achieve a proper territorial planning." (I.1, 2020, Min. Environment, Colombia).

¹⁴² See footnote 128.

production and minimize environmental risk, combining both things' (I.22, 2022). The CPPS representative finds that MSP makes the connection between the sustainability of the marine environment and the economic activities visible (I.15, 2022). The two final statements align with the MSP – good for business narrative elaborated in the Chapter IV.

In sum, according to the responses from the interviews, while the social and environmental elements of the territorial planning with MSP get diluted, in the forefront comes the technical element of MSP which mostly contributes to its perception as a novel policy solution. The main leading actors in MSP adoption in Colombia have this perception. Slightly less frequent but as important is the fact that MSP is also perceived as a 'new name for an existing idea'. The latter is interestingly coming from actors belonging to the Colombian environmental sector and academia.

Relevant for the confirmation or refusal of the finding that 'learning' is the leading causal mechanism is the number of actors that find MSP to be novel or have some novel elements. In this regard, from the 15 interviewees that have provided elements to answer this question, 11 find it to be an innovation (any of the three types), whereas four do not find anything novel about it. If the majority of respondents perceive it as innovative in some way, it indicates that 'learning' has occurred, enabling them to recognize the potential of these novel elements in addressing existing problems. Furthermore, not only are these four opinions outnumbered, but most of them also come from the academia, whose impact over the MSP adoption process is not as relevant. Unless it addresses a politically salient issue (implying the existence of a public debate about certain policy), the adoption of a novel policy would most of the times be a matter of bureaucratic decision-making involving power struggles between and within the public institutions.

III. Quick Take

The analysis has shown which causal mechanisms are present behind the MSP adoption in Colombia. Learning about MSP's outcome, process and its institutional impacts have been the main reason for the policy transfer process. Learning about MSP's outcome and its institutional impact are the most frequent learning objectives. Considering how new MSP is on the world stage, learning about its outcome and institutional impact could have happened predominantly through narratives and not through experiences of other countries. Learning happens through several channels, all of them linked to the IOC-UNESCO as the supplier of the policy. Besides being the policy supplier and promoter, IOC also gives instructions related to MSP's setting and adoption on national level. In this regard, the international factors have been the *enablers* and *facilitators* of the policy transfer. The analysis on the innovativeness of

MSP has shown that large majority of the respondents find MSP to be an innovation of some kind or to have some innovative elements, confirming that (positive) learning has to have happened in the transfer process.

CHAPTER VII: MSP’S “DOMESTICATION” IN COLOMBIA

I. Analyzing the policy content of MSP in Colombia

This chapter covers another element of the policy transfer theory, namely transfer content and contributes to the further understanding of the different adaptations of MSP and their implications for the future management of coastal and marine areas. Transfer content deals with the identification of the policy elements that are being transferred (and adopted) in a policy transfer process. In this chapter I am analyzing the adopted MSP elements by the three institutions that are applying MSP in some form in Colombia. Since this is IO-to-country transfer, I take the version of MSP published by the IOC-UNESCO (Ehler & Douvère, 2009) as the original one and check for the elements that are being adopted (or not) by the three institutions that apply the MSP methodology on Colombian ground. This part of the analysis contributes to the better understanding of the influence of the nature of the adopting institution over the content of the adopted item.

The information for this part of the analysis has been acquired through several different sources and in several steps. Firstly, I have firstly conducted a qualitative content analysis (QCA) of selected publications. Second, using the findings of the QCA, I have broadened the analysis with other publications from these institutions and with information from the interviews (especially the answer to the question: “What does your organization adopt from MSP?”) (see Table 13).

Invemar	<i>Planificación espacial marina para la zona costera de Nariño: análisis e identificación de conflictos, 2018</i> (INVEMAR, 2018) (analyzed with MAXQDA)
	<i>Planificación espacial marina para la zona costera del Cauca, 2017</i> (INVEMAR, 2017)
	<i>Planificación espacial marina para la zona costera del Magdalena, 2016</i> (INVEMAR, 2016)
	Information from the interview with Invemar
MarViva	<i>Atlas Marino-Costero del Bajo Baudó, Colombia 2019</i> (MarViva, 2019) (analyzed with MAXQDA)
	<i>Rutas de participación para la construcción de un esquema de gobernanza local: DRMI Encanto de los Manglares del Bajo Baudó, Colombia, 2020</i> (MarViva, 2020)
	Information from the interview with MarViva
Dimar	<i>Ordenamiento Marino Costero: Visión de Autoridad Marítima. Caso Departamento de Bolívar, Colombia, 2021</i> (Afanador Franco et al., 2021)(analyzed with MAXQDA)
	<i>Zonificación de actividades marítimas bajo escenarios de desarrollo futuro en los departamentos de Bolívar, Sucre y Córdoba, Colombia, 2023</i> (Afanador Franco et al., 2023)
	Information from the interview with Dimar

Table 13. Analyzed sources to determine MSP’s ‘localization’ in Colombia

In the first step, for the QCA, I have selected three publications, which I coded as one set. There is one publication from each institution where they document their application of MSP in a specific case-study¹⁴³. All of the publications refer to IOC-UNESCO's MSP approach as the methodology they rely on when developing their own approach.

In structuring the QCA coding frame, I used the main MSP stages and elements predicted in the IOC-UNESCO step-by-step guidebook for MSP's implementation¹⁴⁴. These MSP stages/elements were my main given categories (deductive approach). I have been assigning text segments (from one sentence to one paragraph, if the idea stays the same) and figures (e.g. maps) from the three documents to these respective categories. Each of these categories are further divided into sub-codes (see Appendix B.5 for more details on the coding framework) reflecting the different steps within each MSP stage. In order to determine not only presence but also absence of certain steps, some sub-codes were left in the framework although they did not get any segments assigned. In this way, I was able to not only systematically compare the three approaches with the MSP guidebook, but also to each other and eventually check for any missing elements that are not being adopted.

Figure 10 shows the coding frame with the main categories and the number of the document segments that have been assigned to each category (for the complete coding framework, see Appendix B.5). Table 14 below presents the definition of each category adapted from the IOC's MSP guide.

 Code System	410
 Pre-planning	28
 Baseline status	288
 Future trends and scenarios	14
 Plan development and implementation	26
 Stakeholder participation	12
 Institutional integration	21
 Miscellaneous	21

Figure 10: Coding framework for Transfer Content (main categories and assigned segments)

¹⁴³ For determining MarViva's MSP approach, I take the Atlas Marino-Costero del Bajo Baudó, where they document their MSP approach in the process of the establishment of the management plan for the regional district for integrated management – Distrito Regional de Manejo Integrado del Bajo Baudó, Chocó. For Invemar's approach I take their publication Planificación espacial marina para la zona costera de Nariño: análisis e identificación de conflictos, where they document their approach applied in the department of Nariño. And for Dimar, I took the publication Coastal Marine Planning: Vision of the Maritime Authority, Case of the Department of Bolivar, Colombia.

¹⁴⁴ The main stages and elements were taken from the 2009 Step-by-step Guidebook (Ehler & Douvere, 2009).

“Pre-planning”	This category incorporates the following steps from the MSP process: Establishment of MSP Authority, Financial considerations for the MSP process, Main principles and goals of the MSP process, Definition of SMART objectives, Geographic boundaries and time period where the MSP planning will take place, Setting of work plan and team, and Communication regarding the intended MSP.
“Baseline status”	This category refers to the MSP stage where the present conditions of the area under analysis are considered: Socio-cultural context in the management area, Environmental context in the management area, Considerations about climate change impacts and environmental degradation in the area, Current maritime sectors and human uses of the management area, and Current conflicts/compatibilities between the different uses and between uses and the environment.
“Future trends and scenarios”	This category refers to the MSP stage where the future conditions of the area under analysis are considered: New demands for space under Business-as-Usual (BaU) scenario, Alternative scenarios for the area (not under BaU) and Selected scenario in the process.
“Plan development and implementation”	This category integrates the following MSP steps: Development and approval process of the MSP plan, Measures for its implementation such as zoning measures but also different input, output and process measures and financial incentives, Institutional arrangements for the implementation of the plan, Monitoring and evaluation of the plan, and Adaptive management by including the results of the evaluation in the next MSP planning cycle.
“Stakeholder participation”	This category is cross-cutting across the whole MSP process and considers the identification of (relevant) stakeholders, as well as ways of involving those stakeholders in the MSP process.
“Institutional integration”	This category is cross-cutting across the whole MSP process and considers the intersectoral coordination between institutions and with other existing planning instruments in the MSP process.
“Miscellaneous”	This category includes text segments that were not relevant for this analysis, such as technical information regarding the data collection process, or general introduction to the methodology.

Table 14: Definition of the main categories

As evident from Figure 10, the category “Baseline status” is the most frequent one in the coding framework with 288 segments assigned to it. Figure 11 below visualizes the distribution of the main categories in the three documents and showcases that “Baseline status” (color yellow) is the most represented in all three documents.

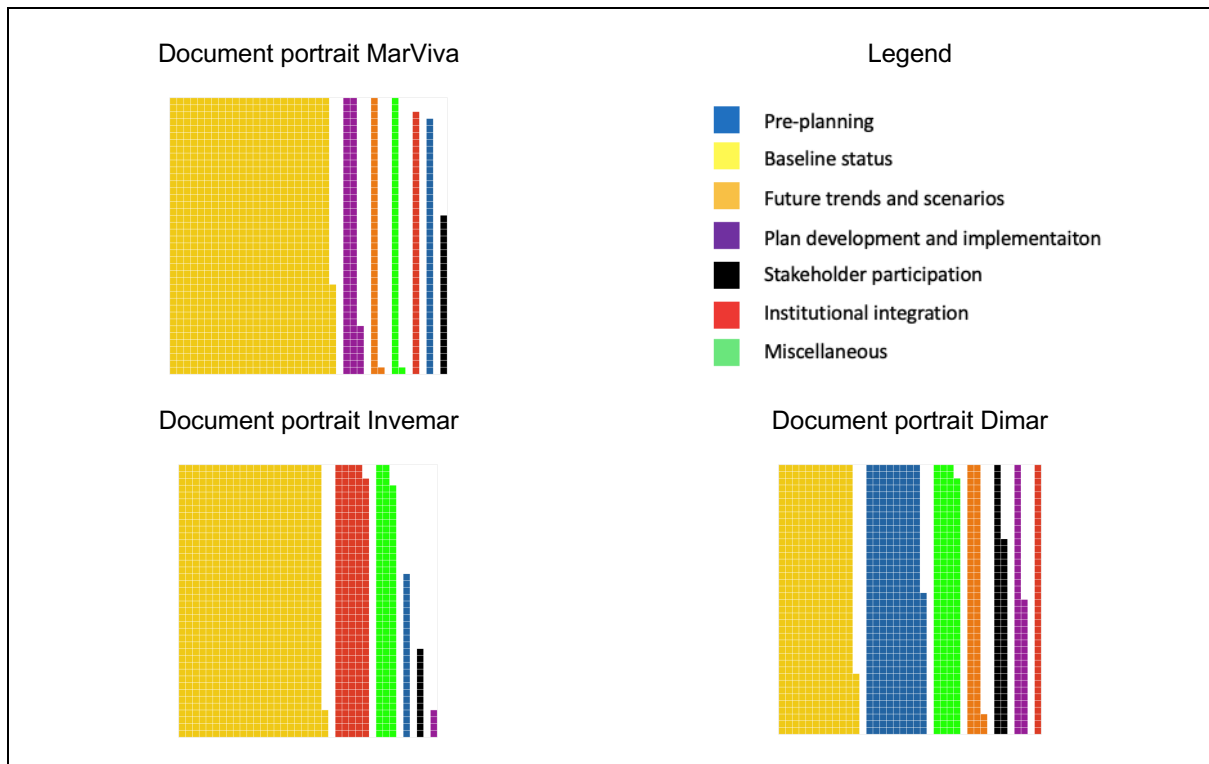


Figure 11: Document portraits with main categories

Firstly, since “Baseline status” (color yellow in Figure 11) is quite relevant, it is worth looking into its sub-categories and their distribution across the three documents more thoroughly. The visual representation of this is Figure 12.

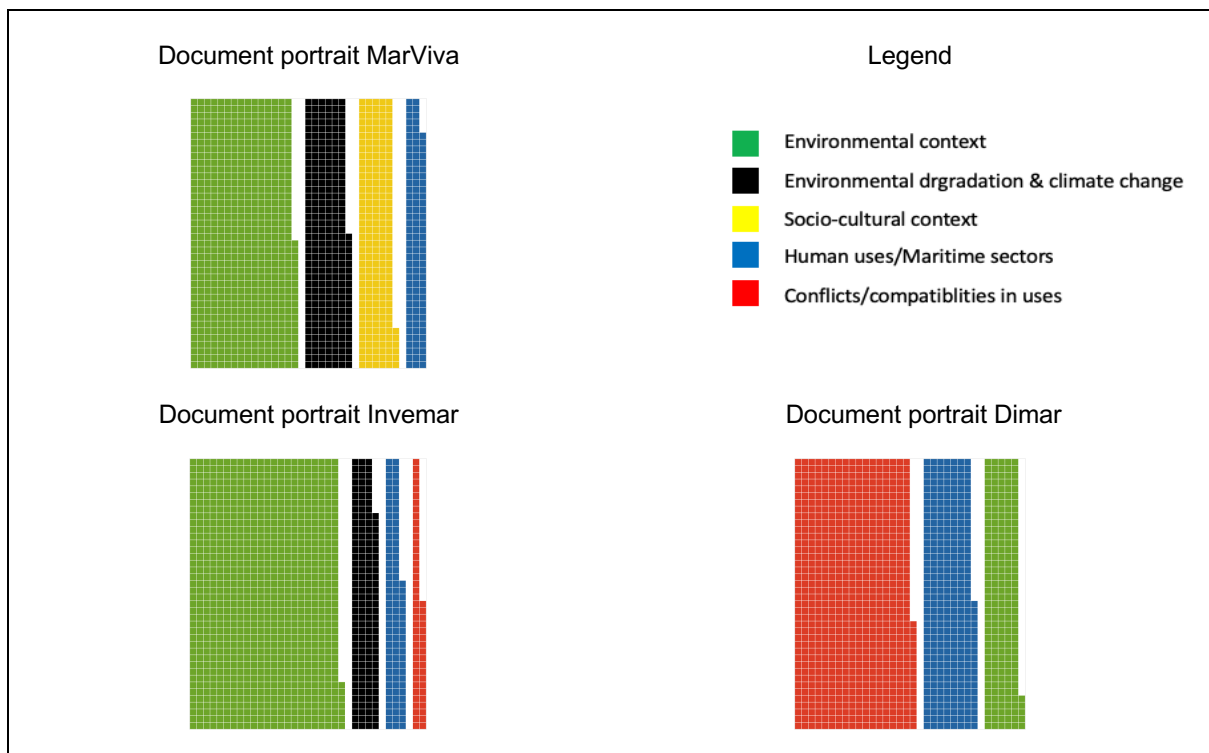


Figure 12: Document portraits for the category “Baseline status” through its five sub-codes

Figure 12 points to several tendencies:

- Environmental context (color green) is the most representative sub-category under 'Baseline status'. While all documents include 'environmental context', the representation of it is way lower in the case of Dimar. This sub-category refers to descriptions about the current status of the ecological, environmental and oceanographic features of the area under analysis¹⁴⁵ including ecosystem services¹⁴⁶.
- Dimar's publication does not include considerations about existing environmental degradation or climate change impact (color black). While MarViva and Invemar both consider the former¹⁴⁷, the climate change impact is only discussed by MarViva¹⁴⁸.
- Considerations about socio-cultural context (color yellow) is only present in MarViva. This encapsulates identifying, understanding and analysing existing social conditions, including cultural aspects¹⁴⁹ and human well-being¹⁵⁰. These aspects are usually not spatially representable or, if so, only through social landscape maps or seascape maps.
- Discussions about existing human uses and/or maritime sectors (color blue) are made in all three documents, but the emphasis in Dimar's approach to this is bigger¹⁵¹.

¹⁴⁵ "[...] the Bajo Baudó coast is located in the warm super humid climatic region, with rainfall between 6000 and 7500 millimeters (mm) annually and average temperatures between 24 and 26 degrees Celsius (°C)". (MarViva, 2019), or "The average temperature of ocean surface waters in this region [Nariño] is around 26.5°C and in coastal waters a little higher, around 27.7°C" (Invemar, 2018), or "The Colombian Caribbean is characterized by having a compressional tectonic environment due to the interaction between the South American, Caribbean and Nazca plates" (Afanador Franco et al., 2021).

¹⁴⁶ "Mangroves are considered strategic because they constitute one of the ecosystems with the highest known biological productivity. Mangrove forests serve as shelter, food, and nesting for birds, reptiles, mammals, amphibians, fish, and invertebrates, and have a high ecological and economic value, since they act as nurseries for many fish and shellfish." (MarViva, 2019).

¹⁴⁷ "According to the Red Book of Plants Colombia, the nato (*M. oleifera*) presents an alarming case, since nearly 60% of its population is decimated because of the strong timber harvesting, putting the species in danger of extinction" (MarViva, 2019, p.79). or "[...] the results show that water quality is affected by changes in the rainfall regime and the tide. During the sampling carried out in November 2015, the water quality was found to be between acceptable and inadequate, due to high concentrations of total suspended solids (TSS) [...]" (Invemar, 2018, p.19).

¹⁴⁸ "Bajo Baudó would be one of the most affected municipalities since its coast is not very high, it has low-slope beaches, barrier islands and mangroves associated with intertidal flats. This increase would affect directly human settlements, since many of them would be flooded by the year 2100" (MarViva, 2019, p.48).

¹⁴⁹ "The Bajo Baudó coastline is inhabited mainly by Afro-descendant communities organized in collective territories and is one of the municipalities with the most community councils in the Chocóan Pacific" (MarViva, 2019, p.126).

¹⁵⁰ "Currently, the coastal areas of the municipality are mostly populated by Afro-descendant communities, surrounded by multiple indigenous reservations, so some interethnic conflicts are still present. Both populations face every day the challenges of globalization, environmental sustainability and challenges that the relationship and dialogue with other actors that arrive in the area." (MarViva, 2019, p.133).

¹⁵¹ "The economy of these communities is mainly extractive, with fishing being the main productive activity, with an emphasis on shrimps, white fish and piangua extraction" (Invemar, 2018, p.28), or, "Regarding fishing effort (number of monitored operations), from a total of 4,077 operations, each with an average duration of one day, with a total of 1,004, Pizarro was the site from which the largest number of operations were carried out [...]" (MarViva, 2019, p.164), or, "Based on the information on

- Dimar’s approach overwhelmingly focuses on the analysis of conflicts and/or compatibilities among uses/sectors¹⁵² (color red). This element is also somewhat present in Invemar’s approach, and both, Dimar and Invemar tend to use the MSP-typical matrix for the presentation of the conflicts and compatibilities between uses. Explicit analysis of conflicts/compatibilities between uses is absent in the case of MarViva. Figure 13 depicts these tendencies distinguishing them by relevance:

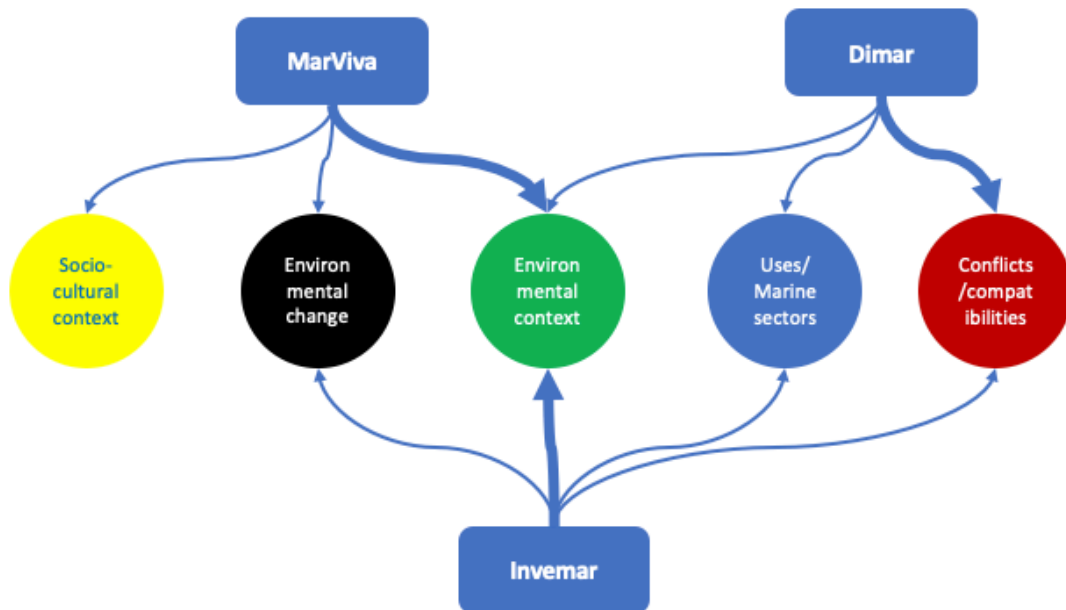


Figure 13: Aspects of higher and lesser importance in the MSP stage ‘Baseline status’ per institution

To check for these tendencies, as well as to provide additional information for the treatment of the other MSP elements and MSP stages (except for ‘Baseline status’) additional sources were considered (Table 2 above), including information from the interviews. Publications were selected that document the application of MSP in practice¹⁵³.

Taking these results from the QCA, I then considered additional publications and information from the interviews (see Table 13) to refine my findings. In this way, I was able to better determine the tendencies regarding the other MSP stages and MSP elements (not only the Baseline status):

uses/activities obtained from different sources, 41 uses were organized into 12 categories of maritime activities [...]” (Afanador Franco et al., 2021, p.12).

¹⁵² “As a result of this process, it was identified that submarine cables, conservation sites, the marine protected area-ARSB, the low tides, the tourist activities and the beaches, are the uses/activities that presented the greatest number of overlaps and conflicts in the marine-coastal zone of the department of Bolívar” (Afanador Franco et al., 2021, p.17).

¹⁵³ The two publications of Dimar refer to one same case study (department of Bolivar), as is the case with Marviva (Bajo Baudó, department of Chocó). Each one of Invemar’s publications deal with separate case studies (department of Cauca and department of Nariño).

“Pre-planning” is a stage in the MSP process that includes all the necessary preparations for the start of the MSP process itself (see Table 14 for better description). In general, Invemar’s and Dimar’s approach do not consider most of the elements in this stage in their approach, except for the definition of the general goal of their approach, as well as the identification of the geographic boundaries of the area under analysis. Regarding their goals, they both similarly focus on the spatialization and analysis of use-use or use-environment conflicts and compatibilities, with the difference that Dimar further develops models for allocation of future uses¹⁵⁴. Invemar on the other hand, emphasizes additionally that the purpose of their approach is to complement existing ICZM practices for better management of the already identified environmental coastal units.¹⁵⁵ The goal of MarViva’s approach is to enable sustainable practices for joint management of the marine protected area with the involvement of the different actors and sectors in the area, especially emphasizing the involvement of the local communities.¹⁵⁶

Unlike Dimar and Invemar, MarViva also elaborates on the financial sustainability of the MSP process, develops detailed working plan and defines measurable objectives with indicators (MarViva, 2020). Regarding the establishment of MSP planning/implementing authority, none of the institutions identifies explicitly one entity with this role. In the case of MarViva the planning and implementation of the management plan is envisioned as a participatory endeavor under the coordination of MarViva. Invemar’s MSP exercise is more of an experimental nature whose outcome is meant to serve as an information for decision-makers (such as the ministry of environment and the regional authorities), if and when they need it (I.9, 2020). In this regard Invemar does not perceive itself or acts as an authority. Dimar is the only institution that explicitly draws on its authority as national maritime directorate responsible to execute the national maritime policy when it applies the MSP methodology in the selected case-studies (Afanador Franco et al., 2023; I.4, 2021).

¹⁵⁴ “The General Maritime Directorate (DIMAR), from the Caribbean Oceanographic and Hydrographic Research Center (CIOH), established the Coastal Marine Planning methodology [or MSP], with the Vision of Maritime Authority (OMC:VAM) with the objective to analyze and assign temporal and spatial distributions of human activities in jurisdictional waters and Colombian coastal areas, in search of achieving the consolidation of the country as a bi-oceanic power, under a holistic approach and comprehensive maritime, river and port security; as well as, guaranteeing the ecological, economic and social principles.” (Afanador Franco et al., 2021, p. 4).

¹⁵⁵ “[MSP contributes to] the spatialization and definition of use conflicts that arise in the sea and in this way, it seeks to minimize them and complement the planning exercises of the coastal marine zone of the department.” (Invemar, 2018, p.10). Or ‘The MSP for the UACLLAS marine area in the department of Cauca contributes to the POMIUAC formulation process in this area and helps minimize use conflicts that arise at sea. (Invemar, 2017).

¹⁵⁶ “With the purpose of guaranteeing the creation of responsible harvesting practices and ensuring optimal functioning of the protected area, the need arises to build a Joint Management Scheme that links all actors and especially the communities in the decision-making processes on the DRMI.” (MarViva, 2019).

While “Baseline status” focuses on the current conditions in the marine area, “Future trends and scenarios” is a stage that focuses on the future planning of the area considering new demands for space and developing different scenarios. Elements of planning for the future are present in the cases of both Dimar¹⁵⁷ and Invemar. MarViva in its 2019 publication proposes a single strategy for future development of the management area¹⁵⁸ but does not propose different scenarios in the spirit of MSP or considers future tendencies in demands for space. Invemar, as well, does not involve calculations or exact predictions of future demands for marine space and resources. The development of future scenarios, when present, are held on a rather conceptual level (case Cauca)¹⁵⁹, or one scenario is developed as the optimal one (case Magdalena). Dimar’s approach, on the other hand, involves precise calculations of future demands for space and space distribution. First and foremost, efficiency and effectiveness criteria, but also technical and ecological criteria are considered when suggesting certain scenario¹⁶⁰.

“Plan development and implementation” is the final stage of the MSP process (see Table 14). From the three institutions, only MarViva has actually reached the stage of developing a management plan with the application of the MSP methodology¹⁶¹. Invemar reaches the stage of conducting an analysis of conflicts/compatibilities of existing uses and occasionally does conceptual development of future scenarios. Dimar goes one step further proposing future development scenarios and suggesting the optimal one based on given criteria.

This category involves the proposal of certain measures in order to operationalize MSP. In this regard, all three institutions involve the MSP-typical zoning measures with maps designating zones where human activities can occur¹⁶². According to the IOC-UNESCO guide

¹⁵⁷ “Co-location analysis allows identifying the most suitable location for future uses in areas where activities are already carried out, analyzing compatibility and incompatibility criteria with the purpose of reducing conflicts to the lowest level possible” (Afanador Franco et al., 2021, p.9).

¹⁵⁸ “The marine-coastal area of Bajo Baudó is one of the best conserved areas in the country, which gives it a high potential for community ecotourism. This can become a possible strategy for the conservation of biodiversity and its associated resources, contribute to the maintenance of ecosystems, promote the consolidation of the protected area, favor ecological processes, preserve cultural practices and promote sustainable development opportunities for the municipality [...]” (MarViva, 2019, p.166).

¹⁵⁹ “Theoretically, an analysis of the main activities carried out was carried out and 5 sectoral scenarios were generated: sea dedicated to fishing, tourism, mining exploration, transportation and mobility or conservation.” (Invemar, 2017, Cauca).

¹⁶⁰ For example, in the case study in the analyzed publications (Bolívar, Sucre and Córdoba departments), aquaculture as maritime sector is prioritized compared to offshore wind energy and underwater cables as the former is not compatible with the other two. Aquaculture is prioritized considering the growth potential and representativeness of this maritime sector in the analyzed area (Afanador et al., 2023).

¹⁶¹ The management plan has not been officially legalized by the regional government of Chocó yet, but since it is built with the participation of all concerned stakeholders, its implementation is still expected to unfold. (I.10, 2020).

¹⁶² “Based on the analysis of the previous information and by using GIS tools, zones free of uses and free of conflicts were defined and calculated representing areas in which future uses/activities could be developed. (Afanador Franco et al., 2021, p.23-24).

zoning measures have to be complemented with other measures in order to be implemented and complied with (Ehler & Douvère, 2009). In this case, only MarViva includes not only zoning but non-spatial measures too¹⁶³.

Additional steps, part of Plan development and implementation, recommended in the IOC guide such as considerations about compliance with the plan, monitoring and evaluation of the plan and of the approach, adaptive management considerations or mention of institutional arrangements relevant for the implementation of the plan, are only present in the case of MarViva (MarViva, 2020). See Figure 14 for visual representation of the reached MSP stage of the three institutions as well as Figure 15 for the MSP stage on which their approach mostly focuses on.

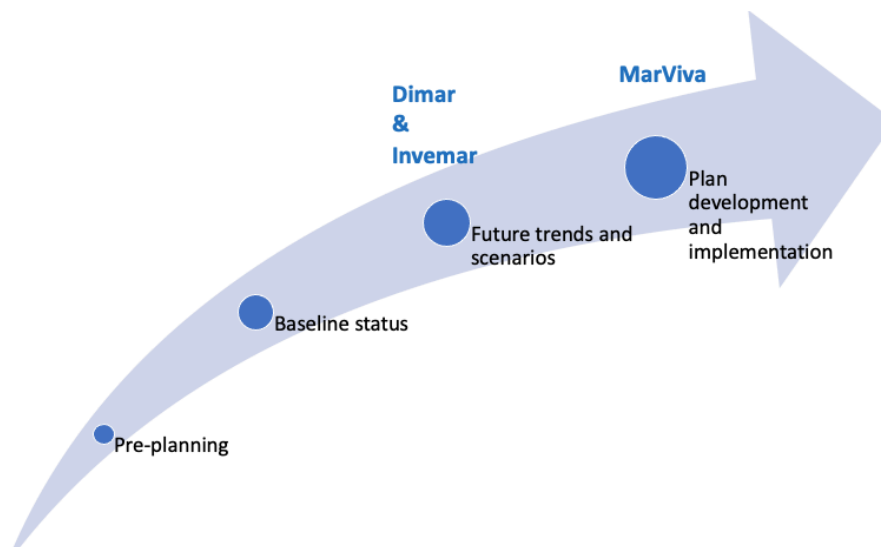


Figure 14: Reached stage from the MSP process in the application of the MSP methodology per institution

¹⁶³ “It is necessary, to preserve the health of this ecosystem, to adopt responsible fishing practices, among which we should mention: avoiding the use of poorly selective gear, incidental mortality of species, pollution and ghost fishing, the latter defined as those fishing gear abandoned in the environment, which continues to trap and kill fish and other animals” (Marviva, 2019, p. 85)

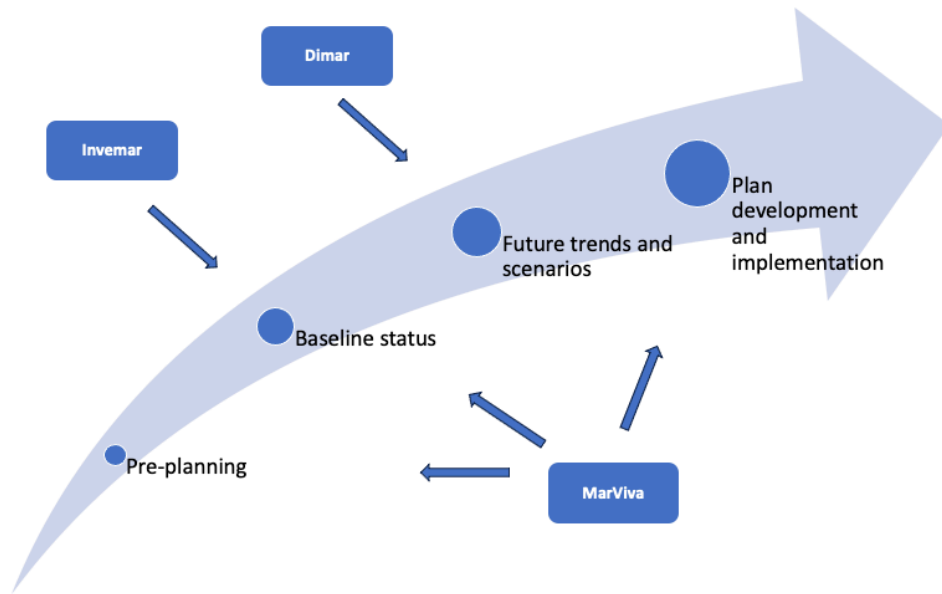


Figure 15: MSP stage of special attention in the application of the MSP methodology per institution

‘Stakeholder participation’ is a category present in all three cases. This is a cross-cutting element that lies at the core of the MSP process as a whole (see identified MSP narratives in Chapter IV). Stakeholder participation is further defined through two sub-categories. One, ‘mapping of actors’ is the stage at the beginning of the MSP process that involves identifying the stakeholders that are present in the area, which are or may be concerned with the MSP process¹⁶⁴. Except in the case of MarViva where the mapping of actors is done through participatory methods, Invemar and Dimar identify the stakeholders in less participatory processes, based on the existing activities in the area known to them (Afanador Franco et al., 2021; Invemar, 2016 & 2017; I.9, 2020). Dimar furthermore, speaks of primary and secondary stakeholders¹⁶⁵, approach that intends to make MSP as efficient as possible (see discussion in Chapters IV and VIII). The second sub-category identifies ‘how and when’ to involve the identified stakeholders in the process. In this case, only MarViva speaks of participatory approaches¹⁶⁶ that involve the stakeholders on an equal footing through a so called ‘horizontal

¹⁶⁴ “The identification of actors is a diagnostic tool that allows analyzing how interaction is taking place between the different actors involved in a given matter. However, more than a general identification, it includes the identification of the function of the different actors, their representatives, their legal nature, the sectoral activities that take place in the area and the associations the different actors have.” (Invemar, 2018, p. 13)

¹⁶⁵ “The actors related to maritime activities were classified as primary, which are those that directly take advantage of the resource and contribute to the conflict, and secondary actors, which are the state entities that control the uses developed in marine, coastal and island spaces” (Afanador Franco et al., 2021, p. 7)

¹⁶⁶ “Through participatory research, knowledge dialogues, meetings to build agreements and spaces for decision-making, strategic actors and conflicts were identified.” (Marviva, 2019, p. 162)

integration'¹⁶⁷, thus integrating first and foremost the local communities in every stage of the MSP process¹⁶⁸. Dimar speaks of involvement of “experts’ judgement” in the process of analysis of conflicts/compatibilities, but the involvement of the other stakeholders stays at the vertical level: “the stakeholders will be informed about the results so they can get to know the approach and give their ideas to strengthen it” (Afanador Franco et al., 2021, p.12). Invemar similarly mentions involving communities and stakeholders in order to inform them about the ongoing activities, receive information from them needed for the analysis of conflict and compatibilities, and present them the results from the process (Invemar, 2017; I.9, 2020), holding elements from both horizontal and vertical level of stakeholder interaction but without considerations of involvement of all concerned parties¹⁶⁹.

‘Institutional integration’ is another cross-cutting element of the MSP process whose main premise is that inter-sectoral coordination in the MSP decision-making process is *conditio sine qua non*. It involves discussions about coordination in the implementation of MSP with other relevant institutions and instruments present in the management area. This category is strong in the case of Invemar starting from the definition of their MSP goal. Contributing towards existing planning instruments in the marine area (ICZM), for better management of the already established environmental coastal units (UACs) and their management plans (POMIUACs), is always an element of the main MSP objective in Invemar’s cases (Invemar, 2016, 2017 & 2018)¹⁷⁰. During the interviews, it was reiterated many times that the MSP activities of Invemar are not supposed to lead to a new management plan but support existing ones, namely the POMIUACs (I.9, 2020). In two of the three publications Invemar extensively elaborates the similarities between the two methodologies MSP and ICZM before continuing to the documentation of its MSP approach, emphasizing the complementary nature of their MSP approach to the existing ICZM one (Invemar, 2016 & 2017). In this regard, when applying the MSP approach, the accent is on the cooperation with other entities belonging to the

¹⁶⁷ There are two ways in which stakeholders may be involved in different stages of the process: Vertical (Communication, Information, and Consultation), and Horizontal (Dialogue, Concertation, Negotiation). Adapted from Bouamrame M. (2006) in Step-by-Step MSP Guide (Ehler & Douvere, 2009).

¹⁶⁸ The involvement of local communities is present at every stage: starting with the data collection to determine the baseline conditions of the area done through participative research methods, the identifications of stakeholders which is done together with the communities through focus group discussions, the management plan of the area consists of agreements of conduct between the different resource users and so its development is not possible without the involvement of all concerned parties, the compliance, as well as monitoring and evaluation of the plan is also developed with and relies on the involvement of all concerned parties (MarViva, 2020).

¹⁶⁹ According to the interview with Invemar, depending on the funds available for the project, sometimes there are several meetings with the stakeholders where also the analysis and maps are being crosschecked but sometimes the stakeholders are just being informed about the results (I.9, 2020).

¹⁷⁰ “Taking into account that in the marine zone of the environmental coastal unit UACLLAS in the department of Nariño, several problems associated with the extraction of marine resources exist, it is good to be able to contribute with the MSP approach to the spatialization and definition of use conflicts that arise in the sea and in this way minimize them and e complemented with the activities of the [existing] planning of the coastal marine zone of the department.” (Invemar, 2018., p. 10)

environmental sector (intra-sectoral coordination), such as the ministry of environment, the regional environmental authorities and the department of national parks. MarViva also explicitly acknowledges the relevance of the existing marine planning activities¹⁷¹. MarViva's approach, however, in a way builds new institutions by bringing together different sectors in different settings (such as implementation committees or decision-making board for the management of the protected area) enabling the inter-sectoral and multi-level planning and management of the protected area (MarViva, 2020). In the case of Dimar, the category of institutional coordination is underrepresented.

II. The three 'domestications' of MSP in Colombia

The comparative analysis has shown that the three different institutions adopt different elements from MSP. It also shows that some adaptations involve more MSP stages and MSP elements (MarViva) whereas others focus on fewer of those (Invemar and Dimar). In this regard, instead of one 'localization' of MSP, following the terminology of Acharya (2012)'s study on the local adaptation of new norms, we face three different 'localizations' of MSP in this case. Table 15 presents the difference between the three approaches in terms of their, defined goal, practical focus, and area of application, whereas Figure 16 shows additional differences in intensity in several dimensions.

	MarViva	Invemar	Dimar
Main focus	Participatory management with local communities	Analysis of <i>existing</i> conflicts/compatibilities between marine uses	Analysis and redistribution of <i>existing and future</i> maritime uses
Goal	Sustainable use of marine resources	Complementing marine planning instruments in place	Allocate space for competing maritime activities and further the development of relevant maritime sectors
Area of application	Marine Protected Area	Coastal zone of different 'departamentos' (up until 12 nm)	Coastal and offshore area of different 'departamentos' (up until 200 nm)

Table 15. Main differences between the three MSP adaptations

¹⁷¹ "[This publication] seeks to be a contribution both to the dissemination and implementation of the process of Marine Spatial Planning and the planning for the Integrated Management of Coastal Zones (ICZM) in the country." (Marviva, 2019, p. 13)

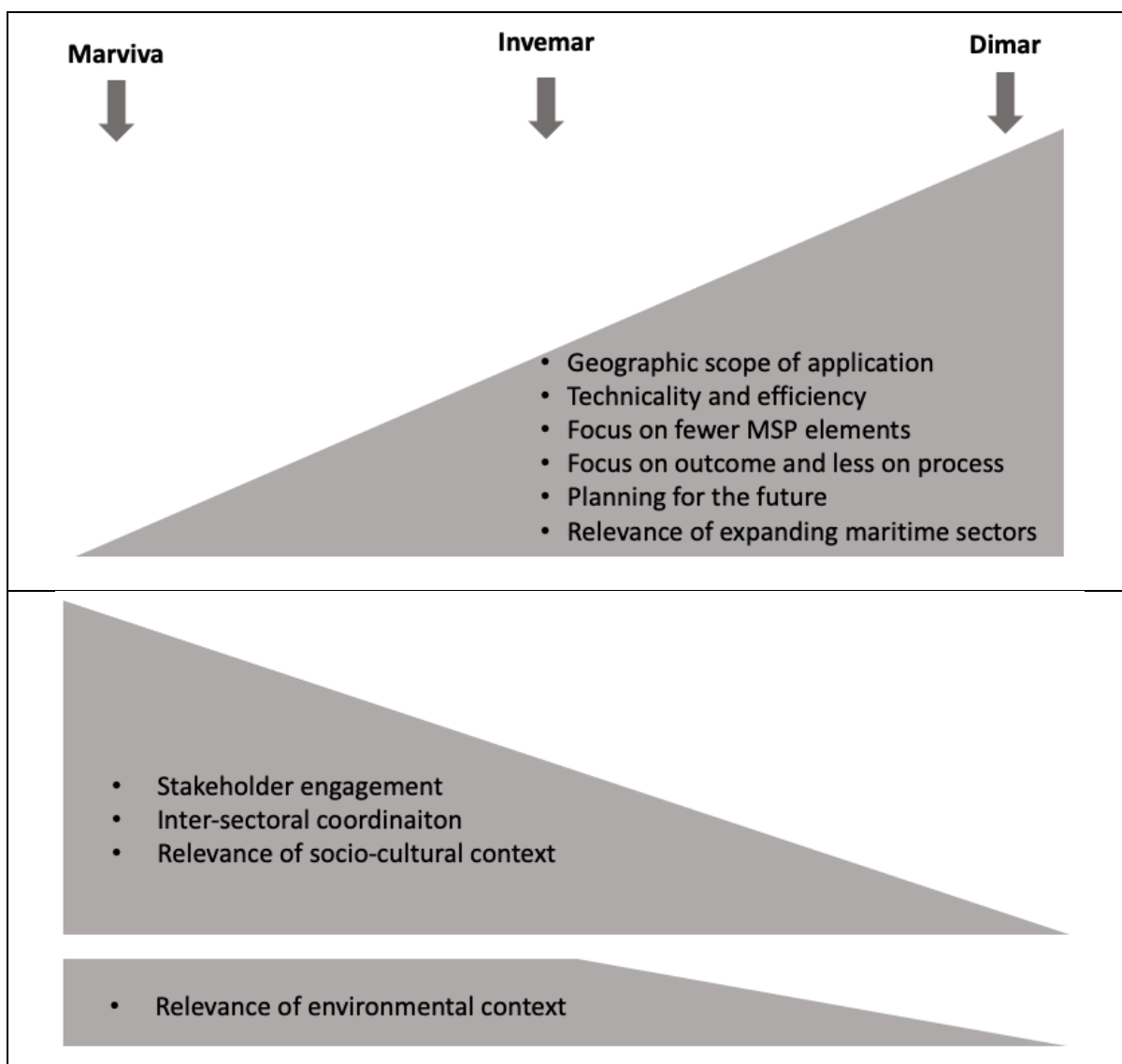


Figure 16. Increasing and decreasing tendencies in comparison

From Figure 16 one can see that with the increase of the geographic scope of MSP application, the technicality and the efficiency of the approach also increase, while, somewhat expectedly, the stakeholder engagement and inter-sectoral coordination decrease. Under the similar logic, the approach focuses less on the ‘How’ and ‘With Whom’ or ‘Under what conditions’ the process unfolds but on the outcome. Another important observation from Figure 16 is that the increased focus on few MSP elements, such as planning for future maritime activities takes the attention away from pressing socio-cultural and environmental concerns. And of course, the less stakeholders are involved in the process to increase efficiency, the ‘blinder’ MSP will stay to these concerns. Exactly this concern was made explicit in the interviews. Namely, Dimar’s capacity to coordinate with more sectors in the process or to show due attention to

the environmental component was put under question (I.9, 2020 Invemar; I.2, 2022 Ministry of Environment).

The different adaptations depend predominantly on the function of each of these institutions and their institutional capacities which together determine the purpose and nature of the adopted MSP. This will be elaborated briefly below by discussing the different MSP-types arising from each adaptation.

II.1. MSP as a participatory management methodology

MarViva is an environmental NGO, active in several countries in the South-East Pacific, in Colombia especially present in the department of Chocó. MarViva has applied the MSP approach in order to support local communities in the creation of 'marine protected area with sustainable use of natural resources'¹⁷² (Marviva, 2020). An important component of MarViva's approach is the balance between conservation and sustainable use of the management area, as well as the involvement of the local ethnic communities through their community councils from the earliest stages and throughout the whole process in order to ensure compliance and sustainability (I.10, 2020; MarViva, 2020). Working locally for many years now with social and political actors in the department of Chocó, has enabled them to successfully apply the MSP approach with special attention to the understanding of the environmental, social and cultural context of the area, as well as the importance of the participatory component. The two main conflicting activities in the management area are the artisanal and industrial fishery, as well as the conflict of these with conservation objects and sites. Considering that the situation is relatively 'simple' considering the few main conflicting sectors, there is not much emphasis on analysis of conflicts and compatibilities between uses, or prediction of future trends and scenarios in the spirit of IOC-UNESCO's MSP. This is also owed to the size of the geographic area under management (as compared to the other two approaches). MarViva's adaptation of MSP can thus shortly be described as a methodology for participatory management.

¹⁷² DRMI EMBB or Distrito Regional de Manejo Integrado Encanto de los Manglares de Bajo Baudó has been declared as protected area in 2019. The initiative for its establishment came from the local communities (predominantly fishermen) who wanted to protect their resources from the practices of the industrial fishers. The communities of Bajo Baudó as well as the regional environmental authority of the department of Chocó were inspired from the success of MarViva's approach in 2015 in a similar case (Golfo de Tribugá-Cabo Corrientes, Chocó) and turned to MarViva for their assistance (I.10, 2020 MarViva). MarViva has used the MSP approach to integrate national, regional and local actors in a participatory process leading to the declaration of the protected area in 2019 and the creation of its zoning and management plan (ibid.). The process involved more than 17 communities and more than 130 community leaders in order to produce a scheme for joint management of the area (Live presentation of MarViva at the *1er Foro Regional PEM como herramienta de gestion* May 2022 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o0mz4xHUIWo>).

II.2. MSP as a complementary analytical tool

Invemar is an institution part of the Colombian environmental system (SINA). It is a research center linked to the Colombian ministry of environment enjoying somewhat financial and operational independency. It is the institution that has developed the official guide for intertidal coastal zone management (ICZM) in Colombia and together with the ministry of environment has been applying it in the development of the coastal environmental management plans POMIUACs. In this regard it is understandable why the emphasis is on the complementary nature of MSP compared to ICZM. Since the existing ICZM already involves almost all of the components of MSP (see discussion on their differences and similarities in Chapter I), Invemar's adaptation of MSP focuses almost only on the elements Invemar considers novel in this approach (check discussion on 'MSP as an innovation' in Chapter VI), namely the analysis of conflicts/compatibilities among uses. The aspects of especially stakeholder integration, socio-cultural aspects but also inter-sectoral integration (vs. intra-sectoral!) become less relevant (Figure 16). The emphasis is thus less on the process and more on the outcome: delivering matrix and/or a map depicting the spatial conflicts and compatibilities for the analyzed area which can be further used especially in the planning and implementation of the POMIUACs. Invemar's adaptation of MSP can thus shortly be described as a complementary analytical tool for analysis of conflict and compatibilities among users.

II.3. MSP as a technical tool for efficient space distribution

Dimar is the Colombian maritime authority, an institution under the ministry of defense. In executing this function Dimar controls and coordinates the maritime activities in Colombian waters with "integral safety and technical rigor" (DIMAR, 2024). Dimar's MSP approach thus focuses on existing maritime sectors and analysis of conflicts/compatibilities arising from these uses in order to better (re)distribute space allocations. Dimar also develops mathematical models for assignment of future uses. It proposes scenarios for the future development of expanding maritime sectors in the area of analysis, based on given criteria. Contrary to the other two approaches, Dimar's approach involves offshore waters up until the limit of the Colombian EEZ. Under the increasing geographical scope of MSP's application and increasing role of the models, the involvement of non-expert stakeholders, stakeholders that have not yet claimed their interest in these areas but may be affected by its use, or whose interest or use cannot be spatially represented are not involved in the process. It is the only entity that can actually practice its jurisdiction in Colombian waters and the entity with 'data monopoly'. It is the only entity that has the most geographic data on offshore waters and the potential to collect data. The focus is on efficiency of the outcome and not on the process as

such. Dimar appropriates MSP by developing its own institutional version of it: methodology for Marine and Coastal Management with a Maritime Authority Vision (OMC: VAM). Its adaptation of MSP can thus shortly be described as a technical tool for the efficient space distribution of maritime activities.

III. Quick Take

The comparative analysis of the transfer content has shown how the functions and nature of the adopting institution influences which MSP elements will be prioritized. It also gives an initial idea in which direction MSP as a public policy would evolve given that one of those actors (Dimar) is set to become the main MSP implementing entity in Colombia. Based on this, one could anticipate that the MSP to be implemented in the future, will evolve less in the direction of incorporating participatory elements and coordination with existing planning mechanisms, and more as a technical stand-alone tool for the straightforward (re)distribution of marine and coastal space.

CHAPTER VIII: DISCUSSION

Inspired by the fast world-wide adoption of the novel policy instrument Marine Spatial Planning (MSP), this present study sheds a unique light into the policy transfer and adoption process of this instrument in a single country. Here, the role of different actors, causal mechanisms and international and domestic factors is examined to explain this process and improve our understanding as to Why and How countries voluntarily adopt novel policies. One of the main foci of the study is the IOC-UNESCO, the main promoter of MSP world-wide and an under researched IO with increasing societal and political relevance. Taking Colombia as a country that is a recent adopter of this instrument, the study is able to provide a state-of-the-art analysis of the factors and mechanisms behind the 'black box' of MSP's policy adoption.

The study finds that the MSP policy transfer is a voluntary IO-driven (or supply-driven) policy transfer. For this reason, the international factors are detrimental for the adoption to happen in the first place. The international elements are found to be both enabling (directly influencing) and facilitating (indirectly influencing) the transfer and adoption of MSP. Different causal mechanisms that explain the process are at place, with the most important ones being *learning* and *instruction*, both directly linked to the IOC-UNESCO. Complex domestic factors related to past experiences with similar policies and inter-institutional rivalry have been crucial for the pace and form of MSP adoption in Colombia.

Interpretation of findings

Contrary to a demand-driven transfer, where the country is proactive in looking for solutions to its problem; in a supply-driven transfer, the country is passive and does not look to adopt a policy innovation. However, the policy innovation typically comes from external sources, with the push for adoption usually driven by promotion from an international organization (IO) (Finnemore, 1993: 576). In the case at stake, the trigger for the adoption process are the recent activities of the IOC-UNESCO in the South-East Pacific region (the MSPGlobal initiative), and not the quest of the adopting country (Colombia) for a solution to a specific policy problem. Of course, the trigger event/activities cannot be treated in isolation as they are surrounded by factors of different nature that enable or inhibit the policy transfer.

The study finds that the most important factor for the transfer and adoption is the established cooperation and relationships between the IOC-UNESCO and the state-level institutions in the region. This has especially unfolded through IOC's regional project SPINCAM where

representatives from the marine and environmental sector of these countries have been meeting regularly for over a decade to cooperate and develop solutions to common challenges in the field of coastal planning and management. As discussed in Chapter V, IOC-UNESCO develops close relationships especially with the Colombian Ocean Commission (CCO), that not only translates IOC's affairs on national level, but is as important for its regional affairs too (through the activities of IOCaribe and CPPS). Another Colombian institution – INVEMAR is also very important, not least because it is a key regional training center for IOC's Ocean Teacher Global Academy, with which it contributes to IOC's capacity development in the region. Both of these Colombian institutions currently lead and bring forward many regional projects and initiatives relevant especially for the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development, implemented under the leadership of the IOC-UNESCO.

So far, the findings have been going in an expected direction according to the theoretical postulations. Namely, that voluntary policy adoption does not happen in isolation from international context. After all, IOs are arenas that act as promoters of new norms (Finnemore, 1993: 594), or “venues for interstate socialization” (Greenhill, 2010). Established long-lasting cooperation, institutional and personal relationships, as well as creating spaces for ideas and knowledge exchange are a necessary condition for the transfer of policies. The international embeddedness of a country, i.e., its access to international networks and organizations, matters great deal (see broad discussion on this in Chapter II: Theoretical Foundations). But the other way around counts as well for an IO-driven policy adoption to happen. Namely, the more embedded a given international bureaucracy is in a member state, the more influential its advice will be (P.-O. Busch et al., 2021). Although this is not a comparative study, the cases of Ecuador, Peru and Panama serve as a reference point to show that the Colombian embeddedness in the IOC and IOC's embeddedness in Colombia are pretty strong on a regional level, to say the least (see discussion in Chapter II: case selection, and Chapter V for more discussion on the Colombian context). So, considering only the *embeddedness* factor, the theory would predict an easy and flawless adoption of MSP in Colombia.

This study shows, however, that this has not been the case. Namely, the adoption process of MSP in Colombia has been slower and more contested than in the other countries from the region. This study therefore questions the taken-for-grantedness of the embeddedness as an enabling factor for policy adoption. *The study finds that the embeddedness as a factor is highly dependent on the domestic context.* The degree of embeddedness is as important as in *which domestic institutions/sectors* the IO is embedded and *how* their inter-institutional relationships look like. If the IO is embedded in two (or more) competing or rivaling sectors on a national level, both being interested in the policy at stake, then the final outcome may be slower rather

than faster adoption of this policy, although the influence of the IO in these institutions/sectors is high. The close relationship of the IOC with two actors belonging to two rivaling sectors (Invemar from the environmental sector, and CCO - entity with close links to the defense sector) has triggered two transfer processes in Colombia. Out of those, only one becomes the official path for the policy adoption of MSP. And so, only one of these processes potentially leads to the establishment of the official MSP authority in Colombia (the designated MSP institution currently is the maritime authority Dimar, also belonging to the defense sector).

The existing institutional rivalry over the governance of marine and coastal areas in Colombia has increased the contestation of MSP as a novel policy and slowed down its adoption. The adoption in Colombia is not as straightforward and unchallenged as in the other three countries in the region. This can be explained by several domestic factors of complex nature, the predominant one being the mentioned inter-institutional rivalry, closely linked to Colombia's previous policy experience with policies similar to MSP, namely with ICZM. This again, is somewhat contrary to the general theoretical expectations, where existing domestic policy experiences would mean more acceptance for the similar novel policy. The explanation for this is, when a country adopts a novel policy, one would expect that less institutional and/or legal changes are required domestically because of its existing experiences (Benson & Jordan, 2011; Makse & Volden, 2011; Marier, 2017). In the case of Colombia, the experience with the ICZM has proven counterproductive for the policy adoption of the MSP. So, also here, this present study refines the theoretical postulations by claiming that: *the existing policy experiences can act as an enabling domestic factor for the adoption of a novel similar policy, to the extent there is an agreement domestically about the (non)effectiveness of the existing policy.* In other words, when the concerned institutions are in a disagreement about the effectiveness and usefulness of the existing policy instrument (ICZM), some will want to change the existing policy (CCO/Dimar), and others will hold on to it (Ministry of environment/Invemar). This dynamic of contestation postpones the straightforward adoption of the novel policy. But interestingly, in this kind of situation, the prospect of adoption also opens up 'windows of opportunities' to take the lead in the contested governance area. In this respect, the adoption can still happen, but the power dynamics will determine its pace and form.

Both, the national embeddedness of the IO and past policy experience are highly dependent on the domestic context. *This study argues that while international factors, such as the IOC and its activities, are crucial for the adoption of MSP in a given country, domestic factors determine the pace and form of this adoption.* By exploring this relationship, the study refines the current theoretical framework, not only affirming the importance of both international and

domestic factors but also explaining their distinct roles and contributions to the policy adoption process.

Another important finding of this study relates more specifically to the role of the IOC-UNESCO in the MSP adoption process. In addition to the more 'typical' function in generating knowledge and providing policy advice through publications, targeted learning programs and technical cooperation (P.-O. Busch, 2015; Herold et al., 2021), IOC-UNESCO has had more agency in the transfer and adoption of MSP in Colombia and the region.

The study reveals that the IOC is actively involved in the design of MSP, going beyond the typical role of IOs in policy transfer, where they adopt and promote versions of policies from forerunner countries (Finnemore, 1993). In this case, the IOC not only promotes but also designs and 'owns' the policy. This is evident in its 2009 flagship MSP step-by-step guide, which initially incorporated elements from leading countries' practices to create a guidebook still widely used by policymakers. In the 2021 version, the IOC goes further by modifying existing elements and introducing genuinely novel components to this area of governance.

Furthermore, the IOC has shaped the narratives surrounding MSP, reflecting an intentional effort to accelerate its adoption in the region. These narratives portray MSP as a 'must-have' policy, crucial for solving governments' marine issues and fostering blue economic growth. Additionally, MSP is made appealing to the broader public by framing it as 'fair, participatory, and just', often using simple communication style. As discussions about eliminating redundant international regimes and organizations intensify (Bridgewater et al., 2024; Bridgewater & Kim, 2021; Dimitrov, 2020; Gray, 2018), IOs increasingly need to demonstrate their legitimacy and secure funding. One strategy is legitimization communication, where IOs shift their messaging style and broaden their audience from policy and technical experts to include the wider public and civil society (Dingwerth et al., 2015; IOC-UNESCO, 2022). This approach emphasizes individual rights, the 'global common good,' and greater participation (Dingwerth et al., 2015: 190), tendencies present in recent IOC publications.

Except for designing MSP's policy content and shaping its narratives, this study finds that the *IOC also actively influences the institutional setting for future MSP implementation in adopting countries.* This is particularly evidenced by the identification of a new causal mechanism termed 'instruction.' The study provides evidence of the IOC's decisive role in selecting institutions to act as MSP authorities—decisions that have been questioned by other domestic actors. Therefore, in what follows, the study reflects on the IOC's source of authority and how it manifests in the region.

The research identifies 'learning' about MSP's potential in addressing governance challenges in marine and coastal areas as the most influential mechanism for policy transfer and adoption. However, given the limited evidence of the policy's actual success in achieving its objectives, there can only be learning about *potential* outcomes. While traditional policy transfer scholarship often focuses on learning about the success of a policy, based on others experiences (see Chapter II for further discussion), the study introduces a new causal mechanism—learning from narratives. So, the study not only finds that learning about *potential* outcome has occurred, but also identifies the primary source of knowledge about this outcome—publications, courses, and events organized or supported by the IOC. By identifying key IOC MSP narratives (Chapter IV) and confirming their overall presence in the case studies (Chapters V, VI, and VII), the study asserts that learning from narratives is the predominant mechanism behind policy adoption.

That said, neither learning (from narratives) nor instruction could have occurred without the IOC being perceived as an authority. *An additional contribution of this study is its exploration of the role of authority in a voluntary policy transfer process.* In the absence of conditionality or an obligation to adopt a specific policy, this transfer is considered voluntary. In such cases, IOs are seen as actors of non-hierarchical policy transfer (Busch et al., 2021). This makes it intriguing to examine how IOs project authority, given that authority typically represents a hierarchical form of governance (Schettler et al., 2018).

IOC-UNESCO is an international organization promoting marine sciences cooperation. With its specialized knowledge, it meets the first precondition for becoming an expert authority. Once this specialized knowledge or expertise becomes a source of power (a second precondition), the IO effectively projects this expert authority. So, expert authority is 'a form of power that induces voluntary deference to knowledge-based requests of a certain actor' (Busch et al., 2022: 232). Deference here implies that, the authority addressees (in this case state-level institutions) refrain from a thorough examination of the content of request by the authority holder (in this case the IO) when they change (or consider changing) their behavior according to the request. The addressees would do so, because they believe in certain qualities of the IO (Zürn, 2018 In: Busch et. al, 2022: 233). Such qualities are performance, overall utility, expert knowledge, credibility, trustworthiness of the IO etc. (Busch et al., 2022).

In this case study, we observed changes in behavior in at least two instances (Colombia and Peru) where state-level institutions acted upon IOC requests regarding the designation of national MSP leaders. The study identifies various knowledge transfer channels in connection to IOC's activities in the region, which, combined with its declared science-oriented focus,

provide evidence that the IOC possesses the necessary expertise in marine sciences (the first precondition for authority). However, expertise alone is not sufficient to exert authority. *This study finds that the IOC's authority in Colombia is rooted in its long-standing relationships with key national institutions, particularly the CCO and Invemar. These relationships foster trust and credibility, which contribute to the IOC's position of authority (the second requirement).*

In conclusion, by coming back to the initial argument, we see that the evidence and analysis consistently support the finding that the adoption would not have been possible without the relationships being established to the degree observed.

Reflections on the practical implications

The following are reflections on the predominant narrative to promote MSP world-wide, namely that MSP is a 'panacea' to all governments' problems in the area of marine governance. A myriad of scholars criticizes MSP's predominant understanding as a rational planning process with universal principles and steps, instead of taking it for what it really is: social and political process that is highly context dependent (Kidd & Shaw, 2014: 1536). The reflections refer to the 'depoliticization' and 'dehumanization' of MSP.

The extreme relevance of the local context over the planning process of MSP has not been emphasized enough in promoting activities. The process, outcomes and objectives of MSP depend strongly on the planning culture of the respective country and on the planning authority. For example, scholars have found important influences over the policy design and the planning culture of MSP coming from the type of authority (read: ministry) leading the process. So, for example, planning differences have been noticed when the MSP authority comes from the environmental sector (as in Norway with the Ministry of Environment), compared to the economic sector (as in Denmark with the Maritime Agency), or the general planning sector (as in Germany, with different ministries in charge of MSP at the level of the Länder, but with the Federal Ministry of Interior, Building and Community in charge for the MSP plan for the German EEZ) (Kirkfeldt et al., 2020). In this regard, it is to be expected that if the MSP planning authority is under the ministry of defense, as it will be in the case of Colombia, then the interests and political priorities of this sector will be represented in the MSP's realization as well. This is especially the case, when, as evidenced through the interviews, there is lacking inter-sectoral coordination in this governance area. So, the planning style is influenced as well. When the issue at stake (MSP) is to be handled under the auspices of the defense sector, it is perceived (and probably presented) as a matter of 'security' or it can easily get 'securitized', and so, the possibility for the interests of other stakeholders to flow into the process is very low. Interestingly, in Colombia, Peru and Ecuador

entities from the defense sector have the lead in MSP-related matters, whereas in Panama the lead is in the hands of the ministry of environment. Future comparative research in this region on how MSP evolves would be enriching in understanding the influence of the nature of the MSP authority on the MSP process.

Designed as a response to rising ecological problems (one of the pioneering examples for MSP-alike planning is the Great Barrier Reef zoning for the protection of the coral reefs), and as a solution to regulatory challenges from the increasing demand for space in the ocean, MSP has not managed to grasp the 'potential complexity and value from engaged participative processes' (Ritchie & Ellis, 2010: 702). This means that the 'marine problem' is framed in terms of its 'bio-physical and regulatory consequences, to the detriment of understanding the implications of its social and political dimensions' (ibid.: 709). This moment, however, continues to be ignored by most MSP scholars and practitioners that define MSP as a rational process where space is being efficiently distributed (see Douvere's 2008 definition). And this is the direction in which MSP in Colombia evolves, stand-alone technical tool for efficient space (re)distribution.

The current MSP practice focuses predominantly on identifying the adequate stakeholders rather than on how to effectively engage them to enrich the process. The MSP case studies focus mainly on the experiences of the active MSP stakeholders, disregarding the interests and motivations of those who were not part of the process, either because they were uninvited or decided not to participate (Flannery et al., 2018). This leaves out the possibility for more inclusive opportunities where unidentified interests can join and enrich the process (ibid: 710). In reality, however, identification of stakeholders or the criteria defining who is an entitled stakeholder are set by the MSP planning authority (Pomeroy & Douvere, 2008). Contrary to this, the advocates for real participation would say that MSP should be an open-ended process, not tailored accordingly to predetermined or expected end-results, not completed by holding few meetings, but through an elaborate strategy which will and should turn complex, problematic and time-consuming, including as many voices as possible in the early years of this novel process (Flannery et al., 2018; Ritchie & Ellis, 2010; Smith & Jentoft, 2017). Real participation is not 'efficient' or 'rational' (note the MSP definition from Douvere of MSP being a 'rational process'), but difficult, probably messy, full of antagonisms and contestations in order to contribute to designing genuinely legitimate public policies.

MSP is another reflection of the post-political condition we live in (Tafon, 2018). In a post-political era, the "political contradictions are reduced to policy problems to be managed by experts and legitimated through participatory processes in which the scope of potential

outcomes is narrowly defined in advance.” (Wilson & Swyngedouw, 2014: 6). Post-political practices frame issues as neutral, being beyond politics and no longer contestable (Flannery et al., 2019: 203). In this way is MSP nothing but logical technocratic exercise for allocating space in an efficient manner (ibid.: 205).

Defined as ‘rational’ process, where based on scientific evidence and geospatial mapping instruments, consensual decisions about ‘efficient’ distribution of marine space can be made, MSP has turned to an expert-driven technocratic instrument stripped away of his inherent political nature. In this regard, while MSP thrives under apolitical and asocial framings, it nevertheless remains, ‘first and foremost, a political process constituted by numerous discursive struggles to frame marine issues’ (Flannery et al., 2019: 203). And while MSP is praised for its ‘participatory character’, the forms of engagement with stakeholders are tokenistic, constructed and tailored through a process of ‘social preparation’. The latter is meant to empower stakeholders so as to achieve ‘behavior and attitude changes so that MSP process can be sustainable’ (Pomeroy & Douvère, 2008: 820), showcasing once again how directed the ‘participatory process’ under MSP is expected to be. The experience and the dynamic within the MSP experts’ group in Colombia show the same tendency (see discussion in Chapter V).

Yet another question raised around the current MSP application is that it does not give enough consideration for socio-cultural components of marine use, as it does to economic, ecological and administrative ones (McKinley et al., 2019; Miteva-Bölter, 2024).

The main instrument for conducting MSP is the Geographic Information System (GIS). These GIS technologies make the development of planning options and future scenarios in MSP possible, and hereby they influence the MSP decision-making process (St. Martin & Hall-Arber, 2008; Miteva-Bölter, 2024). And in this sense, they can easily disregard information which is not representable on a map.

If GIS technologies are fed with limited data layers (e.g., mainly bio-physical data or spatial data on the activities of the most important economic sectors) it can lead to unfavorable outcomes for stakeholders absent from the map (St. Martin & Hall-Arber, 2008). For example, the case with the local fishing communities whose relations with the marine resource itself are not visible on a map. Here, information concerning which fishing communities use what kind of fishing gear, what kind of species they fish, which areas they rely upon or for which areas they dispose local knowledge of, is a ‘missing layer’ on a GIS map (Ehler & Douvère, 2007, 2009; St. Martin & Hall-Arber, 2008).

Integrating the 'human' dimension into the MSP planning process is not impossible, but requires innovative and elaborate methods (St. Martin & Hall-Arber, 2008). Most importantly, it requires including communities and local knowledge in the planning process, as well as inclusion of social sciences beyond the discipline of economics (e.g. anthropology) in order to understand these complex socio-cultural and socio-ecological interactions (Ehler & Douvère, 2007). In this sense, this study has also recognized the important role of the civil society (NGOs) in governance areas where state institutions cannot provide for proper inter-sectoral coordination and public participation. Following this, especially in culturally rich contexts where diverse social and political dynamics unfold, where livelihoods are more dependent on natural resources and where at the same time the local knowledge and practices are detrimental to maintaining functional ecosystems, the inclusion of deeply rooted local NGOs as facilitators may be one form to streamline the unheard and underrepresented interests in more complex planning processes, such as national level MSP.

This being said, it is essential for the policy promoters (such as the IOC and the EC) to adopt a reflective and accountable approach, particularly when there is insufficient practical evidence supporting the overall effectiveness of the policy. This should be the case even more when it comes to culturally and biologically diverse regions, different in so many aspects from the forerunner countries that have shaped the dominant understanding of MSP and its implementation processes.

Limitations and recommendations of the study

This study provides a snapshot of the policy transfer and adoption process of Marine Spatial Planning (MSP) in Colombia. Given the absence of official regulations that make MSP binding at the national level in Colombia, some arguments are cautiously presented, pointing to the most likely future scenarios. Due to the precarious political landscape and shifting priorities, it is possible that official adoption leading to binding application of MSP on a national level, may never materialize in Colombia. This introduces a potential limitation: the study is analyzing a moving target. Despite this, however, I argue that this perceived limitation actually enhances the study's value. By capturing the process, positions and opinions at a critical moment in the policy transfer, the research offers insights that could be overlooked once MSP's official adoption and implementation become the primary focus of both practitioners and researchers. Thus, the study not only documents the trajectory but also preserves the nuances of the policy transfer process, which may be invaluable for understanding the broader implications of MSP and the role of IOC in the future.

The study has focused on the inter-institutional relationships. However, it recognizes that institutions are made of people, and that for in-depth understanding of the transfer and adoption process, and especially to better understand the circumstances regarding the designation of Dimar as a leading MSP institution in Colombia, an investigation on the inter-personal relationships is required. Influential political figures domestically, their actions and interests in this outcome have not been considered in depth due to lack of information. While there are indications that the situation represents an opportunity for influential figures and institutions to gain more leverage in this contested governance area, a deeper understanding of how this "window of opportunity" unfolds requires further research. The study, therefore, recommends exploring this issue through the lens of the Multiple Streams Framework.

Conclusion

The study offers a glimpse into the 'black box' of the policy transfer and adoption process of MSP in Colombia. It makes valuable contributions and refines the policy transfer theory by introducing new causal mechanisms, such as learning through narratives and instruction, which enhance understanding of how IOs' expert authority influences voluntary policy transfers. Both international and domestic factors are examined, showing that while international influences are critical for the policy adoption, domestic factors dictate the speed and form of the adoption. Additionally, the research enriches international organization scholarship by exploring the underexamined role of IOC-UNESCO in the design, promotion, and transfer of MSP. It furthermore contributes to the better understanding of the institutional setting in the field of marine governance in countries under researched in this policy field.

As the IOC turns its attention to other world regions through MSPGlobal 2.0, the lasting impact of its efforts in the South-East Pacific remains uncertain. The speed and manner in which MSP gets adopted and implemented in Colombia and the surrounding countries will largely hinge on the domestic institutional and political landscape.

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