Planning, Devolution and the Territorialisation of Wind Energy in the UK


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Planning, Devolution and the Territorialisation of Wind Energy in the UK

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Territory, scale and energy governance

- Multi-scalar influences on energy governance and the drivers for wind energy. For example in the UK:
  - EU targets
  - Energy as a national issue
  - Reliance of devolved administrations for renewables (esp wind)
  - Re-framing of spatial relationships with energy – for example decentralised generation.
- Energy as a socio-technical system, with an underdeveloped spatial dimension.
- The role of planning in the territorialisation and politicisation of energy.
Devolution in the UK

- Devolution since 1998/99: ‘the age of wind energy’.
- An example of ‘re-territorialisation’
- Distribution of ‘asymmetric competencies’:
  - Planning is fully devolved to all administrations; other key aspects of energy policy are not.
- The evolving political context – divergence since 2010.
Installed renewable energy capacity in the UK 2003-2012 (MW)

(Source: DECC 2013, RESTATS historic data)
Renewable Capacity per capita

Renewable installed capacity

Renewable capacity per capita
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Energy policy is ...</th>
<th>Provision of market support for renewable energy</th>
<th>Planning and consents (onshore)</th>
<th>Planning and consents (offshore)</th>
<th>Economic development spending</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Northern Ireland</td>
<td>Fully devolved</td>
<td>Fully devolved</td>
<td>Fully devolved</td>
<td>Fully devolved</td>
<td>Fully devolved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scotland</td>
<td>Executively devolved</td>
<td>Scope to shape delivery of some schemes</td>
<td>Fully devolved</td>
<td>Fully devolved</td>
<td>Fully devolved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wales</td>
<td>Not devolved</td>
<td>No powers</td>
<td>Partial powers over planning policy and consent for smaller schemes (below 50MW)</td>
<td>Power to determine applications up to 1MW (exception under Transport &amp; Works Act 1992)</td>
<td>Fully devolved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Westminster &amp; England</td>
<td>Full competence</td>
<td>Full competence</td>
<td>Full policy competence for England, partial for Wales; full competence over major projects (50MW plus)</td>
<td>Full competence for English and Welsh Waters (subject to Welsh exceptions, above)</td>
<td>Fully devolved</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Wind energy and the shaping of territorial priorities

- Devolved Administrations host the greatest renewable resources and over half installed capacity of the UK.
- UK state is responsible for meeting EU renewable energy target:
  - 15% of total energy by 2020
  - Devolved administration proportionally exceed these targets
- Complex regional relationships and nationalistic influences on priorities for renewable energy development
Planning and the territorialisation of wind in the UK

- National planning guidance as a key instrument of territorialisation:
  - Scotland’s anti-nuclear stance and post-independence energy economy;
  - Wales steering of large scale projects and limits on autonomy;
  - Northern Ireland’s regulation-lite;
  - English Conservativism and landscape protection.
- Yet each have a shared emphasis on streamlining decision and ‘infrastructuralism’
- Local politicisation – national territorialisation
Final thoughts

- Understanding the geographic scales of energy governance: nation states, communities \textit{and} sub-national government.
- The resilience of dominant energy pathways and energy-as-infrastructure.
- Insights into the spatial politics of the low carbon transition:
  - Multi-level governance and the specificity of place
  - Both challenging \textit{and} reinforcing different types of territorial relationships
Thank you

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