Moving into sustainable futures.
Public perceptions of renewable energy technologies: reflections on practice, planning and policy. Evidence from the Danish near-shore wind farm tender

Governments in many countries have prioritized more sustainable modes of energy production and a higher share of renewables in the national energy consumption for quite some time, and the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions has become an international agenda. But while public support for renewable energy technologies (RETs), e.g. wind farms, is generally high, local resistance to specific local wind farm projects has been prevalent internationally, a fundamental challenge for processes of energy transitions.

This research explores social dynamics, trends and project practicalities that inform our perceptions of RETs, and it does so using mixed qualitative and quantitative empirical data - including survey data from almost 2000 respondents and potential wind farm neighbors. The majority of this data is from the Danish Energy Agency (DEA) 2015-2016 near-shore wind farm bid for tender.

The research contributes to the significant body of energy transitions literature with a more social focus generally, and it contributes with empirical and analytical insights beneficial for RET planning and policy more specifically. The research comprises 1) a unique empirical case study overview of the near-shore wind farm tender, focusing specifically on the contentious Sejere Bugt site EIA-process and on the role of contested scientific data, citizen actions and political dynamics in that regard. This provides the empirical setting for 2) a study of the Danish wind farm co-ownership/shares scheme, an incentive scheme designed to enhance local engagement in and acceptance of windfarms. 3) A study of differences in perceptions of the planned local near-shore wind farms amongst the two key project stakeholder groups, permanent area residents (PRs) and second home owners (SHOs) follows, and finally 4) the impact of predefined uncertainty types on indicated respondent attitudes towards the planned local wind farms is tested. The cover essay selectively and cautiously presents some novel observations, arguments and analytical ideas, and it includes some practical reflections on and recommendations for RET related local engagement and participation processes/activities. Elaborating upon the research findings, the wider research implications for RET related practice, policy and politics are discussed.