

The Danish case: How to win (or lose) social acceptance in the green energy transition

Public support in the energy transition
Nordic Energy Research, Lahti, Finland
5th of December 2025

RAMBOLL

Bright Ideas.
Sustainable change.

Advices public and private decision makers on societal impact and policy



Christine Lunde Rasmussen

Global Head;, Societal Impacts & Policy
Ramboll Management

Examples of Rambølls' work

- Evaluation of the VE Task Force, Energy Agency
- Evaluation of Renewable Energy Schemes, Energistyrelsen, 2025
- Social Acceptance in RE, DENZ UK, 2025
- Innovationpartnership on VE and biodiversity, Miljøstyrelsen, 2025-2027
- Nordic Energy Trilemma 2022
- Collection of best practise for solar cells, Energistyrelsen, Miljøstyrelsen & Plan- og landdistriktsstyrelsen, 2024
- Community engagement and Social Impact Assessment for mining project; Talga, 2023-2025,
- Green vision for Lolland, Lolland Municipality 2024
- Evaluation of the Nordic Co-operation Programme on Energy Policy, NCM
- Energy Poverty in the Nordics, NCM 2022

What I will talk about today

01

What is the problem actually about?
The Danish puzzle

02

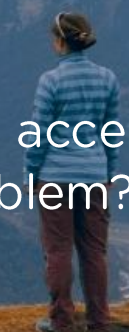
What drives social acceptance? And is
resistance the problem?

03

How you win – or lose –
social acceptance

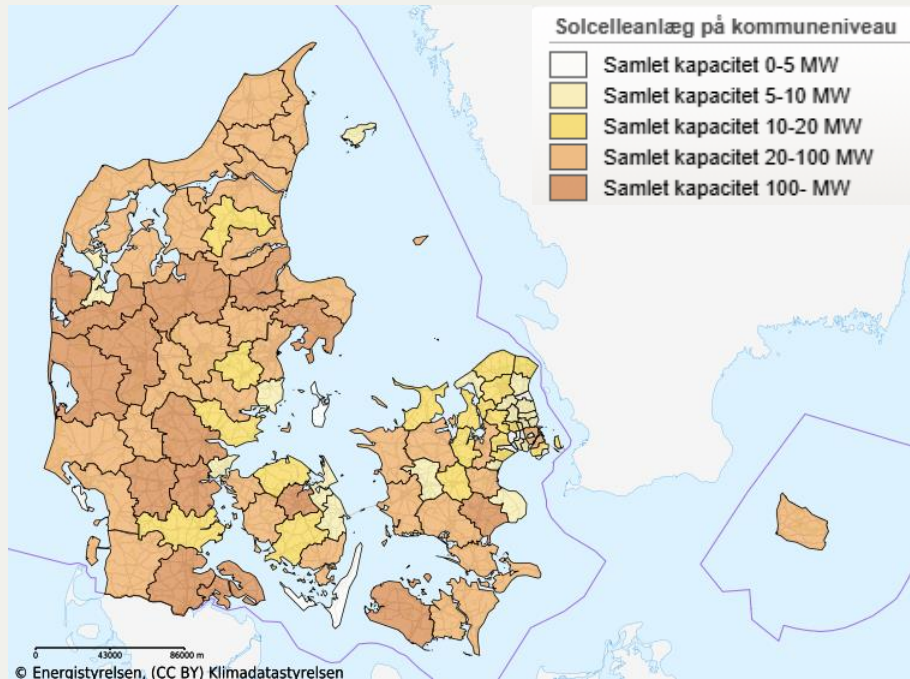
04

Perspectives



Danish ambitions for RE are high, and implementation has advanced, in particular in areas outside main cities

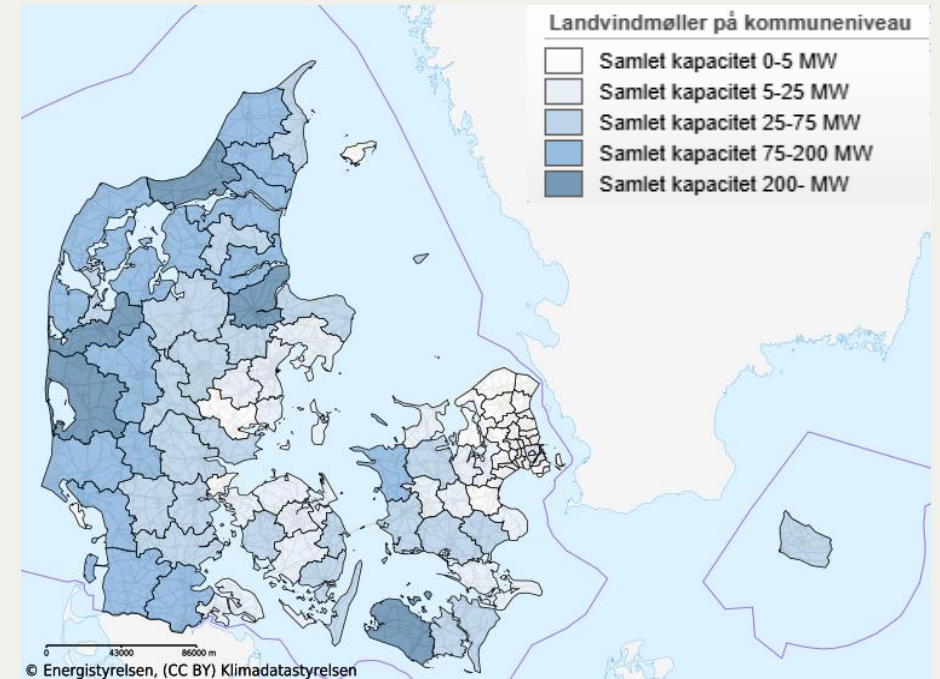
Solarpanels



Still e.g. Solar Panels only cover limited areas; in Kolding (top municipality) 0,49 pct. ha

↑ Capacity in Danmark: **4.114 MW**
Increase of **16 %** from 2023 til 2024
App. **160.000** husstandes forbrug (Green Power DK)

Windturbines

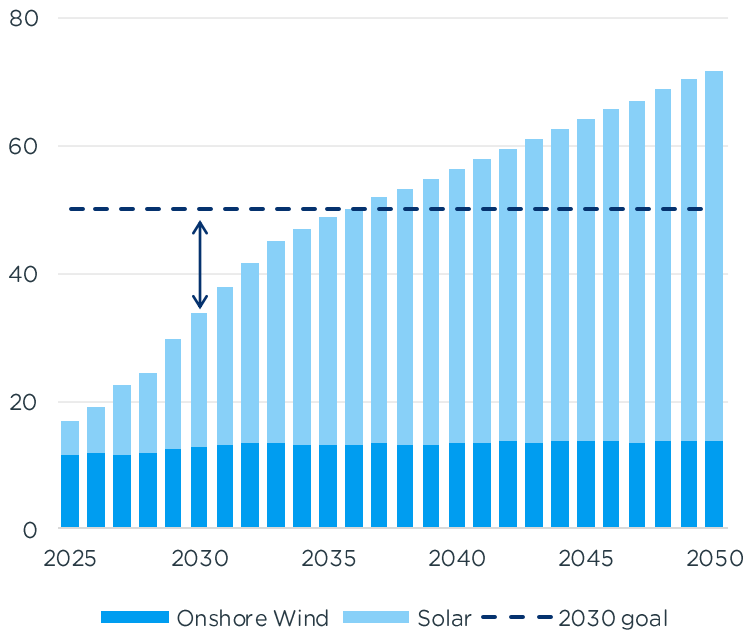


↑ Capacity in Denmark: **4.761 MW**
Increase of **1 %** in capacity from 2023 til 2024
12 new wind mills in 2024

But implementation of RE is stalling

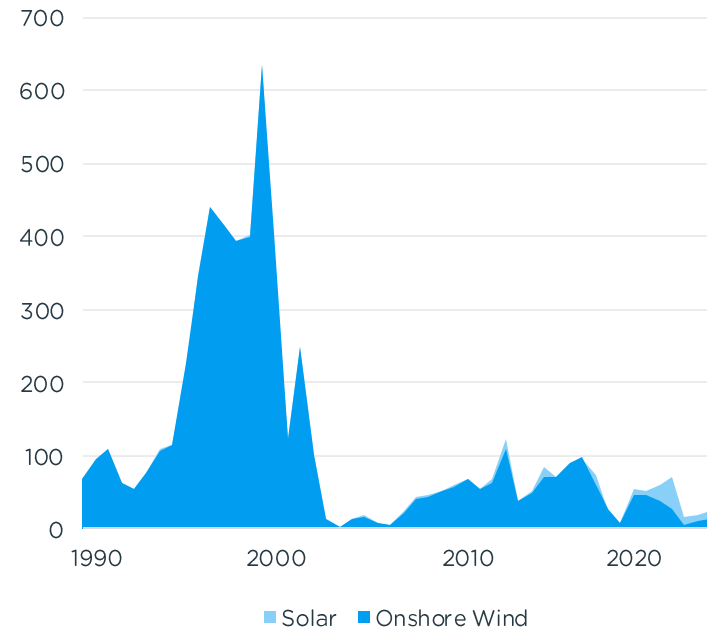
Not on track for the 2030 goal of 4x more onshore wind and solar electricity relative to 2021

Electricity Production, TWh



Onshore wind expansion is slowing down drastically, with only 6 turbines employed in 2025

New RE installations, annually



The implementation rate for energy projects is less than 50 pct in 2025

Projects for at least 14 bill DKK are delayed or dropped

Public resistance is one amongst several reasons for delays



Ikke i min baghave

DR1 13. SÆSON ALLE



Kirsten er 'kommandocentral' i kampgruppe mod solcellepark

A hot topic in recent local elections leading to change in local political leadership

RINGKØBING-SKJERN

Meningsmåling: Op mod halvdelen af vælgere siger nej til flere solceller og vindmøller

Der er fortsat stor modstand mod energianlæg, viser en vælgermåling. Til gengæld er byråds kandidaterne mere VE-begejstrede end borgerne.



En ny meningsmåling viser, at op mod halvdelen af vælgere afviser Mikkel Jezequel

Valgets tale var dog svær at tage fejl af. Socialdemokratiet i Køge gik hele 13,2 procentpoint og fire mandater tilbage, mens Venstre gik fem procentpoint og tre mandater frem ved valget. Dermed bliver det nu Ken Kristensen (V), der bliver den blot anden borgerlige borgmester siden 1970 på Rådhuset i Køge, som skal forsegle energiparkens skæbne. Og hans prioritet var tydelig, da han dagen efter valget blev interviewet i radioen på P1.

»Først og fremmest skal vi have stoppet den energipark,« sagde han, da han blev bedt om at fortælle om de politiske prioriteter i den brede konstitueringskreds bag ham, der tæller både Konservative, SF, Dansk Folkeparti, Liberal Alliance og Corona Camping Listen.

VALGKAMP

I Danmark er opbakningen til vedvarende energi stor. Danmarksdemokraten Ole Kjær mener, at »nok er nok«



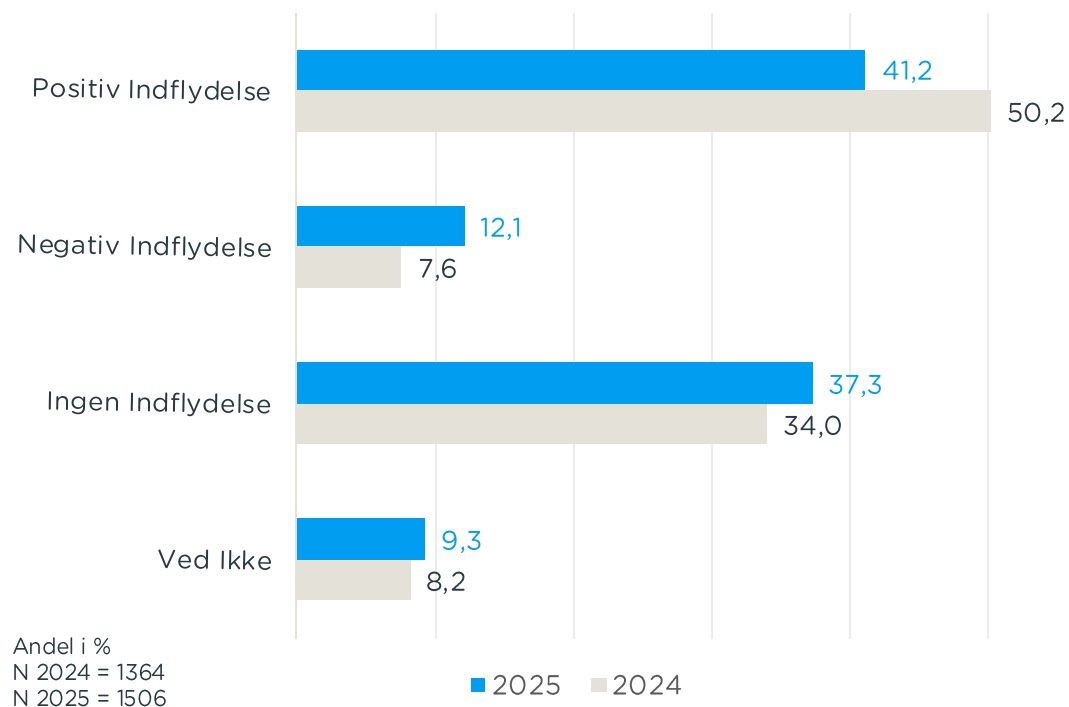
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For mig at se, er det ren populisme uden hold i virkeligheden

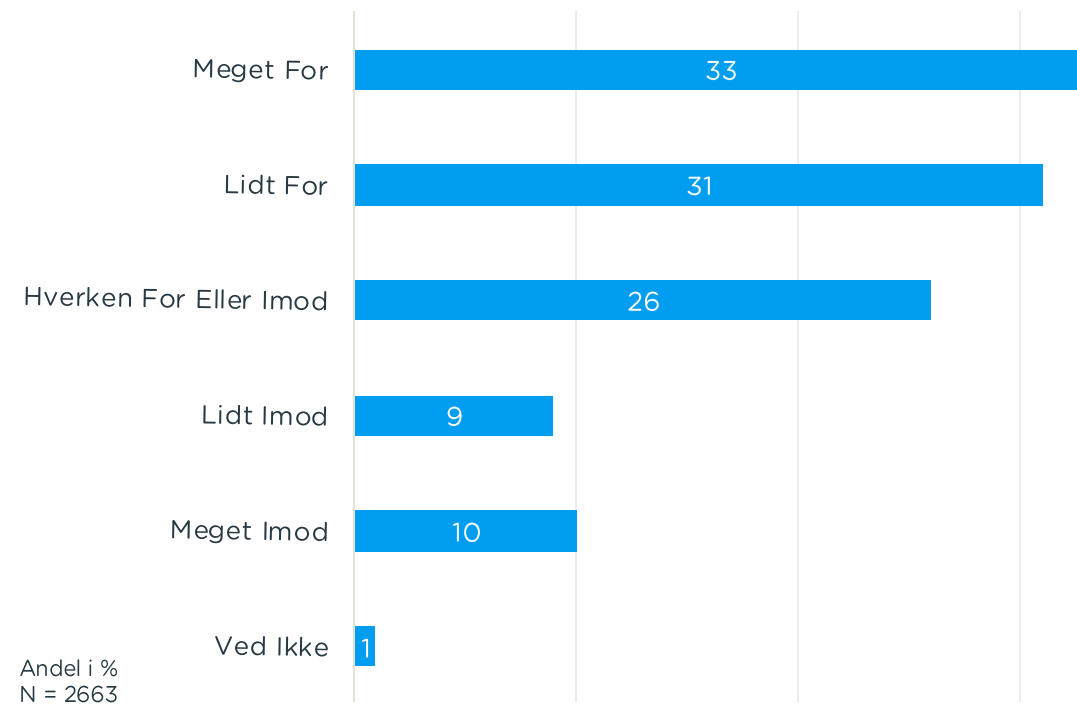
Kristian Borch, lektor ved Institut for Planlægning på Aalborg Universitet

Danish support for RE is generally high – so what is the problem at stake?

Hvilken indflydelse, tror du, grøn omstilling vil have på dit lokalområde i løbet af de næste 10 år? (fx opsætning af vindmøller eller solcelleanlæg, omdannelse af landbrugsjord til vild natur, ændring af arbejdspladser)



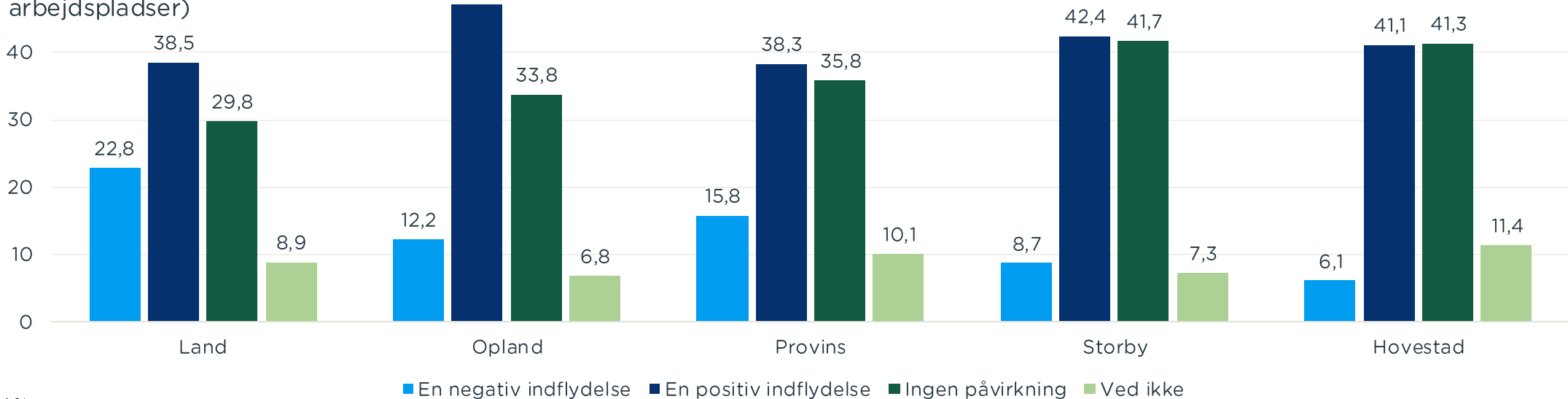
I hvilken grad ville du være åben overfor, at solcelleparker blev anlagt i dit lokalområde?



A closer look indicates that rural areas are less positive - but still somewhat positive - towards RE / green transition

Hvilken indflydelse, tror du, grøn omstilling vil have på dit lokalområde i løbet af de næste 10 år?

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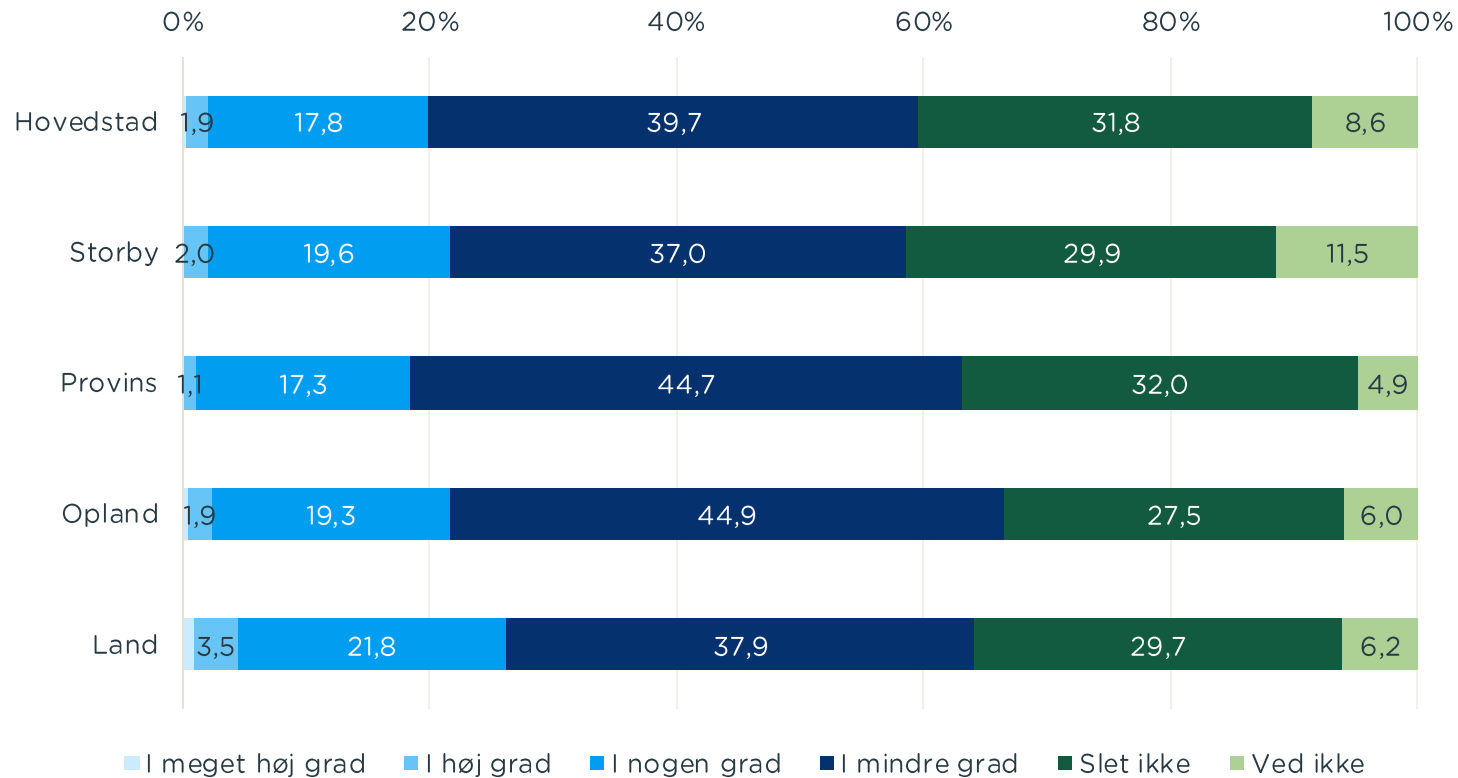


Andel i %
N = 1506

Source: ClimAct 2025, Dronning Mary Center

And citizens attitudes to local politicians seem mixed

I hvilken grad oplever du, at du har mulighed for at få indflydelse på lokale klimatiltag i dit nærområde?



Only slightly more than half of citizens in rural areas are happy or very happy with the effort of local politicians

The picture is not much more positive in cities

Media-driven NIMBY-ism? Or shared public perceptions of injustice?

Research and field insights indicate protest are rooted in **perceptions** of:

- Unfair distribution of benefits – and too few benefits
- Incomplete democratic processes (late, narrow etc.)



This can turn micro-protests into general local and public protest fuelling emotions, media-attention and drive political attitudes

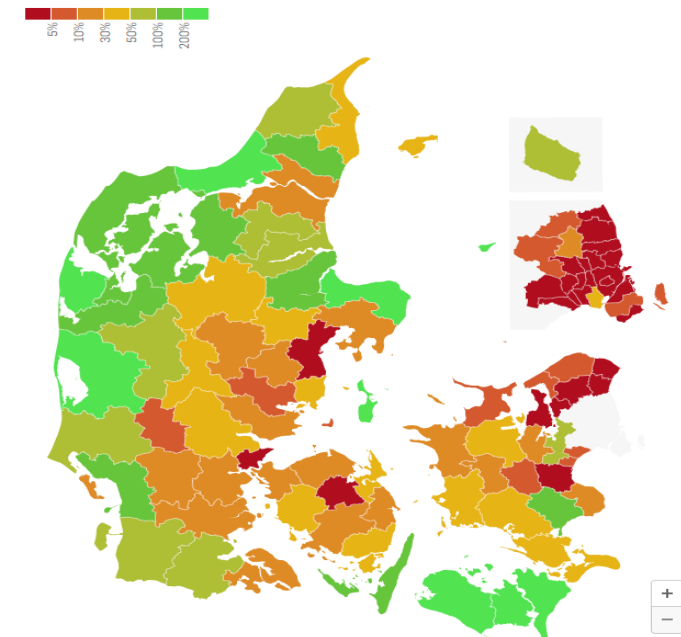
Case

In one municipality, local referendums were held to gauge community views on proposed solar parks.

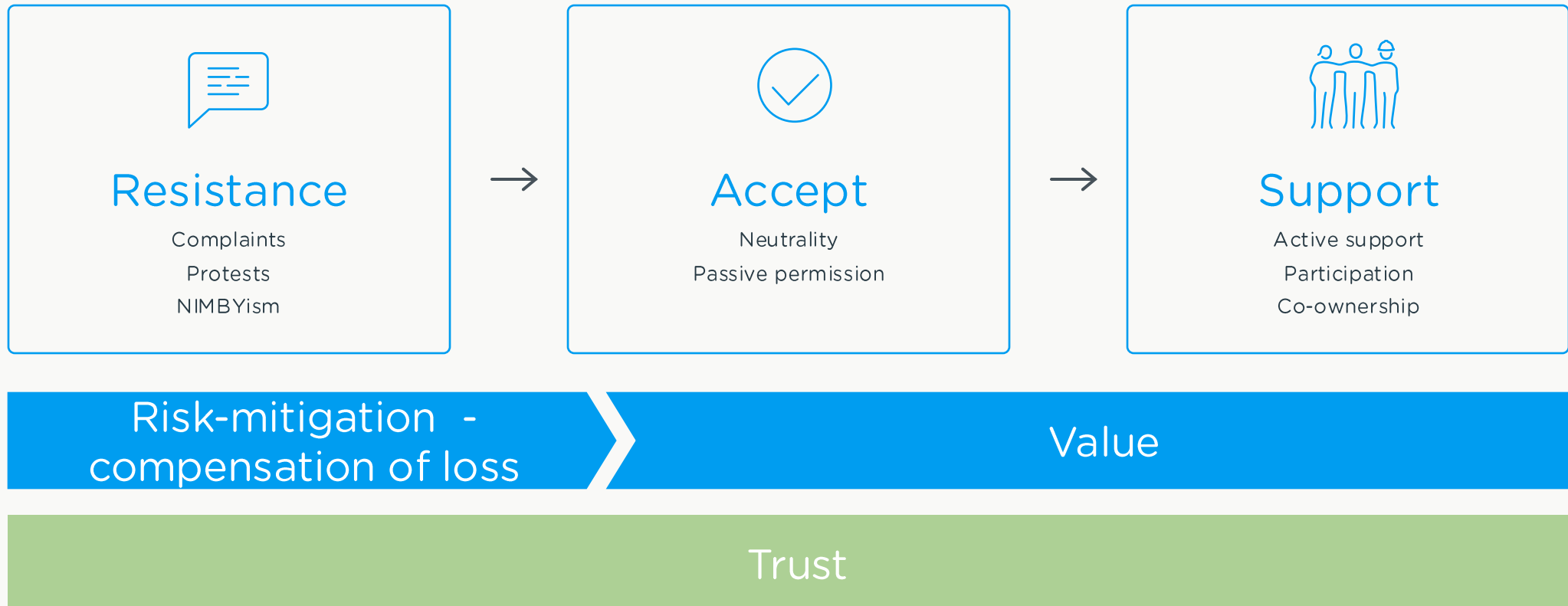
In one of the affected local areas, 65 pct voted against the development

Despite this local opposition, the municipal council chose to continue supporting the planning process, leaving the community

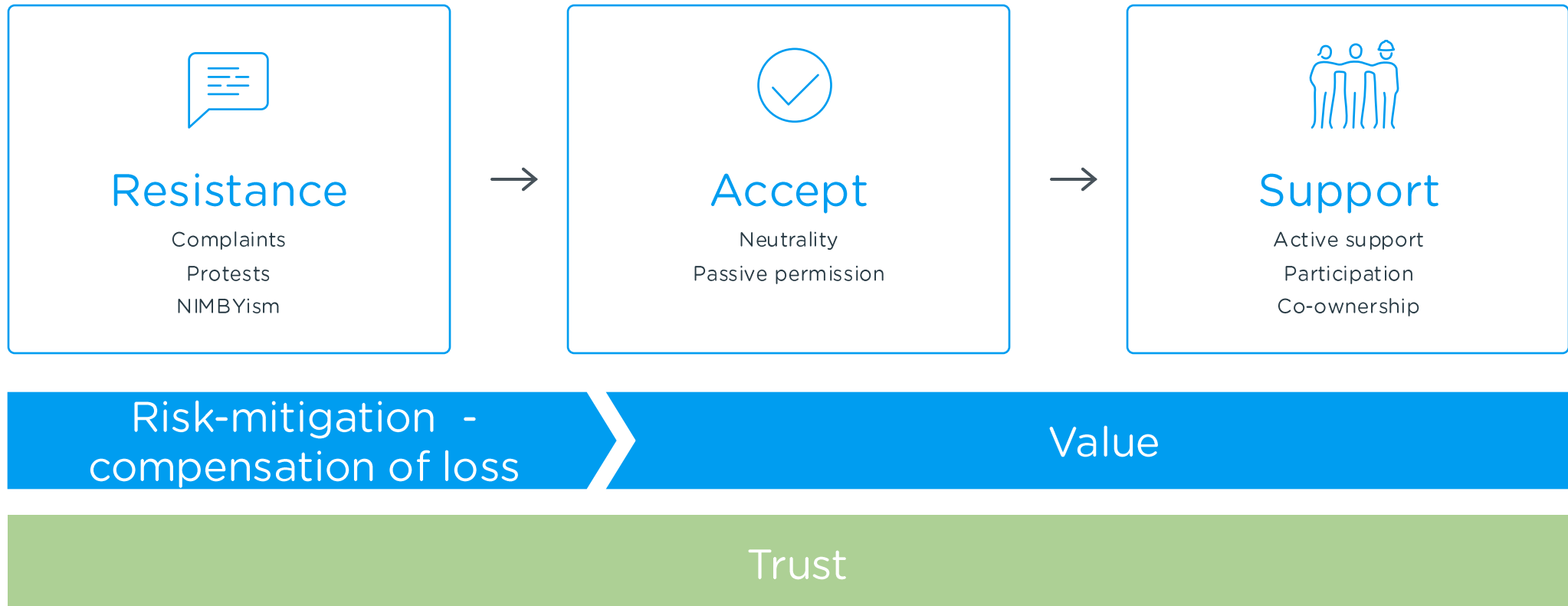
Så meget dækkede VE-produktionen i landets kommuner deres samlede energiforbrug i 2024 (procent)



So how do we unpack social acceptance?



So how do we unpack social acceptance?



Trust and value a drivers



Trust in influence and institutions... Perceptions of no or limited influence and insight into decisions



Trust in fairness and future perspectives ... Perceptions of real and unequal loss of value



Trust as a necessity to navigate real green-on-green conflicts -balancing conflicting value choices

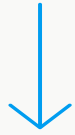
“...People are not resisting climate action; they are defending other important local goods – biodiversity, landscape, identity – and trust is what makes it possible to balance these values fairly.”

...the main cause of local resistance is the perception that value is being extracted from a local area without any substantial value being added in return.

Simon Lex – Assistant Professor,
Copenhagen University

Is resistance the actual problem?

Resistance is (also) civic **engagement**



...someone to

talk to (not talk about)
activate in developing solutions
own and drive solutions



An aerial photograph showing a coastal area with a town in the background and a large body of water in the foreground. In the water, several offshore wind turbines are visible, along with a construction vessel. The sky is clear and blue.

How to win public support? Three strategies

Early and informed engagement, taking local concerns seriously



Case: solar park in Kalundborg

The municipality assessed the landscape impacts of a proposed solar park and required the final design adjustments to protect key landscape qualities (historic and visual coherence)

Case from Rambøll's collection of examples of Danish solar parks

Picture from propreco.dk (developer)

Collaboration and co-creation through early citizen involvement



Case: new energy projects in Sønderborg

- Model for citizen involvement model rooted in acknowledgement that protests are natural.
- Early involvement to explore and meet concerns
- Local working groups shape each project
- Community knowledge improves the plans

Local value as an end goal



Case: Havsøre solar park (Lemvig)

- Jysk Energi and 679 local citizens in Lemvig Municipality co-developed Denmark's first cooperative VE solar park in Høvsøre.
- The project was built as a 50/50 partnership between the energy company and local residents, who purchased shares on equal terms.
- The model generated strong local ownership and resulted in zero neighbour complaints, demonstrating

Perspectives

Building social acceptance is about process as well we outcome (value)

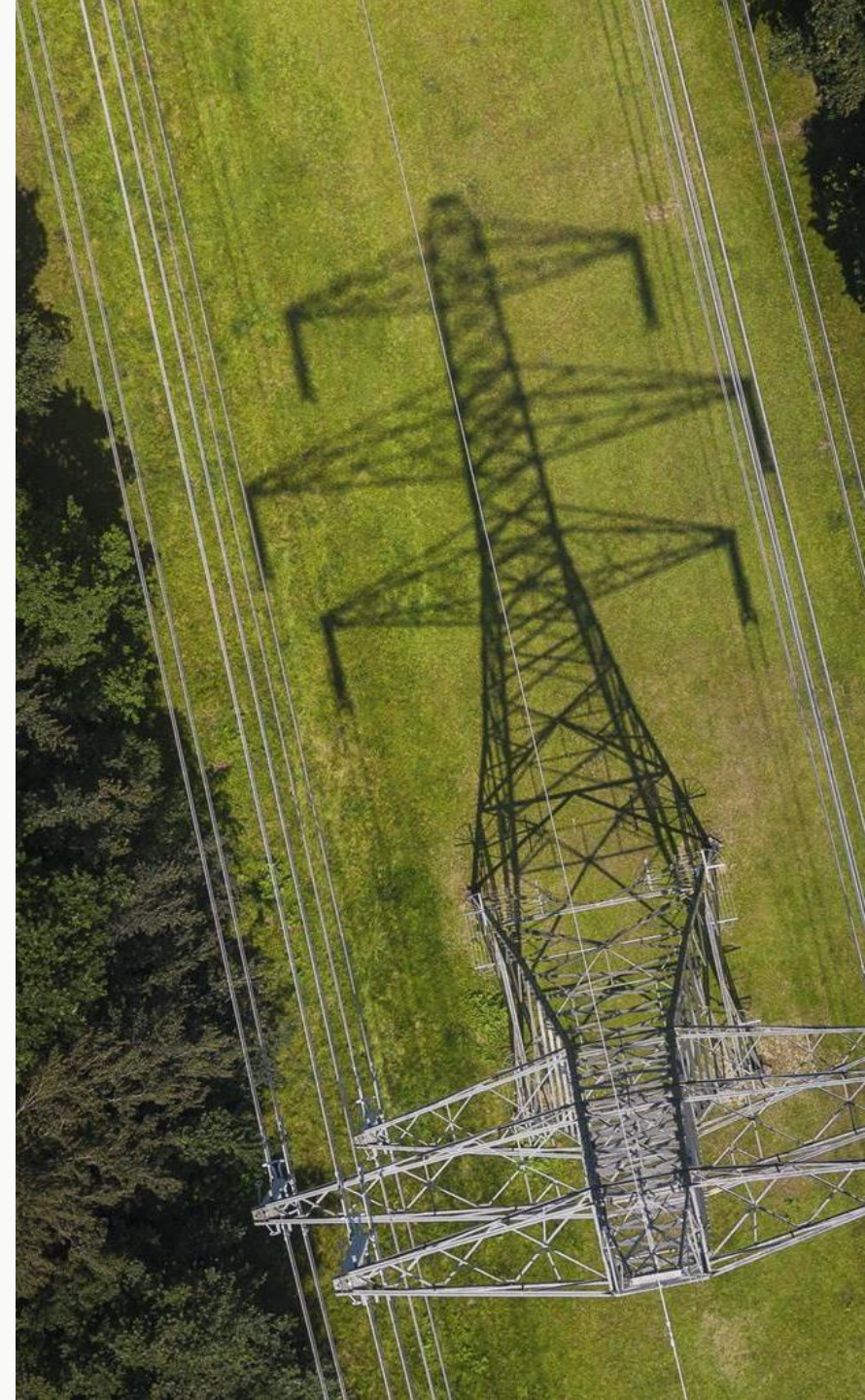
We need to double click on value for local residents.

- Value as structural interests
- Value as shared identity and culture (history)
- Value as multiple values that need to be balanced - green-on-green conflicts

Appreciate that values may be different from the neighbour, the municipal resident, the broader society

Current compensation schemes do not seem adequate

See protest not as the end - but the beginning of dialogue



Thank you for listening!

Christine Lunde Rasmussen
Global Head; Societal Impacts & Policy

+ 45 51 61 68 57

CHLU@ramboll.com

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