

(Dis)Embedding the Wind – on People-Climate Reconciliation in Danish Wind Power Planning

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Abstract: *The rationality of large scale deployment of wind energy to tackle climate change is entangled in the need for generating technological advancement, economic growth and social acceptance – the latter by supporting the reconciliation of local communities with green technologies, what we term as ‘people-climate reconciliation’. However, as challenges in practice, and a growing research in the field of ‘social acceptance’ of renewable energy have shown, the form of reconciliation at stake seems often to happen economically, spatially and democratically detached from the local host communities. This paper argues that the understanding of people-climate reconciliation, framing modern wind power developments, is problematic due to its underlying principles of Green Capitalism and the processes of alienation that it creates. Inspired by Polanyi’s concept of ‘dis-embedding’, i.e. the separation of economy from social relations, and Shiva’s concept of ‘living economy’, i.e. local and decentralized economy shaped by people in their everyday lives, the paper sheds light on what and who is being reconciled when deploying wind farms. Based on empirical data from a Danish case the hegemonic discourse on reconciliation framing renewable energy policies and practices of large wind farm developers is juxtaposed with a local counter-discourse. In doing so, the paper identifies rationales underlying a community-based counter-movement. The paper argues for a reconciliation of renewables with the life of local citizens based on enhanced ‘re-embedding’ of renewable energy developments into local culture and economy thereby considering dimensions of place-identity, equality and democracy.*

Keywords: Wind-energy, Discourse analysis, Green growth, Reconciliation, Alienation, Dis-embedding, Counter-movement

1. Introduction

Global climate change signals a danger that is often accompanied by apocalyptic imagination (Jay, 1994) of drought, melting icebergs, floods and declining biodiversity and that has cultivated ‘ecologies of fear’ (Davis, 1999). In response to this, faith has been placed in the competitiveness and efficiency of the market as the driving force for climate protection, mainly through renewable energy. Indeed, despite differences on views, opinions or positions (Hulme

2009) most politicians, business leaders, activists and scientific communities underline renewable energy technologies as the key answer to a global sustainability and the inevitability of market economy to deliver them (Swyngedouw, 2010). Hence, fear and uncertainty are transformed into targets for expanded investment – a so-called ‘commodification of uncertainties’ (Lohmann 2010, p. 226), where diverse types of uncertainty have been isolated and

linked with tradable global warming solutions. By stripping of ‘the climate problem’ its complex ‘reality’ and reframing it as a mainly economic problem awaiting a market response, green capitalism has navigated its “*internal contradictory relationship with nature*” (McCarthy 2015, p. 2497).

Within this neoliberal paradigm, wind energy has been advanced as a competitive energy source and an economic investment object. In line with the green growth imperative of sustainable development, the overall rationale of wind power development draws on a technocratic understanding of a people-climate reconciliation, which considers the construction of renewable energy markets as a solution not only to the environmental crisis, but also to local enhancements mainly by means of trickle-down effects (Kilbourne 1998, Brittain 2001; Spangenberg 2004, Cowell 2010). Concerning the latter, frequent local discontent about the siting of wind farms has shown that local protests cannot be detached from socio-economic conditions of affected communities. This has in turn made renewable energy policies, as well as corporate interests nurture ‘public acceptance’ of wind power development, by creating material enhancements from people-climate reconciliation in local communities (Aitken 2010; Phadke 2011). For instance, benefit-sharing through a (voluntary) redistribution of revenues from wind farms, in particular the creation of local funds to support local activities, has been increasingly implemented in order to create locally tangible benefits. Similarly, policy measures have been introduced in Denmark that specifically aim at enhancing local acceptance of wind turbines, e.g. by means of co-ownership (Anker & Jørgensen 2015). Yet, the question remains whether such political-corporate solutions for distributing profits provide an appropriate answer to reconciling a local socio-ecological balance. From a local perspective such initiatives could be seen as bribery (Aitken 2010) indicating that wind power as a heavy-weight of sustainable development may be locked in a tension between different discursive approaches to people-climate reconciliation and a growing alienation from local citizens towards renewables as a means to saving the planet and the global common good (Swyngedouw 2010; Morgan 2017).

In this paper we explore the storylines underlying counter-discourses of people-climate reconciliation

in Danish wind power deployment as they differ from a political-corporate discourse. As already described by Hegel (1948 [1798]), the aspiration of reconciliation can be seen as a “*middle course of beauty between the extremes*” (p. 232). Reconciliation works, in other words, towards the productive unification of extreme polarizations through what can, from a discursive perspective, be described as a rhetorical activity (Doxtader 2003). Being a crucial if not necessary element of democratization, reconciliation also contains the power of legitimizing existing political logics (Doxtader 2003, referring to Adorno 1973) – hence creating forms of spatial (Lefebvre 1991; Buchecker 2009; Clausen 2017) and political alienation (Eliasoph 1998; Southwell 2012) as well as the power of deliberation (Boraine 2000) and the base for (re)making the terms of collective life and the local common good (Doxtader 2003). As noticed also by Arendt (1954), processes of reconciliation might lead to a productive understanding of the past, but it might also create fatalistic resignation and justification of totalitarianism, thus having the ability to promote alienation.

In this paper we deal with reconciliation of people and climate (society and nature), as a rhetorical activity with implications for social practice, i.e. discourse is not regarded as simply reflecting social contexts, but also as constitutive of these (Fairclough, 1992). Drawing on reconciliation as a concept with an ambivalent identity, and using empirical data from one Danish wind farm case, the main purpose of the paper is to identify and compare different configurations of people-climate reconciliation, i.e. the local storylines as opposed to the hegemonic neoliberal discourse of wind power development. In this respect, the ambition of the paper is to unpack and compare the underlying notion of people-climate reconciliation within the hegemonic green growth discourse, with local perspectives in order to ask what exactly is being ‘reconciled’ and how when wind farms are deployed locally.

In doing so, we draw on the work of Karl Polanyi (2001 [1944]) to make sense of local counter-narratives. The argument is that the commodification of wind and land as a central action to save the planet and benefit local communities (i.e. a political-corporate discourse on reconciliation unifying capitalist appropriation of nature with saving both global (climate) and local (community) chal-

enges) clashes with a Polanyian 'counter-movement' of societal self-defense. This 'counter-movement' describes the inevitability of local protective forms of resistance to excessive commodifications driven by Laissez Faire rationality. As we will show, a tension towards a neoliberal discourse appears to be working through mechanisms of 'dis-embedding' – a detachment of the economic dimension from the social and physical context, and local residents' demand for balancing or 're-embedding' local climate change actions in local contexts. Moreover, we will show that the process of dis-embedding from the productive resources of the local landscape is co-constituted by a spatial and political alienation of local people. Based on this finding, we advocate a 're-embedding' and deliberative planning approach that moves beyond merely legitimizing modes of reconciliation inherent in green capitalism, toward an approach that recognizes renewable energy as an opportunity for strengthening decentralized, sustainable and livelihood-generating economies, i.e. living economies (Shiva 2005) and lived space (Lefebvre 1991) of local communities.

We draw our arguments on a case study of a proposed wind farm project in Northern Denmark. We conducted 27 semi-structured interviews related to this case (15 with local citizens, 7 with the developer, 5 with politicians and planners). Furthermore, the lead author conducted a desk-based analysis of documents including policy papers, technical reports, scientific articles, newspaper articles, popular magazines and promotional material from wind farm developers. The data collection took place between 2015 and 2017, and the analysis was based on a qualitative content analysis a) highlighting the issues raised by the interviewees, and b) comparing interview material with the content of relevant documents to carve out arguments suggesting a common understanding.

The remainder of the paper unfolds as follows: First, we describe the dominant discourse on reconciliation in wind power deployment before setting the scene for the storylines of a counter-discourse by outlining theoretical notions. Then we describe the case, which is followed by a detailed presentation of the storylines constituting the counter-discourse. Finally, we discuss and contextualize our findings on people-climate reconciliation.

2. Dominant Discourses on Reconciliation in Wind Power Development

2.1 Policies

Wind power is a vital part of the European Union's 2020 renewable targets (European Commission 2017). To ensure its continued development European policies support a strategy where wind energy is made commercially competitive with conventional energy technologies. A Green Paper produced by the European Commission in 2006 recognized that: "*For renewable energy to fulfill its potential, the policy framework needs to be supportive and in particular to stimulate increasing competitiveness of such energy sources (...)*" (European Commission 2006, p. 12). Similarly, a consultative communication for a new energy market design recognized the need to make European power markets "*fit for renewables*" (European Commission 2015, p. 7).

In terms of national targets, Danish climate policies are among the most ambitious in the world (Danish Government 2011). Denmark has the aim to become non-reliant on fossil fuels by 2050 (Danish Government 2011) and a liberalized energy market is presented as the main strategy to achieve this goal (Energy and Transport Ministry, 2005; Danish Government 2011). This is considered particularly relevant to wind power as the most advanced and market-ready renewable energy. Thus, ambitions for wind power were emphasized in the latest energy strategy from 2011 through the intent to give "*the Danish companies good opportunities to exploit the green growth potential by strengthening the link between innovation, production and marketing of new technology for the benefit of Danish export*" (Danish Government 2011, p. 47). In order to promote further development, the Energy Policy Agreement 2008 (Danish Energy Agency, 2008) contained a number of resolutions to improve the feed-in tariff for electricity from new wind turbines. Moreover, the Renewable Energy Act of 2009 introduced different policy measures aimed at enhancing local acceptance of new wind turbine projects (Anker & Jørgensen 2015) by means of benefit-sharing (e.g. mandatory offer of 20% local co-ownership; green scheme allowing wind farm hosting municipalities to apply for grants benefitting communities) and compensatory measures (for neighbor's loss of property value). In practice, the agreement on co-ownership and the green scheme are often emphasized as a

proactive way of nurturing social acceptance through financial participation, and the opportunity to apply for grants is proclaimed to illustrate how the installation of wind turbines incorporates and pervades the local economy.

2.2 Wind Industry

In parallel to the political initiatives to combine market mechanisms with policies to nurture public acceptance, the wind power industry has increasingly co-shaped the consensus on the precariousness of a socio-ecologic balance. While statements confirm the need for a competitive manufacturing base for renewable energy technologies, attention is also paid to the reconciliation of wind power with environmental and socio-economic objectives. For instance, Wind Europe (formerly European Wind Energy Association) has repeatedly stressed the need for wider public acceptance. The reason for this interest tends to remain rather one-sided in economic terms and relates to the acknowledgement that *"any obstacle that slows down a wind farm project costs time and money to a developer – and delays the environmental and economic benefits both the local and wider community will get from the wind farm"* (Azau 2011, p. 30). Thus, Wind Europe supports several EU-funded projects and initiatives which assist with best practice guidance by collecting current knowledge and promoting local acceptance of wind farms. A central means to gain greater acceptance is through the urge that 'wind energy should deliver a multitude of benefits to communities' (Wind Europe, 2018). Not only is wind energy expected to be sustainable in its greenest understanding of the word, it also 'creates local jobs, wealth and economic revival, it helps fight climate change and improves our energy security'. Hence, *"renting out land for wind farms can provide income, but also taxes from a wind energy business can be used for social and cultural services in the community, and a wind project might also provide local infrastructure improvements such as roads and electricity transmission lines"* (Wind Europe 2018).

In line with the political and organizational attention, corporate energy companies have also increasingly shown interest in the human-ecological dimension. For instance, Vattenfall, one of the leading wind power companies in Europe, has recently proclaimed a central aim to be *"successful in sustainable communities and cities by developing*

long-standing relationships and new business models through partnerships and cooperation" (Vattenfall 2015, p. 18 and p. 21). Hence, stressing how *"local acceptance and mutual trust in addition to safeguarding biodiversity are crucial for [the developer's] licence to operate as well as for the success of new projects and existing operations"* (Vattenfall 2015, p. 46). For example, Vattenfall has promoted its ability to boost the local economy through 'green' job creation, engaging in stakeholder dialogue, establishing community funds to support local activities and invested in local tourism industry (Vattenfall 2015, p. 28-30; Vattenfall 2016, p. 12-14). Stressing the potential for generating public acceptance, the company says it is *"committed to understanding environmental impacts and delivering world-class community engagement (...) more deeply than we are obliged to"* (Vattenfall 2016, p. 5). In sum, while the wind industry auspiciously acknowledges a necessary reconciliation of wind farms with the local context, their activism appears to be primarily founded in economic rationales and driven by the necessity to create greater acceptability.

3. 'Disembedding' of Economy from Place in Wind Farm Deployment

In order to capture the dynamic nature of individual and collective responses to the political-economic discourse on people-climate reconciliation it is instructive to draw on a socio-economic perspective outlined by Karl Polanyi (2001)) and further developed by Vandana Shiva (2005). According to Polanyi a fundamental feature of industrialization and the changing nature of the market society is the process of 'dis-embedding'. The concept of 'dis-embedding' describes that economic dynamics or rationality have become independent and detached from cultural and natural conditions in the local physical and social contexts where economic activity takes place. As economy becomes separated from the local community-based 'householding', and markets and trade relations begin to spread, more social and interpersonal relationships (production, service, education, culture, family, nature etc.) get replaced, displaced or dominated by market economic systems, thereby altering the character of the local life coherence. Following Polanyi (2001), dis-embedding is a major cause of the erosion of cohesion in local communities, but also a reason for protest. Thus, Polanyi points to the situation where it is impos-

sible for a market society to be established, because people resist being dis-embedded and turned into commodities while demanding protection instead. This is what Polanyi describes as a 'double movement', i.e. the marketization of inevitably produces a protective counter-movement that insists on shelter from the damaging effects of the market while striving for an alternative – the democratic reinstitution of economy in local society and nature (Adaman et al. 2003), also described by Shiva in her concept of 'living-economy' (Shiva, 2005, p. 63-64). Following Shiva, robust living economies are people-centered, decentralized, sustainable and livelihood-generating, encompassing all the activities that restore and renew people's daily life. Thus, in order for the economy to create a sustainable relationship with nature, it must be reinstated under social control.

The 'dis-embedding' forces of the market and reactionary 'double movement' are also implicitly reflected in the conceptualization of local protests against wind farm developments as place-protective responses to the imminent disruption of place attachment and identity (Devine-Wright 2009, Devine-Wright & Howes 2010, Devine-Wright 2013). While policy-makers and developers in wind power planning often misrecognize the various ways in which local communities can be affected by the siting of renewable infrastructures, place-based approaches indicate that local residents may not only protest against large infrastructures due to matters of procedural justice or the capitalist appropriation of land. But, they also protest against the disruption, annihilation and dis-embedding of the history, identity and social composition of local places and thus their alienation from changing places. The theoretical conjunction of disruptions of place identity and attachment with the concept of economic 'dis-embedding' allows for a sharpened recognition of counter-narratives on people-climate reconciliation within and through the practices of wind power deployment.

4. Case

The wind power project discussed in this paper consists of up to 40 new turbines with a total capacity of 140 MW proposed by one of Europe's largest energy companies – roughly equivalent to the annual electricity consumption of 110,000 households.

The site is situated between two small communities in northern rural Denmark. The area has already hosted 13 wind turbines (30 MW) owned by the same company, which would then result in 53 wind turbines.

Prior to the submission of the planning application in spring 2016, the developer had spent several years negotiating with different land and property owners in order to make agreements for either leasing farmland or buying and demolishing several properties once consent has been granted, which resulted in the closedown of two smaller communities. The company announced its intentions to be a good neighbor at an early stage. Therefore, the company's purchasing offer would be maintained, if those people, who had declined to sell earlier, changed their minds once the wind farm is completed. It was also proclaimed that the installation of the turbines creates a win-win-situation. Not only would the project make a significant contribution to the overall global sustainability, it would also do the residents a favor by offering them the opportunity to move away from an area that has been described as marginal and declining. Furthermore, it was highlighted that the project would create new jobs and income (through local craft industries, service industries, retailing, accommodation, suppliers of gravel and sand etc.) thereby bringing growth to the region. This was considered as a more long-term investment in an otherwise stagnant region, in addition to the formal offer of at least 20% co-ownership shares in the project. Additionally, it was estimated that the payment from the Green Fund could bring up to 12.3 million DKK for local initiatives. As described by a spokesperson of the energy company:

"We do it because it makes things move up to a higher level. We solve the problem with unsaleable properties in outlying areas, we are solving the problem with critical neighbors of wind turbines, and we make it easier to get contracts for the installation of wind turbines through the municipalities, because we help them with the development of the stagnant areas" (Korsager, 2017).

By the time the application was submitted, local protests had been going on for years. One local protest group disseminated leaflets and prepared objection letters to facilitate representations to the council. Another local group began to bring their own wind turbine project forward. This initiative

emerged from a public meeting at one of the local schools under threat of closure, whilst provocatively asking whether a wind turbine could save the school. At this meeting, the fringe and marginalization issue of the area was put into perspective of the renewable energy framing, and the participants were asked: "*what do you think wind turbines should earn money for?*" Despite a poor attendance, the meeting gained some media attention. As a direct response, the energy company also went to the media and offered 50% local co-ownership of the project. This statement was under the newspaper heading "*Our turbines benefit the community*" and the communications director stated:

"This calls for local ownership of about 50%, and it is actually cost price. And when we are engaged in the construction phase, then about a third of construction costs will also go to the local area. So this will largely be a matter of local involvement and ownership" (Energy-Supply, 2015).

It soon turned out, however, that the local residents should not expect more shares than the 20%, since the other 30% would go to eight landowners in the area, who would have the turbines on their land. In the eyes of the energy company, these landowners also represented the local community and were therefore included in the 50%. In response to this misunderstanding, the local community wind power group quickly gathered over 800 residents and a wide range of local associations that supported the development of an alternative shared-ownership project. In contrast to the project planned by the energy company this model would be owned by local residents on a cooperative basis, and all profits from the turbines would benefit the local area. A long series of negotiations between developers, local authorities and citizens followed and the process ended with the intention of a cooperative solution for the community allowing a shared or partial ownership of the turbines. Thus, the members of the cooperative agreed that if the energy company should have turbines in the area, the local community should also have their own turbines, which would allow for higher revenues for community development than the 20% individual shares in the project.

This short description indicates that the oppositional and alternative efforts of the local community tell a different story from the one the developer conveys

and from what policies try to achieve. The following sections will illuminate the underlying storylines of the counter-discourse produced by community members.

5. Empirical Storylines

5.1 *The Eroding Community*

One central storyline is linked to the erosion of the local community. In their descriptions of their place attachment people referred to transformations of the area from a functioning place dominated by the two main professions, farming and fishing, to a marginal area ridden by unemployment and social divisions. The industrialization of farming and the accumulation of land by fewer and fewer landowners had not only changed the use and appearance of the land (bigger fields and more open landscapes), but also the social composition of the place and community. Thus, interviewees reported on the average age getting older and how people are no longer engaged with each other in the same way they did before. The lack of prioritization from the municipality was regarded as having further contributed to a fragmented society, as described by a woman who reasoned the local resistance against the wind farm project with the general experience of being abandoned:

"They (the municipality) are forgetting us. There are huge potholes and poor public transport and lack of bike lanes, but they just do not care. We simply do not count out here. If we had something in return, we might well accept them (the wind turbines), but as it is now, we just have to endure the turbines, while they (the municipality) cannot even put up a cell tower or a fiber network" (interview, citizen).

While the community perceived itself as increasingly becoming socially eroded, an ambivalent observation of the area as being particularly suitable for wind turbines also emerged. Respondents who have lived in the area for decades reported how they actually liked the idea of the area being used for something useful. As the meadows had always been a part of agriculture, the use of the area for renewables somehow contributed to maintaining continuity in the area, as explained by a man who had lived in the area since 1971:

"When the landscape became industrialized, it opened up for another use. Previously the meadow down there was part of agriculture. This was where the cattle grazed ... But as agriculture changed and no longer needed the meadow it proved to be perfect for a large wind farm" (interview, citizen).

The perceived decay of social and economic cohesion did however make the enthusiasm decline. Hence, the establishment of an internationally owned wind farm did not appear as the desired solution to the social and economic erosion, but rather as intensifying a negative development. The buying up of houses had left the social community even more eroded, and the physical leftovers – the empty houses, robbed of everything of value (windows, doors and wooden fences) - made the impression of ‘open scars’ in the landscape and depopulation visible. Most respondents believed that the establishment of a large wind farm would negatively affect the prices of the properties making it even harder to sell a house in the area, and the promise of economic regional growth appeared implausible for neighbors. The claimed facts underlying this evaluation were based on the experiences from other areas: wind power companies using their own services and the wind turbines being manufactured elsewhere. Further, the idea of selling one’s house was not unequivocally seen as an advantageous choice. On the one hand, there was an awareness of the area’s difficult conditions. On the other hand, most people are historically and emotionally attached to the area. The decision to sell a home or even move away from the area was therefore often presented as a choice between ‘plague or cholera’. As described by a middle-aged farmer who sold his house to the company, but at the same time suffered from the certainty that he had to move away from the meadows where his family had lived for generations:

"[The village] is removed from the map ... I had never considered moving away from here, but I said yes because the alternative was to get wind turbines on all sides of the property, and how realistic is it then to sell it in 15 years?" (interview, citizen).

5.2 Inequality

Another overall storyline was related to the deemed inequality of the project. In general, people feared that profits from the turbines would fall into the

hands of a foreign firm as well as a few local landowners. As part of this view the developer was criticized for its cooperation with the big farmers in the area. This was founded in the fact that the developer had engaged landowners early on in order to secure access to the land while the wider community had mostly been excluded from the early process. In particular, some neighbors resented the few major landowners for being used as local representatives by the company when presenting the proposal for 50% ownership to the community. In the eyes of the local residents, these farmers were not representing the local community, but were instead seen as local developers gilded by the project at the expense of other residents.

Moreover, some community members feared they would not even get the 20% shares to which they were entitled through the co-ownership policy, because the energy company was blamed to have corporate rules marginalizing citizens. The same distrust was directed at the municipality being accused of speculating for the Green Scheme. Based on experiences from other wind farm projects indicating that benefits from the Green Scheme were not necessarily redirected to the affected communities also casted doubt on the meaning of the economic benefit. Furthermore, since such funds were considered negligible compared to the overall circulation of money, the entire monetary game was described as a form of ‘blood money’ or ‘bribery’, which was in no way compensating for the change of place. This understanding was not only directed to supportive local residents, but also led to accusations of the municipality as being naive to believe in the wind turbine project as an engine for economic growth. Thus, the suspicion arose that the foreign company did not pay local taxes to benefit the municipality, as described in an open letter from the community energy group to the municipal officials:

"We are living in a remote area, fed with very little resources from society - we are told that we are ‘too expensive to be kept alive’. Now, we finally have a resource that may exactly bring innovation and create new self-preservation, but we are, by some smart players – in this case X (the energy company) - forced to dispense this resource and mutely accept that everyday life must now be bothered by one more load, the impacts of 53 wind turbines, while being compensated with a lump sum of pennies from the RE Act green fund. With

money in our hands and the buying up of the land, X (the energy company) is creating an atmosphere that it is perfectly acceptable to make a ruthless exploitation of the natural area" (Olsen, 2016).

In particular, the social disruption generated by the project was seen as creating a particularly adverse situation. Interviewees depicted how the condition of big landowners benefitting financially from the project, while others did not, had created unfriendly relations between neighbors and had become a delicate matter due to the involvement of relatives. This was described by a man who was one of the initiators of the community wind power project and who had been met with opposition from other neighbors when speaking negatively about the energy company project:

"At the meeting in the village hall there were actually some locals who tried to stop me from copying my discussion paper. They thought it would ruin the meeting, where we were supposed to talk only about the major wind turbine project, and they were related to someone who would have an advantage of it" (interview, citizen).

5.3 Dialogue

The local skepticism also included a critique of the application of public engagement methods. The allure of the energy company being at the forefront of the process and preparing the process very carefully strengthened the feeling of being duped in a process where the goal was already determined. For instance, the practice of sending employees around in the area to knock on doors to get people to sign purchase contracts for their properties was described as particularly creepy, as mentioned by a woman, who had been told not to circulate the contract once it had been signed as the company would otherwise step back from the agreement:

"It's like death walking around knocking on doors with a contract. Only if the house burns down to the ground or you do not say anything you can get money for your house. Actually, we did not want to sell, but what choice do we really have? It's like the choice to stay right next to the turbines or move somewhere else" (interview, citizen).

The use of public meetings did not improve the

situation. Instead, meetings had led to a feeling of domination by a marked-driven tale of sustainability leaving no room for other approaches. Even more so, the general experience of being labelled as troublemakers and opponents of green energy had evoked a negative self-image and the feeling of a limited democratic space. This was described by a member of the wind community group, who not only articulated the difficulty in gaining recognition for other visions than the techno-economic one, but also the feeling of being challenged in terms of lacking resources and an organized community in the early phases of the process:

"When you talk against the big giants, it is as if you are against wind energy. They have just taken out a patent for what it means to be sustainable. What we mean by sustainability does not have a leg to stand on, and it is also because people have found it difficult to stand together. People are not organized and they have almost given up in advance, and I understand that. We are not activists. We do not have the resources to fight the case. We do not even have the language to fight this" (interview, citizen).

Not least, the experience of the energy company trying to suffocate resistance with money and friendliness was described as utterly undemocratic. Buying its way out of the protest instead of pursuing a democratic dialogue did, together with the constant articulation of the advantages of selling one's house, turn into a feeling of giving up from the start:

"When X (the energy company) begins to manipulate its will, we as a community are so vulnerable that we do not think we have the resources to resist. Our communities have lost confidence in ourselves and in the municipality from the beginning and since we predict that our properties become worthless, we feel forced to sell, hoping to get away with at least keeping our end up" (Olsen, 2016).

5.4 The Cooperative Ideal

The idea of an energy cooperative emerged as an alternative storyline to general descriptions about the wind power project as being deeply destructive to a local community. Thus, the objective of the cooperative was presented to 'ensure local ownership of wind turbines [as] a local, non-profit foundation whose purpose would be to support local develop-

ment in the region' (Olsen 2016). In contrast to the compensation offered by the energy company, the strength of the cooperative model is in 'making all stakeholders in the project to winners' including the affected community (Olsen & Christiansen 2017). In doing so, and 'by ensuring local development', the community-based project was supposed to 'restore a balance in the local area, allowing the area to still appear as a community that has a value for the residents/.../' (Olsen & Christiansen 2017). A key rationale for the initiative was the support of the project from both citizens and local associations that had emerged during the process. Inspired from the Danish cooperative culture it was highlighted, how profits from the proposed cooperative fund should contribute to the development and maintenance of local culture, sports and business (Olsen & Christiansen 2017).

Based on this belief both the municipality and the energy company had been told that local support for the establishment of more wind turbines in the area was linked to the criterion of satisfactory community ownership of 'our own wind resources' in the form of additional turbines managed in a local non-profit foundation (Olsen 2016). In the eyes of the community energy group this also outlined an ownership model that could inspire future wind power planning. By gaining local acceptance through greater involvement of local communities and consideration of their needs, large onshore wind farm projects could be implemented, not because the developer purchases a large number of properties, but because citizens supported an initiative to an economically sustainable development of the area, as stated in a newspaper article:

"X (energy company) has nothing to brag about in the media before they will have put their signature onto [agreement] that the community in the area gets its own turbines and that the community is allowed to offer their 20 percent neighbor-shares. The day X agrees to this model, we can praise them to go ahead with a successful model and not one day earlier" (Olsen & Christiansen 2017).

6. Discussion

The case presented in this paper reflects the ambiguous nature of reconciliation in wind power

development from a local and political-corporate perspective. A fundamental difference identified between the dominant neoliberal solution to wind power development and the substance of the local counter-movement becomes visible through antagonistic discourses on economy. Whilst the discourse of Green Capitalism works through dis-embedding mechanisms and contributes to a growing economic, spatial and political alienation of local residents, the one resonating with the narratives of local citizens is based on a democratic re-embedding of renewable development into local economy and society, hence in accordance with the concept of a 'living economy' (Shiva 2005). Consequently, we argue that a reconciliation of climate and society cannot be achieved solely by relying on neoliberal and technocratic approaches, i.e. the efforts of corporate companies to provide for less vulnerable infrastructures, economies and communities. Instead, reconciliation of renewables with the life of local citizens must also incorporate a social dimension of equality and democracy. This argument will be further elaborated by juxtaposing the two discourses of people-climate reconciliation, and discussing the economic dis-embedding, and their spatially and politically alienating consequences, as well as reflecting upon the deliberative and place-restoring rationales of the counter-movement.

6.1 Economic Dis-Embedding

An overall pattern in the local storylines is one of economic alienation as an effect of local people being 'dis-embedded' from their own histories and perceptions of the environment through a continuous detachment of economy from both society and nature (Polanyi 1944). Globalization, capitalization and new forms of production and spatial specializations that turn nature merely into a resource and commodity for unknown consumers are central elements to this situation (Dickens 1997), to which the described wind power project adds another layer. From an economic perspective local residents may be said to be dis-embedded and hence alienated from the productive resources of their local landscape when renewable energy corporations come in and appropriate their resources and in some ways 'sell them back' to the residents on terms that are perceived as unfair. This creates a situation where economic activity is constituted as a separate and distinct sphere, with its own logics

and laws for labour, land and money, that remains abstracted from other aspects of human activity (Adaman et al. 2003).

In the described case this situation is most evident in the prioritization of landownership where those with land are given the possibility to earn more (through leasing or selling their land to the energy company), while other individuals can only buy themselves into the projects through the acquisition of shares (Jaquet 2015, Rudolph & Kirkegaard 2018). This situation can lead to grudge and rifts among local residents, hence reinforcing rather than mitigating local resistance against wind turbines (Gross 2007, Hindmarch & Matthews 2008). Similarly, even in political corporative initiatives to reconcile the economic dynamics of tackling climate change with the broader local economic development this only seems to emphasize the detachment of economy from society and nature, thereby strengthening feelings of alienation among local residents. Whilst the political corporate rhetoric includes an acknowledgement that the road to a positive attitude to wind power is directly linked to the support of the local community, the recognition of the local context by means of compensations, co-ownership or local funds does not make up for the detachment of the local community from the wider green economic growth. In the described case, the establishment of a municipal fund did neither fully counterbalance the perceived economic inequality induced by economic profit being mainly created outside the community, nor did it solve the problem of these revenues not being produced by the community itself. As benefits are mainly attained indirectly through the political will and the goodwill of the developer to distribute commercial profits locally, the economic dimension remains separate from other domains of social life in the sense that any economic initiatives are not thoroughly integrated in the structure of the local economy.

Hence, as noticed by previous research (e.g. Bristow et al. 2012, Cass et al. 2010, Kerr et al. 2017), the main function of the political corporate discourse appears first and foremost as a legitimizing maneuver to address public resistance, without truly embracing the interests and needs of the community. Community interests are respected through the allocation of various forms of ‘benefits’, even though in carefully measured and controlled dosages. As also noticed

by Cowell et al. (2011), the employed ‘community benefit’ mechanism does, from this perspective, not entail a real shift in the direction of a genuine concern for the survival of a marginalized community. It rather becomes a tool to justify an intensified exploitation and enclosure of its natural resources, which reproduces the neoliberal green growth logic to fix climate change (McCarthy 2015, Kenis & Lievens 2016). Following Sachs (1992), who has formulated a sharp critique of the prevailing ecological discourse, this trajectory of reconciling climate protection with local interests can therefore be seen to serve primarily as a basis for an enhanced mastery of nature. Although subsidies and other monetary incentives can push the development in a desired sustainable direction, the instrumental rationale for community benefits can obscure other and equally important justifications; the role of community benefits in promoting environmental justice and how they may better serve the long-term sustainability of wind farm developments (Cowell et al. 2011) and the livelihood of a community.

6.2 Spatial and Political Alienation

The dis-embedding of the local community does not only go hand in hand with an economic alienation from the productive use of the local environment, but also entails a spatial and political alienation. As shown in various studies, spatial alienation encompasses both material and social elements and refers to a dispossession of individuals from both the productive constitution of a place as well as their withdrawal from the social community (Lefebvre 1991, Buchecker 2009, Clausen 2017). Hence, in its substantive sense, alienation from land means the transfer of ownership and property rights, which can then also result in psychological alienation through a loss of sense of belonging (Olwig 2005). In our case it appears that the developer approach to reconcile renewables and society misrecognizes that the landscape or ‘space’ is not a neutral subject of strategic planning, but is itself shaped by social relations. As Lefebvre’s work reminds us, “*space is a social product*” (Lefebvre 1991:24). It is not simply “there”, a neutral container waiting to be filled, but is a dynamic, humanly constructed space – a ‘lived space’ constituted through people’s day-to-day experience and associated images and symbols (Lefebvre 1991). Our case shows how the transformation and enclosure of land, the dislocation of some residents

and an uneven distribution of benefits and losses have led to a rupture of a historically grown community that could not be sufficiently compensated by an additional distribution of monetary means by the developer. The division of a community between those who may profit through landownership and those who do not have the opportunity to gain something has created mistrust and social tensions. Hence, the upheaval of social relationships in addition to the uncertainty immanent in already ongoing changes to the socio-material constitution of place engenders fears and feelings of grief and loss and hereby further adds to the 'disruption' or 'threat' of place attachment (e.g. Devine-Wright 2009, Devine-Wright & Howes 2010) already present among residents. Even more so, the hegemonic discourse on reconciliation "*does injustice to the community's capabilities of self-definition and self-determination*" (Rudolph & Kirkegaard 2018, p. 16) as well as their place attachments, a practice which has previously been referred to as the 'colonization of attachment' (Groves 2015) and 'energy colonialism' (Batel & Devine-Wright 2017). Hence, the energy company's interweaving of the capitalization of natural resources with the position of being far-sighted, while positioning opposition as deviant (Aitken 2010), creates contours of dis-embedding through a 'colonization', not only of the physical land area through the purchase of properties, but also a colonization of people's attachment to the place (Groves 2015). This leads to what Wacquant (2008, p. 241) describes as the 'dissolution of place' meaning the loss of a humanized, culturally familiar and socially filtered locale that provides a home, security and sense of belonging.

In the case in question, the colonialization of place attachment is further reinforced by the political alienation developed among residents. As described in various studies, political alienation, or a more general estrangement from the political system (Citrin 1977), can emerge from a sense of not sharing the values and attitudes of the societal group controlling political institutions (Haslam et al. 1999). Others define political alienation as lack of political trust and low efficacy (Levi and Stoker 2000, Hetherington & Husser 2012) - a situation inviting resistance by marginalized groups (Kriesi et al. 2006, Holmes, 2007).

In our case, political alienation emerges as a consequence of the limited capabilities of the political-corporate strategy to reconcile green growth rationales with local society. Even though there are policy instruments to create some sort of democratic space (i.e. the public hearing), this space is not capable of embracing the complexity of people's life world concerns. Instead of offering opportunities, moments and channels for citizens to exert influence on decisions that affect their everyday lives, a 'closed' space' (Gaventa 2006) emerges which does not allow for broadening out the boundaries to include life world perspectives. Moreover, abstract and quantitative forms of reasoning push aside tacit knowledge and lay understandings that may not be easily articulated in spoken, written or quantified forms (Dickens 1997) and result in feelings of injustice, anger, frustration and alienation from the technical-scientific jargon inherent in the green growth discourse (e.g. Feldpausch-Parker & Peterson 2014). Hence, the presented case also illustrates how the lack of genuine commitment affects the attitudes of the local residents. The fact that corporate-focused policies on reconciliation are met with outright suspicion and accusations of bribery seems to confirm how "*issues over perceived or actual ownership of wind power schemes and the distribution of benefits are influential in shaping the level and nature of local opposition or acceptance*" (Ellis et al. 2009, p.528). The issue of reconciliation cannot, from a local perspective, be solved by monetary compensations alone, but rather by means of a meaningful unification of global climate agendas with local influence and sustainability. This also hints at limitations of the energy company's practices and the supporting policies to recognize the importance of energy democracy as a crucial element of energy transition (Morris & Jungjohann 2016). On a practical level, this misrecognition has the consequence that the 'transformative potential' (McGee 2004, p. 16) inherent in the visions of the local storylines remains locked. Instead of striving for creating something new together with the community, i.e. energize spaces for deliberative debate about the form and substance of collective life - the democratic potential (Doxtader 2003) inherent in the political-corporate reconciliation approach remains limited to the legitimization of the capitalist appropriation of natural resources - the wind and the local landscape.

6.3 The Counter-Movement

Part of the local resistance and counter narrative in the presented case may be said to react towards this forced alienation that companies have brought upon them, including a resistance to the various actions to reconcile renewable technologies and society. Thus, the oppositional activities by residents can be explained as place-protective responses to avoid further economic dis-embedding, democratic alienation and disruption of place-related continuity (Fried 1992, Devine-Wright 2009, Devine-Wright & Howes 2010). Even more so, the initiative to mobilize greater local anchoring and revenues through a cooperatively owned wind power project represents efforts to overcome this dis-embedding, providing an alternative concept of reconciling people with the productive and social resources of their community. This initiative can also be regarded as a place-restorative effort deviating from reactionary particularism seen elsewhere. While anti-wind power movements are often accused of carrying conservative notions of place and nature (Phadke 2011, Mels 2014), the described case did not confirm any defensive or exclusionary localism opposing more universal goals. Instead of being a victim of instrumental economic optimization and dis-embedding strategies legitimized through a trickle-down reconciliation of local communities with global climate goals, people started fighting together for a re-embedding strategy where issues of equality, collaboration, empowerment and local democratic self-governance, were brought forward through wind cooperative ideals. It is therefore also possible to speak of a counter-movement in Polanyian terms, where the forces of economic liberalism seeking to spread and expand in the local area were met by a backlash from society. The recognition of the risk that the community ceased to be a community if the economic dimension was eroded gave rise to a sense of certainty about the need to strengthen the revival of the common life context, an effort, which the corporate wind farm project was not destined to achieve. Following Shiva (2005), this therefore also reveals the contours of a 'living economy' where economy, culture and nature are not outside, but rather integrated or 're-embedded' (Polanyi 2001) in the community. In contrast to the political-corporate discourse, representing a global, marked-driven and centralized approach, the envisioned living economy rendered visible through the storylines of residents were primarily local and decentralized, building on

people's creativity, self-organization and ownership.

7. Conclusion

The main purpose of this paper has been to identify and compare different contours of people-climate reconciliation in a specific case of Danish wind power development, i.e. the local storylines and how they deviate from the dominant green economy discourse. A fundamental difference lies in antagonistic discourses of economy – the one of Green Capitalism working through dis-embedding mechanisms versus a living economy based on an enhanced re-embedding of renewable development into local culture, economy and democracy. Instead of reconciling a people-climate relation through supporting the integration of renewables with a strong democratic agenda and respect for the broader local life context, the hegemonic green growth discourse seemed to reinforce mechanisms of economic, spatial and political alienation thereby widening the gap between local citizens and larger climate goals. Hence, what was being reconciled seemed merely to be the contradictory relationship of marked economy with nature through a political-corporate appropriation and enclosure of wind resources and the local landscape as the solution to both global climate change and local socio-economic decline. Particularly counter-productive in this regard appeared to be the misrecognition of the importance to support the transformative potential inherent in the place identity of local residents and their desire for democratic influence on their life-context. In the lack of acknowledging the significance of the inter-relatedness of local economy, place attachment and democratic foundations for wind power development (i.e. providing local citizens with an influential voice to unfold and incorporate the broader local values at stake), the formation of a local counter-movement can be seen as a protection from excessive commodification as well as a direct response to the deficient political-corporate approach to reconcile a marked-driven approach to save the climate with local cultural, economic and democratic development. In this regard, the local suggestions for cooperatively owned wind power represent efforts of overcoming the forced alienation evoked by corporate initiatives.

The concurrent finding that the local counter-movement did not embody an opposition to wind power,

but to the capitalization of local natural resources and the dis-embedding of the local economy from the local life context hints at the need to energize democratic spaces for collective debates about what it means to live a just and good life within energy transition processes (Miner 2009, Moss et al. 2015, Morris & Jungjohann 2016, Becker & Naumann 2017). Thus, this case from Denmark illustrates the ambivalent identity of reconciliation (Doxtader 2003) – legitimizing existing (in this case political-corporate) agendas vis-a-vis opening up potentials for social innovation. If reconciliation between global climate issues and local interests should be strengthened, communities need support in addressing climate change instead of being colonized by large corporate energy companies. This requires

new standards for deliberative dialogue where the value of citizens' point of views is acknowledged and given a space to unfold instead of bought for silence. On a different level, this also requires us to scrutinize the appropriateness of the current hegemonic Green Growth imperative that tends to reinforce the alienation of local citizens from the productive and social resources of their local landscape in order to equally conciliate local economic challenges - including a susceptibility of new forms of ownership. A local democratic self-governance has potential to achieve a re-embedding of wind energy projects in communities and may thus be a promising path to reconcile renewable energy developments with local culture and economy that deserves further exploration.

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