Nearshore Wind Resistance on Denmark's Renewable Energy Island: Not Another NIMBY Story

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Abstract

The Danish island Samsø is world-famous as Denmark's Renewable Energy Island. 21 wind turbines supply the island's electricity. Today, public hostility toward a projected nearshore wind farm off the island's preserved northern coast is growing. This paper takes its main theoretical cue from Gomart and Hajer's (2003) call to open up political questions to empirical inquiry and to pay attention to the material settings in which political questions unfold. The paper seeks to make sense of the islanders' unexpected opposition to a new wind farm, and it does so through a critique of the unexperimental and depoliticizing attitude – found in the empirical case as well as in some academic scholarship – of the NIMBY (Not In My BackYard) logic. Replacing the NIMBY logic of closing down deliberation with an empirical and 'cosmopolitical' (Stengers, 2005) approach to open up the space of politics to close investigation, the paper focuses on the empirical settings which give the controversy its specific shape and asks how the projected wind farm is interrogated, negotiated and recast as it travels through the socio-material politics of the wind controversy.

Keywords: NIMBY, renewable energy, controversy studies

Introduction

An idyllic landscape – rolling, green hills, blue sky, the Danish flag on a pole – appears on the computer screen accompanied by light music. A hand enters the picture, waters a patch of land, and from the soil shoot baby wind turbines, perfectly nested among the trees and grass of the hills. The wind turbines are picked up by a pair of hands and put into the water at the foot of the hills while a speaker talks about how in Denmark for many years now, wind turbines have delivered environmentally friendly, CO_2 neutral electricity. Soon, the speaker goes on, the Bay of Aarhus will have its own wind farm, a farm in which everyone will be able to invest. "The wind turbine guild of the Bay of Aarhus is for *you*" (www.vaab.dk).

The stop-motion promotion film on the wind turbine guild VAAB's website (www.vaab.dk) is accompanied by black and white videos in which members of the guild - teachers, students, nurses - explain why they have joined the project. Their statements center on the importance of being part of a positive change in society; they talk

Figure 1. Screenshot from the promotion video on www.vaab.dk.

about being granted a say in a meaningful project, exercising their democratic duties as citizens, and leading Denmark towards a fossil free future.

Meanwhile, on Samsø, an island of four thousand inhabitants in the Bay of Aarhus. A man, the vice-president of VAAB and Samsø resident, is walking in the preserved hills of northern Samsø – hills which bear no small resemblance to the landscape in the film described above. According to an islander, the vice-president knew that if certain members of the island community were to oppose the wind farm the project's realization would be jeopardized, so the vice-president went to the homes of key islanders, hoping to put a lid on the protests to come over a cup of coffee (interview1, Samsø resident, Nov 2013). Despite his efforts, soon after the announcement of the wind project in the bay area called Mejlflak, protests broke out on the island, turning the project into a heated political issue and the development of the wind farm into a sociotechnological controversy.

This is the story of the still unfolding Mejlflak controversy as seen from the island of Samsø. Samsø is not just any peripheral farming and tourism island. In 1997, Samsø was appointed Denmark's Renewable Energy Island by the Ministry of Energy, a nomination that set an island-wide, locally managed energy transition in motion, transforming the rural island landscape into one marked by on- and offshore wind turbines, district heating plants and solar systems. Ten years from 1997 the islanders had managed the transition to energy self-sufficiency and could call themselves 'CO_2 negative', thanks to the surplus electricity produced by offshore wind turbines which is exported to the mainland to offset the islanders' transportation practices which remain fossil fuel intensive.

This article examines how and why on this Renewable Energy Island still engaged in alternative energy initiatives resistance is mobilised against a new wind project. The aim is to go beyond the tendency to write off public resistance as NIMBY (Not In My BackYard) reactions and take a closer look at the dynamics at play in this unlikely case of opposition against renewable energy (RE). Without a deeper understanding of the dynamics of opposition encountered by many large-scale RE projects, the road toward the de-carbonization of our societies will be bumpy at best. How do the Mejlflak turbines become controversial objects on Samsø? is the question that will guide the inquiry. The analysis will be structured around the settings or forms (Gomart & Hajer, 2003) in which the controversy comes to life: the project's environmental impact assessment report, the public hearing process, the newspaper debate,

the public meeting and the reactualised role of Samsø's previous experiences with RE projects.

Materials and Methods

I conducted fieldwork on Samsø in the fall of 2013 and spring of 2014. For five months, I lived on the island and took part in the everyday life and work at the Energy Academy, the public non-profit organization behind most of Samsø's energy initiatives. I considered the ten Energy Academy employees my colleagues, attended relevant meetings and executed minor tasks for them. In addition to countless informal conversations with Academy employees and other islanders, I carried out some thirty semi-structured interviews with central island actors as well as with Energy Academy employees and ploughed through reports, newspaper articles and books about Samsø. During my fieldwork, I hardly came across any negative accounts of the Renewable Energy Island (REI) project[1]. This led me to focus primarily on the islanders' positive experiences with the community-driven renewable energy project, and I largely came to view Samsø's energy transition as a success story without strong signs of disagreement or contestation. But an ongoing conflict caught my attention: the controversy surrounding the Mejlflak nearshore wind farm project.

As part of my fieldwork, my investigation of the Mejlflak case was one focus point among others. The data material supporting this analysis consists of qualitative interviews with citizens based on Samsø – both summer house owners and full time residents - and ethnographic field notes along with publicly available documents, websites, newspaper articles and readers' letters related to the Mejlflak project (all documents accessed and newspaper searches conducted between September 2013 and April 2014).

The Mejlflak project was discussed in fifteen of my thirty interviews: three of the municipal officials (including the director of the technical and environmental administration in Samsø Municipality and the head of tourism and business on the island) made critical comments about the project, as did two Energy Academy employees. I interviewed the spokesperson of the protest group "Southern Jutlanders Against Wind Turbines at Mejlflak" (www.aarhusbugtenog-kyster.dk) as well as the previously mentioned vice-president of the wind turbine guild behind the Mejlflak project development, a farmer who also played a central part in the REI project. Of the citizens I interviewed who are not part of the project some expressed critical opinions while others expressed surprise that a wind project could meet such resistance on a renewable energy island.

The interviews were conducted at an early phase in the Mejlflak project. The business model and building contractors not yet in place, what was completed was the siting, the environmental impact assessment and related reports as well as the public hearing process. During the months in which I discussed the project with the islanders, people generally felt in the dark regarding the progress of the project, as the developers seemed to have drawn the curtains after the initial publicity phase. This article focuses on the publicity phase, the phase dominated by public meetings, hearings and debate. It is the phase in which the controversy has found its most visible and loud expressions and where all kinds of records of the case are readily accessible (Venturini, 2010: 264).

I have not interviewed the project developers. They make their views clear in numerous articles, reports, minutes of meetings in the wind turbine guild, in communication materials as well as through their actions. The aim of this article is not to provide a balanced, in the journalistic sense, account of the development of an RE project, but to apply a view from Samsø in order to further our understanding of opposition to RE projects. I investigate how positions of resistance commonly disqualified as NIMBYism (Not In My BackYard) can be appreciated as positions from which statements are made that can help articulate the issues at stake and make contributions to the definition and understanding of the object of concern. My hope is that such a deepened understanding of positions of resistance might point to more constructive ways to approach the planning of the RE projects integral to a future less dependent on fossil fuels. Moreover, by approaching the planning of large, potentially controversial projects as genuinely political and democratic exercises involving the entire affected community,

we might learn how CO_2 emission reductions can give rise to community development rather than conflict; something Samsø managed during the island's energy transition in the nineties, I will argue. In the following I sketch the analytical approach underlying the analysis.

Theory

Studying Controversies: Studying Politics in Practice

In their article "Is *That* Politics?" Gomart and Hajer argue that the distinctly empirical approach of science studies can benefit the study of politics (2003). Instead of "thinking that we can know a priori what (democratic) politics look like" (Gomart & Hajer, 2003: 34), we ought to make politics into an empirical question, they argue. A strong empirical commitment prompts us to venture into a serious engagement with the various settings in which our phenomenon of interest takes place, as these settings, according to Isabelle Stengers' experimental constructivism, "deform the phenomenon in an interesting way, giving a novel spin to the ordinary word 'interesting'(…) The interesting setting is one where the person or creature or thing is not left alone, authentic, but transformed by what occurs, and transformed in ways which induce its interference with the project" (Gomart & Hajer, 2003: 39-40). This interest in the settings in which a political problem unfolds and the attempt to turn the study of politics into an empirically grounded effort mirrors Latour's (2007) call to investigate the trajectory of an issue as the issue evolves and enters and leaves distinctive *stages* (or settings or forms).

Scholars in science and technology studies (STS) have long been concerned with the association between issues or controversies and the way in which they tend to 'spark new publics into being' as they call upon the parties affected by the controversy to get engaged and try to solve the problem (Marres, 2005). The controversy as an object of interest within STS is understood as an instance of politics in practice; a politics which departs from traditional political theory on especially one important parameter. This is not a politics confined to a specific 'political' domain, to the institutions of representative democracy and related venues in which policy-making is known a priori to take place. According to Latour, 'political' "is what qualifies a type of situation" (Latour, 2007: 815). Politics turns around issues, "instead of having the issues enter into a ready-made political sphere to be dealt with" (Latour, 2007: 815). 'The political' thus assumes different forms in different settings and is changed through the interaction with the setting (Whatmore & Landstrom, 2011: 3).

This 'politics' is not a stable figure but should be understood as a changeable movement, only to be known through careful empirical investigations. In a similar manner, the public is not equally engaged, nor does its composition remain unaltered, throughout the trajectory of a political issue. For instance, a seemingly apolitical situation operating out of the public eye, such as a government agency's technical-environmental investigation of an RE project, a well-regulated process following strict, pre-established guidelines, is made up of political moments and decisions (what is taken into account, which elements are left out?), but the process towards finalising the reports typically only involves a select cast of experts and consultants, not a public.

I trace the different political 'states' assumed by the issue as it travels through the settings of the RE project: from development and planning to the public involvement phase. By tracing the trajectory of the political issue - closely resembling the way in which actor-network theory taught us to trace the associations of the social through the analysis of heterogeneous networks of human and non-human actors - we gain a deeper understanding of the workings, tensions and dilemmas of the ongoing wind controversy[2]. With Gomart and Hajer, we can experiment with a new definition of politics, namely: "what does a setting (practice, form) do to those who are engaged in it?" (Gomart & Hajer, 2003: 41). This understanding of the political invites an exploration into the "form of politics, examining the particular sort of engagement it enabled or delimited" as each investigated practice or setting constitutes politics in its own way (Gomart & Hajer, 2003: 47). The overarching setting in which the islanders are involved is northern Samsø itself, the part of the island which will be affected by the turbines. While I take the public meeting or the newspaper

debate as settings which allow the controversy to unfold in distinct ways, the island itself is to be understood as an ever-present setting which affects those engaged with it.

While this is a single-case study, I will remind the reader of Andrew Barry's concept of 'the political situation': "Controversies are neither static locations nor isolated occasions; they are sets of relations in motion, progressively actualized.… They contain multiple sites and events" (Barry, 2013: 10). Barry points to the fact that controversies, no matter how specific and local, are embedded in political situations composed of different disputes which provide the implicated actors with their understanding of the unfolding situation. This is not to say that smaller controversies are simply instances of larger, more general phenomena, but rather that the question of whether a controversy has wider significance and is connected to larger issues, say, of resource dependency or political energy targets, will be contested questions fuelling the controversy (Barry, 2013: 11).

On Samsø, the island's status as Denmark's Renewable Energy Island since 1997 is drawn into the controversy over the projected Mejlflak turbines. The narrative about the island's successful transition to renewable energy is used by both proponents and opponents of the wind farm and thus takes part in the political situation under investigation. To proponents of the new project, Samsø is simply offered a chance to consolidate its position as a green front runner. On Samsø, by contrast, the Mejlflak project is brought out as an example of how *not* to go about creating a renewable energy project, thereby highlighting the practices of citizen participation developed and the hard work put into realising the REI project. People's stories about and experiences with the renewable technologies already in place live on and are mobilised to play their parts for and against the projected Mejlflak wind farm; this is one inescapable setting of the current controversy. The islanders' experiences living on a Renewable Energy Island shape their reactions to the Mejlflak wind farm and the analysis presented here.

The Problem with NIMBY

A ghost that has been haunting public debate and controversy around new RE developments is the NIMBY (Not In My Backyard) syndrome. A quasi-scientific idea found in both (critical) academic research (e.g. Delicado et al., 2014; van der Horst, 2007), policy documents and among the affected parties of controversies, the NIMBY hypothesis posits that although people (according to *some* opinion polls, see e.g. Devine-Wright, 2007: 4) tend to support RE projects *in general,* they are likely to oppose *specific* project plans in their local area. They want to enjoy the benefits of clean, CO_2 neutral energy, but not in their own 'backyards' where the plants are feared to be noisy, disturb the landscape and perhaps even harm the health of affected neighbours. NIMBY is seen as a knee-jerk, self-interested, even hypocritical reaction not to be taken seriously, as NIMBYs are people who reject the public good on particularistic and thus illegitimate grounds.

While academic scholarship engaged with the study of public opposition to and acceptance of RE projects has increasingly taken issue with the NIMBY thesis which is generally deemed unconstructive, insufficient and an empirically "inaccurate and unhelpful way of characterizing opposition to siting" (Burningham et al., 2014: 2; and others[3]), in this article I hope to open up a space that takes us even farther from the logics underpinning the NIMBY thesis.

In keeping with many of these studies the present analysis of the Mejlflak controversy stresses the importance of local ownership, trust, community and participation. But my main appeal, my fundamental argument against the NIMBY logic is not that it is empirically inaccurate and that other factors can be identified which constitute more pertinent barriers to public acceptance and carry more explanatory power. In this article, I will not focus on identifying factors that drive or impede project implementation. My main argument is political. The problem with the NIMBY attitude which I will focus on here is that it closes down deliberation. By calling people 'NIMBY', opposing voices are being silenced. 'NIMBY' is a depoliticizing move (see Edkins, 1999: 9) which reveals the managerialist, instrumental logic characterizing some large-scale develop-

ment projects. The project *must* be realized, that fundamental point is beyond discussion, and the public becomes nothing but an impediment to project realization with its foreseeable negative attitude and well-known counterarguments. With every counterargument automatically debunked as an expression of the catch-all NIMBY category, all objections against the project are made equal: they become 'barriers' to be overcome rather than articulations of concern worth engaging with and taking seriously.

Instead of viewing public opposition as something to be simply "overcome" (Aitken, 2010: 1840), I propose that we, in line with the STS literature introduced above, consider the formation of publics a resource and a productive moment of democratic politics. I will argue, in line with Walker et al. (2010b), that ushering the public into the heart of processes connected with the development of more sustainable ways of producing energy has the potential to bring with it not just CO_2 reductions but also benefits for the involved community on a more general level, as was the result of Samsø's own RE transition. Such results require an open-ended, participatory process experimental in character; a process emphasising "mutual learning and an exploration of the unknown, the result of which cannot be methodically guaranteed" (Jensen 2005: 223). With the costs and resources involved in large-scale RE projects, introducing an experimentalist element into the process will seem demanding and risky, and resorting to shutting down engaged publics through allegations of NIMBYism may seem a more straight-forward solution. What I propose, however, is that we – researchers as well as project developers – strive for an open and genuinely political engagement with these publics. I suggest that we dive into the empirical magma of each project (Venturini, 2010). As such, my proposition is a 'cosmopolitical' one.

Proposing a 'Cosmopolitical' Approach

What might we learn from opposition if we listened closely? This attentive attitude resembles what Freudenburg and Pastor in an early article (1992) termed 'the prudence perspective':

> If the prudence perspective is closest to the truth, it would suggest a need for a broader range of citizen concerns to be taken much more seriously. In fact, citizens would then seem to be proper experts for making decisions on values… From this perspective, much of the NIMBY problem would seem not to result from the greed or shortsightedness of local residents, but from the questionable credibility of companies, agencies and others having fiduciary responsibilities. (Freudenburg & Pastor, 1992: 50.)

As I do not consider it my business to call the credibility of the project developers into question (although the empirical data might to some extent do so), I will propose a more empirically grounded approach to taking citizen concerns seriously. What takes the place of NIMBYism is the proposition found in the writings of Gomart and Hajer and others telling us that "no one can define a priori what is 'politics'" (Gomart & Hajer, 2003: 56). Instead of positioning RE projects a priorically on the side of the public good and 'NIMBY' responses thus inescapably particularistic, our empiricism forces us to interrogate such logics and take citizens' decisions and values seriously.

One final point to be derived from writings in STS brings us to Stengers' (2005) "cosmopolitical proposal". Stengers' proposal is instrumental in turning the NIMBY logic on its head. While concerned citizens' 'situated knowledge' (Haraway, 1988) tends to be considered illegitimate due exactly to its 'situatedness', their concerns dismissed as self-interested, Stengers (2005) proposes an alternative understanding, turning citizens' grounding in the concrete settings of their lives into exactly that which makes them *sensible* and their concerns *relevant*. After all, they are the ones whose lives are immediately affected and, following Stengers, we ought to 'design the political scene' in a way that accommodates those whose attachments are at stake instead of disqualifying citizens' positions exactly because their attachments are the ones that are threatened:

> …there is no knowledge that is both relevant and detached. It is not an objective definition of a virus or a flood that we need, a detached definition everybody should accept, but the active participation of all those whose practice is

> engaged in multiple modes with the virus or with the river (…) [H]ow to design the political scene in a way that actively protects it from the fiction that 'humans of good will decide in the name of the general interest'? How to turn the virus or the flood into a cause for thinking? But also how to design it in such a way that collective thinking has to proceed 'in the presence of' those who would otherwise be likely to be disqualified as having idiotically nothing to propose, hindering the emergent 'common account'? (Stengers, 2005: 1002).

The analysis of the Mejlflak wind controversy falls in four parts, each representing a new setting in which the controversy is dealt with and transformed. In the first setting, the nearshore wind farm is presented as a complicated fact emerging from an environmental impact assessment report and other statutory documents. A second setting takes the shape of the islanders' past experiences with becoming Denmark's Renewable Energy Island. Here we see how past practices of citizen participation shape expectations and criticisms of the Mejlflak project. In the third section, two central settings are investigated and juxtaposed: the public hearing process and the local newspaper debate. Both transform and challenge the Mejlflak project and the people involved on both sides of the debate, but they do so in distinctly different ways. The fourth setting is the statutory public meeting held on the island, which curbed rather than invited opposition. The analysis of these empirical forms will allow us to answer the question *What makes the Mejlflak wind farm controversial on Samsø?* This understanding will allow us to appreciate 'NIMBY' responses as meaningful reactions that could not only serve as cues for future projects but also allow RE projects to deepen rather than challenge democracy.

Analysis

Emerging from Documents: The Development of the Nearshore Wind Farm

The idea behind the Mejlflak project came from a group of members of a local branch of the Dan-

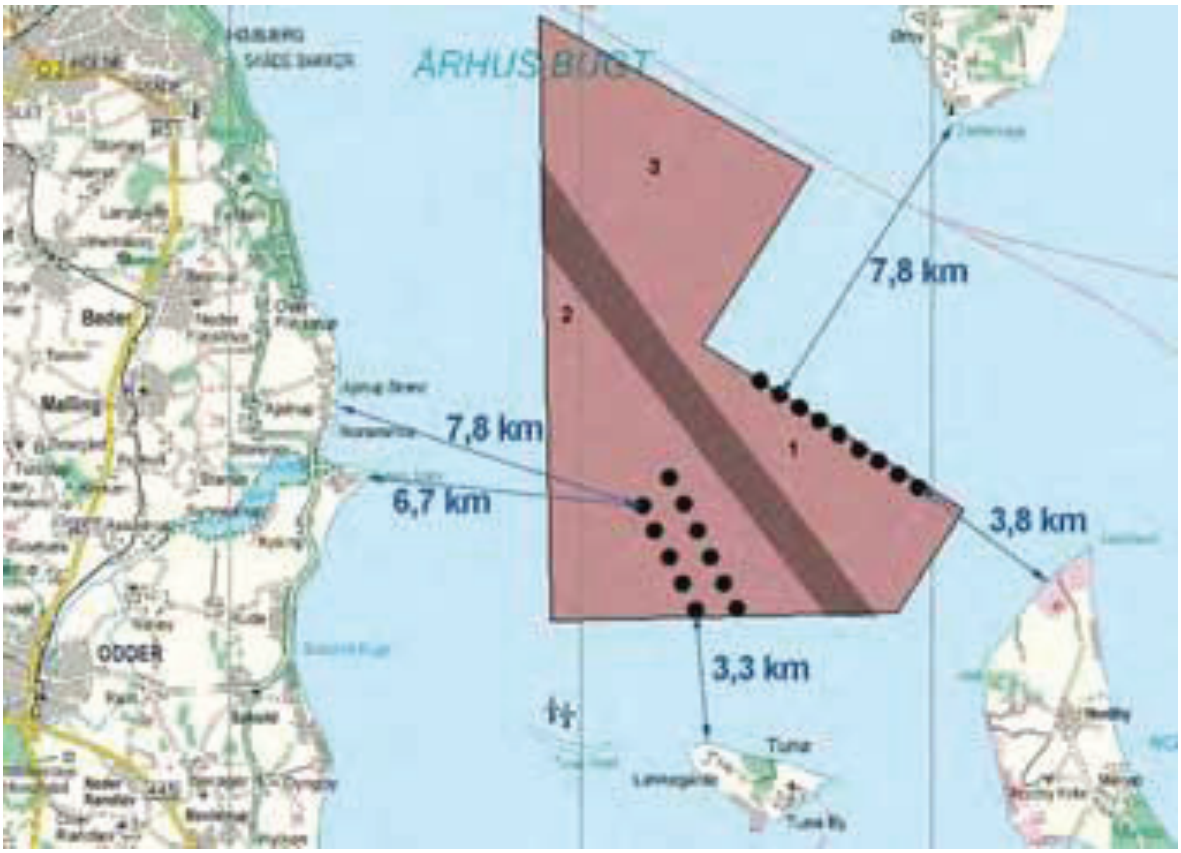

Figure 2. Map illustrating the position of the projected wind farm in the Bay of Aarhus. To the left, Aarhus. In the bottom right corner, Samsø's northern tip. Source: www.oddernettet.dk, Odder Municipality.

ish Society for Nature Conservation. The members founded an association in 2010, VAAB I/S, and got a large, local energy company, NRGi, on board together with four smaller energy companies along the Bay of Aarhus. The group then created HAAB A/S (which ironically translates as HOPE INC), the development company behind the project. The chairman of HAAB, Søren Egge Rasmussen, is also chairman of NRGI's executive committee as well as a member of Aarhus municipal council, representing the Red-Green Alliance (Enhedslisten), the most left-wing party in the Danish political system. The project has thus had both a distinct political and a commercial air from the onset, despite being a grassroots initiative.

In the introduction to the project's environmental impact assessment report (EIA) it is stated that "the starting point was the wish to establish an offshore wind farm which citizens, businesses, municipalities and others around the Bay of Aarhus could take part in and become co-owners of" (Energistyrelsen [the Energy Agency], 2012a: 2)[4]. According to the EIA, the initiators were inspired by Samsø's positive experiences establishing an offshore wind farm on the southern side of the island in the early 2000s as part of the Renewable Energy Island project. The introduction to the EIA also mentions that a new offshore wind farm will be in line with Denmark's energy policy and the goal of having wind energy cover 50 per cent of Danish electricity consumption by 2020. The project in itself, however, the reader will recall, is not a government project but a private initiative.

The Mejlflak wind farm is to consist of twenty *nearshore* sea turbines of 150 meters with a capacity of 60-120 MW. In 2009, only one percent of Danish wind turbines were taller than 75 meters (Energi- og Miljødata, 2009), and since then technological development has been somewhat stagnant (Energistyrelsen, 2012b). To Danes, then, 150 meter turbines in an enclosed bay area do not compare to earlier experiences with wind power (on wind power development in Denmark, see Karnøe 2013). In comparison, Samsø's offshore wind farm of 2003 consists of ten offshore turbines with a capacity of 23 MW. Readers' letters in the local newspapers label the turbines 'monster mills' due in part to their unfamiliar size (Gudmundsen-Holmgreen, 2013).

Nearshore wind turbines - new in Denmark; the first nearshore project has yet to be completed - designate wind farms set up within 20 km of the coast and no closer to the coast than 2-4 km. Nearshore wind turbines have the advantage of being cheaper and less complicated to erect and maintain due to the shallow coastal waters. The Danish government wants to establish 500 MW nearshore sea turbines before 2020. Closer and larger turbines will, all things equal, be expected to be more visually and audibly present, a concern present in my interviews with critical islanders as well as in the newspapers' debate pages. Furthermore, with a new concept, an emerging, still uninstitutionalized technology, comes intensified financial and legal insecurities: at which price can the electricity be sold, which transfer prices and feed-in tariffs to count on? Which rules and protocols apply? Does the project count as an 'experimental project', which would imply larger state subsidies?[5] Such questions are to date (primo 2015) still open and contested (VAAB, 2015).

Without going further into the complex situation which the project is still struggling to settle, it is fair to say that establishing a wind farm is an inherently political situation which mobilizes various institutional contexts as parts of the larger process of investigation connected to the establishment of the turbines. Although the wind turbine is a well-known technology in Denmark (see e.g. Devine-Wright, 2005; Karnøe, 2013), project development is marked by uncertainties for all parties involved. There is a schism between the fully standardized environmental impact assessment process securing the technical-environmental approval of the project and the legal-financial confusion which still characterises nearshore projects. Not all aspects of a RE project can be measured and calculated beforehand (the sudden occurrence of the preserved porpoise which has disrupted the EIA process being a case in point); however standardized, the process is long and uncertain and might come to nothing in the end.

One fact about the project has, however, been firmly fixed from the onset: the *location* of the wind farm - the sticking point of most disputes over RE. One of the requirements of the EIA is that it must include a paragraph on the 'zero alternative', i.e. not implementing the proposal, and alternative

locations. The Mejlflak project's EIA bypasses this consideration of alternatives. Regarding the 'zero alternative', the EIA states that, considering the Danish long-term goal of becoming independent of fossil fuels, there is no real alternative to the construction of the wind farm, as sea turbines are expected to provide a large part of the renewable energy needed. It is *not* possible *not* to set up the wind farm. It is, however, possible to choose a different location, the report briefly states. But, as the following paragraph on alternative locations asserts, since the "ultimate goal" of the developers is to create a wind farm which can engage and involve actors in the Bay of Aarhus area, there is "no real alternative" outside the bay (Energistyrelsen, 2012a: 4). The EIA therefore investigates no concrete alternatives and constructs the Mejlflak wind farm as an unavoidable reality, closing down the space for deliberation and political engagements.

The EIA has been preapproved by the Danish Energy Agency despite the fact that the report does not live up to the legal requirement of seriously discussing alternative locations, thus throwing the legality of the project further into doubt in the eyes of an alert public. According to the former spokesperson of the protest group 'Southern Jutlanders Against Wind Turbines at Mejlflak' (www.aarhusbugtenog-kyster.dk) and summer house owner on Samsø, "it's a Wild West Project. A governmental screening report on nearshore turbines has been published, but the Mejlflak project doesn't figure in it because the preapproval of the EIA came before that report. So maybe it doesn't have to live up to the same requirements as other nearshore projects, no one knows. Legally, it's a mess…"[6] (interview2, Nov 2013). Against this, the chairman of HAAB portrays the organizational and technical uncertainties surrounding the Mejlflak wind farm as "a strong selling point" of the project (Energiwatch, 2014): Mejlflak is taking the lead in the green energy transition. Experimenting means taking risks, moving the RE industry forward, being a frontrunner. As the reader will recall, a degree of technical experimentation might also involve considerable financial supplements as 'experimental projects' warrant larger state subsidies, turning uncertainty into a commercial strength and possibly even a necessary precondition for the realization of the project.

While the chairman has his vision and ideals and tends to refer to a general interest in reducing CO_2 emissions when arguing in favour of the project, the islanders worry about their quality of life, the view from the northern hills and about the social, financial and environmental impacts of the project which, as they see it, have not been fully justified through the EIA process. Some islanders remember the difficulties and resources involved in turning the northern part of the island into a preserved nature area. According to Samsø Energy Academy's director, while it took years to secure the area, this status only includes the coastline and not the coastal *waters* - a distinction thought to be wholly arbitrary - and thus does not prevent the establishment of projects such as the Mejlflak wind farm in the area (interview3, Nov 2013). This difference in views on the project - differences which turn the wind turbines into objects of controversy - is by no means surprising, as the actors occupy opposing and well-known positions vis-à-vis the wind farm which evoke memories of classic NIMBY accounts: the islanders are reluctantly sucked into the project anticipating that the turbines will come to affect their close surroundings. Their interests are first of all particular and local as they are dragged into the project through their personal implication. To the developers, the wind farm is a prestigious political project motivated by references to the public good: taking the lead in the major energy transitions to come. In what follows I will attempt to disrupt this familiar structure, this logic of particular vs. general, public vs. private interest, a distinction found at the heart of NIMBY accounts, and instead view the islanders' opposition and the developers' idealism as distributed phenomena challenging ready-made, preconceived distinctions.

The Past and Future in the Present: Expectations of Involvement

Let us first take a closer look at what is causing the affected communities around the Bay to form a public against the Mejlflak project. In Denmark, after the publication of an EIA a compulsory public consultation process ensues, inviting scrutiny of the EIA. Going through the Mejlflak consulta-

tion responses from affected organizations and citizens, a number of objections can be identified. These include: worries about nearshore turbines near protected natural reserves; concerns about the visual effects of the turbines as seen from the coast (their size and colour, their formation and blinking lights, potentially dangerous low-frequency noise); criticisms of the EIA process and the report, especially regarding the lack of alternative locations. Few also mention concerns about the wind farm's effects on tourism. In addition, there is uncertainty as to how the wind farm will affect plant and animal life in the Bay (Energistyrelsen, 2012c).

All these concerns sound like well-known NIMBY arguments and are similar to arguments voiced in other controversies over renewable energy projects (for an analysis of the rhetoric of wind opposition, see Barry et al., 2008). In that sense, we are dealing with a specific 'genre' of public protest, one that tends to follow quite predictable logics. The categorization and ensuing delegitimization of negative responses as NIMBYism is an easy move, but it is the aim of this article to move beyond such labelling. In this section I will focus on a criticism against the project which is raised across all platforms - in the public consultation process, at public meetings, in my interviews and in the local newspaper debate - by public institutions such as Samsø Municipality as well as by private citizens. This is the concern about the Mejlflak project's democratic deficit.

A number of the consultation responses (to which we shall return in the following section) criticize the project for being 'an investment project' rather than a public involvement project. Denmark has a strong tradition for involving the public in RE projects, and there is a statutory rule of 20 percent local ownership (defined as citizens with officially registered addresses in the municipality) in wind projects (www.windpower.org). While the Mejlflak project was instituted by grassroots from the Danish Society for Nature Conservation, the main investors are energy companies based all over the country as far from the Bay of Aarhus as Copenhagen, where the capital's largest utility company HOFOR has bought shares in the project (VAAB, 2014). It is thus proving difficult for the project developers to realize the "ultimate goal of the project" (Energistyrelsen, 2012a: 4) - to create a wind farm engaging actors in the Bay of Aarhus area.

The Samsø resistance against the project is surprising seen from the perspective of the literature, which tells us that "familiarity with wind farms in the landscape breed[s] contentment" (Warren & McFadyen, 2010: 210). In this case, the opposite seems to be true. The islanders are used to wind turbines, but they are also used to being actively involved in the local energy projects. A banal but essential point in trying to understand the islanders' resistance to the Mejlflak turbines is that the initiative does not derive from the island. The Mejlflak project is perceived as a foreign initiative which will not benefit Samsø. The RE Island project, by contrast, was initiated by island actors and realised with the help of local labour and materials (see Papazu, 2016). The two projects cannot be directly compared, but both sides of the controversy tend toward comparison, e.g. when the Mejlflak EIA mentions Samsø as a role model for the Mejlflak project.

The story of Samsø's transformation into Denmark's RE Island is one that stresses *energy democracy* and *commonity* (commons + community, Hermansen & Nørretranders, 2011) as key values. During my fieldwork at Samsø Energy Academy I witnessed the director, Søren Hermansen, a leading figure in Samsø's energy transformation, tell the story of the island's transition to groups of visitors from all over the world. The story, which has been told, retold and refined since the nineties, is one which foregrounds processes of local democracy. The following is an example of Hermansen's storytelling, in this instance to an odd group of Dutch students, Danish top managers from a large bank, and the newly-appointed Hungarian ambassador to Denmark:

> We made energy democracy. We didn't really talk about climate change, that's abstract. But we created jobs. If we cannot gather people around the burning platform, it's not worthwhile. Then people will say: We know what we have, we don't know what's going to happen. On Samsø we talk about community and the commons as a value. As 'commonity'. It's a matter of defining the commons, defining what we are interested in, our common

> challenges and solutions. Defining the commons means defining the different interests at play and figuring out ways to work together with our different interests. (Field notes, Nov 2013.)

Remember Stengers' spin to the word 'interesting': Hermansen is talking about creating a setting where no one and nothing is "left alone, authentic, but transformed by what occurs…" (Gomart & Hajer, 2003: 39-40). He talks about transforming the island by engaging and transforming the local community. The setting is in focus in his narration; the setting as the community and the diverse interests at play among the islanders, all of which must be accommodated, as the focus is on collaboration. The goal of energy self-sufficiency is not mentioned. The logic of this narrative - the prominence given to the island community, to creating public support for the REI project and using the project to further the islanders' various interests, thus strengthening the community as a whole - is absent from the Mejlflak project. This is not to claim that no controversies arose in connection with the REI project, but I encountered no islanders with a strong recollection of conflicts or disagreements. The project was concluded in 2007, and what lives on, apart from the RE technologies, is the story of community involvement and local democracy. The Mejlflak project has come to serve as a counterpart to this Samsø story; a contrast representing all the pitfalls which the Samsø project allegedly managed to avoid, reactualising Samsø's experiences as exemplary while fuelling public resentment against the Mejlflak project.

The Mejlflak project developers' refusal to name alternative locations has come to highlight the practice of responsiveness of the REI project developers. When the offshore wind project south of Samsø was developed as part of the REI project, three locations were in play (and the preserved northern area of the island was never part of the project plans). In the end, the chosen location was the least advantageous with regard to the wind and seabed conditions and it was the most expensive alternative, but it was the least controversial and the visually most pleasing location as the turbines cannot be seen from the manor on the island, which was a demand on the part of the landowner. As a key player on the island and one of the main investors (as well as the only actual 'neighbour' to this offshore wind farm), the landowner's consent and cooperation was seen as a precondition for the realization of the project.

Siting is a key concept in the NIMBY literature, as well as in the academic literature contesting the NIMBY proposition, as the location of the renewable energy technologies tends to become the main point of contestation (the common disagreement over location is, of course, what gives the NIMBY concept its name). In Corvellec and Risberg's (2007) analysis of Swedish wind farm developers, a developer states: "The value lies in the site, actually. Wind turbines are only a means for exploring sites" (Corvellec & Risberg, 2007: 311). The authors elaborate: "When asked how they start developing wind farms, developers usually answer that they begin by looking for a site with good wind conditions, since this is a key requisite for the profitability of the project" (Corvellec & Risberg, 2007: 310). The focus on the site is thus related to profitability, and this is a further distinction between Samsø's REI project and the Mejlflak project. The former was not a commercial project but a cooperative, local project. While the Mejlflak project is dependent on the support of large investors, primarily utility companies, the REI project secured its funding locally: farmers, citizen cooperative societies, and Samsø Municipality, which bought five of the ten turbines necessary to the offshore wind farm. On Samsø, the value did not lie in the site but in what the RE technologies came to represent: a resourceful community, local democracy, and the possibility of a fossil free future. Hermansen of Samsø Energy Academy sums up the islanders' position on Mejlflak:

> The Mejlflak project gives Samsø the green benefits but it keeps the rest, the jobs and the local development. There's no narrative of 'What's in it for us?' in that project. They don't want to share the yields; they are following an old industrial paradigm where you keep your gains to yourself. In the beginning [of the REI project] I was a bit like the Mejlflak guys, I thought a green project would sell itself. It turned out to be more difficult than that. We had to establish a quorum of citizens willing to take responsibility for their community, we had to learn how to cooperate. 'What we can agree on' became our mantra". (Interview3, Nov 2013.)

Attacks, Appeals and Accusations: Different Formats for Public Debate

The setting which lends the Mejlflak controversy its specificity is Samsø's experience of becoming Denmark's Renewable Energy Island. In this section, two further settings of the controversy introduced are the public consultation process and the local newspaper debate. These are the formats in which the affected public gets a chance to speak. I inspect the arguments voiced and attacks launched and pay attention to the ways in which the newspaper debate and the public hearing process provide different formats for the public to become vocal.

My online searches for articles (conducted September 2013 and March 2014), particularly readers' letters, regarding 'Mejlflak' in the local newspapers returned a large amount of heated and personal expressions of the controversy. The arguments cover a lot of ground as they stretch from concerns about north Samsø's nature ("The Mejlflak turbines will result in environmental destruction of gigantic dimensions", Osbahr, Feb 2014), the wind turbines' size and character ("monster mills", Gudmundsen-Holmgreen, Sept 2013) and worries about the financial viability of the project ("The Mejlflak project is a mixture of Stalinist planned economy and an incredible naivety on the part of the project developers", Breengaard, June 2013) to personal attacks ("OBJ's knowledge of the planet's climate is not impressive", Birkedal, Sept 2013). Newspapers' debate pages have tight word limits and for a readers' letter to be accepted it needs to have an edge. Furthermore, a readers' letter often takes the form of a response to a previously published letter by a named person to whom the new letter is addressed. Rather than providing a deliberative forum for conversations, the format of the newspaper debate encourages bickering and exacerbates differences. An example of the confrontational style of the debate: "Søren Egge Rasmussen's [director of the Mejlflak project] sole argument against my criticism in my latest readers' letter is that I own a summer house on Samsø overlooking Mejlflak" (Skou, Oct 2012).

There is a tendency among the debaters to seek to delegitimize one another's positions through labelling and categorization. In a locally situated conflict, and one in which accusations of NIMBYism play a central role, the location or positioning of the actors is important. When the situatedness of the protesting islanders' positions becomes clear, they are accused of expressing NIMBY standpoints, e.g. when they refer to concerns about low-frequency noise or the visual impact of the turbines on the landscape, effects experienced only by neighbours to wind turbines. At the same time, as is evident from the above citation, the position of critics without permanent residence on Samsø is delegitimized through reference to their status as "summer house owners". Paradoxically, the "summer house owners'" position as outsiders to the conflict makes their concerns even less legitimate than the islanders'. "Summer house owners" are not directly vulnerable to the accusation of proximity, the classic NIMBY charge, but by being slightly farther removed from the problem they become tourists without any legitimate stake in the controversy; they become simply meddlers whose sole interest must be to secure their holiday destination from disturbances. In following this strategy of delegitimization, the director of the Mejlflak project in a lengthy contribution to the debate consistently throughout his discussion refers to the above Skou, the former spokesperson of the protest group against the project, as "summer house owner Skou". He ascribes all criticism of the project to a group of secondary home owners who attend all public project meetings in order to create a fake sense of controversy and local resistance. He concludes that there is no strong opposition against the project (Egge Rasmussen, Sept 2012).

The Mejlflak project, in turn, labours to brand itself as a local grassroots project. The brand of localism of local grassroots organizations is different from that of critical individuals; it is a responsible and altruistic localism aiming at improving the local area. In this case, it involves accepting to do one's share to mitigate climate change despite the costs. As mentioned, with energy companies all over Denmark as investors in the wind farm and a nation-wide campaign recruiting paying members for the guild, the localism of the organization is questioned in many readers' letters, and the director Egge Rasmussen is accused of astroturfing; of parading the project

as a grassroots initiative engaged in saving the planet while in fact being motivated by self-interested political and financial concerns. As a local politician representing the far Left in Aarhus Town Council and chairman of the executive committee of NRGI, the utility company that owns 40 percent of the project shares, readers' letters accuse him of "wearing too many hats" (Gudmundsen-Holmgreen, Sept 2013), putting further into doubt the director's position as a local actor primarily interested in reducing the CO_2 emissions of the Bay of Aarhus area. In his own words: "There is certainly a difference in approach and perspective from the summer house owner who wants to preserve his unobstructed view of the coast line to the local citizen or electricity company concerned with how the Bay of Aarhus area may contribute effectively to the solution to the climate problems" (Egge Rasmussen, Sept 2012). The climate, in this way, is drawn into the political situation of the controversy, the director strategically placing himself and the Mejlflak project on the side of the climate with the "summer house owners" and critical islanders on the opposing side. We will now turn to the public consultation process, a process with fewer casualties, where arguments take center stage over blunt attacks.

In September 2012, the Danish Energy Agency sent the Mejlflak EIA report out to consultation. Out of 102 replies from affected parties - organizations and private citizens - only four responses strongly endorse the project. The arguments voiced in the responses do not raise new concerns about the project as such, but the style

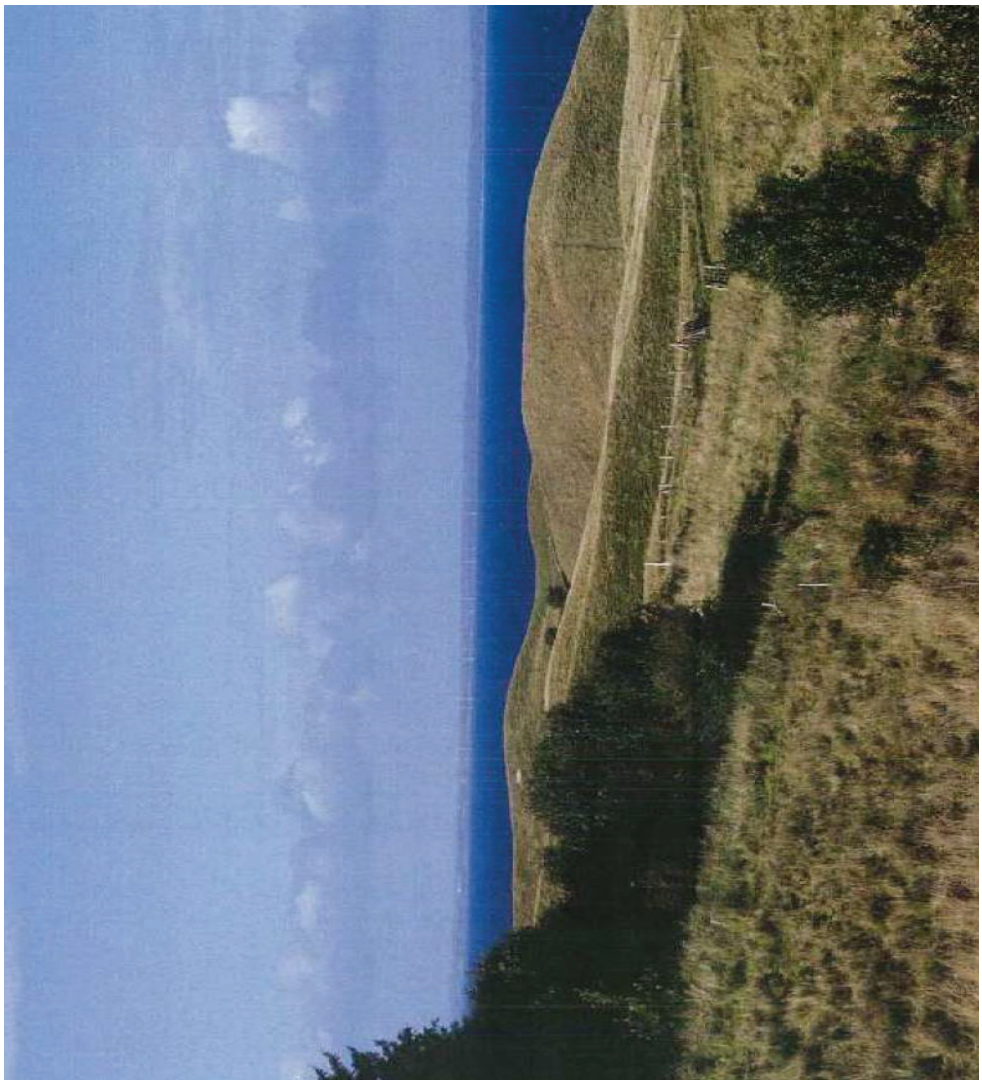

Figure 3. The photo of the hills as it appears in the response to the hearing – turned on its side.

of argumentation and the strategies employed differ markedly from those encountered in the newspaper debate. The responses tend to fall in one of two categories: the (lay) expert analysis and the emotional-personal contribution.

As for the latter, the newspaper debate left little room for expressions of personal attachment as these would leave the contributor vulnerable to NIMBY accusations as well as personal attacks. Since the hearing process does not allow for exchanges of opinions but simply serves to inform the authorities about the attitudes of the public, this format sets the stage for more elaborate arguments and analyses, and the contributors do not as readily risk having their inputs used against them. Among the numerous personally angled responses I will emphasize one, written by an elderly woman and one of the leading figures in Samsø's REI project. In her response, she has allied herself with the island's journalist. His input consists of a photograph showing the northern hills and the sea, taking up one A4 sheet (see below; notice the likeness to the still photograph from HAAB's promotional video on page 1), accompanied by a hand-written description of the camera settings used to produce the photo. Below, typed, the woman writes:

> The picture is taken just outside my house, which is placed exactly north-south and lies about 850 meters from the water to the west and about 20 meters above sea level. We bought the grounds, which cover the statutory 4.08 acres, in 1969, and we later built the house in accordance (of course!) with the regulations in force due to the protection of the area. I have lived here for over 40 years.
> -'It is through such openings that the earth breathes' - Thorkild Bjørnvig [the woman's deceased husband, a local poet who lived in the northern hills until his death, famous throughout Denmark; translated by the author] in the collection of poems 'Morgenmørke' 1977-79.
> (Energistyrelsen, 2012c: 26-27.)

Remember Stengers' proposal to take concerned citizens seriously because of, not despite, their situatedness and personal attachments. Implicated citizens do not derive their interests from the reservoir of disinterested values and ideals known as 'the common good'. On the contrary, their personal attachments drag them into controversies. Recall that "…there is no knowledge that is both relevant and detached. It is not an objective definition of a virus or a flood that we need, a detached definition everybody should accept, but the active participation of all those whose practice is engaged in multiple modes with the virus or with the river" (Stengers, 2005: 1002). This logic runs counter to the central NIMBY-informed assumption that your situatedness makes your critiques illegitimate.

In the response to the hearing, the woman, unafraid of NIMBY accusations, plays up her attachment to the area: she has lived here for 40 years, she is practically (her husband built their house himself) and emotionally (his poem at the end) attached to the place. The large photograph with the technical settings carefully outlined brings a degree of objectivity to the letter, as if to draw in the reader, 'see for yourselves, this place is worthy of preservation', while at the same time serving to place the woman firmly *in* the specific site to which she claims attachment: this is her view. Several of the responses contain photographs; a move that may be thought to provide the government officers in the capital with documentation of the value of the place, as the officials might never have set foot on Samsø. The woman's response also contains a reference to the status of the northern hills as a preserved and highly regulated nature reserve, subtly drawing attention to the fact puzzling to many islanders that while previously proposed projects in the hills have been dropped because of the area's protected status, this is no obstacle to the Mejlflak project, since, legally, a listing of the *coast* does not equal a preservation of the coastal *waters*.

In contrast to this argumentation-through-attachment, many islanders resort to the tactic of argumentation-through-expertise, departing from Stengers' call for situatedness and particularity as a source of legitimacy. As a concerned and highly engaged islander told me:

> My husband is a biologist, he has studied the migration of birds and even the effects of wind turbines on birds. So we wrote a response to the hearing which completely undermined the results of the EIA report. We've also written a response about the past controversy about the radar pylon

> [a project proposed and rejected due to the area's protected status] as well as a response about the effects of the project on the landscape and tourism, because we run one of the largest tourist attractions on the island. (Interview4, Nov 2013.)

In a similar manner, the former spokesperson of the Mejlflak protest group, a physician, has produced two responses, one in non-specialist language outlining the perceived weaknesses of the project, and one ten-page response detailing in complicated and detached legal jargon problems regarding the legality of the project. To illustrate, one sentence starts: "It follows from §3, article 3, annex 2, in the relevant Environmental Impact Assessment order (Order.No. 815 of August 28 2000) that the EIA executive order must contain a review of the most important alternatives inspected by the entrepreneur…" (Energistyrelsen, 2012c: 198).

By bringing in biology and law, this citizen tactic adopts the expert's disinterested "gaze from nowhere" (Haraway, 1988: 581), attempting to escape their personal implication by deriving objectivity from expert language and arguments. However, by drawing on several kinds of expert knowledge - tourism, birds' migration patterns, legal and historical aspects – the (albeit few) citizens behind more than one response counteract their own positioning as experts, as an expert tends to be someone with extensive knowledge within rarely more than *one* field. Instead, these citizens attempt to cover as much ground and deliver as many arguments against the Mejlflak project as possible to the officials in the Energy Agency.

In these diverse ways, the dynamic of the controversy unfolds in different settings, through different strategies. If this is the face of NIMBYism, it emerges as a more varied and variable phenomenon than is commonly construed. In order to render their positions legitimate, opponents of the project experiment with different conscious positionings: personal attacks, individual attachments, expert claims, and rational arguments appealing to common sense. The controversy in this way constantly changes shape as the critics of the project refuse to be held in a position of particularity or NIMBYism.

The public meeting: an unengaging engagement exercise

Our final setting of the controversy is the public meeting held on Samsø by the project developers. Danish law lists certain requirements to secure public involvement which must be followed when developing a wind farm. The public consultation process is one such step towards inserting a degree of public deliberation into the process by legal means and, similarly, community meetings have become traditional and are now required by law. The Mejlflak project held five public meetings presenting the results of the EIA, one of them on Samsø. Gomart and Hajer (2003: 45) pose that "*[d]eliberation cannot be understood without taking the role of 'practice' into account*…" , arguing that public engagement exercises run the risk of serving as nothing more than an opportunity for developers to manage people's positions and even silence criticism. The public gets an opportunity to raise their concerns, after which the developers can continue realising the project knowing the public was given a chance to speak. The public meeting differs from the formats of the newspaper debate and the consultation process where confrontations are never direct but always mediated by writing. The public meeting carries with it the potential for the parties to critically and directly engage with one another's positions and concerns, but there is no guarantee that such a deliberative forum arises, hence Gomart and Hajer's call to take practice into account.

The meeting took place in one of the island's community centres. About one hundred islanders attended. I was not present myself so this section rests on a newspaper report and my interviewees' impressions of the meeting. HAAB's director, according to the local newspaper article, stated ahead of the meeting that "We don't expect to reach agreement" (JRE, 2012). Following this statement and the setup of the meeting, it seems that no real involvement of the citizens - in Gomart and Hajer's sense of 'constructing', 'transforming' and 'empowering' actors into participation (Gomart & Hajer, 2003: 45) - was intended. The presentation of the results of the report took up more than half of the evening and centered on the two classic 'NIMBY' issues, low-frequency noise and visual impact. Experts had been invited

to calm the crowd. After lengthy, technical presentations, one hour was allowed for debate. The questions raised by the public did not center on noise or visual impact but on the location of the turbines, a point the presenters had not brought up. Asked about the choice of location, the director responded that he wants "a locally anchored project" and the turbines to be placed "where they will be seen". Representatives of the guild, VAAB, added that the project was "simply following Samsø's example" (JRE, 2012).

To HAAB, the wind farm is a demonstration project and the visibility of the large turbines is a force of the project. To the islanders in whose everyday lives the turbines will become a visible factor, their size and impact is an unwanted change. If the developers took the islanders' objections seriously, the turbines would not be erected near Samsø's northern point. Engaging in a democratic process would most likely mean abandoning the project in its current form. Since the EIA lists no alternatives to the current location, it is likely that the project developers' interests are so tightly connected to the location close to Samsø that no alternative project would be conceived. This is the dilemma of public involvement: to practice it in a serious manner involves the risk of non-realization. Still, had the public been involved at an earlier point and invited into the development of the project, the process might have carried with it the potential to *transform, construct* and *empower* the island community in ways that could have produced results that differ from those of today.

Conclusion

What makes the Mejlflak wind project controversial on Samsø? To approach a controversy as an instance of politics which must be understood through concrete, empirical engagements is to move beyond the NIMBY logic. Each section of the analysis has investigated a different empirical setting, allowing us to examine "the particular sort of engagement it enabled or delimited" (Gomart and Hajer, 2003: 47). The Mejlflak project's EIA process, marked by uncertainties and by one hard fact, the location of the wind farm, created opposition on Samsø. So did the project's commercial character and the project developers' reluctance to involve the local communities. These practices, which stand in sharp contrast to the islanders' experiences with the community-oriented RE Island project, sparked resistance and undermined the project developers' wish to create "a locally anchored project" (JRE, 2012). A desire that finds expression in rhetoric but not in practice. The newspaper debate and public hearing process offered different channels through which the public could voice their concerns and critiques; channels of publicity which have given the Mejlflak project its public image of a controversy.

The problem with NIMBY is that it is a fundamentally unexperimental and depoliticizing move: by reducing all arguments to the positioning of the actors expressing them, it prevents us from learning from opposition and appreciating the situatedness of local responses. In this article, I have attempted to treat resistance as valuable expressions that might contribute to our understanding of the phenomenon of resistance. Large-scale RE projects carry with them great potentials both for strengthening local democracy and communities and for developing more environmentally sustainable societies, but they also embody the potential of the tyranny of the Good. When the voice-over in the Mejlflak project's promotional video says "The wind turbine guild of the Bay of Aarhus is for *you*", one remember Stengers' question: "[H]ow to design the political scene in a way that actively protects it from the fiction that 'humans of good will decide in the name of the general interest'?" (Stengers, 2005: 1002).

My proposal is that we try to pay attention to the attachments articulated by the implicated. Taking the attachments of the involved seriously involves a reweighing of the issue and a redistribution of the dichotomy around which 'NIMBY' conflicts tend to unfold, particularism vs. the public good. By re-opening a space of contestation, questions of whether and how to approach large-scale energy projects become political once again, and new knowledge is generated. This new knowledge could then be put to use in future RE projects.

The RE Island project developers on Samsø accomplished this: they learned how to listen

to the various interests of the islanders; they found ways to get those different interests to work together, and they built a stronger local community on the basis of those differences. I do not believe that this approach or the case of Samsø is specific to the Danish context. With governments all over the world setting CO_2 reduction goals and formulating aspirations to embark on renewable energy transitions, if project developers do not practice responsiveness and willingness to learn from citizen reactions, many projects will likely come to nothing or be realized against the public will, making the future even more difficult. But the analysis has also demonstrated the malleability of resistant publics. As the setting of the controversy changed from one format of publicity and participation to another, so did the responses and reactions, even the composition, of the public. A public is not a fixed entity that cannot be swayed or transformed, on the contrary, publics are ever-changing, and so are the issues they engage with. This points to the potential of learning that is inherent in all controversy.

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Notes

1 This is not to say that there never was conflict in the years 1997-2007, only that the conflicts that might have been have not carried into the present and have been widely forgotten.

2 A crucial difference between this endeavour of 'tracing the political' as opposed to classic actor-network theoretical interests in 'tracing the social' is that the purpose of the analysis of the political is not to reach any (if momentary) stabilization of the network(s) analysed, but rather to point to the fluidity and changeability of the political issue.

3 See also Barry et al., 2008; Cass & Walker, 2009; Devine-Wright, 2007; Devine-Wright, 2009; Freudenburg & Pastor, 1992; van der Horst, 2007; Walker, 2008; Warren & McFadyen, 2010; Wolsink, 2007; Delicado et al., 2014; Walker et al., 2010b; Devine-Wright, 2011; Roberts et al., 2013.

4 The EIA is conducted by consultants hired by the project developers and has yet to obtain its final approval by the Danish Energy Agency, among other reasons because porpoises have been observed in the area, complicating the analysis (VAAB, 2014).

5 'Experimental' or 'trial projects' are, according to the Danish Ministry of Climate, Energy and Building, smaller projects designed to test new types of wind turbines and other technologies and procedures related to the development of wind energy. Such projects go through a strict application procedure as there are substantial state subsidies connected to the status of 'experimental project' as these are not expected to function on market conditions (Energistyrelsen [the Energy Agency], 2011).

6 There is an uncertain relation between the official governmental screening report of possible areas for nearshore wind farms (created by the Danish Energy Agency) and the Mejlflak EIA: the plans for the project and the preapproval of the Mejlflak wind farm came before the rules regarding nearshore wind farms had been settled. Great uncertainty therefore prevails as to which rules pertain to the Mejlflak wind farm.