

Technical University of Denmark



## Making space for wind farms: Practices of territorial stigmatisation in rural Denmark

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**Abstract:**

Whilst issues of siting wind farms have mostly revolved around their public acceptance resulting from an unequal distribution of local costs and benefits, the perceived fairness of the planning process and the disruption of places, the challenge of finding adequate locations and getting access to the land for large wind projects in the first place is becoming increasingly significant. This matter becomes particularly relevant in small countries with relatively mature wind energy sectors, such as Denmark. Although the Danish Renewable Energy Act provides unique measures that allow for greater community involvement and ownership of wind farms, access to diminishing spatial resources reflects a key concern for developers, while putting the role of private landowners at the core of successful projects. By drawing on case studies from rural Northern Denmark it will be demonstrated how narratives of territorial stigmatisation are mobilised and aligned by developers and municipalities in order to make space for and legitimise large wind farm projects in rural areas. In doing so, the paper will illustrate how stigmatisation practices are embedded in discourses of rurality as 'Outskirts-Denmark' that generate a division between areas of energy production and consumption. In more practical terms, it will be shown that 'new development practices' of mapping suitable areas, and purchasing and demolishing properties in marginalised rural areas may not only reflect mechanisms of an evolved wind energy industry, but also allow wind farm developers to avoid conflicts by expediting depopulation.