

Wind power development and citizens' concerns of distributional justice in Northern Finland. Case studies in Simo and Pyhäntä – two municipalities in transition.

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Abstract

Wind power development in Finland carries the hopes and expectations for the future based on green electricity, free from carbon emissions. Wind power units of today are large scale power plants just like any other large power generation units, and their siting in wind parks involves changes and pressures on the entire sustainable development triangle.

We have gathered information from two municipalities in Northern Finland, Simo and Pyhäntä, with ongoing substantial wind power development. Based on municipal residents' interviews and survey, this paper approaches distributional justice of wind power development, in particular the residents' wins and losses, as well as perceptions of land use, impacts in the local lifestyle and real estate income generated by a wind park.

Finnish municipalities have a strong self-government. In the case of wind power, the municipality has authority on their income from wind power parks, as the municipal council determines the tax rate of the land rented. Municipal residents communicated views on wind power technology and its' siting, the local motivations for wind power development and tensions between municipal and individual interests, as well as the impact on daily activities during construction and operation of wind power units. The interviews also conveyed the positions of "winners and losers" of wind power development.