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Shared and Contested Elements in Climate Plans towards a Danish Low Carbon Society

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The industrialized countries must make efforts to reduce their climate impact through increased renewable energy capacity and energy saving efforts. The Danish government’s vision about a society independent of fossil energy has initiated several Danish energy and climate plans describing visions and measures in a 30-40 year perspective. The presentation analyses four Danish action plans from the Danish Society of Engineers, a renewable energy NGO, an environmental NGO and a report from a governmental, independent climate change commission. The aim is to identify shared and contested elements, which should be addressed in order to align future transition efforts towards a low carbon Danish society.

The renewable energy NGO plan is an energy plan, while the other plans are climate plans including non-energy related greenhouse gasses from land use changes and agricultural practices. The plans differ with respect to how agriculture and food consumption should change as part of the transitions.

The plans present different scenarios for the overall Danish energy system. The national commission’s plan describes a system exchanging energy with other countries through a transnational grid, while the other plans describe scenarios for a more independent national energy system, where wind turbine energy mainly is used or stored in Denmark.

All four plans agree about a significant increase in Danish wind turbine capacity and stronger energy saving efforts in production and consumption. The plans differ with respect to the possible reduction of energy consumption, which has implications for the increase in wind turbine capacity. The different assumptions about the future energy need imply also differences in the future role of biomass as energy source, which implies different ecological and climate impacts.

Other differences in the plans concern the roles of economic growth, technological optimization, and public regulation, not least the role of economic measures and market development.