Spoiled darkness? Sense of place and annoyance over obstruction lights from the world’s largest wind turbine test centre in Denmark - DTU Orbit (31/12/2018)

Spoiled darkness? Sense of place and annoyance over obstruction lights from the world’s largest wind turbine test centre in Denmark

The relation between wind power development and local communities has received considerable attention in literature and practice. Relatively few studies, however, have provided evidence about how local citizens perceive enduring environmental impacts such as aviation obstruction lights installed on wind turbines or on wind farm light masts. Evidence regarding people’s perceived annoyance over obstruction lights is of increasing importance as wind turbines become taller, thus potentially affecting more people in the future. The paper conducts individual web-based surveys and interviews with local residents around the world’s largest onshore test site for tall wind turbines in Denmark – the national test site in the rural area of Østerild. The aim is to explore the nature and extent of perceived annoyance over aviation obstruction lights from the test site and the efficiency of different coping strategies. In particular, the discussion focuses on the perceived annoyance in relation to the perceived changes in sense of place, hereunder the loss of the area’s unique night darkness. We argue that perceived annoyance can only be mitigated through coping strategies to a limited extent, as a) perceived effects on sense of place are distinctive in shaping annoyance, and b) an internalisation of planning-related inequities persists.

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