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Climate Attitudes in Denmark

An analysis of public support for and
acceptance of climate policy

English summary



About The Danish Council on Climate Change

The Danish Council on Climate Change is the independent and statutory advisory body on climate change to the Danish Government. The Council is composed of experts with broad expertise and high level of climate-relevant academic knowledge. The Council provides impartial advice on Denmark's transition to a climate-neutral society by 2050.

Climate Attitudes in Denmark

An analysis of public support for
and acceptance of climate policy
(English summary)

Original Danish title

Klimaholdninger i Danmark

En analyse af befolkningens opbakning til
og accept af klimapolitik

Published May 2026 by

The Danish Council on Climate Change

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Public support for and acceptance of climate measures are essential to the ability to formulate, adopt, and implement climate policy. However, there are different perceptions regarding the level of support, and climate attitudes vary across the population. In this analysis, the Danish Council on Climate Change maps the key characteristics of climate attitudes among the Danish population and examines the factors that influence them. Finally, the Council presents its recommendations on how to maintain and strengthen public support, acceptance and engagement in the climate transition.

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Brief summary - Main conclusions

This report examines 1) what characterizes public climate attitudes, 2) whether groups with different attitudes can be identified, and 3) what factors influence these attitudes. The report is based partly on a review of Danish and international research literature and partly on the Council's own analyses of ClimAct survey data from a representative sample of the Danish population.

What characterises public attitudes to climate policy issues?

- **There is broad support for climate action in Denmark.** The vast majority are concerned about climate change, and most people favour a climate policy that is among the most ambitious in the world. A majority believe that Denmark should reduce emissions as quickly as possible, regardless of what other countries do, and many are, in principle, willing to contribute, for example through reduced income or changes in lifestyle. The Danish Council on Climate Change assesses that this provides a strong foundation for formulating and adopting the measures needed to meet Denmark's climate targets. However, it is important to note that people in Denmark have different attitudes, concerns, and levels of engagement. Public support tends to be lower when issues or policy measures become more specific.
- **People underestimate the support of other people.** People systematically underestimate the willingness of others to contribute to and support climate policy measures - particularly the installation of solar panels and onshore wind turbines. This may constitute a barrier to the transition, as individuals' attitudes, engagement, and acceptance are influenced by their perceptions of what others think and do.
- **Disconnect between general and specific support.** Attitudes to climate issues at a general level do not always align with attitudes, acceptance, or behaviour at a more specific level.
- **There is a paradox in attitudes to carbon taxes.** More people support carbon taxes than oppose it. However, there is generally less support for taxes than for other climate policy measures, such as subsidies. This may appear paradoxical given the strong support for the "polluter pays" principle that taxes are designed to reflect. Opposition to taxes may be driven by concerns about costs or uncertainty about their effectiveness.

Can groups with different climate attitudes be identified?

- **Six segments with different climate attitudes are identified.** The Danish Council on Climate Change identifies six segments with different climate attitudes analysing survey data from ClimAct. The majority of the population falls within three segments that are all concerned about climate change and supportive of climate action. Only a small part of the population falls within the segment that is not concerned with climate change and opposed to climate action.
- **Most people have attitudes in middle positions.** The Council has examined whether the six segments indicate a population characterised by disagreement and substantial, systematic differences in attitudes. It finds that most people have attitudes that are concentrated in middle positions and have moderate opinions. The segments do not differ considerably in their level of concern about climate change, though they are somewhat more dispersed in their support for political and individual climate action. Overall, the findings suggest that there are fewer people in extreme positions. There are also no clear and systematic differences between the segments in terms of their demographic composition.
- **Segments have different priorities in the green transition.** Some segments emphasise the importance of reducing greenhouse gas emissions out of concern for future generations, taking global responsibility, or supporting the "polluter pays" principle. Other segments place particular emphasis on ensuring that the transition does not place an undue burden on citizens and does not weaken Denmark's competitiveness.

Which factors influence public attitudes to climate policy?

- **Support is influenced by perceived effectiveness in reducing emissions and fairness.** Climate policy measures that are perceived as effective in reducing greenhouse gas emissions and as fair, or that have other positive co-benefits, are more likely to gain support. Perceptions of effectiveness in reducing emissions and fairness can be incorporated into policy design, information efforts, and citizen engagement.
- **Perceived fairness relates to distribution, recognition, and procedural justice.** Fairness concerns not only the distribution of costs and benefits, but also the inclusion and recognition of different perspectives in decision-making processes. Data show that many citizens do not feel they have influence over climate policy and they have limited trust in to what extent politicians include all relevant considerations in policy development.
- **Climate concern affects support.** The more concerned individuals are about climate change, the more likely they are to support climate policy measures. However, academic research suggests that high levels of concern or anxiety may in certain contexts lead to inaction or feelings of hopelessness.
- **The level of information and knowledge influence support.** Support depends to a large extent on the effects that people expect climate policy to have. These perceptions do not always align with actual effects. Academic research shows that information about the expected consequences of climate policy measures—e.g. on greenhouse gas emissions, prices, employment, and the economy—can increase public support.
- **Communication and framing influence support.** Public understanding and assessment of climate policy measures are shaped by how they are framed and communicated politically. For example, support for less popular measures may be strengthened if they are linked to principles that are supported by many people, such as concern for future generations, the “polluter pays” principle, or Denmark’s role as a frontrunner in reducing emissions.
- **Social norms and dynamics in social networks influence support.** Attitudes towards climate policy are shaped not only by individual preferences but also by perceptions of what others think and do. Social norms and dynamics in social networks influence both attitudes and behaviour, and policies that challenge norms are less likely to gain support. Support can therefore be strengthened by raising public awareness of the broad support for climate policy measures, facilitate public dialogue, and making climate-friendly choices easy and normal. Over time, this may help ensure that measures, which initially face opposition, become widely accepted and embedded in everyday life.

Brief summary - Recommendations

The Danish Council on Climate Change recommends five ways for the Danish Government to maintain or strengthen public support, acceptance, and engagement:

1. **Greater public awareness of broad support.** The government and other relevant actors should communicate to the public that there is in fact broad support for climate action, for example when formulating policy proposals or in the public debate. If there is insufficient awareness of the broad support in public discourse, it may reduce support for climate policy measures.
2. **Focus on effectiveness in reducing emissions and fairness.** The Council presents five recommendations to the Government on how to strengthen support for climate policy that is perceived as effective and fair:
 - **Design climate policy measures with a focus on effectiveness and fairness.** The Government should design climate policy measures with a clear focus on effectiveness in reducing emissions and on fairness. This requires attention to the effect on climate and how the costs of policy are distributed. At the same time, the Government should consider how to involve citizens and recognise their needs and perspectives in the policy development process. There are many different perceptions of fairness, depending on individual perspectives.
 - **Specify policies to meet the 2035 and 2050 climate targets.** The Government should specify which reduction measures and policy instruments it intends to use to achieve Denmark's climate targets. This can help initiate an important public debate about what kind of climate-neutral society Denmark should aim for by 2050 and what the public can support.
 - **Inform about the effects of climate policy.** The Government should be explicit about the effects of its policy on climate, the economy, and other co-benefits, including how measures will affect nature and the environment. This can be done for example in policy proposals and in the annual update of the Government's climate programme. At the same time, the Government should be explicit about how it intends to address any adverse effects of policy.
 - **Explain the use of taxes and regulation.** The Government should inform about how carbon taxes and regulatory requirements work, for example in connection with policy proposals and more broadly in the public debate. This includes explaining that taxes are consistent with the "polluter pays" principle.
 - **Intergenerational fairness.** The Council recommends that, in its long-term plan for a climate-neutral Denmark, the Government should address how climate policy and climate change are expected to affect future generations. Future generations are an important concern for the majority of people according to survey data in this analysis.
3. **Narratives and communication about the climate transition.** People are not motivated by information, knowledge, and data alone, but also by narratives about identity, hope, values, and community. The Council highlights two recommendations on how the Government can work with unifying narratives that facilitate collective action and with differentiated communication:
 - **Narratives about a climate-neutral Denmark.** The Government should actively work to unite people around narratives that make the vision of a climate-neutral Denmark tangible and meaningful. Such narratives can clarify why the transition is important, what a climate-neutral society might look like in practice, and how citizens can contribute to achieving it.
 - **Communication and dialogue with different groups.** The Government should consider how best to communicate with and engage in dialogue with different segments of the population on climate policy and climate change. Different strategies may be needed to maintain or strengthen support across segments, and dialogue can help inform the Government about citizens' concerns and potential opposition to climate action. There may

be a need for more knowledge on how best to reach and engage with the most climate sceptic segment.

4. **Involving citizens in policy development.** Public support can be strengthened if citizens feel they are involved and that their needs, concerns, and perspectives are recognised in political decision-making. The Council highlights two recommendations in this regard:
 - **Citizen involvement in policy development.** The Government should consider whether citizens and citizen perspectives can be more actively involved in the development of climate policy. Increased involvement may take place through citizens' assemblies, panels, consultations, dialogue platforms and workshops related to legislative proposals, partnerships with civil society organisations, and systematic inclusion of citizen perspectives in commissions and expert groups. However, it is important to balance the benefits of involvement against the urgent need for action and effectiveness in the transition.
 - **Local acceptance.** The Government should look beyond financial compensation when seeking to maintain or strengthen the conditions for local acceptance of technologies such as solar panel installations and onshore wind turbines. This could include transparent communication, co-ownership, and citizen involvement based on dialogue. In this context, the Government should also seek to understand what drives local acceptance when, for example, renewable energy installations, electricity infrastructure, and CO₂ storage facilities are established. Local acceptance has not been a main focus of this report.
5. **Supporting a climate-friendly life.** When climate-friendly behaviours are perceived as normal and widespread, and when they are embedded in social communities, the likelihood increases that citizens will support policy measures and engage in the transition. The Council highlights two recommendations to support everyday climate action:
 - **Community-based climate action.** The Government should consider how to strengthen the conditions for community-based climate action. This could include green community initiatives or more loose-knit social networks where citizens come together to explore how to live more climate-friendly and adapt to climate change. Such communities may focus on renewable energy, climate-friendly diets, sustainable transport, the sharing economy, or climate adaptation.
 - **Normalisation of climate-friendly preferences.** The Government should work to normalise climate-friendly preferences. Such preferences can directly reduce climate impacts and make stricter climate regulation feel less burdensome. For example, individuals who have already adopted more climate-friendly behaviours may be less affected by carbon taxes.

The recommendations may be relevant not only for the Government, but also for municipalities, organisations and businesses, among others. The Danish Council on Climate Change works to continually incorporate new knowledge and insights from its analyses into the Council's work and recommendations.

Summary - Introduction

People experience and respond to climate policy in different contexts

The climate transition involves changes to society, the economy, and the landscape. Towards 2050, the climate transition will involve land-use changes, technological changes, and a possible transition in consumption patterns. Climate policy is expected to become increasingly visible in everyday life – even as new and improved technologies continue to emerge. Climate measures will manifest themselves in the neighbour's field, in workplace canteens, on television, in heating bills, and at the car dealer. At the same time, climate change will increasingly cause more frequent extreme weather events in Denmark and globally.

The climate transition may entail improvements and burdens. Some climate measures may lead to improvements for society such as more nature and cleaner drinking water. Conversely, climate measures may also result in inconvenience or costs, for example in the form of high-voltage power lines in the landscape or higher prices for the most polluting or resource-scarce goods. These different experiences will shape the population's attitudes towards climate policy.

The transition may affect people in all the different roles they play in the transition – as neighbours, employees, consumers, residents, democratic citizens, business owners, landowners and more. People may respond with support, acceptance, engagement, opposition, protest, apathy, tolerance, uncertainty or indifference. These different responses may be active or passive, positive or negative, as illustrated in Figure 1.

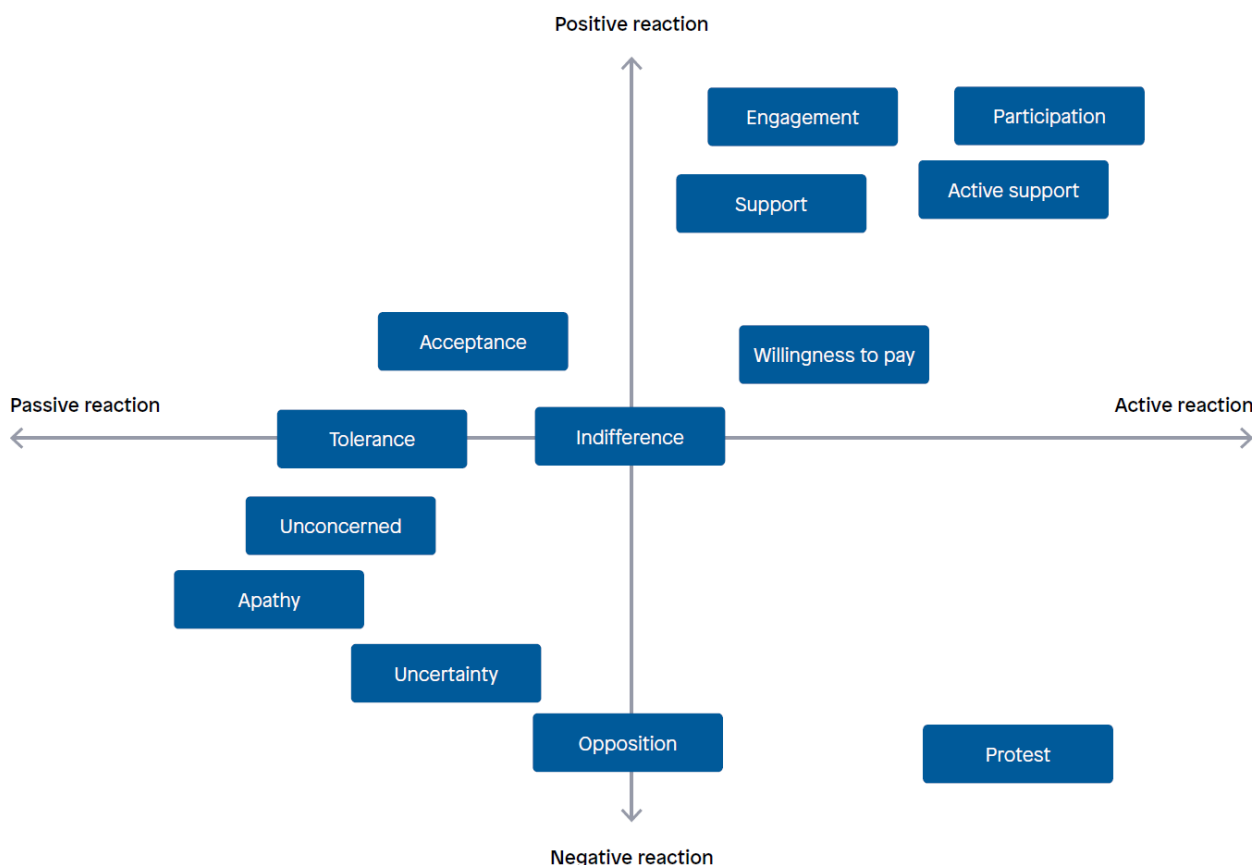


Figure 1 Examples of different responses to climate measures

Sources: The Danish Council on Climate Change based on Kyselá m.fl. (2019)¹, Wolsink (2018)² og Gaede (2018)³.

Public support or acceptance are important for achieving Denmark's climate targets

Different responses to climate policy proposals and measures can influence the likelihood of achieving Denmark's climate targets. If politicians experience that many people do not accept or support new climate policy measures, they may hesitate to develop and adopt new climate policy.

The introduction of new policy measures requires a certain degree of support from and normalisation among politicians, citizens, businesses, and other stakeholders.⁴ This applies, for example, to a greenhouse gas tax on agricultural emissions. At the same time, the implementation of climate measures may be delayed or confronted by opposition. Academic research and experience show, for instance, that local opposition has delayed the expansion of renewable energy.

Significant public disagreement may challenge climate action

Climate action may be challenged if public attitudes are characterised by disagreement and significant differences. In such cases, attitudes may be described as polarised. Polarised attitudes could undermine the social and political stability that may be necessary in order to agree on and implement ambitious climate policies.⁵ and challenge the social cohesion and social balance that must be ensured in accordance with the Danish Climate Act.⁶ There is a risk that climate policy may lead to polarisation over time. Therefore, it is important to monitor developments.

Understanding public experiences and attitudes can support climate policy

The Danish Parliament and the Government can strengthen the foundation for developing and implementing effective and broadly supported climate policy if they understand what shapes people's climate attitudes, support, and acceptance. Conversely, inadequate insight into public perspectives on climate policy may limit decision-makers' ability to take people's experiences and concerns into account when designing and implementing climate policy. This may increase the risk of opposition and make it more difficult to achieve the necessary and demanding emission reductions in the years to come.

The analysis provides insights into climate attitudes in Denmark

In the *Status Outlook 2024*, the Danish Council on Climate Change recommended that the Government develops a strategy for public support and acceptance in Denmark. This analysis elaborates on that recommendation. The purpose of the analysis is to describe attitudes in Denmark to climate policy issues and identify factors that influence support, acceptance, and engagement.

The analysis seeks to answer three questions:

- What characterises people's attitudes to climate policy issues? (Chapter 2 in the report)
- Can groups with different climate attitudes be identified within the population? (Chapter 3 in the report)
- Which factors influence people's attitudes to climate policy measures? (Chapter 4 in the report)

Based on the analysis of these three questions, the Danish Council on Climate Change presents recommendations on how the Government can maintain and strengthen support, acceptance, and engagement. These are outlined in the blue box earlier.

Attitudes are one element of acceptance of climate policy

A distinction can be made between three dimensions of acceptance of climate policy:⁷

- **Sociopolitical acceptance.** The broadest and most general level. This includes attitudes and perceptions among the population as well as among politicians and stakeholders in the political landscape. This is the focus of the this report.
- **Local acceptance.** Refers to the specific acceptance of, for example, renewable energy projects among local stakeholders, particularly residents and local authorities.

- **Market acceptance.** Concerns the uptake of technologies and the acceptance of products or policy measures among consumers, producers and financial actors.

This analysis focuses on sociopolitical acceptance and examines more specifically support for and acceptance of climate policy within the population in Denmark. Appendix A outlines how the Danish Council on Climate Change understands the population in this analysis. The three dimensions of acceptance mutually influence each another.⁸ Sociopolitical acceptance can be regarded as a foundation for the other two dimensions.⁹ The legislative framework and societal conditions for the climate transition are shaped at the national level – among the Government, the Danish Parliament, other political actors, and the population as a whole.

Summary - Conclusions

There is broad support for climate action

The report finds that there is broad support for climate action in Denmark when people share their perspective on more general climate issues.

Based on survey data from ClimAct (se Figure 2)¹⁰ and existing literature, Chapter 2 in the report shows that:

- the vast majority are aware of climate change and concerned about it
- most people want Denmark to pursue a climate policy that is among the most ambitious in the world, and more ambitious than current policy
- most people are, in principle, willing to contribute, for example through reduced disposable income or changes in their lifestyle
- there is general agreement on why climate action is necessary. For a majority of the population the need for action is motivated primarily by concerns for future generations and for nature.

Broad support for climate action does not mean that everyone shares the same views. The population can be described in terms of groups with different attitudes, concerns, and levels of engagement. At the same time, it is important to note that support is lower in some contexts when issues or measures become more concrete, although there is also support for several specific climate policy measures.

The Danish Council on Climate Change assesses that the broad support provides a strong foundation for formulating, adopting and implementing climate policy that can meet Denmark's climate targets. The fact that support is lower in some specific contexts does not change this foundation; rather it indicates that the way climate policy is designed and implemented is important. It highlights a need for understanding which factors strengthen or weaken support in different contexts, and what underlies scepticism, opposition, or concerns among the public. These issues are explored throughout the report.

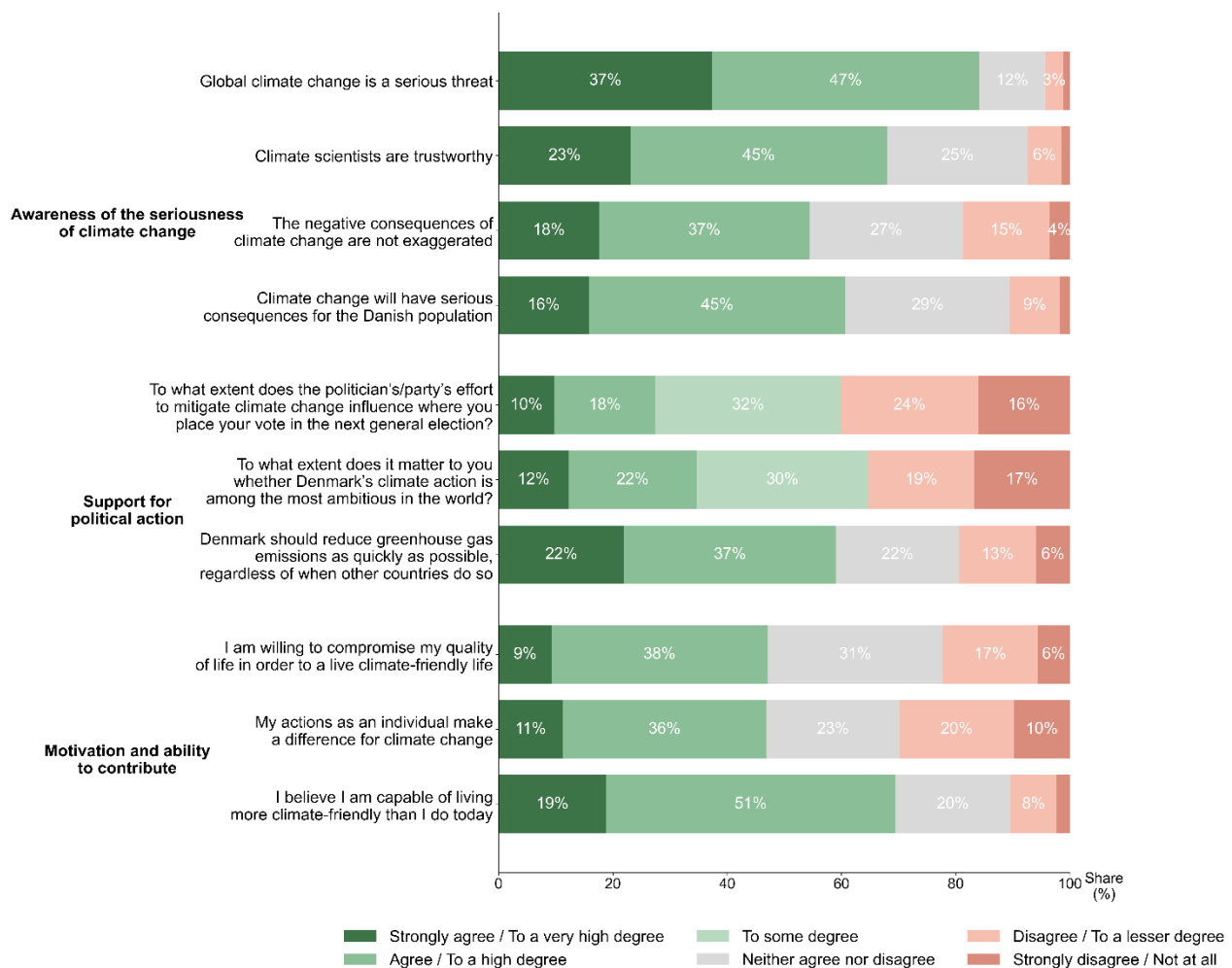


Figure 2 Selected questions related to “awareness of the seriousness of climate change”, “support for political action”, and “motivation and ability to contribute”

Note 1: Results are presented in percentages and are based on a sample of 1,506 responses. The data have been weighted to ensure representativeness by adjusting for differences between the sample and the population.

Note 2: The wording and response categories of the three following questions have been reversed compared to the original wording of the questions. The original wording of the questions was: “The negative consequences of climate change are exaggerated”, “I am unwilling to compromise my quality of life in order to live a climate-friendly life”, and “My actions as an individual make no difference for climate change”.

Note 3: The two questions “To what extent will the politician’s/party’s efforts to mitigate climate change influence where you place your vote in the next Danish general election?” and “To what extent does it matter to you whether Denmark’s climate action is among the most ambitious in the world?” use the following response categories: “To a very high degree”, “To a high degree”, “To some degree”, “To a lesser degree”, and “Not at all”.

Source: The Danish Council on Climate Change based on ClimAct (November 2025).¹¹

People underestimate the support of others

Most people underestimate how much other people support climate policy measures and the willingness of other people to contribute to the transition through reduced disposable income. The report finds that people in particular underestimate support for onshore wind turbines and solar parks in their local area (see Figure 3). On average, people expect the level of support to be only half as high as it actually is. Moreover, the literature finds that politicians also tend to underestimate the level of public support for climate policy measures.¹²

The literature suggests that the underestimation of other peoples' support can weaken climate policy support and engagement, partly because it creates "spirals of silence", where people talk less about climate issues within their social networks.¹³ Underestimation of other peoples' support may therefore act as a barrier to the climate transition.

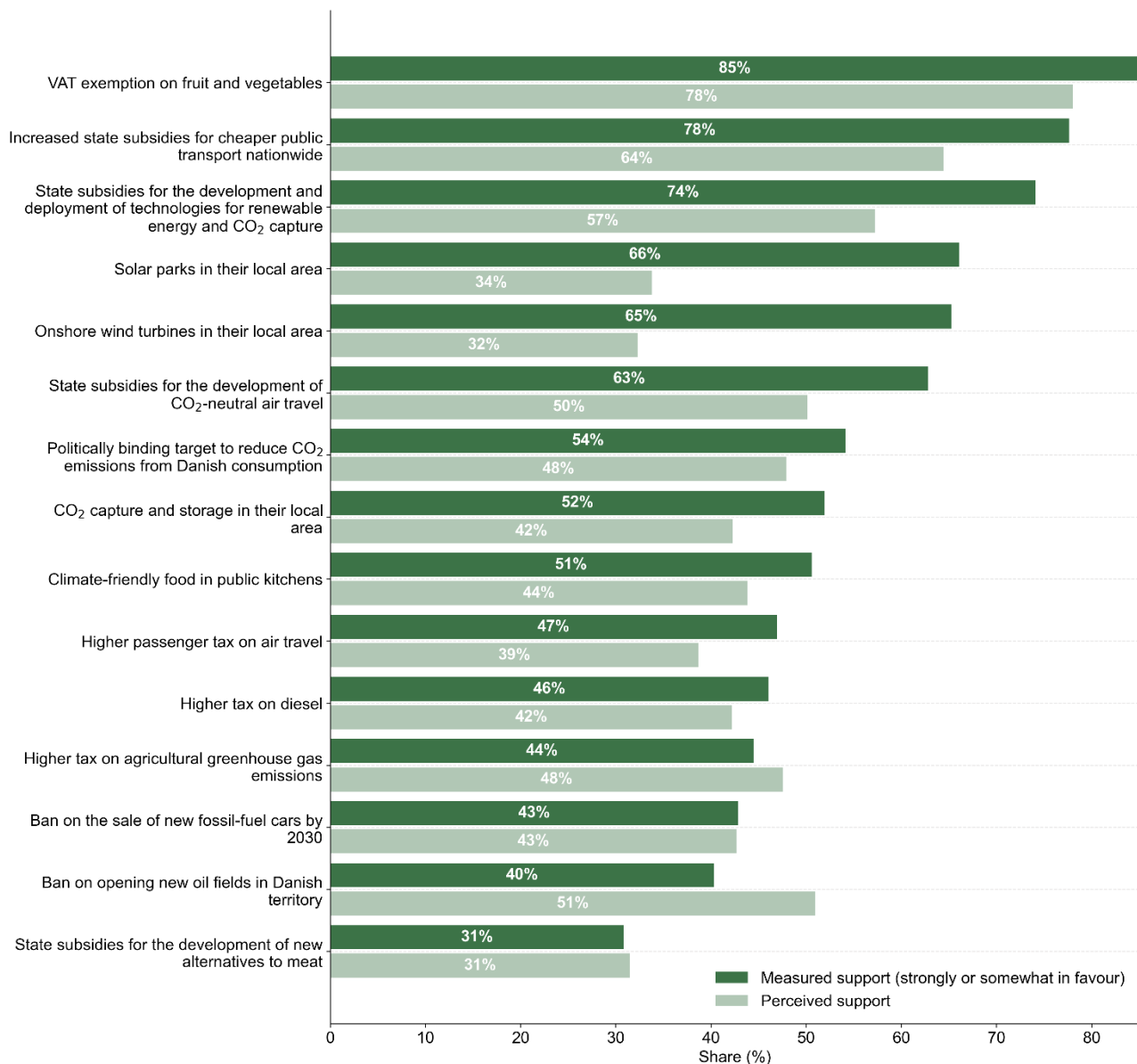


Figure 3 Perceived norms regarding climate policy measures

Note 1: Question: "What proportion of the Danish population do you think supports [measure]?" (i.e. what percentage would respond that they are either "somewhat in favour" or "strongly in favour" of this measure in a questionnaire survey). Results are presented in percentages and are based on a sample of 1,990 responses. The data have been weighted to ensure representativeness by adjusting for differences between the sample and the population.

Source: The Danish Council on Climate Change based on ClimAct (January 2026).¹⁴

General support does not always translate into actual acceptance and action

There is not necessarily consistency between attitudes to climate issues at a general level and attitudes, acceptance, or behaviour at a more specific level, for example attitudes towards specific climate policy measures or local projects.

At an overall level, there is broad support for climate action in Denmark, but it is less clear what the public believes should be done about the problem more specifically and how they wish to contribute. There is a partial disconnect between general support and specific levels of support. For example, there is general support for the expansion of wind energy in Denmark.¹⁵ This also applies when people are asked whether they are open to such technologies in their local area. However, local opposition has in some cases delayed the implementation of specific projects.¹⁶

This partial disconnect between general and specific levels of support can be explained in different ways, including:

- **Distributional considerations.** The benefits of much climate policy are dispersed across the society while the costs are often concentrated around specific actors. This means that those who are most strongly affected by the policy have strong incentives to organise and oppose it, while the many who are less affected or receive small benefits have weaker incentives to mobilise support.¹⁷
- **Attitudes and everyday life.** Behaviour and acceptance of specific measures are influenced by many factors other than attitudes and perceptions when people experience climate policy in everyday contexts rather than, for example, in a survey.¹⁸ For instance, studies show that the degree of local acceptance of solar and wind installations is affected more by how people experience the process of establishing such facilities and less by people's attitudes towards the technologies.¹⁹

Finally, respondents in surveys may have a tendency to give answers they perceive as more socially acceptable. This may partly explain the high levels of support at a general level.²⁰

However, Chapter 4 in the report finds a clear relationship between attitudes to general and abstract questions and support for specific climate policy measures. Consequently, the more people consider climate to be an important political priority, the more they are likely to also support specific climate policy measures. Although support is generally lower at the specific level than at the general level, it is also worth noting that many specific measures still enjoy support. In general, more people are in favour than opposed – including examples of measures that directly affect individuals, such as climate-friendly food in public kitchens and passenger taxes on air travel. Consequently, while support may be greater at the general level than at the specific level, support at the specific level is still significant.

There is support for the 'polluter pays' principle, but scepticism towards requirements and taxes

The report finds that there is a high level of support for the 'polluter pays' principle as a central consideration in climate policy. At the same time, there is, on average, less support for climate policy measures that restrict specific behaviours, such as taxes or bans, while there is greater support for climate policy measures that encourage specific behaviours, such as subsidies or informative policy measures (see Figure 4).²¹ This may appear slightly paradoxical, as taxes place the costs on those who emit greenhouse gases: the polluters.

The analysis finds that the greater the perceived climate impact and co-benefits of a climate policy measure, including economic effects, the more likely people are to support the measure. Taxes are often the most cost-effective climate measure, meaning that they deliver the greatest climate impact relative to the cost for society. Again, it appears paradoxical that taxes are met with relatively more scepticism than other types of measures.

There may be several reasons for the apparent paradoxes. Research shows that people may be concerned about negative or limited effects of taxes related to the costs, fairness and climate impact.

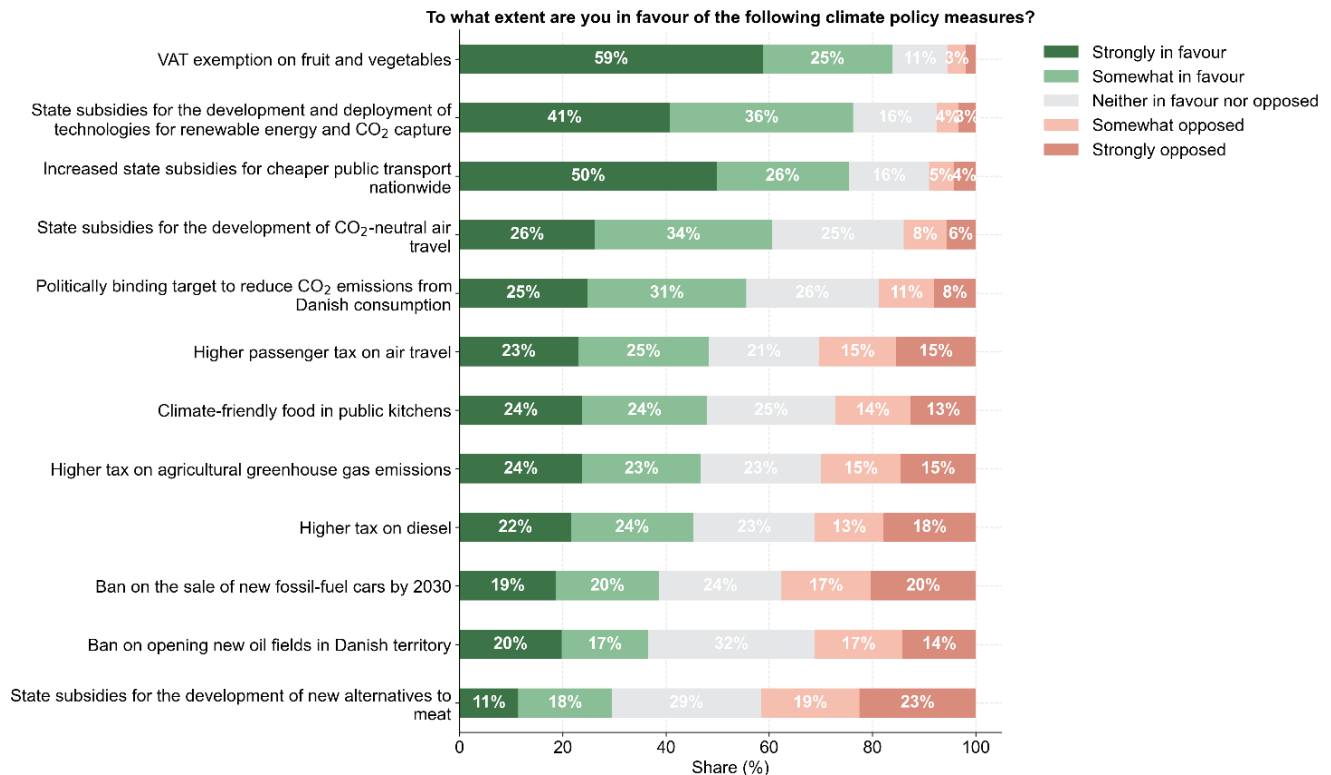


Figure 4 Distribution of responses regarding support for specific climate policy measures

Note 1: The figure is based on a sample of 3,003 responses. The data have been weighted to ensure representativeness by adjusting for differences between the sample and the population.

Note 2: The measures were selected by ClimAct based on dialogue with other organisations, including the Danish Council on Climate Change. Five of the measures are included in the Danish Council on Climate Change's catalogue of policy measures and are therefore measures previously recommended by the Council. These include passenger taxes on air travel, taxes on agricultural emissions, higher taxes on diesel, and a ban on the sale of fossil-fuel cars by 2030. In addition, the Danish Council on Climate Change has recommended a benchmark for reducing the climate footprint from consumption and has recommended cancelling the 8th licensing round and future licensing rounds in the North Sea, which are also related to some of the specific measures included in the survey.

Source: The Danish Council on Climate Change based on data from ClimAct (May 2025).²²

Support for climate policy measures can increase

The level of support for different climate policy measures varies, and some policy measures are initially met with greater scepticism than others. The scepticism, however, is not necessarily permanent. Attitudes are dynamic, and experience and academic literature show that support for, for example, taxes and regulations can increase over time once the measures have been implemented.

Support can, for example, be increased by:

- **Designing policy** to reflect citizens' concerns about costs, fairness and climate impact, for example by combining taxes with compensation for low-income groups or investments in new climate or environmental measures.
- **Ensuring transparency and providing information** about the actual impacts and consequences of climate policy measures, as perceptions do not always correspond to the actual effects of the measures.
- **Considering the framing, communication, and dialogue** with citizens about policy measures. This could include using considerations and principles that many people support as motivation for climate

policy, such as the consideration for future generations, the ‘polluter pays’ principle, or Denmark’s role as a frontrunner in climate policy.

- **Supporting social norms and normalisation**, for example by making the broad support for climate policy visible and making climate-friendly choices easy and common, so that more far-reaching measures also gain acceptance over time.

There are differences in climate attitudes across groups

The report identifies six segments with different attitudes towards climate issues: the ‘Alarmed’, the ‘Alert’, the ‘Cautious’, the ‘Ambivalent’, the ‘Indifferent’ and the ‘Doubtful’. The segment analysis uses the same segment names as ClimAct’s group classification, which is based on a similar analysis.²³

The segments differ in terms of how concerned they are about climate change, how much they support political climate action, how motivated they are to take individual climate action, and how strong their climate attitudes are. Figure 5 describes the six segments, while Figure 6 illustrates the differences between them. The segment analysis:

- finds that the vast majority of the Danish population is concerned about climate change and, at a general level, supports political and individual climate action. This applies to the ‘Alarmed’, the ‘Alert’ and the ‘Cautious’, which together make up the majority of the population.
- identifies a segment that is relatively concerned, but more reluctant to support climate action: the ‘Ambivalent’, which accounts for around one fifth of the population.
- identifies a segment that does not take a clear position on climate issues: the ‘Indifferent’, which accounts for around one sixth of the population.
- finds that few people are doubtful, meaning sceptical towards climate change science and opposed to climate policy action. Only one in twenty respondents belongs to the ‘Doubtful’ segment.



Figure 5 Description of the six segments

Source: The Danish Council on Climate Change, based on ClimAct (November 2025).²⁴

Most people are concentrated in the middle of the spectrum of climate attitudes

In the public debate, climate change is sometimes presented as an issue involving large differences, or even polarisation, between groups, for example between people in urban and rural areas. The Danish Council on Climate Change has examined whether the six segments reflect a population characterised by disagreement and substantial, systematic differences in attitudes.

The Danish Council on Climate Change finds that most people are concentrated in middle positions and have moderate attitudes. This is shown in Figure 6. The segments are not particularly dispersed in terms of their concern about climate change. They are somewhat more dispersed in terms of their support for political and individual climate action. Across the segments, the overall picture is that most people are concentrated in middle positions, while fewer hold more extreme positions.

In addition, there are no consistent, systematic and substantial differences between the segments in terms of their demographic composition. This is elaborated below.

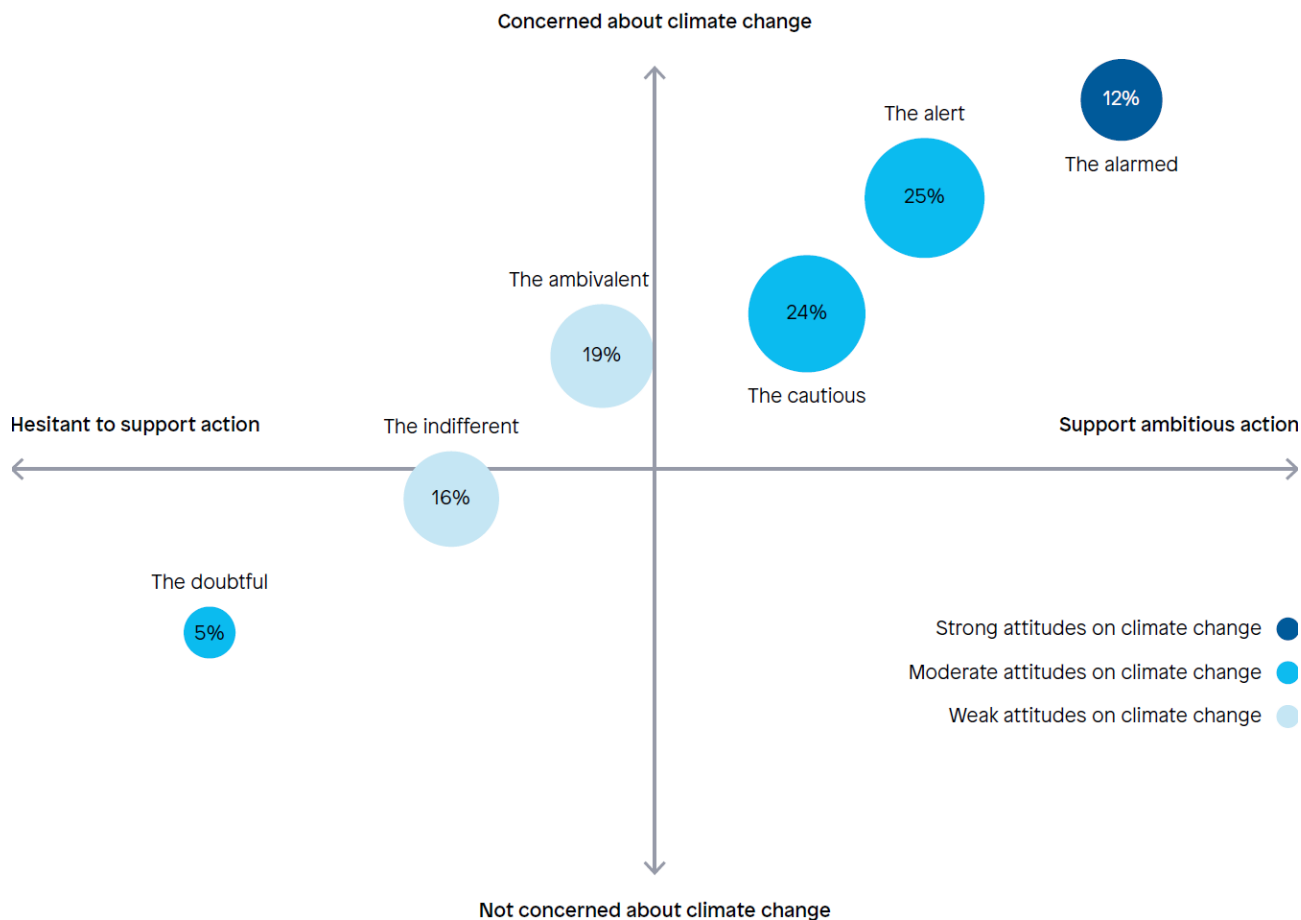


Figure 6 The six segments by concern about climate change and support for climate action

Note 1: The size of the bubbles in the chart indicates the percentage of respondents in each segment. The two axes indicate the index values for concern about climate change and support for climate action, respectively. Support for climate action includes both political and individual action. Respondents were asked directly about whether they have strong attitudes towards climate change. The Danish Council on Climate Change has grouped the responses into three categories for the figure.

Note 2: The segment analysis is based on data from ClimAct's survey *Holdningsobservatorium - Danskernes klimaholdninger* from November 2025. A total of 1,506 respondents answered the survey. The segments were identified using latent class analysis. The segments are named on the basis of ClimAct's support index and Lind et al. (2023)²⁵, which, adapted to a Danish context, is based on *Global Warming's Six Americas*, developed by the *Yale Program on Climate Change Communication*.

Note 3: The results are shown as percentages and are based on a sample of 1,506 respondents. The data are weighted to ensure that the results are representative by adjusting for differences between the sample and the population.

Source: The Danish Council on Climate Change, based on ClimAct (November 2025).²⁶

Different segments emphasise different considerations

Different segments emphasise different considerations in relation to the green transition. This insight can contribute to understanding what matters to the different groups. The majority of the alarmed, the alert and the cautious emphasise the importance of reducing greenhouse gas emissions out of consideration for future generations, reducing emissions in order to take global responsibility, or support the 'polluter pays' principle.

The indifferent and the doubtful segments place particular emphasis on ensuring that the transition does not place an undue burden on any citizen, and that it does not weaken Denmark's competitiveness. The ambivalent segment displays a wider range of views on which considerations are most important.

Different factors influence public support for climate policy

Based on the academic literature, the Danish Council on Climate Change has identified factors that appear to influence people's climate attitudes. The factors are shown in Figure 7 and include individual factors, such as demographics, lifestyle, views on climate change, views on society, and factors relating to how people perceive the design of climate policy. In addition, contextual factors, such as political, economic, material, social and cultural contexts, are important in shaping attitudes.

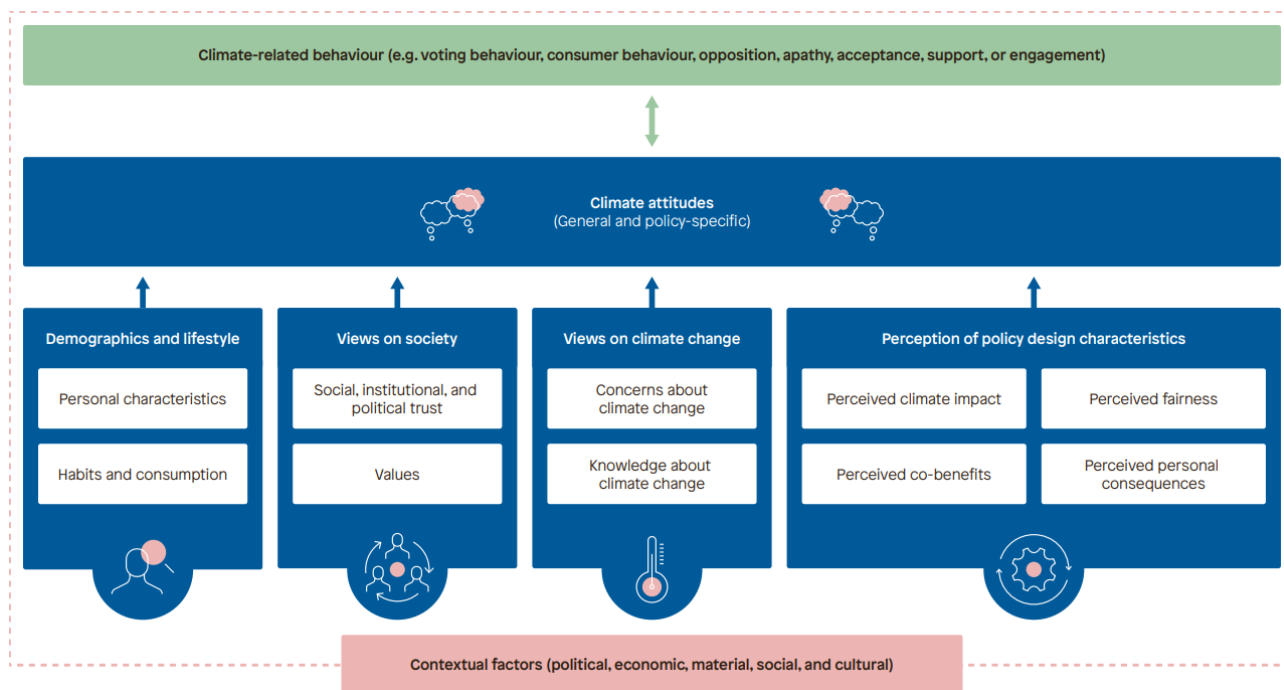


Figure 7 Factors influencing people's climate attitudes

Sources: The Danish Council on Climate Change based on Dechezleprêtre et al. (2025)²⁷; Drews & van den Bergh (2015)²⁸; Bergquist (2022)²⁹; Fairbrother et al. (2019)³⁰; Dabla-Norris et al. (2023)³¹; Kulin & Sevä (2020)³²; Davidovic & Harring (2020)³³; OECD (2022)³⁴; Bumann (2021)³⁵; Ejelöv (2020)³⁶; Klenert (2018)³⁷; ClimAct (2025).³⁸

Demographics play a relatively small role in shaping support for climate policy

The Danish Council on Climate Change has examined how demographic factors affect support in two ways. First, the Council have analysed the demographic composition of the six segments with different climate attitudes at a general level as mentioned above. Second, the Council analyses the importance of demographics for support for specific climate policy measures, such as carbon taxes.

- Geography.** Geography is the demographic factor most strongly associated with support for climate policy. Support for climate policy is slightly higher in larger cities than in rural areas. However, at a general level, there are no major divides between urban and rural areas. The same picture emerges when looking at support for specific climate policy measures. At the same time, the analysis indicates that there may be a relationship between where people live and which climate policy measures they perceive as fair. Consequently, if people do not support a given climate measure, it is likely not because of where they live, but rather because they do not perceive the measure as effective in reducing greenhouse gas emissions or as fair. This is elaborated below.
- Gender.** There are slightly more women than men in the segments that are concerned about climate change and, at a general level more women support climate action. Women are also slightly more prone to support some of the specific climate policy measures than men. However, for more than half of the measures examined, there are no significant differences between support from men and women.

- **Education.** There is a slight tendency for people with longer levels of education to be more concerned about climate change and more supportive of climate policy. However, the differences appear small.
- **Age and income.** The analysis finds no measurable effects of age or income on support for climate policy measures.

Perceptions of climate policy design are important for support

People's perceptions of the design and effects of climate policy measures influence support for specific climate policy measures more than gender, education, age, and income. This is shown by international academic literature.³⁹ The Danish Council on Climate Change's analysis and existing literature show that it matters whether people:

- believe the measures are effective in reducing greenhouse gas emissions
- believe the measures will have negative consequences for them personally
- perceive the measure as fair for society
- expect co-benefits, for example health benefits from lower particle pollution

People's perceptions of climate policy design influence support more than factors that are more difficult to change, such as age, gender, and geography. This provides policymakers with opportunities to strengthen support for climate policy measures through policy design, information, and dialogue with citizens about climate policy. For example, a tax with high climate impact can be accompanied by additional green investments and/or deductions or subsidies for particularly affected groups.

Support may also be increased through clear information about purpose and effects of climate policy measures. Information and communication are important because people's perceptions of climate impacts, economic effects, and co-benefits do not always correspond to the actual effects.⁴⁰ In addition, how climate policy measures are framed influences how people understand and assess the effects.⁴¹

Climate concern influences support for climate policy measures

The level of concern about climate change is important for whether people support specific climate policy measures. This is found both in the Danish Council on Climate Change's analysis of survey data and in the international academic literature.⁴² The more concerned people are about climate change, the more likely they are to support specific climate policy measures.

However, it is not clear whether or how climate concern within the population can or should be increased in order to strengthen support for climate action. Overall, the literature suggests that concern alone does not necessarily create greater support for climate policy measures, and that high levels of concern and anxiety may, in some cases, lead to inaction if people do not feel that individuals or society as a whole can take climate action.⁴³

Perceived fairness concerns distribution, processes and recognition of different perspectives

The regression analysis in Chapter 4 in the report finds that support for climate policy measures increases if people expect the costs of the measures to be fairly distributed across society. It is important to note, however, that according to existing studies economic factors alone cannot explain whether the climate transition is perceived as fair or not.

Overall, perceived fairness appears to be shaped by the following factors:

- whether people generally perceive the distribution to be fair in terms of burdens and benefits associated with climate change and climate policy, known as **distributive justice**.
- whether people feel they are involved and heard in a meaningful way in policy development, known as **procedural justice**.

- whether people feel the decisions taken recognise the needs, concerns, and perspectives of relevant groups and individuals, including marginalised groups, and future generations, known as **recognition justice**.⁴⁴

Data from ClimAct show that a large majority feel they do not have the opportunity to influence national climate policy or local climate measures in Denmark.⁴⁵ Consequently, there appears to be potential for strengthening people's perception of procedural justice. A majority also report they do not trust politicians' ability to take all groups in society into account when developing climate policy.⁴⁶ This indicates that perceptions of recognition justice in the population could be strengthened.

Appendix A Design and methodology of the analysis

The analysis is based on two overall sources of data: a) a mapping of Danish and international academic literature, and b) survey data from Danish questionnaire studies on climate attitudes within the population.

Literature mapping

The Danish Council on Climate Change has mapped academic literature and other studies within a range of topics. The analysis primarily draws on research on social acceptance and public support for climate policy (the literature typically uses concepts such as *public support*, *public opinion*, *policy attitudes*, *public perceptions*, *social acceptance*, etc.). In addition, the Danish Council on Climate Change has also mapped research within the fields of *just transition*, democracy and citizen involvement in the climate transition, as well as behavioural research. The analysis also draws on insights from these research fields.

The academic literature on social acceptance and public support is primarily based on national or international population surveys that measure people's views on different climate measures or climate-related issues through surveys, similar to the ClimAct surveys. In the Danish Council on Climate Change's mapping, particular emphasis has been placed on *reviews* and meta-studies, as well as studies based on empirical data from Denmark and/or comparable countries. Danish survey studies that have not been published as academic research have also been included.

Survey data

The Danish Council on Climate Change has analysed survey data collected by the research project ClimAct.⁴⁷ ClimAct is a collaboration between social science researchers from Aarhus University and University of Copenhagen and is supported by the foundations Realdania and KR Foundation. Four times a year, ClimAct conducts population surveys examining the population's attitudes towards different climate-related issues. Table 1 provides an overview of the four specific surveys used by the Danish Council on Climate Change in the analysis.

Table 1 Overview of ClimAct surveys

Survey title	Published	Number of observations
Danskernes opbakning til klimapolitiske tiltag	May 2025	3,003
Holdningsobservatorium – Danskernes klimaholdninger	November 2025	1,506
Danskernes opbakning til klimapolitiske tiltag	January 2026	1,990
Holdningsobservatorium – Danskernes klimaholdninger	March 2026	2,003

Source: ClimAct.⁴⁸

Sample and representativeness

ClimAct uses an online panel provided by *Norstat* to distribute surveys. The sample sizes vary across the individual surveys from approximately 1,500 to 3,000 respondents, cf. Table 1 above. The underlying population consists of all adults above the age of 18 in the Danish population. ClimAct has sought to ensure representativeness in the data

collection by managing the sampling process based on demographic variables (age, region, and gender). Data collection continued until the desired number of observations had been obtained both for the sample as a whole and for the individual demographic groups. Subsequently, the sample data were weighted on demographic variables where deviations from the background population occurred. The purpose is to increase the likelihood of representativeness so that the results reflect the Danish population as accurately as possible.

When the Danish Council on Climate Change refers to results from ClimAct's surveys in this analysis, we typically use the term *the population*, because we assess that the sample sizes and representativeness in relation to the underlying population are sufficient for the results to reflect patterns within the population as a whole.

The Danish Council on Climate Change's interpretation of survey data

In the analysis, the Danish Council on Climate Change uses results from surveys (both from ClimAct and from other studies and academic research) to provide insights into:

- where support for different climate policy measures is strongest and weakest which priorities, principles, and values people emphasise in relation to the climate transition
- which specific types of information, formulations, or policy designs can make attitudes towards different climate policy measures more positive or negative.

It is important to keep in mind that expressed attitudes do not necessarily translate into action. There may be several reasons for this:

- Behaviour is shaped not only by attitudes, but also by factors such as habits, competencies, social norms, accessibility, and experiences.⁴⁹
- The attitudes people express in surveys are shaped not only by their underlying values or consistent attitudes, but also by other factors. These include, for example, how issues are framed and discussed in practice, and which signals are communicated by political actors and the media (so-called *framing effects*).⁵⁰ *Social desirability* bias may also play a role, as respondents tend to report attitudes or patterns of behaviour that they perceive as more socially acceptable in surveys.⁵¹
- Local acceptance of facilities such as solar parks, wind turbines, and CCS depends not only on attitudes towards the specific technologies, but also on citizens' experiences of the process surrounding the establishment of the facilities.⁵²

Nevertheless, attitudes and survey responses make it more likely that acceptance, support, opposition, or engagement will be reflected in practice.⁵³ For example, a person is more likely in practice to accept a specific carbon tax if they have expressed support for the tax in a survey than if they have expressed opposition.

Segmentation analysis

The segmentation analysis focuses on examining whether groups with different climate attitudes can be identified. To investigate this, the Danish Council on Climate Change conducted an analysis of data from ClimAct's survey studies. Segmentation analyses are used to divide respondents into segments based on data in order to better understand the different groups within the population. This method has been used by several organisations to examine public attitudes to climate issues:

- **The Yale Program on Climate Change Communication** has developed a theoretical model that divides the US population into six segments, known as *Global Warming's Six Americas*.⁵⁴ The purpose of this approach is to understand which segments should be targeted through communication and how to communicate effectively with the different segments.
- In 2026, **ClimAct** published a support index that divides the Danish population into six segments.⁵⁵ The segmentation analysis is based on research conducted at the University of Copenhagen. Inspired by *Global Warming's Six Americas*, the researchers developed a segmentation model (the AAACID model) adapted to a Danish context.⁵⁶ The model divides the population into the following six segments based on their climate attitudes: *Alarmed, Concerned, Cautious, Ambivalent, Indifferent* and *Doubtful*.

The Danish Council on Climate Change identified the six segments shown in Figure 5-6 using latent class analysis, a statistical method used to identify subgroups within a population that often share similar characteristics. Based on selected indicators, probabilities of belonging to each segment are estimated. Respondents are then assigned to the segment to which they have the highest probability of belonging. ClimAct and the researchers who developed the AAACID segmentation model also used latent class analysis.⁵⁷ The method has likewise been applied by other researchers, for example to analyse flexitarians in Denmark.⁵⁸

The latent class analysis was conducted using the StepMix software package in Python and was based on categorical variables.⁵⁹ StepMix was developed to perform latent class analyses in one, two or three steps using an Expectation–Maximisation (EM) algorithm. The probabilities were estimated using 50 iterations with random starting values in the StepMix model, as the estimated probabilities may be sensitive to local optima. The Danish Council on Climate Change also conducted a sensitivity analysis using 1,000 iterations, which produced the same results. The model was specified to test different numbers of segments, starting with one segment and then incrementally adding segments up to a maximum of seven.

Regression analysis

Chapter 4 in the report focuses on examining which factors influence the population's attitudes towards climate policy measures. The Council has examined which factors influence support for 12 different climate policy measures. These 12 measures were included in the ClimAct surveys (see Figure 4). The Council's analysis is based on statistical regression analyses in which attitudes towards the 12 measures are the dependent variables. The independent variables are factors that the international research literature identifies as important (see Figure 7) and that can be examined using the ClimAct dataset. The analysis consists of a series of ordinal logit regression models estimated separately for each of the 12 climate policy measures.

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