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Assessment of perceived legitimacy in policy evaluation

application to Dutch Regional Energy Strategies

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Regional Energy Strategies

- › History of unrest and resistance against wind farms
- › 30 plans for Windfarms and Solar parks in Dutch regions 2030
- › Voluntary contribution, but must total 35 TWh
- › Regions have an informal position, municipality council approves of regional plans.
- › Emphasis on participation and local ownership





Perceived policy legitimacy

- › Windfarms and solar parcs have an impact on the landscape and on people
- › Policy Evaluation: Not only effectiveness and efficiency...
- › Perceived legitimacy: acceptability, when considering everyone's interests
 - policy features that affect perceived legitimacy
 - Seems more appropriate than evaluating acceptance or support





Research Question

- › To what extent do different policy characteristics affect citizen's perceived legitimacy of local renewable energy policy in the Netherlands?





Methods - Participants

> Introduction policy to respondents

- 1. Text, pictures



- 2. Movie



> N >2733: Kantar panel



Method development

 > 1. Conceptual framework

 > 2. Experts interviews: policy details

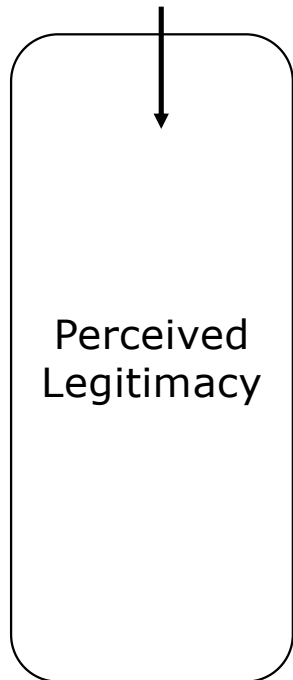
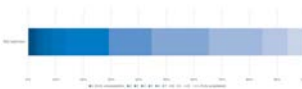
 > 3. Pilot. 10 Videointerviews respondents: for understanding and appropriateness





Conceptual Framework *(Van Noije)

1. overall

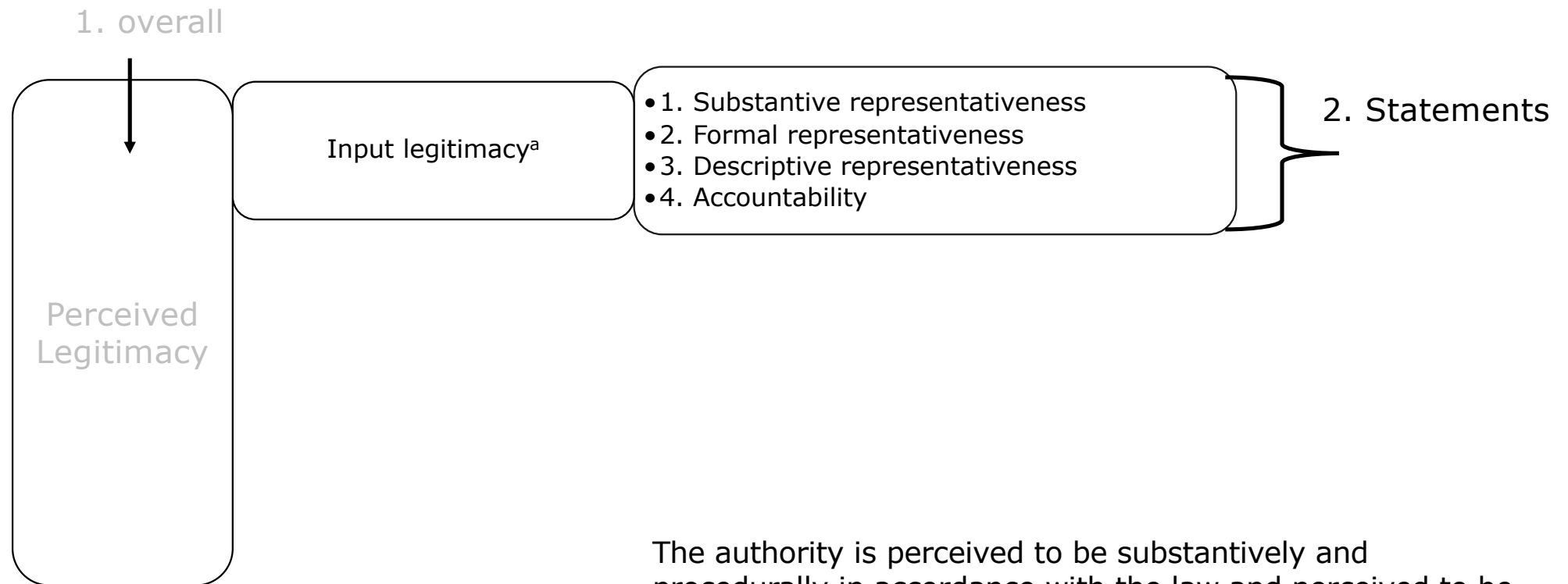


Do you consider it acceptable that there are regional energy strategies, when considering everyone's interests?





Conceptual Framework *(Van Noije)

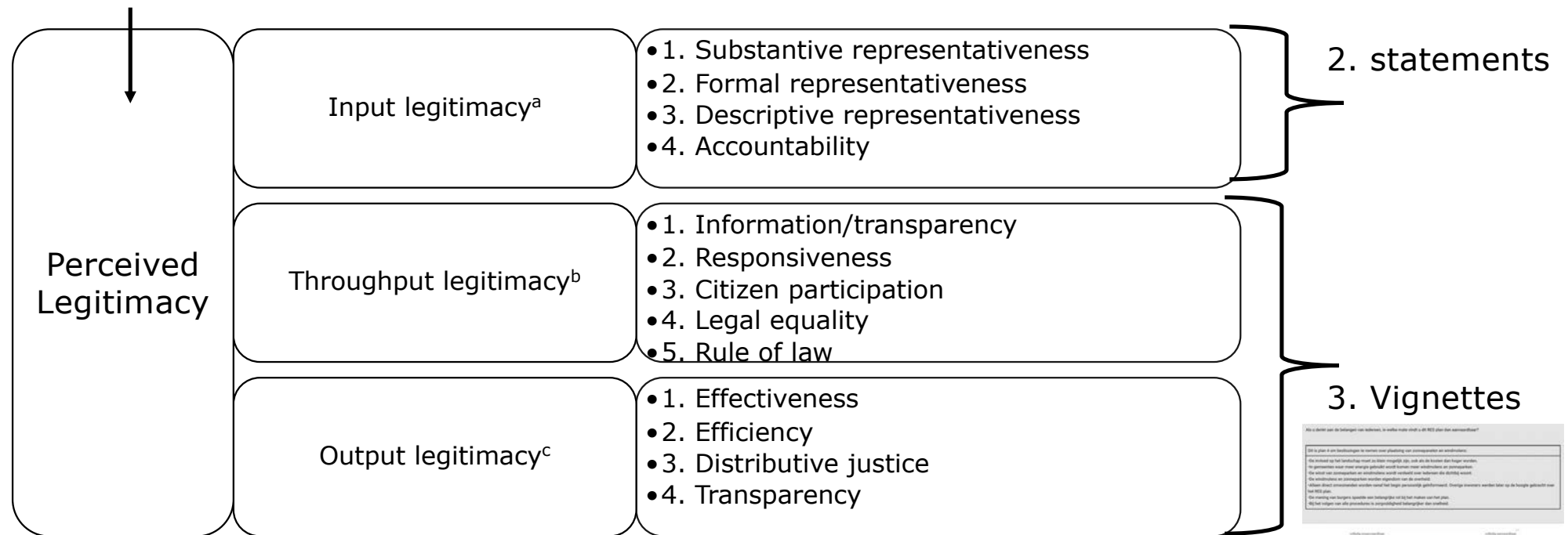


The authority is perceived to be substantively and procedurally in accordance with the law and perceived to be the outcome of a morally just political process.



Conceptual Framework ^{*(Van Noije)}

1. overall





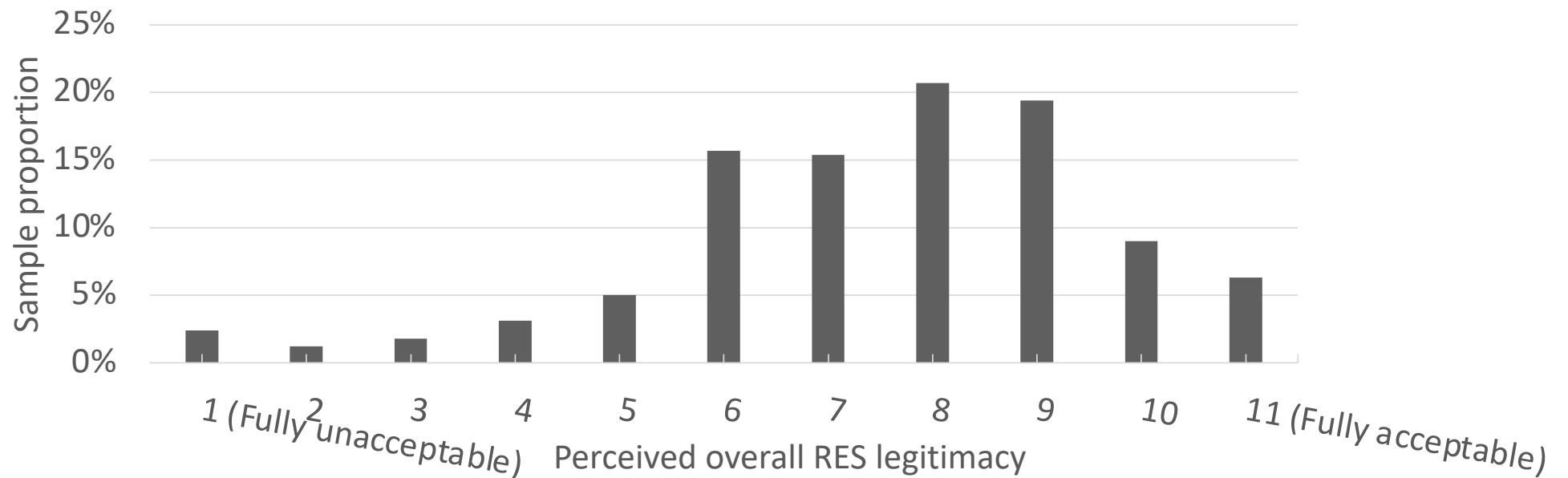
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Results





1. Do you consider it acceptable that there are regional energy strategies, when considering everyone's interests?





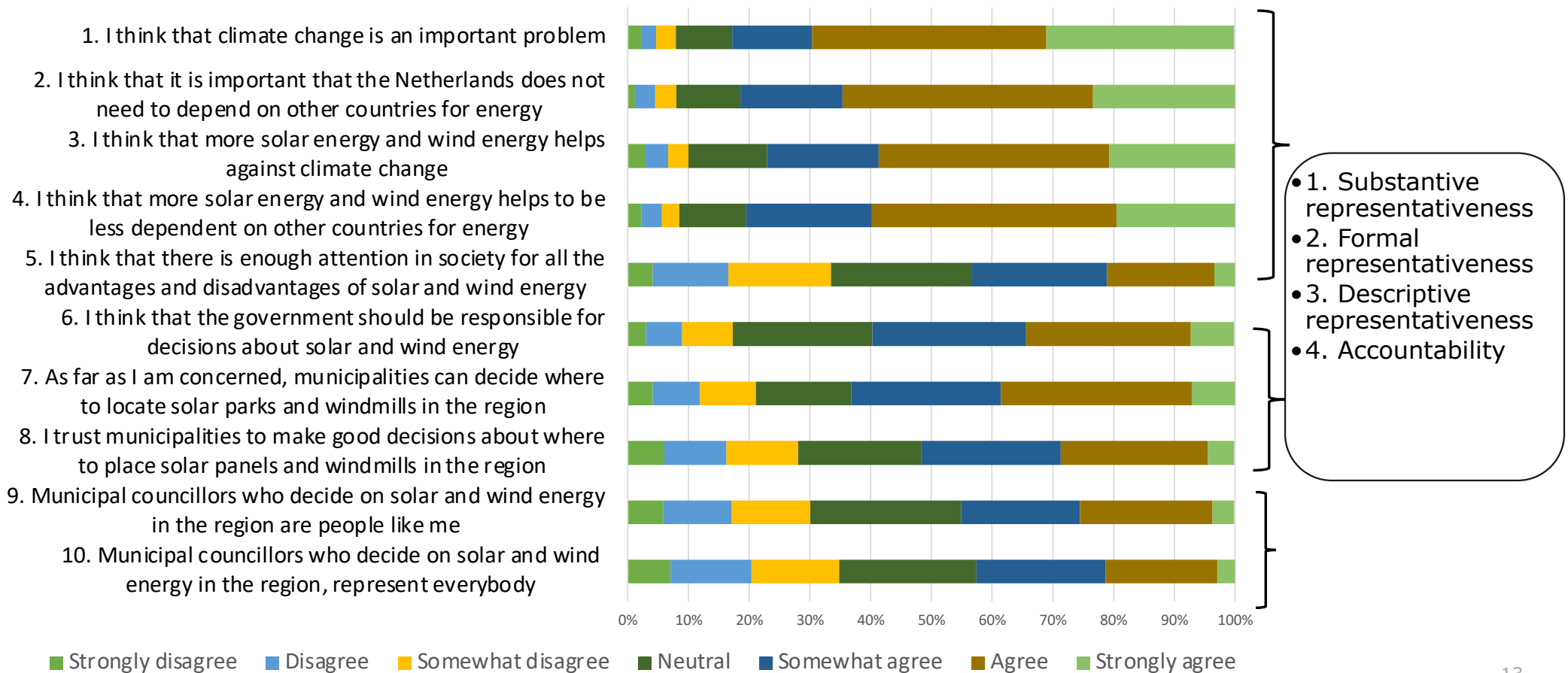
Unknown, not understood, yet acceptable

87% did not know there is a RES (before explanation)
66% understands how the RES works (after explanation)
42% understands how decisions are made.
44% understands who make decisions.





2. Input legitimacy





3: Presentation of the vignettes, an example

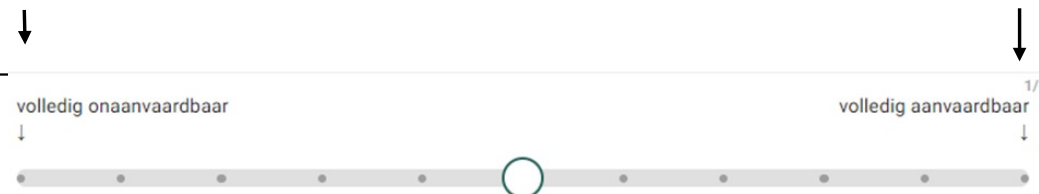
This is plan 1 to decide about the placement of solar panels and wind turbines:

When you think about everyone's interest, to what extent do you consider this RES plan acceptable?

- Impact on landscape must be as small as possible, even if the costs will be higher
- Wind turbines and solar parks are more often placed in municipalities where more energy is used
- Profits of wind turbines and solar parks are distributed across people who live nearby
- Wind turbines and solar parks are owned by the government
- People nearby were informed personally about the RES plan. Other people were informed later.
- The opinion of citizens played an important part in making the plan
- When following all procedures, conscientiousness is more important than speed

Fully unacceptable

Fully acceptable



Respondents (n = 2733) read 4 different plans. With a random intercept model we calculated the effect of different policy traits on perceived legitimacy.

Results



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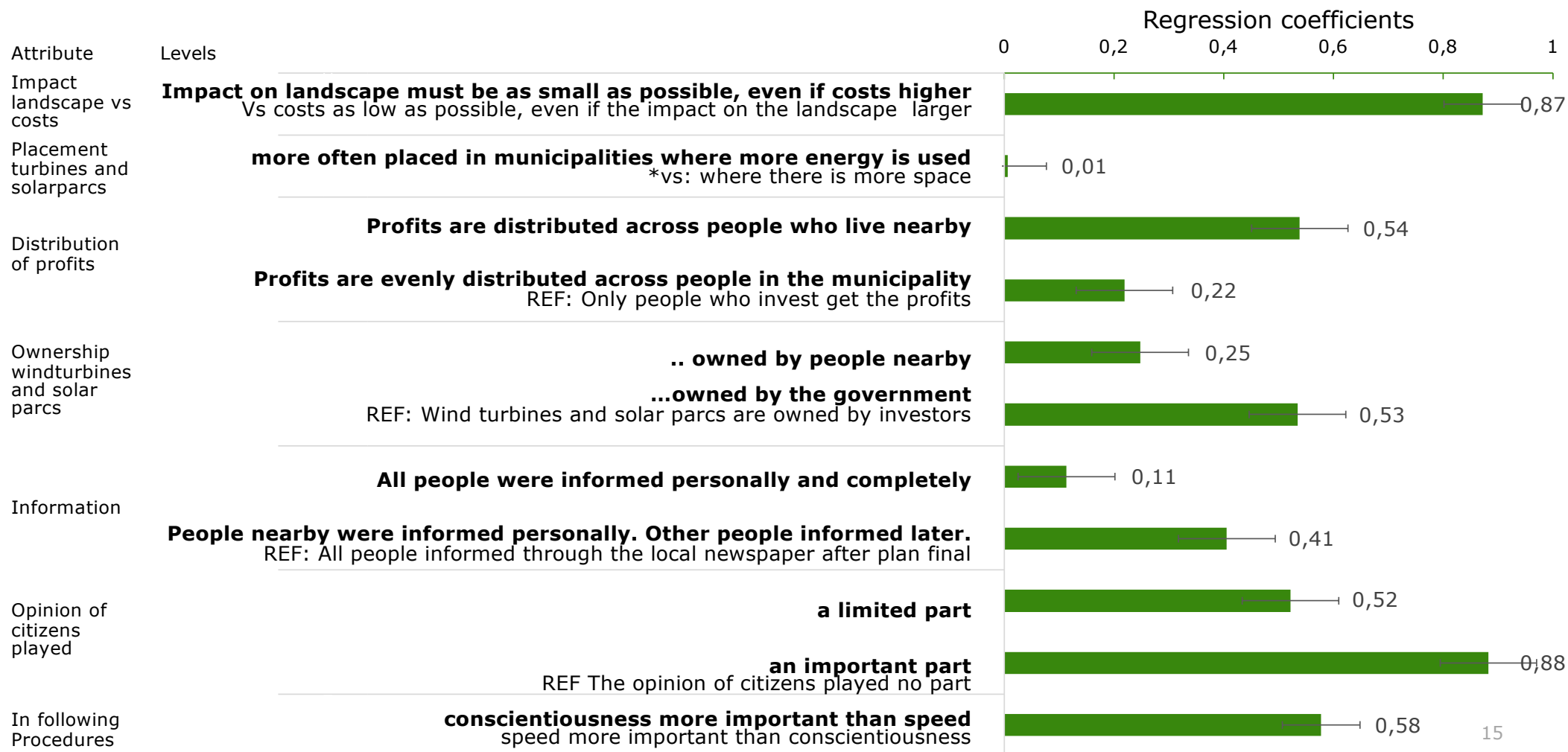




Figure 2: Presentation of the vignettes, an example

This is plan 1 to decide about the placement of solar panels and wind turbines:

When you think about everyone's interest, to what extent do you consider this RES plan acceptable?

3,75

+0,87

-0,01

+0,22

+0,53

+0,11

+0,88

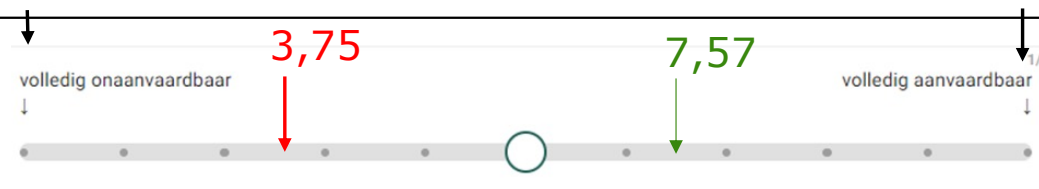
+0,58

=6,93*

- Impact on landscape must be as small as possible, even if the costs will be higher
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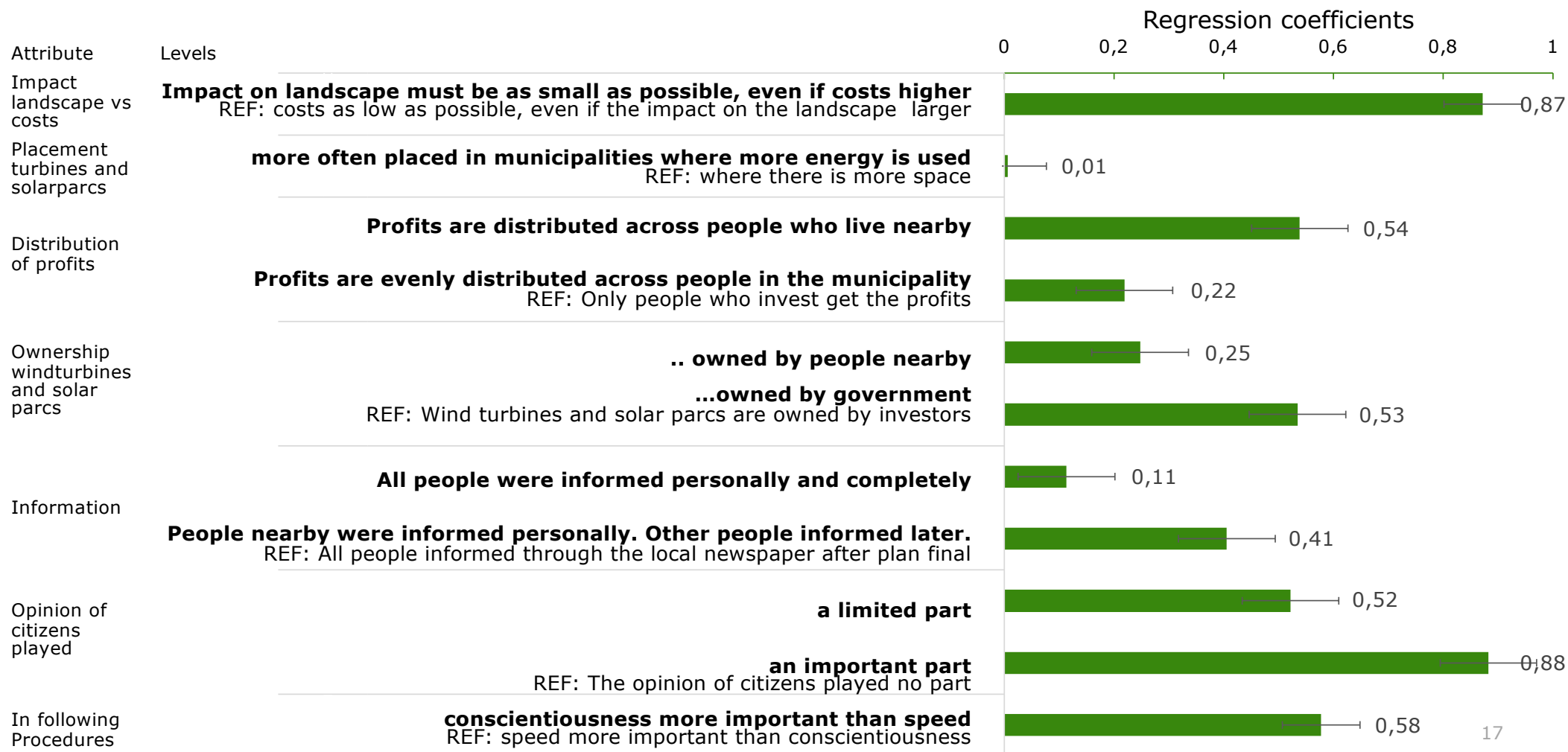
Fully acceptable



Results



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Conclusions RES

- › 1. Respondents consider the existence of RES acceptable
- › 2. Policy features (nearly all) important for perceived legitimacy
 - Most important: take into account opinion citizens, landscape more important than costs!
 - Perceived justice: Ownership by government and profits equally distributed in municipality
 - Actual policy: 50% local ownership!
- › 3. Perceived Input legitimacy is important:
 - Substantive higher than formal and descriptive representativeness





General conclusions

- › Conceptual legitimacy framework can be applied to evaluate perceived legitimacy of environmental policy
 - Provides structure for policy evaluation
 - Context matters: approach depends on case