

## Master/Bachelor Thesis

### “Mini-Grids and Off-grid Market Categories: Investigating Legitimacy”

#### Background

More than 700 million people around the world lack access to electricity. While global electrification rates have improved over the years, many individuals are still projected to remain without access, with “9 out of 10 of them likely to live in rural Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA)” (World Bank, 2022). To address the energy access challenge, entrepreneurial ventures have emerged, rolling out products such as portable solar lanterns, home solar systems, and even building mini-grids in rural areas to provide energy access. In this “energy access” space, entrepreneurial ventures have positioned themselves as either off-grid product providers or mini-grid developers, arguably relying on different understandings and convictions of what energy access in SSA should be. It is still unclear how the two market categories built their legitimacy. Therefore, it is interesting to investigate the legitimation and the evolution of the two categories in pursuing universal energy access in SSA.

#### Introductory Readings

- Navis, Chad; Glynn, Mary Ann (2010). How New Market Categories Emerge: Temporal Dynamics of Legitimacy, Identity, and Entrepreneurship in Satellite Radio, 1990–2005. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 55(3), 439–471.
- Pedersen, Mathilde Brix; Nygaard, Ivan (2018). System building in the Kenyan electrification regime: The case of private solar mini-grid development. *Energy Research & Social Science*, 42(), 211–223
- Boghossian, J., & David, R. J. (2021). Under the Umbrella: Goal-Derived Category Construction and Product Category Nesting. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 66(4), 1084–1129

#### Tasks and Goals

This thesis is closely related to the current research of the chair, part of the TUM SEED Center, and you will conduct your data collection and analysis in close collaboration with our doctoral students. The thesis will be based on archival data from at least two of these energy access stakeholders: 1) Development Organizations (e.g., The World Bank), 2) Mini-grid and/or Off-grid Ventures, 3) Media, and 4) Government/Electricity Agencies. You will review the relevant scientific literature market categories. You will collect and analyze data with a specific geographical focus on Kenya or Uganda.

#### Requirements

- Excellent English skills and interest in entrepreneurship, development, and sustainable energies.
- Independent, reliable, and diligent working style with the ability to work in multi-cultural settings.
- Advanced Seminar *Sustainable Entrepreneurship* with a minimum grade of 2.0 (for Master Thesis)
- Course *Corporate Sustainability* with a minimum grade of 2.0 (for Bachelor Thesis)

#### Details

- Supervisors: Prof. Dr. Frank-Martin Belz and Mohammed Bendaanane, M.Sc.
- Start: Flexible / As of now
- Working time: 6 months

#### Contact.

If you are interested in writing your thesis at our chair or have questions about this topic, please contact Mohammed Bendaanane ([m.bendaanane@tum.de](mailto:m.bendaanane@tum.de)). To apply, send an email including your CV, and the current transcript of records (as one PDF file). We are looking forward to working together with you!