**Dr Ben Radley, Lecturer in International Development at University of Bath** *“Off-Grid Solar Expansion in Africa: New Technologies, Old Dependencies?”*

Africa’s off-grid solar market is growing rapidly. What development prospects does this hold for the countries and individuals benefiting from expanded access? This paper presents findings from a critical literature review of 171 papers investigating the effects of expanded access to off-grid solar in the global South on economic development. The overwhelming majority of papers point to positive developmental outcomes, observed primarily through increased household income and savings. Through a theoretical reframing of how economic development is generally understood by the literature, the paper argues for caution when interpreting the significance of these findings, and contends that future research would benefit from a heightened appreciation of the tensions and risks associated with this rapidly growing sector, and the possibility that its developmental effects will not rest on the expanded energy access it generates per se, but rather the broader institutional political economy framework within which this expansion takes place.