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***Social Justice and the Governance of Solar Energy: a Study of Viking Business Park, Epping and Shoprite Distribution Center***

ABSTRACT

This study seeks to understand how the search for sustainable energy leads to many businesses going off the grid and the impact this may have on social justice in Cape Town. This is significant as the study attempts to gain insights into how social justice can be deepened by businesses that are completely off the grid or partially off the grid. These insights should provide an understanding of how access to energy by all (a form of social justice) can be deepened by businesses going off-grid. These insights should also provide policymakers with an understanding of how to approach going off-grid businesses. The study will use the concepts of social justice and energy justice to surface an understanding of energy justice. The study will consist of two case studies: Viking Business Park, Epping (VBPE), and Shoprite Distribution Centre (SDC) in Cape Town. The justification for these two cases is that they both represent two different scenarios of how businesses go off-grid, that when combined, will bring a clear understanding of energy justice. First, Viking Business Park is managed by an independent property management company: -Spear Property. The park is home to several businesses with different energy needs and will regard going off-grid differently. Secondly, the Strand Shoprite Centre, on the other hand, is owned and managed by Shoprite unilaterally. This means the decision to go off-grid is entirely that of Shoprite. This presents a unique opportunity for data triangulation and comparison. The research questions this study seeks to understand are: What impact does installing solar energy systems by business centres have on social justice? To successfully answer this question, the researcher will employ a qualitative research approach to elicit the necessary data to address the research purpose. The qualitative method will facilitate the exploration, comprehension, and assessment of the understanding of social justice that emanates from businesses going off-grid.

Keywords: Social Justice, Energy Justice, Governance, Solar energy, and Off-grid.