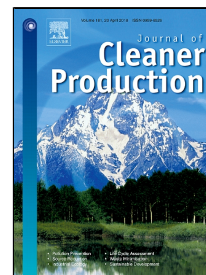


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Comparing two pathways of strategic niche management in a developing economy; the cases of solar photovoltaic and solar thermal energy market development in Lebanon



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1 Comparing two pathways of strategic niche management in a developing economy; 2 the cases of solar photovoltaic and solar thermal energy market development in 3 Lebanon

4
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14 **Abstract**

15 There is abundant solar potential in the Middle East North Africa region. Yet access to
16 sustainable energy is still a fundamental challenge in many countries of this region. In this paper we
17 seek to understand the success and failure of the development and the diffusion of solar energy
18 technologies by analysing using a Strategic Niche Management framework to compare the niche
19 development of solar thermal energy and solar photovoltaics in Lebanon. This paper has two main
20 questions: (1) *How have the solar thermal niche and the solar photovoltaic niche developed in*
21 *Lebanon, and how do they compare?* (2) *In which ways does the Strategic Niche Management*
22 *framework help us to understand the development of solar energy niches in a developing country*
23 *context?* To answer these questions, a cross case analysis of solar thermal and solar photovoltaic
24 systems was conducted. Due to the absence of research using Strategic Niche Management in Middle
25 Eastern developing countries, this study uses an illustrative case from a country in this region to
26 contribute new insights. Moreover, unlike the Strategic Niche Management research that only focuses
27 on single case studies, this paper presents the results of a comparative study of two niches. The main
28 Strategic Niche Management propositions were grouped and compared per item (i.e. on voicing and
29 shaping expectations, social networks, and learning). The results show that the solar thermal niche
30 affected the solar photovoltaic niche to a large extent. This was especially in relation to the learning
31 and coordination processes. This has gradually contributed to establishing a clear vision. However,
32 both niches lacked a niche manager who was able to coordinate, manage and maintain the dynamics
33 of the niche processes. It also lacked horizontal collaboration between key actors involved (i.e.
34 ministries). International donors were found to play a crucial role in initiating and shaping the market
35 with certain constraints of prioritization in the region. The paper ends with conclusions and ideas for
36 future research on solar energy niche development in the context of developing countries.

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