

Einladung zum Kolloquium

Digital Entrepreneurship in Africa

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Digital entrepreneurship is widely believed to be an engine for Africa's development in the 21st century. From Mark Zuckerberg to Emmanuel Macron and Paul Kagame, technologists and policymakers have proposed that digital technologies are enabling Africa to “leapfrog” and experience ground-breaking economic progress. Yet, in any imaginable measure for digital economies, Africa does far worse than any other continent, and global divides seem to be widening. In this book, we grapple with the large gap between boundless ambition and sobering statistics. We draw on a five-year empirical research project, including fieldwork in 11 African cities. We show that the average African digital enterprise is unable to grow exponentially, scale internationally, attract venture capital, or disrupt cumbersome analog value chains. Instead, we see entrepreneurs who are creatively and productively applying and adapting digital business models to their local contexts. This has many of the wished-for positive socio-economic effects, just not at the rate and scale that the widespread narratives suggest. Our book thus builds a nuanced review of what the digital revolution means in, and to, the world's economically most marginal places.