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Is small still beautiful?: Exploring the role of SMEs in emerging visions of a 'green' economy

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CEEDR seminar series

Wednesday 27th April 2016

Middlesex University, The Burroughs, Hendon Campus. London NW4 4BT

Is small still beautiful?: exploring the role of SMEs in emerging visions of a 'green' economy

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Abstract

Responding to environmental threats, such as climate change, air pollution and loss of biodiversity, while also meeting economic needs, represents a major challenge for businesses, governments and society as a whole. International policy makers have presented small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) as 'drivers' of sustainable development, playing an instrumental role in delivering a more inclusive 'green growth' agenda, in both developed and emerging economies (e.g. Mazur 2012, OECD 2015). The 'de-growth' movement has also identified smaller enterprises, social ventures and more localised, place-based business models as integral to its economic model (e.g. Jackson 2011, Buch-Hansen 2014). However, many key issues remain unresolved, including the capacity and willingness of SMEs to engage with these alternative visions for a more sustainable economy. In this seminar, I will consider how green growth and de-growth discourses might be reconciled with existing bodies of knowledge about SMEs, with particular reference to their pro-environmental behaviours and growth processes.

References

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Biography

Richard Blundel is an organisational researcher with a particular interest in the links between entrepreneurial activity, innovation and environmental sustainability. A common theme in his work is an examination of the nature and consequences of growth in different organisational contexts, including small artisanal food producers, manufacturing businesses and social enterprises. His research has appeared in journals such as *Entrepreneurship & Regional Development*, *Enterprise & Society*, *Industry & Innovation*, *Prometheus*, and the *Journal of Small Business Management*. He edited The Quarterly Survey of Small Business in Britain (2011-14) and is co-author of *Exploring Entrepreneurship* (2nd edition) (Sage, 2017). Richard is co-organiser of the ESRC Seminar Series, 'Green Innovation: Making it Work' (2015-16) and is collaborating with Professor Fergus Lyon and Dr Ian Vickers on a project for the recently-established ESRC Centre for Understanding Sustainable Prosperity (www.cusp.ac.uk).

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