

One day workshop, University of Greenwich, June 20<sup>th</sup> 2016

Call for participation

**Small steps towards sustainability: Exploring the distributed, fragmented and piecemeal aspects of socio-technical change**

What will it be like to experience day-to-day life in a sustainable technological society?

Who decides which technologies should be developed and implemented to achieve sustainable development goals?

Current models for embedding environmentally sustainable behaviour increasingly focus on the necessity for changing the dominant techno-economic paradigm, through development and diffusion of large-scale, radically disruptive technologies. The question of individual sustainable lifestyles and deeper social questioning of what it means to live sustainably have been marginalised. Such issues are reduced to an imperative that citizens should be encouraged to 'choose' pre-defined technological solutions and behaviour which minimises the potential for social controversy over the introduction of novel technologies.

However the concept of sustainable development has other interpretations which encompass lifestyle changes, shifts in social values and modification to existing relationships with artefacts embedded in day-to-day life. Deep seated changes to current arrangements require willingness for heterogeneous social groups to develop shared visions and expectations of future socio-technical relations. In fact, experience of past changes to the embedded techno-economic paradigm reveals that such change can only be successful through developing support of and participation by social actors - individuals, organisations, communities and institutions. It involves finding ways to reconfigure the socio-technical arrangements of everyday life in an acceptable manner, while negotiating disruption caused by the impact of radical technological change. In addition, new means of facilitating emergent socio-technical and organisational forms are needed. Such social, economic, cultural and political processes are mediated by national and local contexts, which construct and shape new socio-technical arrangements.

Organisers: Greenwich Political Economy Research Centre/ sustainability, technology and innovation research group and

Responsible Innovation and Sustainable Entrepreneurship Collaboratory

The workshop will be convened as a forum to explore these issues, with the aim of developing an inclusive and diverse academic research agenda for sustainable change. Presentations (of 20 minutes each) which cover the following themes are welcomed:

- *Vision*: Creation of new storylines relating to the diffusion of technology and shared expectations of future social change. Role of innovation in sustainable management of aging, health, welfare, home/work balance.
- *Experience*: Cases of new technologies in use, including examples of technical re-scripting by users. Co-creation of socio-technical paths, actor and stakeholder identification, local and community experiments.
- *Organisation*: Development of new community governance and business models. Emergence of technology mediated social enterprise, novel financing arrangements for sustainability projects.
- *Responsibility*: Balancing the need for open and inclusive communications with ‘behind the scenes’ decision making in systems innovations. Role of ethical behaviour by consumers, citizens, governance institutions, large and small firms.
- *Transfer*: Can models of sustainable development from mature industrial nations be transferred to other national contexts, for example emerging economies and newly industrialising countries? What can Western nations learn from traditional societies?

*Please send abstracts (maximum 200 words) by **May 4<sup>th</sup> 2016** to either:*

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