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**BORN-SUSTAINABLE
INTERNATIONAL
SMES AND INHERENT
PARADOXICAL
TENSIONS:
A QUALITATIVE
STUDY**

Analyzing the tensions inherent in Born-Sustainable International SMEs (BSISs) is key to understanding how they can act as agents of change globally. This research bridges sustainable and international entrepreneurship to advance knowledge on these organizations. Using Smith and Lewis' (2011) paradox theory as a conceptual lens, it explores how BSISs navigate conflicting demands such as social and environmental responsibilities versus economic growth and international expansion. An exploratory qualitative study was conducted through four in-depth case studies and semi-structured interviews, analyzed using the Gioia methodology. Findings reveal the central paradox these SMEs face and highlight the strategies, practices, and levers they employ to manage tensions effectively. The study adapts paradox meta-theory to the context of international sustainable SMEs and provides practical guidance for managers to navigate complex sustainable entrepreneurship models. By integrating theoretical and managerial insights, it contributes to research and offers actionable recommendations for fostering sustainable organizational practices. I focus on the impact of education spending on individual behaviors and environmental quality. Endogenous preferences play a key role in the effectiveness of the policy, as it is shaped by the efficiency of schools in transmitting green values. Because environmental quality and private mitigation are substitutes, raising the tax rate can lead to a crowding out of private mitigation, in which case engaging in public mitigation might be better for the environment.

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