

Small is beautiful - A brief review

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Marc Jacquinet

Abstract

A mixture of philosophy, environmentalism and economics

E. F. Schumacher¹ is a well-known heterodox economist and social thinker with two important texts for rethinking our contemporary global order, global capitalism and the global financial problems: his 1973 book *Small Is Beautiful: A Study of Economics As If People Mattered* and his 1977 *A Guide for the Perplexed* considered as a critique of materialistic scientism and as an exploration of the nature and organisation of knowledge. And the analyses of Schumaker have recently gained new momentum with the current recession (that started in 2007-2008).

Let us see some of the features that can be a starting point for reading *Small is Beautiful* and help students to define new research problems.

Small Is Beautiful, while not a minimalist work, is one of the most influential books in the business world, preaching a fierce critique of the molds of the Western economy and calling for a revolution in which appropriate and decentralized technologies were introduced.

The first point I want to make is about the modern organizations and modern corporations as well as the bureaucracies of nowadays. There seem to be a constant stream of issues in terms of behaviors, aftermath, ethical issues, responsibility, solidarity, work, inequality, *inter alia*.

As Madelein Bunting put it in a recent article of the Guardian (10 November 2011) put it: "One of the recurrent themes through the book is how modern organisations stripped the satisfaction out of work, making the worker no more than an anonymous cog in a huge machine."²

References

Bunting, Madelein (2011) "Small is beautiful – an economic idea that has sadly been forgotten", The Guardian, 10 November 2011.

Links

https://static.fecam.net.br/uploads/1512/arquivos/323944_Livro_O_negocio_e_ser_pequeno.pdf

https://edisciplinas.usp.br/pluginfile.php/4606603/mod_resource/content/1/e_f_schumacher_-_o_negocio_e_ser_pequeno.pdf

¹ A native German, having spent his childhood in Bonn, Germany, Ernst Friedrich "Fritz" Schumacher (1911 - 1977) showed early academic talent with a strong affinity for numbers. Years later, this natural ability would be confirmed by being one of the UK's most renowned and influential economic thinkers, as well as acting statistically and actively in the economy.

² <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2011/nov/10/small-is-beautiful-economic-idea>

