
Summaries

Small enterprises in Wester Europe

by Jeremy Boissevain

A combination of factors has led to the expansion of the small enterprise sector. These include: *Recession*: many newly redundant workers start up to their own; *Rising taxes*: smaller enterprises obtain tax advantages and can more easily operate partly in the untaxed informal economy; *Expanding service sector* creates opportunities for small catering and repair enterprises; *Growing decentralization*: decentralized smaller firms not only avoid more of the financial burden of big government and big labour, many are also proving more flexible, innovative and efficient; *Ethnic consolidation*: the growth of large immigrant communities is increasing demand for specialized food, housing, travel, credit and work that is being met by ethnic entrepreneurs, whose success at a time of recession may be generating increased racial tension; *Deteriorating quality of life*: concern with the social and physical pollution caused by industrial massification is creating demand for natural products and for small enterprises to provide these.

Entrepreneurship to Measure. Towards a theory of the small firm

by G. Geeraerts and J.J.J. van Dijck

In this contribution the first steps towards a theory of the small firm are taken. A theoretical basis for future research into the field of small and medium-sized businesses is introduced, based on current, theoretically and empirically founded insights, supplemented with the results of our own research into the problems and potentialities of SMB's. The concept of 'change and development by crisis' takes a central position in the conceptual model developed in this article. This forms the foundation of our treatment of several foci concerning the developmental potentialities of SMB's. In the course of this we try to further our understanding of the (organization) sociological properties of SMB's. The article also contains a section concerning the methodology of research into the field of SMB's. It is argued that traditional (onedimensional) methods of research (survey's, in-dept interviews,...) are not suited to gain a substantial knowledge of the basis properties of SMB's. A combination and integration of quantitative and qualitative methods of research is advocated.

The small firm proprietor growing towards a small business manager: small business in a changing world

By J.H. Pompe, H.J.M. van den Tillaart and F.W. van Uxem

As nowadays the term 'Mittelstand' is considered an outdated concept, it seems more appropriate to think in terms of small businessmen. Preference for the latter stems from the fact that at present

additional qualifications are required, to be precise: managerial qualifications. Would it be enough for the traditional small businessman – as a shopkeeper or artisan – to practice his craft, it is the modern proprietors' business to manage his firm. Affected by social, technological and economic developments – attended with continuing increases of scale since World War II – the small businessman has to coordinate organizational processes concerning means of production, both material and financial, and often a small number of employees. However, it must be kept in mind, that small businessmen usually come from a socio-cultural background in which traditional values such as high quality products (and/or service) and good craftsmanship still prevail. Consequently, the effort to combine craftsmanship and managerial and entrepreneurial qualities creates for many small businessmen a stressful situation. To integrate these aspects can be a real problem, which could make running one's own business a matter of fate rather than choice.

The contributing wife in medium and small sized business: theoretically invisible, but practically indispensable

by J.N. Meijer

Over the years women – in various positions – have actively contributed to a good business performance of small and medium sized firms. In this respect, the entrepreneur's wife assisting her husband in running the family business, still plays a pivotal role. The name *contributing wife* refers to a rather peculiar position in the business world, in that marital status takes priority over professional skills. The wife's contribution to the firm is often still taken for granted and this phenomenon has, in spite of changing norms and values, hardly ever been questioned. This may well account for the fact that up till now, research on the subject is scarce. Attempting to gain more insight in the (life) situation and significance of the contributing wife in small and medium sized business, this article focuses on her role in the family firm as well as on its implications for her role as a wife, mother and homemaker.

The defense of cooperative values in 'alternative' organizations

by R.N. Stern

The underlying values of small collectivist organizations are described using Weber's idea of value rational behavior and Rothschild-Whitt's eight characteristics of alternative organizations. These organizations develop structures designed to establish and maintain specific values. However, the structures that are developed, environmental forces and the natural history of the organization create threats to the basic values. In particular, problems inherent in consensus decision making, organizational survival itself, protected markets, homogeneous memberships, and technical change may threaten basic values. The likelihood that a collectivist organization will survive with its underlying values intact while in a predominantly capitalist economy, may depend upon its ability to be flexible in managing the tension between its values and the organization structure it creates. The greater members' insistence on maintaining cooperative values in a pure state, the less likely is long-run survival.

Small-scale, selfmanaging, selfsufficient

by A. Walravens and W. Riedijk

The 'alternative' or 'human- and environment-friendly' enterprise was (and is) defined in the literature as well as in institutional and individual value-systems as 'marginal'. In several fields, such as pollution, the nature of products and services and human relations, more and more criticism is being formulated of the traditional enterprise. Recently a breakthrough seems to

originate from the revaluation of the 'alternative' enterprise: these enterprises are increasingly more being considered as 'avant-garde'. Especially in relationa to forms of future enterpreneurial activities as such. We have found evidence, that just like in the thirties, also as a result of socio-economic circumstances, peoples choose more and more for forms of selfdeterminating organizations. New, in comparison with the comparable phenomenon in the thirties, is the important part which values and life-styles are playing in the choice of aims and forms of (production)organiza-tions. In this article we discuss:

- a) whether there is sufficient evidence for this analysis and
- b) the characteristics of present non-traditional enterprises

The sociology of ethnic business

by F. Bovenkerk

This essay deals with the recent flourishing of shops and trades among post-war immigrants in the Netherlands. Two types of ethnic enterprise are being contrasted: one that is based on an ethnic clientele (such as the Islam butcher), the other providing for the market in general (such as the Italian ice cream parlor). The type or original migration, the motive for going into small business and various economic and social characteristics of these two modes of ethnic enterprise, are shown to vary accordingly.