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me agricultural policies have failed to supply consumers with nutritious food at inexpensive prices. They have succeeded in keeping millions of acres of fertile cropland from production, prevented the growing of billions of bushels of wheat (and other grains), and driven innumerable families off their farms and into the cities.

US government medical programs have eaten up a staggering number of tax dollars and increased the individual medical bill by about 1,000 percent since 1965. But the US has not had a statistically significant per capita decrease in deaths since 1960 from any single illness except tuberculosis, syphilis and hypertension, while the death rates for cancer and certain other diseases have soared. The same sorry record exists in the sphere of industrial health and safety and in the regulation of consumer goods.

Why are the "experts" from both the public and private sectors meeting with such dismal results? The answer, according to Sale, lies in the notion of the "technofix." What is a "technofix?" Former US Atomic Energy Commission chairman Glen T. Seaborg said it best: "We must pursue the idea that it is more science, better science, more wisely applied that is going to free us from (our) predicaments..."

Actually, the technofix cure intensifies the disease. How do you solve problems caused by science? Through the more intensive use of science. Problems caused by technology? Find a technological solution. Problems caused by bureaucracy? Find a bureaucratic solution. The results of these "solutions" are all around us. For instance, the US Law Enforcement Assistance Administration spent \$7 billion in 10 years to combat crime, and the crime rate is higher than ever.

Why don't these solutions work? The answer lies in what Sale calls the "beanstalk principle": "For every animal, object, institution, or system, there is an optimal limit beyond which it ought not to grow." To attribute the origin of most social problems to scale may seem simplistic, and to a certain extent it is. Nevertheless, Sale is on to something which ties into an important aspect of human nature: people function best in an arena where they can see the results of their efforts. This is what is meant by "human scale." Large cities breed irresponsibility because those individuals who are adversely affected by another person's

actions remain nameless and faceless. By contrast, in a small community there is a greater opportunity for people to work together. For example, in keeping your neighbourhood clean, your actions are likely to have an exemplary effect. They are likely to be appreciated and echoed by others. But, in a large city, you could spend every spare moment picking up other people's trash and litter and never make a dent in the problem.

Sale is in favour of breaking society back down into smaller and more manageable units. Before this can occur, however, the misguided belief that big is better, or necessary, needs to be taken to task. Sale does a very good job of this and, where possible, marshals available facts and experience which demonstrate that small-scale technology, regional self-sufficiency, and pared-down bureaucracy can work better than existing large-scale structures.

Human Scale took six years to research and write. In expending the effort, Sale has performed the task of bringing together in one volume the fruits of community-oriented theory and practice, and the results are truly impressive. The alternatives are there. The question is: are we willing to pursue them?

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HUMAN SCALE

by Kirkpatrick Sale

New York, G.P. Putnam's Sons,

1980; 558 pages; \$12.50

Reviewed by Donald Alexander

Most everyone has something to say about the problems of our society. Few have done their homework in coming up with possible solutions. Kirkpatrick Sale has. *Human Scale*, at 558 pages, is not only a monumental re-think of the basic premises of technocratic society, it is an encyclopedic look at the "human scale" alternative.

After cataloguing the various ills lurking beneath our affluence - pollution, swollen bureaucracies, crime, diminishing resources - Sale picks them apart one by one and shows how each is a product of *bigness*: big government, big business, big everything.

Though the examples he uses are American, it is not difficult to think of ones closer to home. According to Sale, US government housing programs have provided billions of dollars of public money for developers and almost nothing in the way of shelter for the poor and the people of the inner city. On another front, govern-