

Geographic Determinates of Wealth, Power, and Technology

GUNS, GERMS, & STEEL

Vocab

● Hunter / gatherers:

- nomadic (move around) people who follow and hunt wild game and gather wild plants to live.
- Small bands of people
- Oldest living system: 2 million years!
- All humans H & G's prior to 12,000 yrs ago.
- Is this a good strategy? Pros / Cons?
- Description | [link](#) |
- Do people still live this way? | [link](#) |

Jared Diamond's hypothesis:

- Geography is the reason some have more than others. (wealth / money, power, and technological advancement) Why?



Geographic Luck:

- ⦿ Because of geography, some people had advantages such as:
 - Better climate
 - Better plants
 - Better animals
- ⦿ Why Better?



- ◎ Better Climate: Able to support most useful crops and animals for humans
- ◎ More nutritious plants – able to domesticate
 - Ex: wheat, barley
- ◎ More efficient animals – able to domesticate; provide meat, milk, fur, power
 - Ex: cows, goats, pigs, sheep, horses
- ◎ Farming / Domestication = human control; humans interfere with nature. How?
 - Plant only the biggest, tastiest, easiest to harvest seeds; plant and harvest at specific times
 - Breed animals with desired traits (size, attitude, fur/ wool), herd animals, live closely with.

Fertile Crescent – geographically lucky

◎ Fertile Crescent –

- Good climate
- more nutritious native plants (wheat, barley)
- animals that could be domesticated (cow, sheep, goat, pig)
- = huge advantage over other groups of people
- Why?

Papua New Guinea – Geographically unlucky

- Does not develop advanced technology
- Hunter / gatherers + limited farming
- Same systems for 40,000 yrs

● Why?



Papua New Guinea

- ◎ Limited crops: Sago, wild banana, taro
 - Not very nutritious, hard to store
 - No domesticated animals (eventually pig brought over)
 - can not support large populations
 - No specialization; time spent acquiring food



Rise of Civilization:

⦿ What it takes

- Agriculture: farming domesticated plants and animals
- permanent settlements: people live in 1 place
- Excess food supply / support more people

Allows for:

- Specialization: people do one thing they are really good at (brick makers, pottery makers, tool makers, artists, bakers, ect...)
- More time to be creative / inventive
- Advances in technology (metal working, writing)

Race to Civilization

- ◎ According to Jared Diamond:
 - People who were geographically lucky were able to advance faster and further than others.
 - This gave them an advantage over other groups of people

Geographically lucky places:

- ◎ Similar to Fertile Crescent:
 - similar latitude (temperate zones)
 - similar climate
 - same animals and plants do well here
- Examples: Europe, U.S., North Africa, South Africa, Australia...

Why Europe Geographically Lucky?

- ◎ Same latitude, similar climate to F.C. – why important?
- ◎ Migration – close to Fertile Crescent
 - People from Fertile Crescent bring resources to Europe
 - Animals, plants, technology (farming practices, metal working, writing)
 - Domesticated animals plants do well in Europe – why these animals and plants so important?
 - Europe gets a head start with all the resources from Fertile Crescent.
- ◎ U.S. is also geographically lucky. Why?
 - Same reasons as above

Migration

- ① Why did people have to migrate from the Fertile Crescent?
 - Humans over-used / ruined environment / land became unproductive

migration

- ◎ Impact on others:
 - Exchange of ideas, technology, plants, animals
 - Exchange of diseases,
 - Positives vs. negatives

Timeline of civilization

- Location / Place
- Farming / Domestication
- Rise of Civilization
- Advanced Technology

Role of Germs in Conquest

- Killer germs came from domesticated animals (small pox, influenza- (the flu), and more...
- Germs helped and hurt different groups of people. Who? How?
 - Helped Europeans (example: Spanish)
 - Hurt native people of the Americas (example: Inca)

Role of Germs in Conquest

- Why?
- Europeans developed immunity – able to resist germs. How?
 - Long history of contact with farm animals. Already exposed to these germs, bodies learned to resist over time = **IMMUNITY**
 - People of Americas did not live with farm animals that spread killer germs = **NO IMMUNITY**
 - Approximately 90-95% of all native peoples in North, South and Central America die from germs!

Role of Germs in Africa

- Small Pox – Kills off natives in S. Africa (Khoi San)– 90-95% die
 - makes conquest easier for Europeans
- Role of Malaria
 - Carried by mosquito
 - Tropical disease
 - Hurts European settlers – Why?
 - Europeans did not know how to avoid
 - settled next to water with many mosquitos

Role of Germs in Africa

- ⦿ How Europeans make Malaria worse for tropical Africans?
 - In the past: Slavery - Forced Africans to live close together, work in areas with Malaria
- ⦿ How tropical Africans still impacted by Malaria?
 - Live in cities, live close together
 - Lack money for vaccinations (help prevent infection)
 - Economy affected – mothers taking care of sick kids instead of working

Role of Germs in Africa

- Who is responsible for the issues of conquered people like the Native Americans and the Africans?