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Global - Mr.Badgley    1WW

#12 Civilization is what?

1. Jared Diamond, the author of "The Worst Mistake in the History of the Human Race," states five reasons why humans are worse of as farmers than hunter-gathers. One reason is that farmers have a less varied diet than hunter-gatherers. Farmers were limited to a few starchy crops, which comes at the price of being high in calories while low in nutrition. The second reason is that because of dependence on a limited number of crops, farmers ran the risk of starvation if one crop failed. The third reason is that agriculture encouraged people to clump together into societies. The societies then traded with other societies. This encouraged parasites and disease to spread. Hunter-gatherer societies lived in small camps scattered around. This was harder for epidemics to get a hold of humanity. The fourth reason was the creation of deep class divisions. Hunter-gatherers close to zero stored food and barely any surplus of food either. They live off the wild plants and animals they gather and hunt. As a result, there can be no class of upper elites that become fat off of other people's food. Only a farming population could sustain an upper class that lived better than the rest of the local population. The fifth reason was the possibility that farming encouraged gender inequality. The move from hunting and gathering to farming also meant that women no longer had to carry their babies, but they were also prompted to produce more babies to work the fields. Farming women tended to have more frequent pregnancies than their hunter-gatherer counterparts, weakening their health over time. Sometimes, they were even used for hard labor. They carried heavier loads than their male counterparts.

2. Jared Diamond suggests that humanity was trapped into thinking farming was better than hunting and gathering in a forest because farming removed the limit on population. Farming could support more people in a smaller space. Food grown rather than sporadically scattered among the wilderness became much more concentrated. In addition, in a nomadic society, the birth of a baby had to be kept at four year intervals because a baby had to be held until it was old enough to catch up with adults. This burden was removed, allowing babies to be birthed in two year intervals.

3. One can disagree with the Jared Diamond's argument that switching from hunting and gathering in the wilderness to farming was the worst mistake in history. One reason is that societies would farmed for food had more food than societies that did not. Farming simply produces more food, More food meant food could be stored for times in need, such as the winter. Another reason why farming is not the worst mistake in history is that it allowed for future advancements. A surplus of food meant that things could be traded. Staying in one place allowed trade to flourish, cities to grow, and it created people who did not have to focus on finding food all the time. These allowed people to dedicate themselves to a single job, such as being a blacksmith, an engineer, or a researcher. Eventually, higher levels of technology arrived. Could humanity have antibiotics or advanced surgery today if there was not even a stable of source of food to research that?