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*Guns, Germs, and Steel* is a book written by Jared Diamond where he argues that civilization's development across time were heavily influenced by ecological and geographic factors rather than genetics. This is done by using several examples that follow five themes, such as interactions between humans and the environment, development and interaction between cultures, state-building and its associated expansion and conflict, patterns and systems of economic systems, and development and transformation of social structures.

One example that Diamond uses to illustrate the role of interactions between humans and their luck resulting from their geographical environment plays into modern society's current state is Maori and Moriori incident of 1935. The ancestral Maori who first colonized the Chathams may have been farmers, but the crops they brought could not grow in the cold climate, resulting in reverting back to being hunter-gatherers. Consequently, they could not support specialists, armies, bureaucrats, chiefs, and technology that would likely only develop in farming societies. The Chathams are composed of small and remote islands, thus limiting land and resources available. The end result was the Maori having to learn to get along with each other and reduce potential conflicts from overpopulation, which was accomplished by renouncing war and castrating males. The Maori ended up with a small population that was not accustomed to war and lacking advanced technology, weapons, strong leadership, and organization. Meanwhile, the northern, warmer part of New Zealand allowed for farming. As a result, the Maori who remained in New Zealand increased into a population greater than 100,000 and were known as the Moriori. This population had the specialists, armies, organization, weapons, and etcetera that the Maori did not have. The increased population density of the Moriori also meant that they gained experience with war from chronic engagements of wars with neighboring people.

Secondly, Diamond also uses the example of the Chimbu tribe and Daribi tribe to illustrate how two neighboring tribes with differing willingness to adapt new technology results in cultural differences between the two in the area of employment. The author states that "...the Chimbu tribe proved especially aggressive in adopting Western technology. When Chimbus saw white settlers plating coffee, they began growing coffee themselves as a cash crop...In contrast, the Daribi, are especially conservative and uninterested in new technology," (252). The Chimbus are portrayed as the tribe that displayed adaptability towards new technology more than the conservative Daribi. This difference in culture would eventually result in the Daribi being reduced to working for the Chimbus. Diamond states that the Daribi briefly looked at it while the Chimbus would have been bargaining to charter the helicopter. The author's example clearly demonstrates the difference in culture between these two tribes ultimately resulting in the Daribi being reduced to working for the wealthier Chimbus.

Thirdly, the author use the Cherokee Indian Confederacy as an example of state-building and its associated conflict to support his argument that the development of civilizations is heavily influenced by ecological and geographical factors as opposed to genetics. Diamond mentions that bunches of small societies do not join together to increase happiness of their citizens but rather by banding together to eliminate a larger enemy. Increasing white settlements led to increased conflicts with the Cherokees. When individual Cherokees committed crimes against the whites, the whites assumed the Cherokees were united in this cause and indiscriminately assaulted or stopped trade with the Cherokees. The author writes that:

In response, the Cherokee chiefdoms gradually found themselves compelled to join into a single confederacy in the course of the 18th century... The first task of these leaders was to punish individual Cherokees who attacked whites, and to deal with the white government... Eventually, the Cherokees became literate and adopted a written constitution. (289)

The unity of the Cherokees was caused by a greater threat, and eventually led to a more organized state that was literate and had a written constitution. This example also demonstrates that historic prejudice that whites were genetically superior and could thus organize better was false. Hence, the Cherokee Indian Confederacy was an example of state-building and its associated conflict that supports Diamond's argument that the development of civilizations is heavily influenced by ecological and geographical factors as opposed to genetics.

Another noteworthy point that Diamond makes that supports heavy influence of geological and ecological factors in development of civilizations is where it is shown why Eurasians were able to utilize the agricultural production in the Fertile Crescent. Agriculture would have led to a surplus of food that would support the economy of a civilization. The first reason Diamond gives us is its Mediterranean climate, which by natural selection results in native plants that were able to survive long periods of dryness but make quick use of rain, such as species of cereals and pulses (136). Diamond acknowledges that there were several areas that had this climate, but the Fertile Crescent had additional advantages over those areas. According to Diamond, this area already had crops that yielded large amounts of food energy in comparison to the amount of energy invested. One such example is that, "Experimental studies...show that annual harvests of up to nearly a ton of seeds per hectare can be obtained, yielding 50 kilocalories of food energy for only one kilocalorie of work expended," (136). The author also states that Fertile Crescent flora has a high percentage of self-fertilizing plants that occasionally cross-pollinate (137). This would have eliminated the problem of figuring out plant reproductive biology where plants with beneficial mutations for humans would breed with plants without that mutation. The diverse amounts of productive crops meant that agriculture would flourish there without as much effort. Therefore, agricultural civilization first developed in the fertile crescent due to compatible and favorable crops, supporting Diamond's argument that geological and ecological factors led development of civilizations rather than genetics and the theme of patterns and systems of economics.

Also, Diamond discusses the rationale behind the anarchy of tribes leading to chiefdoms as an example of development and transformation of social structures to support ecological and geographical factors as the major factors leading the development of civilization. He mentions that tribes have an informal, egalitarian system of government where most members of the tribe participate in, (272). Most people in a tribe have familial relations with each other, thus putting pressure on those in the fight to defuse the situation without violence. The economy also did not support unequal social structures, in the end, everyone still had to grow, hunt, and gather for food. Diamond says that this leads to no "...economic specialists, they also lack slaves, because there are no specialized menial jobs for slaves to perform. As the population increases if the geological and ecological factor support it, so does the economy and the number of specialized workers. This combined with there coming a time when two strangers get into a fight, and there is no familial pressure to resolve the situation peacefully would mean that violence could spiral out of control. The population at this time will become a chiefdom as the tribes realize that "...one person must exercise a monopoly on the right to use force...the chief was a permanent centralized authority, made all of the significant decisions, and had a monopoly on critical information," (273). This person with power would have to be respected and distinguished among the lower class of general citizens. Thus, the egalitarian society of tribes leading to the creation of chiefdoms is an example of development and transformation of social structures to support ecological and geographical factors as the major factors leading the development of civilization.

To conclude, Jared Diamond's argument that ecological and geographical factors are the major factors leading the development of civilizations throughout time as opposed to genetics also demonstrate the five themes: interactions between humans and the environment, development and interaction between cultures, state-building and its associated expansion and conflict, patterns and systems of economic systems, and development and transformation of social structures. Nicholas Kaufmann once said, "What matters isn't what you are, it's who you are, right now, in this moment."