Guns, Germs, and Steel Summary, wordbook homework

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What is his theory about how different regions/civilizations developed?

He thinks early differences in agriculture between societies lead to vast disparities in health, technology, and social structures. He said that it’s from Differences in Immunity, Writing and Technological Advancement, Formation of States.

Difference in immunity depends on dense populations and constant proximity to domesticated animals. As diseases circulated frequently, those who survived passed their immunity on to their offspring.

Agricultural societies also developed writing systems that is primarily because they needed to keep records of crop production, trade, and administration. Furthermore, agriculture led to more leisure time, as people could store food and did not have to spend all their time hunting or gathering.

Early agricultural societies started as small bands or tribes, but over time, they merged into larger, more complex societies through conquest or cooperation. As societies expanded, they required centralized leadership to maintain order and organization.

What are some examples?

New Guinea vs. Australia, China’s Early Unification, Malaria and European Colonization, The Spread of Agriculture in the Americas, The Bantu Expansion in Africa are examples.

The people of New Guinea developed agriculture, sophisticated tools, and political structures, while the Aboriginal Australians did not. This difference arose primarily due to geographic and environmental factors.

China became the world’s first large, centralized state, largely due to its homogeneous geography and temperate climate. These factors caused communication, transportation, and political unity, making it easier for China to unify compared to regions with more geographical barriers.

How do these contribute to the development of the US and UK in their earliest periods?

Both the UK and US benefited from geographic and historical advantages that gave them an early lead in agriculture, technology, and disease resistance. These factors, combined with military power and political centralization, contributed to their rapid rise as global powers.

In geography,

The UK benefited from its location within Eurasia, where agriculture had developed thousands of years earlier. This allowed UK to inherit domesticated crops and animals from the Fertile Crescent and other advanced agricultural societies.

The early American colonies were largely settled by European agricultural societies, particularly the British, who brought with them domesticated crops, animals, and farming techniques that thrived in North America’s temperate zones.

The Celts were an ancient Indo-European people who spread across Western Europe, particularly in Britain, Ireland, France (Gaul), and Spain, before the rise of the Roman Empire.

The Celts developed agriculture, metallurgy, and social hierarchies as part of their early societies.

Some Celtic groups, like the Gauls, Britons, and Picts, developed metalwork, oral traditions, and warrior-based societies in regions suited for farming and trade.

The Native Americans (Indigenous peoples of the Americas) developed civilizations independently, but with different geographic constraints.

Some groups, like the Aztecs, Mayans, and Incas, developed agriculture, writing, and complex political systems in regions suitable for farming.

However, due to geographic barriers (such as mountains and deserts) and a lack of domesticable large animals (except for llamas in South America), their technological development was slower than in Eurasia.

Reference

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