

“The Rise of Agricultural Civilisation was more likely in Eurasia than elsewhere”

Although Diamond’s thesis may be true in a/the given geographical situation, it does not necessarily hold for “elsewhere” as it is based on the experiences and climatic conditions of Eurasia.

Geography/environment might be construed by some to have been favourable/kinder to the region in question as opposed to, say somewhere like Papua New Guinea , but I think mostly **necessity** rather than geography was the driving force to change. People had to adapt to either not having the means to survive or finding new ways to for their continuity. Therefore the now defunct (by virtue of the environmental/climatic changes) hunter-gathering stage had to be replaced in the case of Eurasia or be completely overhauled. Circumstances beyond the hunter gatherers control simply put an abrupt end to that tried and tested way of life of hunting and gathering

The extreme climatic/environmental changes in the Middle East region had left hunter gatherers with no option but to try and find/establish alternative to hunting and gathering for the sake of survival. One would think that they would have tried various options before finally settling for domesticating plants and also the very same animals they used to hunt and they probably did. Conditions in Eurasia at that time required alternatives that were swift and untested – practical alternatives to hunting and gathering. As it turned out this domestication of some foodstuffs (plants and animals) was more reliable and controllable compared to hunter gathering. Not only did this method provide them with meat without the effort of hunting for hours maybe, but there were even more added benefits – they had milk from goats and cows and manure from the very same animals to feed their plants

Europe by some draw of luck or call it what you will, benefited a great deal from the hard experiences of the Middle East as these new farming and more stable methods of food production were then exported from the Middle East. So without experiencing much of the growing pains of the first farmers, Europe adopted the farming of plants and domesticated animals from the said region and this brought great benefit to most including the very poor but especially the new farmers who were then inspired to produce more food which also brought some benefit to the wider community, but mostly to the new food and meat producers. Needless to say they realised how influence they suddenly held in their hands

In between all this according to Diamond, having come so close to the now domesticated animals most people in Europe developed immunity to whatever disease the animals might transmit unlike some unfortunate “new world” communities who had not been in close proximity with any domesticated animals. So could one then say that the said agricultural civilisation from Eurasia was the cause of the demise of some populations in the “new world”? i.e. germs via domesticated animals via the explorers

Also if we follow the same thinking then the agricultural civilisation that took place in Europe in particular, was the means with which the “new world” was overrun

n. The way this agricultural system, having been imported from the Middle East, encouraged the first bureaucrats which in turn led to more bureaucracy/politics and greed which led to more experimentation, exploration and greed.

This in turn led to the emergence of various people like artisans who were useful in making travel /exploration possible and bureaucrats too which therefore further led to the issue of control from various parties who assumed they should be the one in charge thereby the idea of political settings and control of the populace took its roots later leading to the idea of control of the “new land” i.e. exploration financed initially by the agricultural revolution/civilisation

Agricultural civilisation was not necessarily more likely in Eurasia than elsewhere – it probably was happening elsewhere already but with differing results or implications

In Europe it was the necessary prelude to exploration into the “new world” with devastating consequences for the peoples of the “new world”

Elsewhere as in some parts of Africa agriculture and mining was practised in some communities

Maybe parallel **situations** were already in existence “elsewhere” to use Diamond’s reference, but maybe not necessarily with the exact mirror image scenario(?) but more or less the same as in Eurasia

It seems very plausible that, other hunter gatherers had already begun moving away from just hunting and gathering but had actually established some sort of domesticated plant and animal farming communities, maybe while still hunting now again

As pointed out by Jared Diamond, in a place like PaPua NewGuinea the people there seem to have stuck to hunting and gathering at a time when Eurasia was leaving this form of existence behind(not necessarily by choice). But I think that there could be some sort explanation for this. For instance the PuaPua New Guineans s might not have suffered the same traumatic climatic/environmental changes that necessitated a plan B as in the case of Eurasia so therefore they did not have to disrupt their way of living without any reason

There was no need or any looming crises to make them change no logical requirement to alter their way of life so they carried on as before – no need for them to diversify i.e. to even think of farming and domesticate animals as in other places

In their case, environmental change had not (yet) altered the means of supply of food and their lack of means for large scale food production could not have affected their lives in such a way that they thought change was an absolute necessity.

But the fact that Eurasia had to quickly adapt to fast-changing adverse environmental conditions mostly worked in Europe’s favour as it pushed/required people to find ways and means to survive and very quickly and as is often said “necessity is the great mother of invention”

Thus having been through hardship and having had to adapt so quickly, is it any wonder then that this was the decisive millstone to farming in Europe in particular which then led to other inventions like innovating the Chinese gunpowder invention into guns, the farming from the Middle East into a profitable money-generating venture that would lead to use of steel exploration and the railways

€Obviously now with enough food for all, and a surplus even, it is presumed that the wider population was better fed and as such could actually sit down and discuss – thus communities were formed - how to improve food production, how to find better ways of farming or simply what to do next with their newfound abilities. I think in most cases where a population is better fed a lot of thinkers and entrepreneurs also emerge so food mass production takes a country to a different level altogether

Time previously spent hunting and gathering is then spent differently – maybe contemplating on where one should go next

In places “elsewhere” where some previously full time hunter gatherers had established farming communities - maybe the agricultural civilisation pattern did not quite follow the same guidelines as some of Eurasia – but if it appears that maybe these historical events were running concurrently, can we then actually say that the rise of agricultural civilisation was more likely in Eurasia than elsewhere? In parts of Southern Africa for instance, there were agricultural communities mostly reliant on actual planted crops (sorghum, millet and yams etc.) and most importantly they also had domesticated herds of cattle and other various livestock, beside being miners and this was at a time when Europe had no reason to pay attention to places “elsewhere”

So Diamond’s thesis of agricultural civilisation can be deemed to be correct only if the implication is that Europe went on to develop weapons and move far afield as a result of the profits of the agricultural revolution. This agricultural civilisation brought with it inconveniences such as beauracracy – now people had to be controlled for the good of the whole community