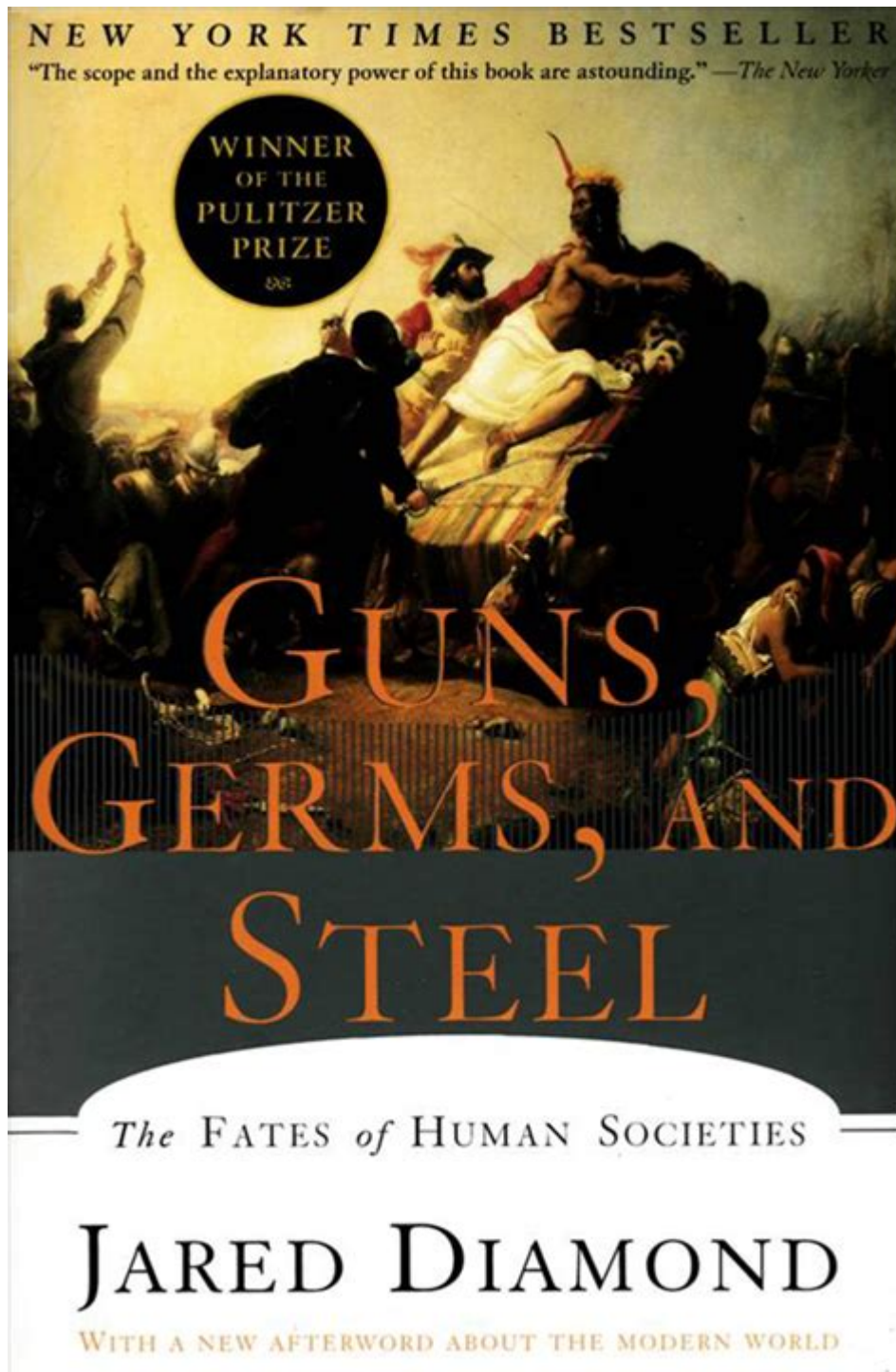


Guns Germs And Steel



Guns, Germs, and Steel: A Deep Dive into Jared Diamond's Revolutionary Theory

Ever wondered why some societies flourished while others stagnated? Why did Eurasia dominate

global power, while other continents lagged behind? Jared Diamond's groundbreaking book, *Guns, Germs, and Steel: The Fates of Human Societies*, offers a compelling and controversial answer, challenging traditional explanations rooted in inherent racial or cultural superiority. This comprehensive blog post will dissect Diamond's central arguments, explore the supporting evidence, and critically examine the criticisms leveled against his work. We'll delve into the key factors he identifies—geography, environment, and technology—to understand the vastly different trajectories of human societies across the globe.

The Geographic Lottery: Environmental Advantages of Eurasia

Diamond's central thesis rests on the concept of a "geographic lottery." He argues that Eurasia's environmental advantages played a crucial role in its rise to dominance. This wasn't about inherent human superiority, but about the fortuitous circumstances of geography and the resulting development of agriculture and technology.

Favorable Climate and Domesticatable Plants and Animals:

Eurasia benefited from a diverse range of climates and readily domesticable plants and animals. The availability of wheat, barley, rice, and other high-yield crops, coupled with animals like cattle, sheep, and pigs, allowed for the development of surplus food production. This surplus freed people from constant subsistence farming, allowing for specialization in other crafts and the development of complex societies. Other continents lacked this abundance of domesticable species and suitable climates for large-scale agriculture.

East-West Axis: Facilitating Diffusion of Ideas and Technology:

Eurasia's east-west axis played a critical role. Similar climates and latitudes allowed for the easy spread of crops, livestock, and technology across vast distances. In contrast, the north-south axis of the Americas and Africa presented greater climatic barriers, hindering the rapid diffusion of innovations. A new crop developed in one region could readily spread to neighboring regions with similar conditions, fostering innovation and development at an accelerated pace.

The Power of Germs: Biological Warfare and Immunity

The impact of infectious diseases is another critical aspect of Diamond's argument. Densely populated Eurasian societies developed immunity to many diseases, while populations in other regions lacked this crucial defense. When Eurasians encountered indigenous populations in the Americas, Africa, and Australia, they unwittingly carried devastating diseases like smallpox, measles, and influenza, to which the indigenous people had no immunity. These diseases decimated native populations, paving the way for Eurasian conquest. This wasn't intentional; it was a tragic consequence of biological warfare.

The Development of Technology: From Plow to Gunpowder

The availability of domesticable animals and resources also fueled technological advancements. Animals like oxen provided the power for plowing, leading to more efficient agriculture and food production. The development of metalworking, wheeled vehicles, and eventually gunpowder, further amplified Eurasian dominance. These technological advantages, born from the fortunate geographic circumstances, provided a significant military edge over other societies.

Criticisms and Counterarguments:

While influential, Diamond's theory has not been without criticism. Some argue that he overemphasizes environmental factors and underestimates the role of culture, political organization, and human agency. Others point to the complexities of historical interactions and the role of chance events, which are difficult to fully account for in a grand historical narrative. The debate continues, and Diamond's work should be viewed as a significant contribution to understanding the complexities of global history, rather than a definitive answer.

Conclusion:

Guns, Germs, and Steel offers a provocative and insightful perspective on the vast disparities in the development of human societies. While not without its critics, Diamond's work compels us to consider the powerful influence of geography, environment, and chance in shaping human history. By analyzing the interaction of these factors, Diamond provides a compelling, albeit complex, explanation for the global power dynamics that have shaped our world. It encourages a re-evaluation of traditional historical narratives, moving beyond simplistic explanations of cultural or racial superiority. His work serves as a call to examine the intricate interplay of environmental, biological, and technological factors in shaping the diverse paths of human civilization.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs):

1. Is Diamond's theory deterministic? No, Diamond's theory isn't strictly deterministic. While he highlights the significant influence of environmental factors, he acknowledges the role of human agency and chance events in shaping history.
2. What are some of the limitations of Diamond's work? Critics argue that Diamond oversimplifies complex historical processes, neglecting the nuances of cultural and political factors. Furthermore, the deterministic aspects of his theory have been challenged.

3. How does Diamond's work relate to colonialism? Diamond's work sheds light on the biological and technological advantages that contributed to European colonialism, but doesn't excuse the morally reprehensible actions involved.

4. What other factors does Diamond consider besides geography? Beyond geography, Diamond explores the impact of disease, the domestication of plants and animals, and the development of technology as key factors influencing societal development.

5. How has *Guns, Germs, and Steel* impacted the field of history? *Guns, Germs, and Steel* has significantly impacted historical scholarship by prompting a reassessment of traditional narratives and emphasizing the importance of environmental and biological factors in shaping human history.

guns germs and steel: *Guns, Germs and Steel* Jared M. Diamond, 1998 This book answers the most obvious, the most important, yet the most difficult question about human history: why history unfolded so differently on different continents. Geography and biography, not race, moulded the contrasting fates of Europeans, Asians

guns germs and steel: *Guns, Germs, and Steel* Jared M. Diamond, 1999 The fates of human societies.

guns germs and steel: *The World Until Yesterday* Jared Diamond, 2012-12-31 The bestselling author of *Collapse* and *Guns, Germs and Steel* surveys the history of human societies to answer the question: What can we learn from traditional societies that can make the world a better place for all of us? "As he did in his Pulitzer Prize-winning *Guns, Germs, and Steel*, Jared Diamond continues to make us think with his mesmerizing and absorbing new book. Bookpage Most of us take for granted the features of our modern society, from air travel and telecommunications to literacy and obesity. Yet for nearly all of its six million years of existence, human society had none of these things. While the gulf that divides us from our primitive ancestors may seem unbridgeably wide, we can glimpse much of our former lifestyle in those largely traditional societies still or recently in existence. Societies like those of the New Guinea Highlanders remind us that it was only yesterday—in evolutionary time—when everything changed and that we moderns still possess bodies and social practices often better adapted to traditional than to modern conditions. *The World Until Yesterday* provides a mesmerizing firsthand picture of the human past as it had been for millions of years—a past that has mostly vanished—and considers what the differences between that past and our present mean for our lives today. This is Jared Diamond's most personal book to date, as he draws extensively from his decades of field work in the Pacific islands, as well as evidence from Inuit, Amazonian Indians, Kalahari San people, and others. Diamond doesn't romanticize traditional societies—after all, we are shocked by some of their practices—but he finds that their solutions to universal human problems such as child rearing, elder care, dispute resolution, risk, and physical fitness have much to teach us. Provocative, enlightening, and entertaining, *The World Until Yesterday* is an essential and fascinating read.

guns germs and steel: *Guns, Germs, and Steel: The Fates of Human Societies (20th Anniversary Edition)* Jared Diamond, 2017-03-07 Fascinating.... Lays a foundation for understanding human history.—Bill Gates In this artful, informative, and delightful (William H. McNeill, New York Review of Books) book, Jared Diamond convincingly argues that geographical and environmental factors shaped the modern world. Societies that had had a head start in food production advanced beyond the hunter-gatherer stage, and then developed religion --as well as nasty germs and potent weapons of war --and adventured on sea and land to conquer and decimate preliterate cultures. A major advance in our understanding of human societies, *Guns, Germs, and Steel* chronicles the way that the modern world came to be and stunningly dismantles racially based theories of human history. Winner of the Pulitzer Prize, the Phi Beta Kappa Award in Science, the Rhone-Poulenc Prize, and the Commonwealth club of California's Gold Medal.

guns germs and steel: For All the Tea in China Sarah Rose, 2010-03-18 A dramatic historical narrative of the man who stole the secret of tea from China In 1848, the British East India Company, having lost its monopoly on the tea trade, engaged Robert Fortune, a Scottish gardener, botanist, and plant hunter, to make a clandestine trip into the interior of China—territory forbidden to foreigners—to steal the closely guarded secrets of tea horticulture and manufacturing. For All the Tea in China is the remarkable account of Fortune's journeys into China—a thrilling narrative that combines history, geography, botany, natural science, and old-fashioned adventure. Disguised in Mandarin robes, Fortune ventured deep into the country, confronting pirates, hostile climate, and his own untrustworthy men as he made his way to the epicenter of tea production, the remote Wu Yi Shan hills. One of the most daring acts of corporate espionage in history, Fortune's pursuit of China's ancient secret makes for a classic nineteenth-century adventure tale, one in which the fate of empires hinges on the feats of one extraordinary man.

guns germs and steel: Europe and the People Without History Eric R. Wolf, 2010-08-22 'The intention of this work is to show that European expansion not only transformed the historical trajectory of non-European societies but also reconstituted the historical accounts of these societies before European intervention. It asserts that anthropology must pay more attention to history.' (AMAZON)

guns germs and steel: The Secret of Our Success Joseph Henrich, 2017-10-17 How our collective intelligence has helped us to evolve and prosper Humans are a puzzling species. On the one hand, we struggle to survive on our own in the wild, often failing to overcome even basic challenges, like obtaining food, building shelters, or avoiding predators. On the other hand, human groups have produced ingenious technologies, sophisticated languages, and complex institutions that have permitted us to successfully expand into a vast range of diverse environments. What has enabled us to dominate the globe, more than any other species, while remaining virtually helpless as lone individuals? This book shows that the secret of our success lies not in our innate intelligence, but in our collective brains—on the ability of human groups to socially interconnect and learn from one another over generations. Drawing insights from lost European explorers, clever chimpanzees, mobile hunter-gatherers, neuroscientific findings, ancient bones, and the human genome, Joseph Henrich demonstrates how our collective brains have propelled our species' genetic evolution and shaped our biology. Our early capacities for learning from others produced many cultural innovations, such as fire, cooking, water containers, plant knowledge, and projectile weapons, which in turn drove the expansion of our brains and altered our physiology, anatomy, and psychology in crucial ways. Later on, some collective brains generated and recombined powerful concepts, such as the lever, wheel, screw, and writing, while also creating the institutions that continue to alter our motivations and perceptions. Henrich shows how our genetics and biology are inextricably interwoven with cultural evolution, and how culture-gene interactions launched our species on an extraordinary evolutionary trajectory. Tracking clues from our ancient past to the present, The Secret of Our Success explores how the evolution of both our cultural and social natures produce a collective intelligence that explains both our species' immense success and the origins of human uniqueness.

guns germs and steel: Why The West Rules - For Now Ian Morris, 2010-11-04 Why did British boats shoot their way up the Yangzi in 1842, rather than Chinese ones up the Thames? Why do Easterners use English more than Europeans speak in Mandarin or Japanese? To put it bluntly, why does the West rule? There are two schools of thought: the 'Long-Term Lock In' theory, suggesting some sort of inevitability, and the 'Short-Term Accident' theory. But both approaches have misunderstood the shape of history. Ian Morris presents a startling new theory. He explains with flair and authority why the paths of development differed in the East and West and - analysing a vicious twist in trajectories just ahead of us - predicts when the West's lead will come to an end. 'Here you have three books wrapped into one: an exciting novel that happens to be true; an entertaining but thorough historical account of everything important that happened to any important people in the last 10 millennia; and an educated guess about what will happen in the future. Read,

learn, and enjoy!' Jared Diamond 'A great work of synthesis and argument, drawing together an awesome range of materials and authorities to bring us a fresh, sharp reading of East-West relationships.' Andrew Marr

guns germs and steel: Natural Experiments of History Jared Diamond, James A. Robinson, 2012-10-01 Some central questions in the natural and social sciences can't be answered by controlled laboratory experiments, often considered to be the hallmark of the scientific method. This impossibility holds for any science concerned with the past. In addition, many manipulative experiments, while possible, would be considered immoral or illegal. One has to devise other methods of observing, describing, and explaining the world. In the historical disciplines, a fruitful approach has been to use natural experiments or the comparative method. This book consists of eight comparative studies drawn from history, archeology, economics, economic history, geography, and political science. The studies cover a spectrum of approaches, ranging from a non-quantitative narrative style in the early chapters to quantitative statistical analyses in the later chapters. The studies range from a simple two-way comparison of Haiti and the Dominican Republic, which share the island of Hispaniola, to comparisons of 81 Pacific islands and 233 areas of India. The societies discussed are contemporary ones, literate societies of recent centuries, and non-literate past societies. Geographically, they include the United States, Mexico, Brazil, western Europe, tropical Africa, India, Siberia, Australia, New Zealand, and other Pacific islands. In an Afterword, the editors discuss how to cope with methodological problems common to these and other natural experiments of history.

guns germs and steel: Collapse Jared Diamond, 2013-03-21 From the author of *Guns, Germs and Steel*, Jared Diamond's *Collapse: How Societies Choose to Fail or Survive* is a visionary study of the mysterious downfall of past civilizations. Now in a revised edition with a new afterword, Jared Diamond's *Collapse* uncovers the secret behind why some societies flourish, while others founder - and what this means for our future. What happened to the people who made the forlorn long-abandoned statues of Easter Island? What happened to the architects of the crumbling Maya pyramids? Will we go the same way, our skyscrapers one day standing derelict and overgrown like the temples at Angkor Wat? Bringing together new evidence from a startling range of sources and piecing together the myriad influences, from climate to culture, that make societies self-destruct, Jared Diamond's *Collapse* also shows how - unlike our ancestors - we can benefit from our knowledge of the past and learn to be survivors. 'A grand sweep from a master storyteller of the human race' - Daily Mail 'Riveting, superb, terrifying' - Observer 'Gripping ... the book fulfils its huge ambition, and Diamond is the only man who could have written it' - Economist 'This book shines like all Diamond's work' - Sunday Times

guns germs and steel: Why Nations Fail Daron Acemoglu, James A. Robinson, 2012-03-20 NEW YORK TIMES AND WALL STREET JOURNAL BESTSELLER • From two winners of the 2024 Nobel Prize in Economic Sciences, "who have demonstrated the importance of societal institutions for a country's prosperity" "A wildly ambitious work that hopscotches through history and around the world to answer the very big question of why some countries get rich and others don't."—The New York Times FINALIST: Financial Times and Goldman Sachs Business Book of the Year Award • ONE OF THE BEST BOOKS OF THE YEAR: The Washington Post, Financial Times, The Economist, BusinessWeek, Bloomberg, The Christian Science Monitor, The Plain Dealer Why are some nations rich and others poor, divided by wealth and poverty, health and sickness, food and famine? Is it culture, the weather, or geography that determines prosperity or poverty? As *Why Nations Fail* shows, none of these factors is either definitive or destiny. Drawing on fifteen years of original research, Daron Acemoglu and James Robinson conclusively show that it is our man-made political and economic institutions that underlie economic success (or the lack of it). Korea, to take just one example, is a remarkably homogenous nation, yet the people of North Korea are among the poorest on earth while their brothers and sisters in South Korea are among the richest. The differences between the Koreas is due to the politics that created those two different institutional trajectories. Acemoglu and Robinson marshal extraordinary historical evidence from the Roman Empire, the

Mayan city-states, the Soviet Union, the United States, and Africa to build a new theory of political economy with great relevance for the big questions of today, among them: • Will China's economy continue to grow at such a high speed and ultimately overwhelm the West? • Are America's best days behind it? Are we creating a vicious cycle that enriches and empowers a small minority? "This book will change the way people think about the wealth and poverty of nations . . . as ambitious as Jared Diamond's *Guns, Germs, and Steel*."—BusinessWeek

guns germs and steel: Upheaval Jared Diamond, 2020-05-12 A Bill Gates Summer Reading Pick A riveting and illuminating (Yuval Noah Harari) new theory of how and why some nations recover from trauma and others don't, by the Pulitzer-Prize-winning author of the landmark bestsellers *Guns, Germs, and Steel* and *Collapse*. In his international bestsellers *Guns, Germs and Steel* and *Collapse*, Jared Diamond transformed our understanding of what makes civilizations rise and fall. Now, in his third book in this monumental trilogy, he reveals how successful nations recover from crises while adopting selective changes -- a coping mechanism more commonly associated with individuals recovering from personal crises. Diamond compares how six countries have survived recent upheavals -- ranging from the forced opening of Japan by U.S. Commodore Perry's fleet, to the Soviet Union's attack on Finland, to a murderous coup or countercoup in Chile and Indonesia, to the transformations of Germany and Austria after World War Two. Because Diamond has lived and spoken the language in five of these six countries, he can present gut-wrenching histories experienced firsthand. These nations coped, to varying degrees, through mechanisms such as acknowledgment of responsibility, painfully honest self-appraisal, and learning from models of other nations. Looking to the future, Diamond examines whether the United States, Japan, and the whole world are successfully coping with the grave crises they currently face. Can we learn from lessons of the past? Adding a psychological dimension to the in-depth history, geography, biology, and anthropology that mark all of Diamond's books, *Upheaval* reveals factors influencing how both whole nations and individual people can respond to big challenges. The result is a book epic in scope, but also his most personal book yet.

guns germs and steel: Guns, Germs and Steel Jared Diamond, 2013-07-04 ****WINNER OF THE PULITZER PRIZE**** 'A book of big questions, and big answers' Yuval Noah Harari, bestselling author of *Sapiens* Why has human history unfolded so differently across the globe? And what can it teach us about our current crisis? Jared Diamond puts the case that geography and biogeography, not race, moulded the contrasting fates of Europeans, Asians, Native Americans, sub-Saharan Africans, and aboriginal Australians. An ambitious synthesis of history, biology, ecology and linguistics, *Guns, Germs and Steel* is a ground-breaking and humane work of popular science that can provide expert insight into our modern world. 'The most absorbing account on offer of the emergence of a world divided between have and have-nots... Never before put together so coherently, with such a combination of expertise, charm and compassion' *The Times*

guns germs and steel: Conquests and Cultures Thomas Sowell, 2021-08-10 This book is the culmination of 15 years of research and travels that have taken the author completely around the world twice, as well as on other travels in the Mediterranean, the Baltic, and around the Pacific rim. Its purpose has been to try to understand the role of cultural differences within nations and between nations, today and over centuries of history, in shaping the economic and social fates of peoples and of whole civilizations. Focusing on four major cultural areas(that of the British, the Africans (including the African diaspora), the Slavs of Eastern Europe, and the indigenous peoples of the Western Hemisphere -- *Conquests and Cultures* reveals patterns that encompass not only these peoples but others and help explain the role of cultural evolution in economic, social, and political development.

guns germs and steel: Lone Survivors Chris Stringer, 2017-07-26 *Lone Survivors: How We Came to Be the Only Humans on Earth* By Chris Stringer

guns germs and steel: A History of the Future Peter J. Bowler, 2017-11-02 A wide-ranging survey of predictions about the future development and impact of science and technology through the twentieth century.

guns germs and steel: Critical Summary of Guns, Germs, and Steel - The Fates of Human Societies by Jared Diamond Dennis Bergot, 2004-02-17 Seminar paper from the year 2004 in the subject Economy - Environment economics, grade: 1,0 (A), University of Hamburg (Centre for Sea and Climate Research), course: Seminar Contemporary Environmental Problems, language: English, abstract: The starting point of Diamond's book "Guns, Germs, And Steel" is a question he was asked by an indigenous New Guinean friend of his called Yali. His question was: "Why is it that you white people developed so much cargo and brought it to New Guinea, but we black people had little cargo of our own?"¹, addressing the obvious inequality in wealth and power of today's world. With his book, Diamond tries to provide an answer for this question. According to Diamond, the immediate causes for the inequalities in the world today are to be found in the different stages of development between the continents as of around A.D. 1500. By that time, only societies of Eurasia, the landmass that constitutes Asia and Europe, and there especially the Western Europeans, possessed ocean-going ships, population-decimating germs, steel weapons, horses usable for warefare, easy spread of information by an efficient writing system and many other means that come in handy decimating, subjugating or in some cases even exterminating the original inhabitants of other continents. Diamond calls these advantages the proximate factors of differing developments that led to the inequalities. The book's title "Guns, Germs, And Steel" can be understood as a summary of these proximate causes. In chapter three of his book, Diamond cites as a prominent example of the inequalities the conquest by the Spaniard Francisco Pizarro and a few hundred soldiers over the Inca emperor Atahualpa at Cajamarca/Peru in A.D. 1532. The Spanish got there and won because they possessed the above stated proximate factors. He then turns the point around and asks why, for instance, the Native Americans or Aboriginal Australians were not the ones who possessed these proximate factors and used them to conquer Europe. [...]

guns germs and steel: The Wheel Richard W. Bulliet, 2016 A visually rich, analytical history of the key cycles in a revolutionary technology.

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guns germs and steel: Connect David L. Bradford, Carole Robin, 2021-02-11 'A practical and timely book I highly recommend' Arianna Huffington, Founder and CEO, Thrive Global 'Connect offers a compelling and highly accessible roadmap for building relationships that lead to professional success and personal fulfilment. I highly recommend this book' Reid Hoffman, co-founder of LinkedIn and co-author of Blitzscaling and The Alliance 'I encourage anyone who cares to develop stronger and more meaningful relationships anywhere in their life to read this book' David Rogier, Founder and CEO at MasterClass _____ David Bradford and Carole Robin taught interpersonal skills to MBA candidates for a combined seventy-five years on their legendary Stanford Graduate School of Business course, Interpersonal Dynamics. Now, in Connect, they share their time-tested strategies for developing the interpersonal skills that have become fundamental to success at work and in our everyday lives, such as building trust, giving feedback and navigating conflict. Connect shows why relationship-building is crucial to becoming a more effective manager and leader and living a fulfilled life, from highlighting the importance of curiosity and empathy to demonstrating how to break logjams and negotiate boundaries. Filled with research-backed insights, useful concepts and thought-provoking exercises, Connect is an important resource for anyone hoping to build and sustain relationships, providing tools to make relationships robust -- and even exceptional. _____ WHAT FORMER STUDENTS SAID ABOUT INTERPERSONAL DYNAMICS: 'I can't believe how much I learned about myself and about how others see the world' 'This course changed my life; it was transformational' 'I feel so much better equipped to create the kinds of relationships I want in my life'

guns germs and steel: Kardashian Dynasty Ian Halperin, 2016-04-19 Traces the rise of the Kardashian and Jenner families to reality show and tabloid fame. Discusses the negative publicity that has overshadowed their recent years while scrutinizing charges of exploitation that have targeted Kris Jenner, Rob Kardashian, and Caitlyn Jenner.

guns germs and steel: How To Save Our Planet Mark A. Maslin, 2021-05-06 'Punchy and to

the point. No beating around the bush. This brilliant book contains all the information we need to have in our back pocket in order to move forward' Christiana Figueres, Former Executive Secretary UN Climate Change Convention 'Amazing book' Chris Evans, Virgin Radio Breakfast Show 'Everyone should have this book' Rick Edwards, BBC Radio 5 Live 'A timely and important book, not only laying out the facts...but suggesting real solutions to the challenges facing us' Professor Alice Roberts, Anatomist, Professor of Public Engagement in Science, University of Birmingham

How can we save our planet and survive the 21st century? How can you argue with deniers? How can we create positive change in the midst of the climate crisis? Professor Mark Maslin has the key facts that we need to protect our future. Global awareness of climate change is growing rapidly. Science has proven that our planet and species are facing a massive environmental crisis. How to Save Our Planet is a call to action, guaranteed to equip everyone with the knowledge needed to make change. Be under no illusion the challenges of the twenty-first century are immense. We need to deal with: climate change, environmental destruction, global poverty and ensure everyone's security. We have the technology. We have the resources. We have the money. We have the scientists, the entrepreneurs and the innovators. We lack the politics and policies to make your vision of a better world happen. So we need a plan to save our planet... How to Save Our Planet is your handbook of how we together can save our precious planet. From the history of our planet and species, to the potential of individuals and our power to create a better future, Maslin inspires optimism in these bleak times. We stand at the precipice. The future of our planet is in our hands. It's time to face the facts and save our planet from, and for, ourselves.

'A handbook of clearly established, authoritative facts and figures about the terrible toll we as humans have taken of our planet, plus ways in which we can lessen the impact. For laypeople like me, who can see what is happening but haven't always got the precise statistics to hand, it's hugely valuable' John Simpson CBE, BBC World Affairs Editor, Broadcaster, Author & Columnist 'Saving the world is no small thing, but picking up this book's a good start' Paris Lees, Contributing Editor at British Vogue, campaigner 'I love it. My kids love it' Chris Evans, Virgin Radio Breakfast Show 'A no-nonsense crib sheet on the state of the world and how to help it' The I Newspaper

guns germs and steel: Why Europe? Michael Mitterauer, 2010-07-15 Why did capitalism and colonialism arise in Europe and not elsewhere? Why were parliamentary and democratic forms of government founded there? What factors led to Europe's unique position in shaping the world? Thoroughly researched and persuasively argued, Why Europe? tackles these classic questions with illuminating results. Michael Mitterauer traces the roots of Europe's singularity to the medieval era, specifically to developments in agriculture. While most historians have located the beginning of Europe's special path in the rise of state power in the modern era, Mitterauer establishes its origins in rye and oats. These new crops played a decisive role in remaking the European family, he contends, spurring the rise of individualism and softening the constraints of patriarchy. Mitterauer reaches these conclusions by comparing Europe with other cultures, especially China and the Islamic world, while surveying the most important characteristics of European society as they took shape from the decline of the Roman empire to the invention of the printing press. Along the way, Why Europe? offers up a dazzling series of novel hypotheses to explain the unique evolution of European culture.

guns germs and steel: Seven Myths of the Spanish Conquest Matthew Restall, 2004-10-28 Here is an intriguing exploration of the ways in which the history of the Spanish Conquest has been misread and passed down to become popular knowledge of these events. The book offers a fresh account of the activities of the best-known conquistadors and explorers, including Columbus, Cortés, and Pizarro. Using a wide array of sources, historian Matthew Restall highlights seven key myths, uncovering the source of the inaccuracies and exploding the fallacies and misconceptions behind each myth. This vividly written and authoritative book shows, for instance, that native Americans did not take the conquistadors for gods and that small numbers of vastly outnumbered Spaniards did not bring down great empires with stunning rapidity. We discover that Columbus was correctly seen in

his lifetime--and for decades after--as a briefly fortunate but unexceptional participant in efforts involving many southern Europeans. It was only much later that Columbus was portrayed as a great man who fought against the ignorance of his age to discover the new world. Another popular misconception--that the Conquistadors worked alone--is shattered by the revelation that vast numbers of black and native allies joined them in a conflict that pitted native Americans against each other. This and other factors, not the supposed superiority of the Spaniards, made conquests possible. The Conquest, Restall shows, was more complex--and more fascinating--than conventional histories have portrayed it. *Seven Myths of the Spanish Conquest* offers a richer and more nuanced account of a key event in the history of the Americas.

guns germs and steel: Salt Mark Kurlansky, 2011-09-30 Homer called it a divine substance. Plato described it as especially dear to the gods. As Mark Kurlansky so brilliantly relates here, salt has shaped civilisation from the beginning, and its story is a glittering, often surprising part of the history of mankind. Wars have been fought over salt and, while salt taxes secured empires across Europe and Asia, they have also inspired revolution - Gandhi's salt march in 1930 began the overthrow of British rule in India. From the rural Sichuan province where the last home-made soya sauce is produced to the Cheshire brine springs that supplied salt around the globe, Mark Kurlansky has produced a kaleidoscope of world history, a multi-layered masterpiece that blends political, commercial, scientific, religious and culinary records into a rich and memorable tale.

guns germs and steel: *The Shackled Continent* Robert Guest, 2010-09-14 A former Africa editor for *The Economist*, Robert Guest addresses the troubled continent's thorniest problems: war, AIDS, and above all, poverty. Newly updated with a preface that considers political and economic developments of the past six years, *The Shackled Continent* is engrossing, highly readable, and as entertaining as it is tragic. Guest pulls the veil off the corruption and intrigue that cripple so many African nations, posing a provocative theory that Africans have been impoverished largely by their own leaders' abuses of power. From the minefields of Angola to the barren wheat fields of Zimbabwe, Guest gathers startling evidence of the misery African leaders have inflicted on their people. But he finds elusive success stories and examples of the resilience and resourcefulness of individual Africans, too; from these, he draws hope that the continent will eventually prosper. Guest offers choices both commonsense and controversial for Africans and for those in the West who wish Africa well.

guns germs and steel: *Summary and Analysis of Guns, Germs, and Steel: The Fates of Human Societies* Worth Books, 2016-11-15 So much to read, so little time? This brief overview of *Guns, Germs, and Steel* tells you what you need to know—before or after you read Jared Diamond's book. Crafted and edited with care, Worth Books set the standard for quality and give you the tools you need to be a well-informed reader. This short summary and analysis of *Guns, Germs, and Steel* by Jared Diamond includes: Historical context Chapter-by-chapter summaries Detailed timeline of key events Important quotes Fascinating trivia Glossary of terms Supporting material to enhance your understanding of the original work About *Guns, Germs, and Steel* by Jared Diamond: Professor Jared Diamond's informative and fascinating Pulitzer Prize-winning *Guns, Germs, and Steel* explores a historic question: Why were the Eurasian peoples able to dominate those from other lands? Diamond argues that it was ecology and geography—not race—that shaped the modern world. Societies that developed in regions with fertile land for farming and that had domesticable plants and animals were able to progress more quickly, thereby creating the tools to conquer preliterate cultures. Drawing on a variety of disciplines—from linguistics, genetics, and epidemiology to biology, anthropology, and technology—*Guns, Germs, and Steel* offers an eloquently argued view of the development of human societies. The summary and analysis in this ebook are intended to complement your reading experience and bring you closer to a great work of nonfiction.

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