

# Sample essay on the worst mistake in the history of human race: an analysis

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Jared Diamond contests the progressivist belief that agriculture has brought humankind great benefits compared to the hunting and gathering form of life that people from 10, 000 years ago used to live. Although the claims of progressivists that agriculture has provided food for more people without having to go through the “ nasty, brutish, and short life” that the hunters and gatherers were subjected to on a daily basis, and that it provided farmers more time to engage in art, bear some truths, paleopathology proved that negative effects caused by agriculture far outweigh its positive effects.

Paleopathology provides information on the signs of diseases in the remains of the people of the past. Skeletons found in Greece and Turkey showed that men and women before stood 5’9 and 5’5 respectively. However, farming groups were shown to have decreased in height, measured at 5’3 as the tallest for men and 5’ for women (Diamond). Armelagos and his colleagues who studied the skeletons in Dickson Mounds near the Spoon and Illinos river revealed that farmers have increased enamel defects, an indication of poor nutrition, by an overwhelming 50 per cent, an increase in iron-deficiency anemia, rise in bone lesions which indicate infectious disease, and an increase in degenerative conditions of the spine which shows hard work (qtd. in Diamond). Life expectancy was also found to be low, wherein people lived until 26 years during pre-farming period, while it decreased to 19 years after the adaption of farming.

While farmers depended on the starchy variety of food, hunter-gatherers consumed a wide variety of food. When one crop failed in the farming community, their diet suffer even more. There is also the fact that since

people started leaving in communities due to farming, diseases became easily transferred from person to person. In addition, since people stayed in one place, the population started to grow faster as women were shown to give birth every two years compared to the hunter-gatherer women who had to take care of their children until at least four years until they become old enough to keep up with the adults. This constant childbirth put a great toll on women's health, as well as the establishment of sexual roles wherein women were made to work harder and carry heavier weights than men. Apart from the distinction on sex roles, agriculture also established social status as some skeletons in the farming community showed better teeth and taller height compared to the rest of the community members.

## **Work Cited**

Diamond, Jared. " The Worst Mistake in the History of the Human Race."

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