

Latitudinal Patterns of Pre-industrial Human Cultural Diversity and Societal Complexity

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Abstract : Pre-industrial old-world human cultural diversity and societal complexity exhibits remarkable geographic regularities. Along the latitudinal axis from the equator to the arctic, a descending trend of human ethno-cultural diversity is found to be in coincidence with a descending trend of biological diversity. Along the same latitudinal axis, the pre-industrial human societal complexity shows to peak at the intermediate latitude. It is postulated that human cultural diversity and societal complexity are strongly influenced by collective learning, and that collective learning is positively related to human population size, social interactions, and environmental challenges. Under such postulations the relationship between collective learning and important geographical-environmental factors, including climate and biodiversity/bio-productivity is examined. A hypothesis of intermediate bio-productivity is formulated to account for those latitudinal patterns of pre-industrial human societal complexity.

Keywords : cultural diversity, societal complexity, latitudinal patterns, biodiversity, bio-productivity, collective learning

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