

will inevitably increase to the limits of subsistence. Not all scholars would agree that this has been demonstrated, nor will all be convinced by more specific uses of evidence. Paintings of dubious ethnographic validity and estimates of field size by passing Spanish marauders are translated into caloric yields from hunting and agriculture. A rough numerical parity between chiefdoms and between villages within chiefdoms is assumed so that one estimate of warrior strength or village size is applied to other groups for whom no data exist. Here Dobyns is struggling with lack of evidence, but in his discussion of soil fertility and Indian agriculture he often proceeds with little reference to available scientific research. Finally, in his calculations he sometimes writes as if epidemics produced identical death rates regardless of social conditions. These and similar issues will almost certainly make this book the center of a fruitful and significant scholarly controversy.

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