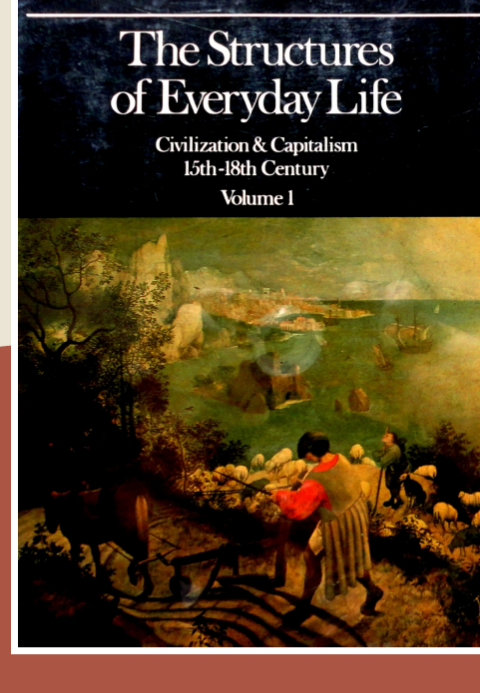


Human Progress

DOOMSLAYER

a newsletter that cuts through the gloom



Blog Post | Human Development

Grim Old Days: Fernand Braudel’s Structures of Everyday Life

Fernand Braudel’s book on early modern Europe explores the harsh realities of pre-industrial life, from deadly wildlife encounters to frequent famines and even occasional cannibalism.

One surprising anecdote relates to the incredible quantities of salt people used to season their otherwise unpalatable food:

“In the Europe of insipid farinaceous gruels consumption of salt was large . . . twenty grams daily per person.”

Today, on average, Americans eat about 3.4 grams of salt per day.

[Read more](#)

Blog Post | Women's Empowerment

The Glory Days of Women’s Culture in China

Over the last century, China has enjoyed periods of relative freedom and flourishing women’s literature.

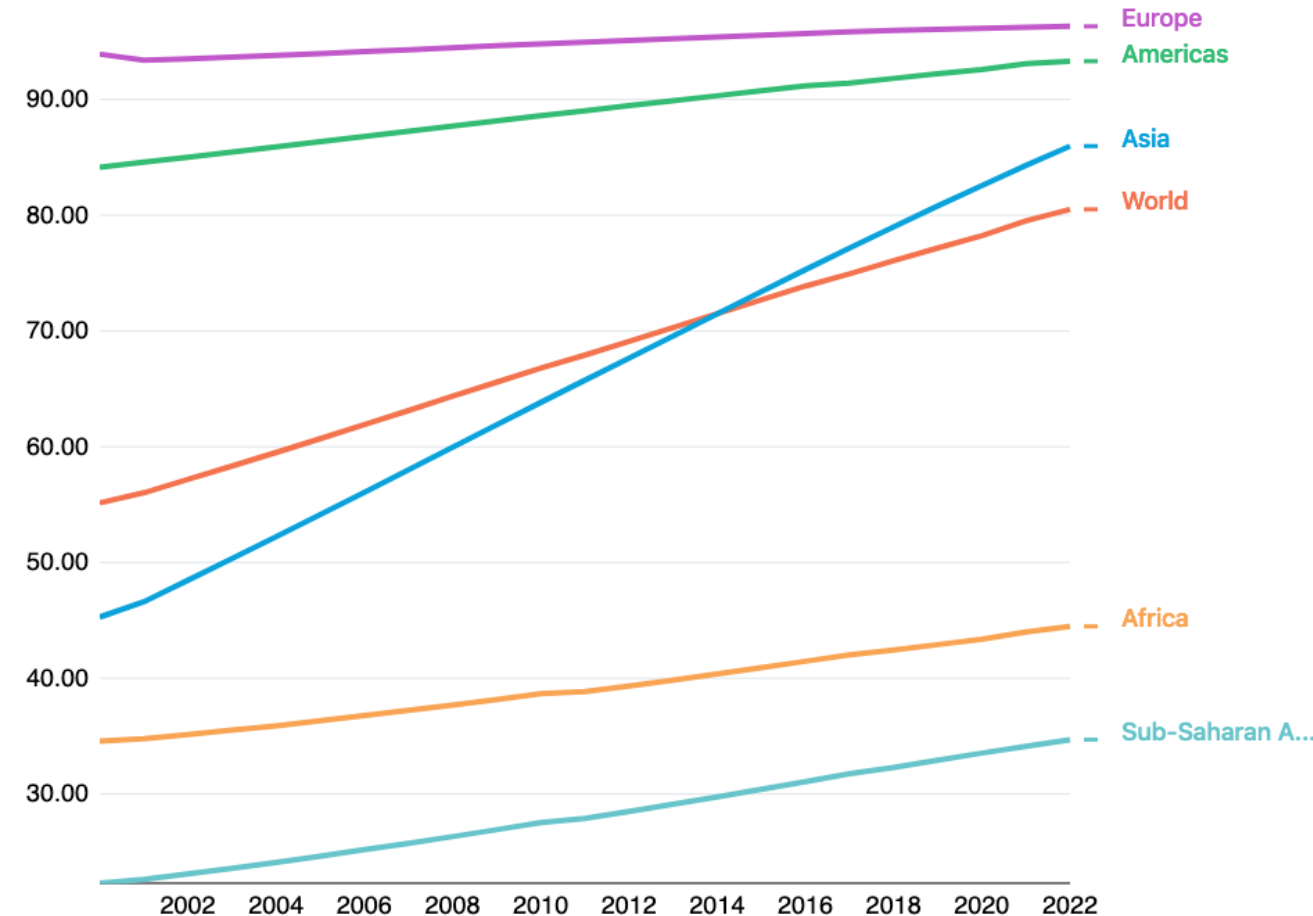
Tragically, each was eventually brought to an end by the state.

[Read more.](#)



People using at least basic sanitation services

% of population (2000–2022)



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Before the germ theory of disease, with a few notable exceptions, public sanitation was atrocious.

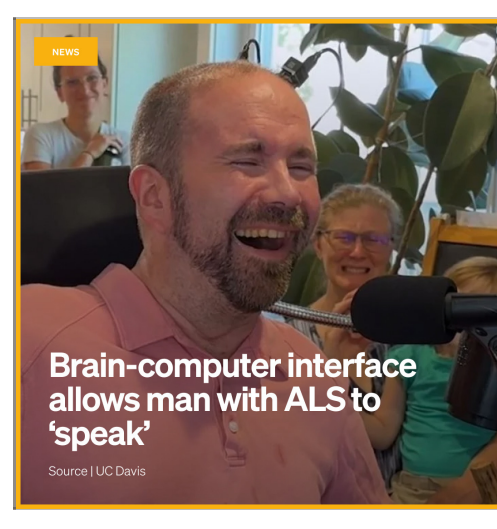
In urban areas people often deposited their refuse in the streets, where it would eventually run into and pollute the nearest body of water. In rural areas, people lived with animals and used their droppings to fertilize crops—an extremely dangerous practice, especially considering the fact that people rarely washed their hands.

All of this created regular outbreaks of diseases like cholera, hepatitis, and polio.

Today, poor sanitation is mainly limited to very poor countries.

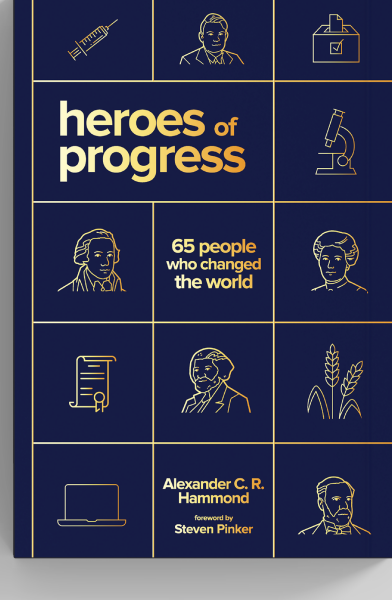
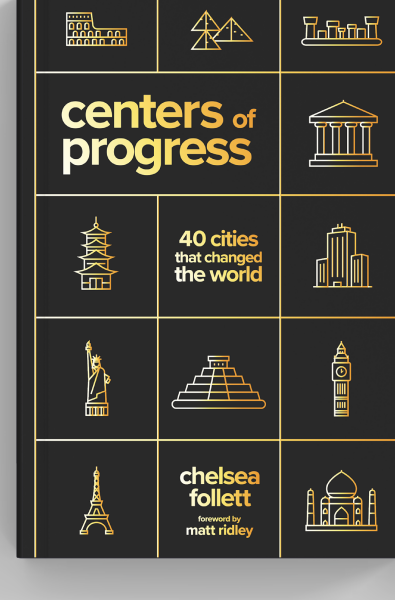
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