

Domestication of plants and animals in anthropology

[Science](#), [Anthropology](#)



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Domestication of plants and animals in Anthropology

In anthropology domestication of plants and animals is not merely the growing of plants and rearing of cattle, but rather is the shift from gathering of food to producing food for own consumption. It is a stage in human life when he realized that collection of food was not only unsustainable but could not also fulfill the demand of food by the family. For domestication to be successful, man further realized that it was imperative that the variety of crops or animals to be reared had to be of a different variety from those that were available for gathering or hunting in the bush.

Taking wheat as an example, the wild variety of wheat had a tough but easily breakable rachis. The seed of the wild variety of barley easily clutter releasing the grains far away where they independently grow into mature wheat. In addition, the tough shell on the seeds of wild wheat prevents the seeds from being prematurely exposed. Domesticated wheat on the other hand easily separates from chaff making it suitable for flouring. Progressive harvesting and planting of wild wheat lead to mutations that led to formation of a variety of wheat which had tougher seed coats to sustain the roughness which wheat goes through in the process of harvesting.

Animals on the other hand had also to go through transformation suitable evidence lies in wild goats found in the Middle East which have horns with totally different shape as those that are reared at home (Ember 168).

Animals and plants in the wild even though had more similarities with those that are domesticated, they are different because they had to gain or lose a number of features to make them adaptable for domestic purposes.

Theories explaining why Domestication occurred within only a Few Thousand

Years

There are two theories explaining why domestication occurred within a few thousand years ago. One of the theories, Gordon Childe's Theory has it that unreliable climatic conditions led to domestication of animals and plants. Long periods of drought in the Middle East led to scarcity of food or even water. This led to crowding around water points and areas that earlier on had plenty of food. Man therefore realized that to mitigate the effect of drought and increase food production, domestication of plants and animals was inevitable (Ember 169).

Another theory originated by Mark Cohen, Lewis-Flannery explains that domestication was as a result of curiosity and adventure. Man admired the beauty and abundance that defined hunting and collecting areas. He therefore wanted to replicate this abundance in his own home. This theory further agrees that population pressure also led to domestication. The hunting and gathering communities increased in numbers and became unsustainable. There were no more new places to move to and in a few thousand years ago man realized that domestication was more sustainable than hunting and gathering (Ember 170).

In the recent years, archeologists seem to agree that changes in climate like hot and dry summer as well as cooler winters led to evolution of a new variety of grains that grew annually. People then had to take advantage of the yearly grains by using technology to store and manufacture the grains. This made man less mobile and eventual surrender of the nomadic way of life. This was supported by a periodic climate.

Works Cited

<https://assignbuster.com/domestication-of-plants-and-animals-in-anthropology-essay-samples/>

Ember, Melvin. Human Evolution and Culture: Highlights of Anthropology.
Pearson: Boston, 7th Edition, 2008. Print.