

Peer Review

Review of: "Does Palaeolithic Resource Management Leading to Domestication Explain Human “Modernity”?”

Marcelo Cardillo¹

1. IMHICIHU, CONICET

While the paper offers an impressively broad and erudite synthesis, drawing on exhaustive sources and integrating diverse case studies across archaeology, biology, and anthropology, there are opportunities to further strengthen its explanatory and empirical framework.

Currently, certain internal inconsistencies may affect the paper's theoretical coherence. For instance, the author cites the “flight response” as a barrier to domesticability in species like deer or zebras, yet the horse—also an animal defined by its escape response—is (see for example; Birke, L., Hockenhull, J., Creighton, E., Pinno, L., Mee, J., & Mills, D. (2011). Horses' responses to variation in human approach. *Applied Animal Behaviour Science*, 134(1–2), 56–63. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.applanim.2011.06.002>) treated as a successful early domesticate. Clarifying or refining this underlying principle would greatly enhance the argument's consistency.

Furthermore, the discussion of human self-domestication could benefit from avoiding a circular explanatory structure where the phenomenon appears as both cause and consequence. The model would be significantly more robust if it accounted for diverse socio-ecological contexts and provided more concrete material evidence. At present, the absence of a clear operational definition or testable hypotheses makes it difficult to fully evaluate the framework's analytical reach.

Finally, while the application of taphonomic logic is conceptually sound, it potentially risks shielding the argument from empirical falsification. By addressing these points, the author could transition this work from a compelling conceptual exploration into a more rigorous, testable scientific model. This critique is intended to highlight the work's potential as a major synthetic contribution while suggesting a path toward greater empirical clarity.

Declarations

Potential competing interests: No potential competing interests to declare.