

## How culture shapes the evolution of our genes

The well worked out examples of the impact of human culture in re-shaping our own evolution are riveting, I think.

...

The ability of *adults* to digest lactose, in fact, confers evolutionary advantages *only when a stable supply of milk is available*. And this would not have been the case until *after* milk-producing animals (sheep, cattle, goats, camels) had been domesticated and a host of related cultural features, such as knowledge about how to care for such animals and collect their milk, had arisen. ... Amazingly, just over the last 3,000-9,000 years, several adaptive mutations have occurred in the *LCT* gene ... conferring this ability.

...

The forms of living arrangements that we have invented in the last 5-7,000 years – involving cities and markets and modern telecommunications – are surely also a force in our natural selection. ... For instance, as a species, we may be getting smarter because we live in cities, and because urban culture is getting ever more complex, stimulating, and demanding. We almost certainly are evolving to have different immune systems ... as our species lives in ever larger and denser aggregations, with movements of people over ever longer distances between cities, giving rise to new sorts of epidemics as a result.

Read full, original post: [How do genes and culture co-evolve, and what are some examples of this in action?](#)