

Human Science Seminar

第47回人間科学セミナー

The evolutionary replacement of matriarchies: The history of gendered social structures based on kinship, religion, genetics, and linguistics



Speaker:
Dr. Christian Etzrodt

未来共生学講座・准教授

Research interests:

Sociological Theory, Sociology of Education (especially Liberal Arts and Multicultural education), Sociology of Elites, Political Sociology (with a focus on the management of liberal democracies), Money and Banking (especially Banking reforms), Japanese Studies (nihonjinron, bushidō), and Matriarchal Studies.

問い合わせ先



大阪大学大学院人間科学研究科

附属 未来共創センター

✉ mirai-kyoso@hus.osaka-u.ac.jp

☎ 06-6879-4050

Zoomでもご参加いただけます。
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Thursday, December 2, 2021
PM. 17:00~18:30

Venue: Learning Commons (N203)

George Peter Murdock's Atlas of World Cultures presented a summary of ethnographic data for 563 cultures worldwide. The Atlas documents that at the end of the 19th century 16% of the surveyed cultures were matrilineal and 15% matrilineal. "Matriarchal" societies (with both matrilinearity and matrilocality) were present in all 6 continental/"racial" clusters. This is an astonishing result, since it implies that "matriarchal" societies were not rare 150 years ago, although today we cannot even imagine that such societies ever existed.

The aim of my research project is to investigate the rise and the fall of matriarchal societies in human (pre-)history. I am applying two complementing strategies: a forward analysis and a backward analysis. The forward analysis starts with the last common ancestor of gorilla, chimpanzee, and human. All three species have different gendered residential patterns (chimpanzees are patrilocal, gorillas are mixed, and humans are flexible), which can be reconstructed with very few deviations from this common ancestor. I am connecting this analysis with theoretical considerations about kinship systems in order to create an interpretative framework for the backward analysis.

In the backward analysis, I start with the ethnographic data of cultures listed in Murdock's Ethnographic Atlas or in the Human Relations Area Files in order to reconstruct proto-cultures based on linguistic families and genetic relationships (mitochondrial DNA and Y-chromosome DNA). I will add to this ethnographic data religious and mythological data (I have access to Yuri Berezkin's mythological data base). This data is largely ignored in Murdock's surveys. With this strategy it should be possible to determine the beginning and the location of patriarchalization processes, which have destroyed the previously wide-spread matriarchies.

Additionally, I intend to measure the power of the genders in the household/economic activities, in the community/political activities, and in religion/spiritual activities. This should allow me to test several hypotheses about matriarchies and patriarchies. The most important hypothesis is that matriarchies existed, in which women had more power than men.

My research is in the early stages and therefore I do not plan to lecture. Instead I hope for a lively discussion of possible limitations of my research design.