
Division of labor in human evolution

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Résumé

Following the emergence of the *Hominini*, the biological evolution of the tribe has been always accompanied by cultural changes, and behavioral patterns were underlying the relationships among individuals.

For several years during the Late Pleistocene, *Homo sapiens*, *H. neanderthalensis*, *H. erectus*, *H. floresiensis*, and Denisovans shared the planet. At one point, *H. sapiens* began to express a complex behavior, that allow us to remain the solely *Homo* species in the world, and the path in which it originated and developed is now being traced using the techniques of archaeology, molecular biology and ancient DNA studies, and paleoanthropology. One of these behavioral key changes that are though to have contributed and helped the first humans to adapt, spread, and evolve into who we are today, is the division of labor between individuals from the same group.

The study of the archeological record in Eurasia concluded that gender-specific activities appear at the beginning of the Upper Paleolithic when *Homo sapiens* did a similar economic and technological tasks to modern hunter-gatherer societies, suggesting that women and men were participating in different activities within their groups.

However, recent studies and new techniques have allowed distinguishing patterns of variation among individuals and behavioral specializations within the hominins from more than a million years ago.

For example, Neandertals also performed many sophisticated tasks usually associated only with modern humans. For example, they constructed complex shelters, made pendants and other jewelry showing traces of ochre dye, practiced patrilocality as mating behavior, and had the knowledge and used medicinal plants and hafting materials. Their manual laterality and its ontogenetic development were both similar to modern humans, and show evidences of social learning, an emerging sexual division of non-foraging labor and individual specialization of some types of work within the group.

And the research is still in progress, increasing our knowledge about the behavior of the species that once were sharing the planet with us and could trace the evolution of the human behavior during the course of the biological evolution of our genus.

Mots-Clés: Division of labor, behavioral specialization, Middle Pleistocene, Late Pleistocene, Neandertal

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