

A RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN RITUAL HUMAN SACRIFICE AND EVOLUTIONARY DEVELOPMENT OF HIERARCHICAL SOCIETY

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There are a lot of bright and honorable moments in the history of humanity. Each civilization brought many things, which worth describing. However, dark things such as human sacrifice, in our history have appeared to have a strong influence on the evolution of modern hierarchical societies.

Ritual human sacrifice used to be widespread, especially in many Austronesian language cultures.

The latest results [1] based on the analysis of more than 93 Austronesian cultures revealed that the practice of human sacrifices tended to make societies increasingly less egalitarian and eventually gave rise to strict, inherited class systems. The scientists [2] have discovered a strong dependence between ritual human sacrifices and social inequality, which we have nowadays. They divided cultures into three groups based on their social status. The first group was a society with equal rights where inheritance of wealth and status between generations was not allowed. In this type of societies only 25 percent of cultures practiced human sacrifice. The second group was moderately stratified societies in which wealth and status could be inherited. It was found that 37 percent of moderately stratified societies had the practice of ritual killings. The third group was highly stratified societies in which 65 percent of cultures committed ritual killings.

Thus, in moderately stratified societies bloody traditions were used to promote social inequality, whereas in highly stratified societies it was an instrument to defend social elites from low-status individuals. This idea suggests that ritual killings are a way to force people into obedience, allowing the religious and political leaders who organized the killings to consolidate power unopposed.

References:

1. J.Watts *et al.* Ritual human sacrifice promoted and sustained evolution of stratified societies (2016) *Nature*, 532 (7598), pp. 228-231.
2. The 'darker link' between ancient human sacrifice and our modern world URL: <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/morning-mix/wp/2016/04/05> (дата обращения: 11.09.16).