

Martine Segalen

(Paris University, Nanterre, France)

From Rural Kinship to Surrogacy Debates. A Course of Research over the Last 50 Years

This lecture will address the various debates over which have taken place over the past fifty years regarding family and kinship changes in the discipline of anthropology, from the point of view of a Europeanist anthropologist.

As a very vivid field of research in the 1980-1990s mainly devoted to an anthropo-historical perspective on family reproduction of rural societies -following the influence of Jack Goody's comparatist works-, the field of research seems to have shrunk under the spell of David Schneider's positions (though not as much as in the United States).

However, the deep transformations of our societies (notably the lengthening of life and the question of social solidarity) has opened a new comparative field of research, including the former socialist countries (KASS research).

Presently the traditional and basic questions of the discipline concerning filiation and descent are being revived with the sharp discussions concerning the consequences of the new reproductive techniques.

So, the lecture will deal with:

- the European kinship systems of inheritance and marriage (research in the 1980s-1990s);
- the vast European kinship enquiry called KASS (Kinship and Social Security) which refers to a comparative research organized by the Max Planck Institute of Social Anthropology (Germany);
- the current debates nowadays in France and elsewhere regarding the changes concerning filiation regarding the developing practices associated to assisted procreation.