Faith in the Faithful
Religious Practice and Social Networks in Rural South India

Eleanor A. Power
London School of Economics & Political Science
Religion as a Hard-to-Fake Sign of Commitment

Signaling, Solidarity, and the Sacred: The Evolution of Religious Behavior

RICHARD SOSIS AND CANDACE ALCORTA

Anthropologists have repeatedly noted that there has been little theoretical progress in the anthropology of religion. Geertz had pronounced that scholars of religion have turned their attention to the study of ritual, trance, and meditative development, rather than to the question of the proximate mechanisms responsible for religious behavior. Here we review these literatures evolutionary processes explanation of religion.

Key words: behavioral ecology; costly signaling


Many challenges confront evolutionary scholars of religion. The origin of religious belief, religious behavior, and institutionalized religions—religions—however, necessarily assume the rubric of religion, including myth, ritual, taboo, symbolism, morality, and belief in noncorporeal beings. Concomitantly, religions; cooperation; culture; evolution; prosociality; religion; ritual; Cooperation; Dual inheritance theory; Cultural group selection

Abstract

This paper lays out an evolutionary theory for the cognitive foundations and cultural emergence of the extravagant displays (e.g., ritual, taboo, symbolism, morality, belief in noncorporeal beings). Concomitantly, the cultural evolution of prosocial religions

The Ties That Bind Us

Ritual, Fusion, and Identification

by Harvey Whitehouse and Jonathan A. Lanman

Most social scientists endorse some version of the claim that participating in collective rituals promotes social cohesion. The system of belief; cooperation; culture; evolution; prosociality; religion; ritual

In setting out our conceptual framework, we report numerous ongoing investigations that test our hypotheses against the wealth of ethnographic description that has inspired a cultural evolutionary process. This framework (1) reconciles key aspects of the adaptationist and by-product approaches to the origins of religion, the development of prosocial religions

The evolution of costly displays, cooperation and religion: credibility enhancing displays and their implications for cultural evolution

Joseph Henrich*

The cultural evolution of prosocial religions

Social scientists have

Social scientists have

Social scientists have

Social scientists have
Community Formation

Communication

Cooperation

Structural Outcomes
Research Setting & Data
Reputation

- Hardworking
- Physically strong
- Influential
- Good advice
- Generous
- Good character
- Devout
- Ritual knowledge

Hardworking: 4
Generous: 2
Influential: 1
Social Support

- Emotional support & companionship
  - Close friends, conversation partners
- Behavioral assistance
  - Borrow items, run errands, help watching children
- Financial assistance
  - Borrowing petty cash, bigger loans
- Guidance
  - Important matters, advice
- Vouched support
  - Help finding work, people in ‘high positions,’ aid if there is a problem
Religiosity

Public Religious Practice

Regular Worship

Possession
Religiosity & Reputation
kusumam - character
karmam - action
Are those who invest more in the religious life of the village seen as more devout? As more prosocial?

Hurdle models predicting # of nominations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Worship</th>
<th></th>
<th>Possession</th>
<th></th>
<th>Ritual</th>
<th>Count</th>
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</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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Power 2017, *Evolution & Human Behavior*
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Power 2017, *Evolution & Human Behavior*
Is religious ritual action associated with support relationships?

Exponential Random Graph Model (ERG, \( p^* \))

Individual - Node

Interpersonal - Dyadic

Structural - Network
Is religious ritual action associated with support relationships?

ERGMs predicting the likelihood of a supportive tie

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Religiosity</th>
<th>Estimate (SE)</th>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Alakāpuram</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regular Worship</td>
<td>0.24***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.06)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Possession</td>
<td>–0.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.07)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weighted Public Religious Acts</td>
<td>0.01***</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>(0.003)</td>
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*** p<.001, ** p<.01, * p<.05, † p<.10

Also in the model: node age, gender, caste, household wealth, and past or current committee membership; dyad gender homophily, dyad caste homophily, dyad kinship, dyad difference in the number of years of education, dyad distance between households, and dyad reciprocity (mutuality), GWESP

Is religious ritual action associated with support relationships?

- Possession
- Ego
- Public Ritual Practice
- Regular Worship

Is religious ritual action associated with support relationships?

Community Formation: Collective Ritual & “Communitas”
orrumai
unity
The cultural evolution of prosocial religions
Monthly Worship

Annual Festival: *Muḷaippāri*

Annual Festival: Vow Procession
Are co-participants more likely to support one another?

Table 1: ERGM model results for (1) co-participation in the monthly worship and (2) co-participation in the annual festival.

<table>
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<tr>
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<th>S.E.</th>
<th>Odds Ratio</th>
<th>p-value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1: Monthly Worship (No = 0)</td>
<td>0.274</td>
<td>0.048</td>
<td>1.315</td>
<td>&lt;.0001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2: Vow Procession (No = 0)</td>
<td>0.282</td>
<td>0.158</td>
<td>1.326</td>
<td>0.0739</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Muḷaippāri</em> (No = 0)</td>
<td>0.130</td>
<td>0.111</td>
<td>1.138</td>
<td>0.2449</td>
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Power, 2018, *Proceedings B*
Are co-participants more likely to support one another?
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Thanks - உன்னு