

Ewa Dąbrowska-Prokopowska

ORCID: 0000-0001-8296-365X

Zakład Socjologii Polityki i Bezpieczeństwa

Instytut Socjologii

Uniwersytet w Białymstoku

Michalina Trochimowicz

ORCID: 0000-0003-0993-9084

Szkoła Doktorska Nauk Społecznych

Uniwersytet w Białymstoku

Analysis of religious ritual behaviours on the Facebook group “Trust Jesus” in relation to Pascal Boyer’s concept of the religions “in the wild” and interaction rituals theory by Randall Collins¹

Keywords: religious rituals, religion, social media, interactional rituals, wild religions

Słowa kluczowe: rytuały religijne, religia, media społecznościowe, rytuały interakcyjne, dzikie religie

Introduction

One of the many evolutionary puzzles is why people manifest such strong tendencies to perform religious ritual actions. Religious rituals are commonly performed in numerous cultures across the world in various forms, despite their potential lack of explanation in adaptational processes. In a religious context, rituals are understood as a spiritual integration of members of a given community with supernatural, counter-intuitive and intentional agents (Lawson and McCauley, 1990), such as god, demons, angels or ghosts. Collective religious rituals based on behavioural synchronisation increase emotional bonds and intimacy among group members as well as erase their individual boundaries in favour of their blending with the community (Sosis and Bressler, 2003).

¹ The research leading to these results has received funding from the Norwegian Financial Mechanism 2014-2021 (Project number 2019/34/H/HS1/00654).

Ronald Collins provides a similar interpretation in his interaction rituals theory. In it, Ronald Collins (2011) underscores the importance of participants focusing their attention on a shared activity, by means of which they become more aware of what others are doing and what they are feeling as well as more aware of this mutual awareness. As a result, they experience shared emotions in a more intense way, and they lose themselves in this microsituation (Collins, 2011). Numerous studies demonstrate that religious ritual behaviours boost social solidarity, thus facilitating the cooperation between members of the group, which constitutes a basis for an efficient adaptation to the environment (Sosis and Alcorta, 2003). Similarly, Ronald Collins in his concept speaks of a positive impact of interactive rituals on an increased social solidarity. Their effectiveness is dependent on how efficiently the participants interconnect, reach high level of mutual focus of attention and emotionally shared mutual awareness during the given interaction ritual (Collins, 2011).

Pascal Boyer claims that the ability to represent counterfactual, supernatural situations is being continuously used in human understanding of our environment. The ease with which people imagine non-existent agents is connected to evolved social intelligence. Having said this, it is not synonymous with the functionalist understanding of the meaning of institutional religion (Boyer, 2018). The dominance of institutional religion in today's developed cultures does not prove that they are universal to all societies. This is crucial to keep in mind in today's context of advancing secularisation and increased indifference towards organized religions in modernised countries. This, however, is not synonymous with the decline of spirituality, which in modern societies is fuelled by the individualized phenomenon of fuzzy fidelity and a quest for new, more 'primal' communes which satisfy people's pragmatic needs (Voas, 2009). Pascal Boyer points that the religions 'in the wild', as he calls them, persist and coexist with the institutional religions even in societies with strong traditions of organized, doctrinal religions (Boyer, 2021). Therefore, a question arises: to what extent do these religions 'in the wild' match the descriptions of modern religious groups and their particular rituals performed via social media? This paper aims to answer this question by proposing an analysis of ritual behaviours manifested in a private Facebook group 'Trust Jesus'.

This article is part of a stream of research that has been developing for several years on the analysis of people's ritual behaviour in social media spaces (Burgess and Green, 2018; Abel et al., 2021). This research points out that rituals in social media are a specific form of communication between people expressing common values and experiencing similar emotions. In line with this definition, the literature on social media rituals focuses primarily on violent events (Trillň et al., 2022). However, the most interesting studies are the one that focus their attention on media rituals embedded in the specificity of everyday life. This type of media rituals mainly targets the creation of specific virtual communities of support (Brownlie and Shaw, 2019). The research presented in this article fits into this as yet under-researched strand of research by presenting how religious rituals are spontaneously created on Facebook with

the aim of stimulating a sense of social solidarity and mutual support in its users. Although Ronald Collins’ theory is currently being used to analyse rituals in social media (Maloney, 2013; van Haperen et al., 2020; Jodén and Strandell, 2021) there is a lack of research relating to the religious sphere, particularly in relation to cultural evolution theory and Pascal Boyer’s concept.

Adopted methodology

This study utilizing the virtual ethnography method (Steinmetz, 2012) analyses a Polish Facebook group called “Trust Jesus” (Group “Trust Jesus”, 2022). It was established on the 8th of April 2018. It is a private group, which means that only group members may see its content: posts and comments. The group currently has 119,000 members. As the description suggests, the group is meant for religious people, affiliated with Catholicism. The main aim of the studied group is to provide support for its members in prayer, doing good, and cherishing Jesus Christ.

Virtual ethnography is a method used to learn about and describe people and phenomena based on observable online behaviours and their outcomes (Cichocki et al., 2012). This is a qualitative type of study based on adapting traditional methods of ethnographic studies to studying online cultures (Kozinets, 2006). This method is based on the anthropology of collectivity, the features of which are connected to the definition of virtual communities and online communication. This impels the researcher to employ pertinent study methods (Daniel, 2011). As Leesa Costello, Marie-Louise McDermott, Ruth Wallace (Costello et al., 2017) stated: “Netnographers appear to be narrowing rather than expanding the scope of netnographic research, choosing to focus on data that is easy to collect and analyze, while minimizing their own engagement with the members of the online communities they are studying”.

According to the principles adopted in virtual ethnography, fieldwork is carried out in real time and researchers function in the Internet space on the same terms as other users. In this research, the principle adopted was that the researcher would act according to the tactic of being so-called ‘transparent’ (Cichocki et al., 2012). This is a tactic relying on the approach where the researcher does not engage with the communication and only makes observations of the content posted online. Additionally, by adopting this tactic, the researcher has to characterise a network identity consisting of neutral and unemotional elements. The advantage of this strategy is that it does not affect the behaviour of the people being investigated or the course of their communication. This is important when the researcher’s self-disclosure may affect the form and content of communication that is natural in the given Internet space or provoke negative reactions from users. The study group is private in nature and its participants are characterised by a high level of similarity in the forms of their communications and the content they share.

At the same time, the participants in the study group become very emotionally involved when an individual user of the group attempts to criticise their actions or forms of communication adopted. Therefore, this indicates, that there is a fairly strong internal control within the surveyed group, aimed at creating a feeling among users of being part of a closed community. For this reason, in the discussed research, the primary aim of which is to investigate the forms and content of religious rituals in the studied Facebook group, it was reasonable to adopt a 'transparent' tactic, despite the knowledge that the research material obtained is based on little in-depth information.

This study poses three research hypotheses. The first hypothesis is that in the study group, posts and comments will take on the characteristics of religious rituals (rigidity, repetition, redundancy). The second hypothesis assumes that in the study group, religious rituals will take on the characteristics of interactional rituals (gathering of users under a specific post, occurrence of rhythmic charging between participants in the form of taking over sequence rules in comments under posts, occurrence of rhythmic synchronisation of participants' statements under a post, occurrence in participants' statements under a post of emotional charging with the use of gif, emoji, mem type elements). The third hypothesis assumes that in the studied group, there will be features of "wild religions" in the religious rituals (focus of religious activity on pragmatic goals in posts and comments, occurrence of individual religious specialists, lack of features of a believing community).

In this case, the method of participant observation was employed in order to understand how the members of the Trust Jesus group communicate and create virtual religious rituals. The observation commenced in early December 2021 and ended mid-February 2022. The conclusions were being systematically recorded in the observation journal. Throughout the study, the researcher limited herself to solely observe the dynamics of the group, without taking part in the ongoing discussions. Her presence in the group was neutral and has not to any degree influenced the expression and reactions of the members of the researched group.

Definitions, aspects and outcomes of ritual actions in Ronald Collins' theory of culture evolution and interaction rituals concept

People of all cultures feel the need to engage in ritual actions. Rituals are pervasive elements of our every-day behaviour, as the particularities of human cognitive architecture make them appeal to human attention. Basically, they are a product of evolutionary processes occurring as a result of natural selection (Boyd and Richerson, 1985). Rituals, in particular collective rituals, activate people's cognitive-emotional system and have it focus on detection and response

to potential threats (Liénard and Boyer, 2006). According to Martin Lang, Jan Krátký and Dimitris Xygalatas (Lang et al., 2020):

When faced with a prospect of uncontrollable threats, people are compelled to perform any action that is deemed effective to regain the feeling of control. According to Malinowski, magico-religious rituals are emotionally driven expressions of the desired goal, be it safety during warfare or success in hunt, that stem from the compulsion to exercise control over uncontrollable threats and to soothe the overwhelming anxiety. In other words, Malinowski theorized that rituals are inherently tied to anxiety-provoking situations because they help decrease anxiety that may impede normal functioning.

The evolution of ritualized behaviours is thus connected to every-day existence, the struggle to survive, cognitive organisation of the environment, the feeling of threat and the necessity to make important decisions. Rituals let people take control over the ever-changing reality and resulting threats. At the same time, taking part in rituals is a manifestation of people’s need to belong and to forge strong social bonds. Prosocial functionality of rituals is not tied to the truth of belief. As Konrad Talmont-Kaminski (2016) stated: “A belief tradition that eschews content vigilance may maintain beliefs independently of their truth since they will be judged to be plausible simply because they are believed by others. This is important in the case of religions”.

Roy A. Rappaport claims that every ritual behaviour has particular features: rigidity, repetitiveness and redundancy (Rappaport, 2007). Rituals are based on people’s need to perform actions in accordance with a pre-established model, which is re-enacted in particular contexts and time. It is also important to perform the same action multiple times and recite the same words as part of a collective ritual, as it fosters mutual synchronisation within the group and the emotional mimicry (Fischer and Hess, 2017) of all people participating in a given ritual. The particularity of a ritual is based on establishing a clear line between the reality created as a result of the performed ritual and the every-day. The rigidity and the order of collective ritual action create among participants a sense of being in a comprehensible and safe reality, which differs from the every-day realm of threats. In his theory of interaction rituals, Ronald Collins provides a similar description of these phenomena. According to Ronald Collins, each ritual is built upon the following four ingredients (Collins, 2011):

- Two or more people gathering in the same place, mutually affecting each other with their bodily presence, regardless of whether it is in the foreground of their conscious attention or not.
- There are clear lines which allow determining who takes part in the ritual and who does not, thanks to which the participants can distinguish between the participants and people who are excluded.
- The participants focus their attention on the common activity. By transmitting this focus to each other, they are becoming mutually each other’s focus of attention.
- The participants begin to share the collective mood or emotional experience.

Figure 1 shows the interaction ritual as a set of processes with causal connections and feedbacks. During the interaction ritual, the aforementioned four elements feedback upon each other and the shared focus of attention and emotions are mutually reinforced. As a result, the participants co-create a common emotional and cognitive experience, delineated from the experiences of people who were not taking part in the ritual.

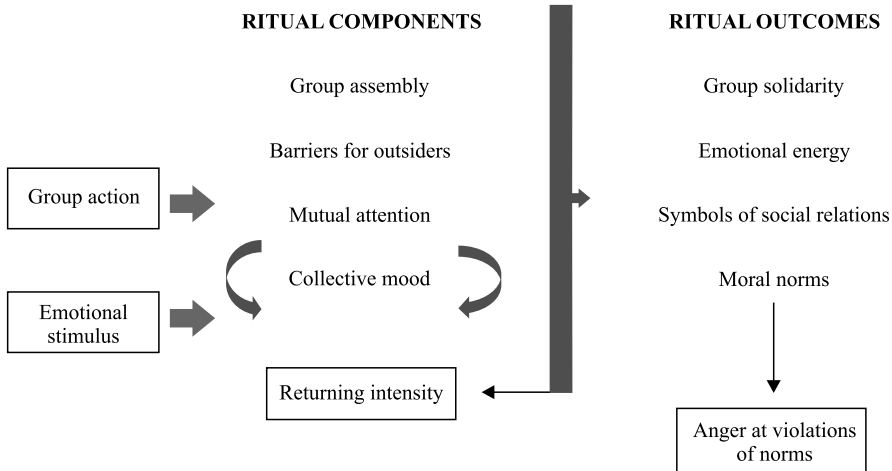


Fig. 1. Interaction rituals
 Source: own study based on Collins (2011).

Religious rituals are a particular type of rituals. According to Emil Durkheim (1990) the division between the sacred and the profane constitutes a basis for religious rituals. For Emil Durkheim (1990), a ritual consists of established rules of conduct which dictate a set of procedures to be performed before socially-accepted sacred objects, which in turn maintain the high level of social integration within a group and promote prosocial activity. For community members, religious rituals work as a protection from threats. Their main aim is to reduce tension and stress levels which manifest when taking risky decisions, which could lead to a disintegration of the group. The majority of rituals is, however, clearly irrational, therefore, participation in a ritual does not carry adaptional outcomes. In the eyes of non-religious people, praying for several hours, fasting or suffering pain during religious rituals is not perceived as a rational behaviour. For participants, however, the rituals are a source of sense of meaning and provide a simple explanation of reality. The belief system of a given religion changes people's perspective, as a result of which even unpleasant actions take on rational meaning, becoming a desired activity that should be performed before other members of the group. As some researchers emphasise: "The costs of performing certain religious rituals may provide a reliable signal of loyalty to the religious group and commitment to the community's beliefs, norms, and values" (Xygalatas et al., 2021).

Such religious rituals, based on synchronisation and unconscious mimicry, trigger prosocial behaviours in participants (Chartrand and van Baaren, 2009). In addition, according to numerous studies, social synchronisation, which constitutes a basis for collective religious rituals, underlies the creation of affiliation relationships. Therefore, the detection of it in social contexts may prove important for bond creation and, as a result, for proper social functioning (Atzil et al., 2014). Emil Durkheim (1990) claimed that participation in stimulating and synchronising religious rituals may lead to a greater sense of social connection among participants and displaying more prosocial approach towards them. Depending on the efficiency of religious rituals engaging numerous participants, they could create strong group bonds, which increase cooperation and coordination of collective action (Gelfand et al., 2020). According to Ara Norenzayan et al. (2016):

Cultural evolutionary process selects for any psychological traits, norms, or practices that (1) reduce competition among individuals and families within social groups; (2) sustain or increase group solidarity; and (3) facilitate differential success in competition and conflict between social groups by increasing cooperation in warfare, defense, demographic expansion, or economic ventures. This success can then lead to the differential spread of particular religious elements, as more successful groups are copied by less successful groups, experience physical or cultural immigration, expand demographically through higher rates of reproduction, or expand through conquest and assimilation. It was this cultural evolutionary process that increasingly intertwined the “supernatural” with the “moral” and the “prosocial”. For this reason, we refer to these culturally selected and now dominant clusters of elements as prosocial religions.

Ronald Collins (2011) has reached similar conclusions by proposing the four basic outcomes (Fig. 1) of interaction rituals, which entail arriving at prosocial products as a result of participation:

- Increased sense of solidarity within the group and sense of membership.
- Increased emotional energy in participants of a ritual, manifesting by exuding more power, enthusiasm and readiness to engage in collective action.
- Reinforced recognition of membership symbols which represent the group, and which the members recognize as ‘sacred objects’. People with strong group solidarity treat such symbols with tremendous reverence and strive to protect them from people from outside the group.
- Increased feeling of morality among participants, the feeling of rightness in adhering to the group and respect for its symbols. The development of the notion of moral evil in participants consciousness in violating the norms of group solidarity of its symbolic representations.

Religious rituals performed on social media as a manifestation of modern religions 'in the wild'. Study findings and discussion

Social media such as Facebook attract users across continents by offering a highly interactive, yet simple and attractive communication. Initially, predominantly in the 1990s, the Internet was characterized by a non-synchronic one-directional communication. In the current age, online communication is highly multiple-directional, hipertextual, and synchronic. In addition, following the advent of mobile technology, the increased possibility to send pictures and films in a simple way and a more intuitive interface, this type of communication is becoming and ever-natural tool to forge bonds between people (Wilson et al., 2012). Liav Sade-Beck emphasises:

Vast amounts of data and links to additional, related sites provide a huge storehouse of available information; thus, the Internet is a technological innovation tightly linked to social change. These social changes have clear implications for the patterns of expression of emotions. Online communication on the Internet facilitates the expression of emotions (output) and the input of emotional messages, thus developing and reinforcing important social ties between users, forming a system of relationships similar to ties of family and friendship, all taking place without participants being physically present (Sade-Beck, 2004).

Social media users have the ability to engage in communication relating to religious and spiritual matters as well. The technology behind Facebook facilitate a very simple and diverse religious communication with a wide network of users. Thanks to Facebook, temporal and spatial barriers to performing religious rituals disappear, providing access to archived and continuously created information (Treem and Leonardi, 2013). Private Facebook groups are a particular type of religious community, free from restrictive norms and barriers to entry. They are a community of individuals who at a chosen moment decide to engage in virtual interaction rituals pertaining to a religious matter of choice. This type of virtual religious groups allows their users to build short-term relationships, make contacts, engage in discussions, partake in specific rituals, and become a part of a broadly understood community of faith (Miller et al., 2013).

Religious rituals performed in private Facebook groups such as "Trust Jesus" are adapted to the technology of Facebook as well as to the particularity of online communication. The freedom to co-edit content on Facebook groups translates into an increased human interaction, by giving people the possibility to create a specific type of content and reach expected communication goals by posting their own posts. In addition, the users have at their disposal a wide array of multimedia to be used in communication (pictures, GIFs, memes, video, emoji) by the means of which they create and recreate common religious and spiritual experiences. The particularity of the structure of a Facebook post provides a possibility to create a text jollied up with numerous visual elements, the aim of which is to sustain emotions in other members of the group.

The possibility to express one’s reaction and to write a comment under a post pertaining to a given religious matters creates a particular situation which Ronald Collins (2011) calls a microsituation, providing a framework for an interaction ritual. In the realm of a virtual group, this is a ritual of directing the focus of attention of users upon a religious content presented in a given post. It is based on co-presence, sharing common emotions, a collective synchronisation of behaviours while providing a moral basis for this behaviour.

Virtual religious ritual, constituted by these rules, where users of the studied group engage in a situation around a given religious post, are suitable to demonstrate ephemeral engagement. The even intuitive structure of these rituals forces the users to react in by answering in comments with a commonly used ritualized and repetitive utterances. In order to perform a religious ritual, the users pre-agree to a rather rigid and repetitive linguistic ceremonial. Most often it would be repeating the formulas such as ‘Amen’, ‘Yes, it’s true’, ‘I love Jesus/God’, ‘I believe’ or ‘I trust you, Jesus/God’. The ritual posts very often contain a meme or a GIF. Next to that, its structure usually concentrates around questions mandating the confirmation of faith in Jesus, angels or God. More often than not, the posts begin by: ‘Do you believe in.../ Do you love.../ Do you trust...’ ending with a question mark. Such questions are placed against a background depicting the religious figure in question. Equally often, the ritual posts induce collective synchronisation among users by pasting a Bible passage or a prayer written by the author of the post against a graphic background. The latter is commonly a thanksgiving message to some supernatural agent (God, Jesus, angels) for protecting people on Earth. Such ritual posts are usually commented by users who respond by pasting an ‘Amen’ or short formulas: ‘I trust/love you, Jesus’. One can observe in the analysed posts that group members cooperate and above all demonstrate before others their engagement in reproducing the appropriate, fixed and repetitive formulas.

Alberto Acerbi (2016) points out that in social media, like in the case of comments appearing under religious posts in the analysed group, social learning occurs, based on domain-general heuristics. It is referred to as ‘social learning strategies’ helping people choose what, when and from whom to learn (Acerbi, 2016). Importantly, the structure of Facebook allows for multiple reproductions of the same content, which makes it possible to create a long chain of transmitted information, free from any distortion (Acerbi, 2019). These phenomena facilitate mimicry and a simple reproduction of ritual formulas published under posts, manifesting features of a religious ritual. While the rituals are not costly, the very act of getting involved with a given post-turned-religious-ritual is synonymous with entering a ritual microsituation, which requires the participants to activate the prescribed and synchronised behaviours, which in turn can induce the feeling of short-term bonds.

The overwhelming popularity of religious and spiritual groups on Facebook begs the question whether such groups can fulfil the functions resembling these of the religions ‘in the wild’. Pascal Boyer emphasises: “The study of religious representations should focus on what happened before the emergence of religions

in that sense, and also on what happens outside their hegemony, or at its periphery – what I call informal religious activity or wild traditions” (Boyer, 2021).

Pascal Boyer (2021) speaks of three basic features of religions ‘in the wild’. Firstly, the religious activity is centered around pragmatic goals. In the research group, one can observe numerous posts relating to very precise needs of users. Usually, they are requests to pray for a sick family member or a deceased relative. No post published in the researched group related to a philosophical discussion pertaining to religious dogmas, the origin of soul or evil. The posts carry a simple message, sustain emotions, and their content is adapted to the every-day struggle of its members. Secondly, in the religions ‘in the wild’ there are individual religious specialists who are not representatives of formal institutions. In the researched group, virtually all members have the potential to provide services of contacting supernatural agents. There are no limits as to who, when and on what topic may motivate users to partake in a religious ritual. Having said this, certain users stand out as they undertake this activity more often than others based on their reputation of previous success in getting other members involved. The last feature of the religions ‘in the wild’ is that they do not constitute a community of faith. The structure of Facebook makes it impossible to construct a fixed normative framework, which are typical for traditional religious communities. All members of the researched group can get involved with any post-turned-religious-ritual of their choice at their convenience. Therefore, the group solidarity being the result of these particular rituals is short-lived, as it only lasts as long as the discussion under a given post. The small emotional factor and costs of engagement make it impossible for the members of the group to form a religious community based on prescribed norms. Basically, it can be said that they are a set of relationships between members of the group which are dynamically shifting and are based on low-cost religious rituals which need to be constantly altered and confirmed in the virtual space of the researched group.

Summary and final conclusions

In summary, we conclude that in the studied Facebook group it is possible to observe the emergence of visible virtual religious rituals that are characterised by rigidity, repetition and redundancy. There is a specific pattern of users’ reactions to the shared posts, which are then repeated by other members of the studied group. The multiple repetition of the same actions by users and the use of similar words, stickers or gifs as part of the collective rituals, apparently reinforces their mutual synchronicity and sense of connection with other group members and supernatural beings. It can be observed that group members pay attention to respond positively to users inserting comments similar to theirs under a specific post of a ritualistic nature. The observed virtual religious rituals

also meet Randal Collins’ definition of interactional rituals (Collins, 2011). The ability of users to synchronise their actions under a specific religious post on the group even though they are not always made at exactly the same time, and the visibility of the comments, results in the formation of a sense of mutual influence. In such a situation, participants focus their attention on the activity being played out together and collectively share their mood and emotions about playing out a virtual religious ritual. As a result, the effect of the systematically occurring virtual religious rituals in the studied group is an increase in the emotional energy of the rituals participants and their mutual support. It can be described as a manifestation of an increased sense of group solidarity and a strengthening of the appreciation of religious symbols. The analysed virtual religious rituals can also be seen as a manifestation of so-called ‘wild religions’. Their extra-institutional form, the spontaneously forming communal bonds between group members as a result of the systematic playing out of virtual religious rituals initiated by ordinary users and the functionality of the inserted posts meet the defining criteria described by Pascal Boyer. Yet, we are aware that only the participatory observation applied within the framework of virtual ethnography makes it impossible to accurately verify the research assumptions we have made. However, we assume that researchers’ interest in the various aspects of cultural transmission and the evolution of people’s religious behaviour in the Internet space, in conjunction with sociological concepts relating to the mutual determinism of individuals and structures, which Randal Collins’ concept represents, may inspire new empirical research and draw attention to details of transmission that have not yet been explored. It is hoped that this article will contribute in some way and clarify potential ambiguities and highlight the extent to which cultural evolutionary theory can agree with selected sociological theories on key issues related to observing people’s religious behaviour in the virtual sphere, particularly in relation to Pascal Boyer’s conception of so-called ‘wild religions’ mentioned in the article.

References

- Abel, Susan; Machin, Tanya and Brownlow, Charlotte (2021). Social media, rituals, and long-distance family relationship maintenance: A mixed-methods systematic review. *New Media & Society*, 23(3), 632–654. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1461444820958717>.
- Atzil, Shir; Hendler, Talma and Feldman, Ruth (2014). The brain basis of social synchrony. *Social Cognitive and Affective Neuroscience*, 9(8), 1193–1202. <https://doi.org/10.1093/scan/nst105>.
- Acerbi, Alberto (2016). A Cultural Evolution Approach to Digital Media. *Front. Hum. Neurosci.*, 10:636. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fnhum.2016.00636>.
- Acerbi, Alberto (2019). *Cultural evolution in the digital age*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Boyd, Robert and Richerson, Peter (1985). *Culture and the evolutionary process*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Boyer, Pascal (2018). *Minds Make Societies: How Cognition Explains the World Humans Create*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Boyer, Pascal (2021). Deriving Features of Religions in the Wild: How Communication and Threat-Detection May Predict Spirits, Gods, Witches, and Shamans. *Human Nature (Hawthorne, N.Y.)*, 32(3), 557–581. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12110-021-09410-y>.

- Brownlie, Julie and Shaw, Frances (2019). Empathy Rituals: Small Conversations about Emotional Distress on Twitter. *Sociology*, 53(1), 104–122. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0038038518767075>.
- Burgess, Jean and Green, Joshua (2018). *Youtube: Online video and participatory culture* (2nd ed.). Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Cichocki, Piotr; Jędrkiewicz, Tomasz and Zydel, Robert (2012). Etnografia wirtualna. In: Jemieliński, Dariusz (Ed.). *Badania jakościowe. Metody i narzędzia*. Warsaw: PWN, 203–219.
- Collins, Ronald (2011). *Łańcuchy rytuałów interakcyjnych*. Cracow: Nomos.
- Costello, Leesa; McDermott, Marie-Louise and Wallace, Ruth (2017). Netnography: Range of Practices, Misperceptions, and Missed Opportunities. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1609406917700647>.
- Chartrand, Tanya and van Baaren, Rick (2009). Human mimicry. In: Zanna, Mark (ed.). *Advances in experimental social psychology*, Vol. 41. Elsevier Academic Press, 219–274. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0065-2601\(08\)00405-X](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0065-2601(08)00405-X).
- Daniel, Ben Kei (2011). *Handbook of Research on Methods and Techniques for Studying Virtual Communities: Paradigms and Phenomena*. Hershey: Information Science Reference.
- Durkheim, Emil (1990). *Elementarne formy życia religijnego: system totemiczny w Australii*. Warsaw: PWN.
- Fischer, Agneta and Hess, Ursula (2017). Mimicking emotions. *Current Opinion in Psychology*, 17, 151–155. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.copsyc.2017.07.008>.
- Gelfand, Michele; Caluori, Nava; Jackson, Joshua Conrad and Taylor, Morgan (2020). The cultural evolutionary trade-off of ritualistic synchrony. *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society of London. Series B, Biological sciences*, 375(1805), 20190432. <https://doi.org/10.1098/rstb.2019.0432>.
- Group “Trust Jesus” (2022). Access: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/194026591324157/> [22.02.2022].
- van Haperen, Sander; Uitermark, Justus and van der Zeeuw, Alex (2020). Mediated interaction rituals: a geography of everyday life and contention in Black Lives Matter. *Mobilization: An International Quarterly*, 25(3), 295–313. <https://doi.org/10.17813/1086-671X-25-3-295>.
- Jodén, Henrik and Strandell, Jacob (2021). Building viewer engagement through interaction rituals on Twitch.tv. *Information. Communication & Society*, 25(13), 1969–1986. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1369118X.2021.1913211>.
- Kozinets, Robert (2006). Netnography. In: Jupp, Victor (ed.). *The Sage dictionary of social research methods*. London, England: Sage, 193–195.
- Lang, Martin; Krátký, Jan and Xygalatas, Dimitris (2020). The role of ritual behaviour in anxiety reduction: an investigation of Marathi religious practices in Mauritius. *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society B: Biological Sciences*, 375(1805), 20190431. <https://doi.org/10.1098/RSTB.2019.0431>.
- Lawson, Thomas and McCauley, Robert (1990). *Rethinking religion: Connecting cognition and culture*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Liénard, Pierre and Boyer, Pascal (2006). Whence Collective Rituals? A Cultural Selection Model of Ritualized Behavior. *American Anthropologist*, 108, 814–827.
- Maloney, Patricia (2013). Online networks and emotional Energy. *Information, Communication & Society*, 16(1), 105–124. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1369118X.2012.659197>.
- Miller, Brian; Munday, Peter and Hill, Jonathan (2013). Faith in the Age of Facebook: Exploring the Links Between Religion and Social Network Site Membership and Use. *Sociology of Religion*, 74(2), 227–253. <https://doi.org/10.1093/socrel/srs073>.
- Norenzayan, Ara; Shariff, Azim; Gervais, Will; Willard, Aiyana; McNamara, Rita; Slingerland, Edward and Henrich, Joseph (2016). The cultural evolution of prosocial religions. *Behavioral and Brain Sciences*, 39, e1. Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0140525X14001356>.
- Rappaport, Roy Abraham (2007). *Rytuał i religia w rozwoju ludzkości*. Cracow: Nomos.
- Sade-Beck, Liav (2004). Internet Ethnography: Online and Offline. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 45–51. <https://doi.org/10.1177/160940690400300204>.
- Sosis, Richard and Alcorta, Candace (2003). Signaling, solidarity, and the sacred: The evolution of religious behavior. *Evolutionary Anthropology*, 12, 264–274. <https://doi.org/10.1002/evan.10120>.
- Sosis, Richard and Bressler, Eric (2003). Cooperation and Commune Longevity: A Test of the Costly Signaling Theory of Religion. *Cross-Cultural Research*, 37(2), 211–239. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1069397103037002003>.

- Steinmetz, Kevin (2012). Message Received: Virtual Ethnography in Online Message Boards. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 26–39. <https://doi.org/10.1177/160940691201100103>.
- Talmont-Kaminski, Konrad (2016). Commentary: Religious credence is not factual belief. *Front. Psychol.*, 7:1544. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2016.01544>.
- Treem, Jeffrey and Leonardi, Paul (2012). Social Media Use in Organizations: Exploring the Affordances of Visibility, Editability, Persistence, and Association. *Communication Yearbook*, 36, 143–18. <https://doi.org/10.1080/23808985.2013.11679130>.
- Trillá, Tommaso; Hallinan, Blake and Shifman, Limor (2022). A typology of social media rituals. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, 27(4). <https://doi.org/10.1093/jcmc/zmac011>.
- Wilson, Robert; Gosling, Samuel and Graham, Lindsay (2012). A review of facebook research in the social sciences. *Perspect. Psychol. Sci.*, 7, 203–220. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1745691612442904>.
- Voas, David (2009). The rise and fall of fuzzy fidelity in Europe. *European Sociological Review*, 25(2), 155–168. <https://doi.org/10.1093/esr/jcn044>.
- Xygalatas, Dimitrios; Maño, Peter; Bahna, Vladimír; Klocová, Eva; Kundt, Radek; Lang, Martin and Shaver, John Hayward (2021). Social inequality and signaling in a costly ritual. *Evolution and Human Behavior*, 42(6), 524–533. <https://doi.org/10.1016/J.EVOLHUMBEHAV.2021.05.006>.

Summary

This article provides an analysis of communication within a private Facebook group, "Trust Jesus", as a ritual action performed by its members. The aim of the conducted study utilizing the virtual ethnography method was to establish whether properties of religious ritual behaviour can be observed in the posts and comments published in the studied group. In order to support the arguments and interpretations of the gathered research materials presented in the article, the authors refer to the cultural evolution theory, the concept of wild religions by Pascal Boyer as well as the sociological concept of interaction rituals by Ronald Collins.

Analiza religijnych zachowań rytualnych na grupie facebookowej „Zaufaj Jezusowi” w odniesieniu do koncepcji religii „na wolności” Pascala Boyera oraz teorii rytuałów interakcyjnych Randalla Collinsa

Streszczenie

Artykuł stanowi analizę komunikacji w ramach prywatnej grupy na Facebooku „Zaufaj Jezusowi” jako działania rytualnego wykonywanego przez jej członków. Celem przeprowadzonych badań wykorzystujących metodę wirtualnej etnografii było ustalenie, czy w postach i komentarzach publikowanych w badanej grupie można zaobserwować właściwości religijnych zachowań rytualnych. Na poparcie przedstawionych w artykule argumentów i interpretacji zgromadzonego materiału badawczego autorki odwołują się do teorii ewolucji kulturowej, koncepcji dzikich religii Pascala Boyera oraz socjologicznej koncepcji rytuałów interakcyjnych Ronalda Collinsa.

