

emotional, and physical costs associated with such rituals could also vary depending on competition and pressures. During times of war, for instance, they may become both highly costly and highly valued as demonstrations of group membership (Sosis, Kress, and Boster 2007). There is an important balance to strike with the deployment of “doctrinal” ritual over and against “imagistic,” however. The subordination of high-arousal and low-frequency ritual to more routinized ritual can increase oversight, but it can also increase boredom and reduce motivation, which can result in campaigns to expand “imagistic” practices or can even result in revolt. Both ritual modes thus tend to occur in states of flux within individual social groups as the interests of the individual participants compete with the interests of the institutions (Whitehouse and Hodder 2010, 123–25).

So, an increase in “doctrinal” ritual can increase the salience of socially concerned deities, but there is more. As growing anonymity in larger and larger societies made the monitoring of “doctrinal” ritual performance more difficult for the institutions, socially concerned deities could become even more critical to the society’s survival.<sup>93</sup> Agents thought to be able to covertly monitor everyone’s actions may exploit the tendency for people who believe they are being watched to engage in more prosocial behavior (Bateson, Nettle, and Roberts 2006; Bateson et al. 2013).<sup>94</sup> This is particularly true if those agents are also thought to be willing and able to punish (Bourrat, Atkinson, and Dunbar 2011; Atkinson and Bourrat 2011; Johnson 2016). Growing urbanism would increase population density and interactions with material media, which would include media related to deity, contributing to a heightened sense of divine monitoring, particularly if sociocultural institutions were in place to enforce mores and even administer public punishment on behalf of the socially concerned deity (Hodder 2006, 195; Shults and Wildman 2018, 39). An increased capacity to monitor would also likely increase the perceived access to strategic information. These features could contribute to the mitigation of the occurrence of freeriding and other violations of

---

relatively schematized encyclopedic knowledge, leading to the standardization of teachings in collective memory. Unauthorized deviations from the standard canon thus become easy to identify.”

<sup>93</sup> The monitoring of ritual performance by socially concerned deities in smaller societies likely developed in the interest of “stimulating and rationalizing (i.e. explaining costly behaviours with appeals to unverifiable agents) religious ritual” (Purzycki, Haque, and Sosis 2014, 81).

<sup>94</sup> It should be noted, however, that prosocial behavior and normative behavior are not the same thing. Because lying and cheating could have prosocial functions within a society, even if they do not align with normative behavior, cues of being watched tend not to mitigate that behavior (Oda, Kato, and Hiraishi 2015; Cai et al. 2015; Pfattheicher, Schindler, and Nockur 2018).