

Affiliations

Department of Human Evolutionary Biology
Harvard University
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LEVYNA
Laboratory for the Experimental Research of Religion
Masaryk University
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Czech Republic

Employment

- 01.01.2018 – Current Postdoctoral researcher at LEVYNA, Masaryk Uni
01.07.2018 – Current Associate at Human Evolutionary Biology, Harvard Uni
01.11.2016 – 30.06.2018 Postdoctoral researcher at Human Evolutionary Biology, Harvard Uni
30.08.2014 – 31.08.2016 Graduate researcher at Experimental Anthropology Lab, University of Connecticut
1.11.2011 – 31.08.2014 Doctoral researcher at LEVYNA, Masaryk University

Education and academic qualifications

- 25.01.2011 – 06.12.2016 Ph.D. in Religious Studies, Masaryk University, Brno, Czech Republic. “*The Cognitive Science of Religion: Connecting the Humanities with the Sciences in the Study of Ritual Practice, Prosociality, and Anxiety*”
01.09.2008 – 25.01.2011 MA in Religious Studies, Masaryk University, Brno, Czech Republic. “*Neurophysiological basis of religiosity*” (Dean’s Award for an outstanding MA thesis)
16.09.2005 – 01.09.2008 BA in Religious Studies; & Media Studies and Journalism, Masaryk University, Brno, Czech Republic. “*Life in the Sahaja Yoga movement: A case of spiritual change or conversion?*”

Other training

- 07.09.2014 Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative
29.07.2012 – 23.08.2012 Experimental Methods in the Study of Cognition and Culture summer school, Aarhus University, Denmark
19.10.2011 – 12.11.2011 Exchange student, Religious Studies Department, University of Szeged, Hungary
01.08.2009 – 31.01.2010 Exchange student, Religious Studies Department, University of Szeged, Hungary

Grants & Fellowships

- 01.01.2018 PI: *The Evolution of Ritual Behavior as a Communication Technology*. Czech Science Foundation. €53,900
01.01.2018 PI: *Ritual behavior as a means to anxiety alleviation*. Neuron Fund. €9,250
01.01.2015 PI (with D. Xygalatas): *Effects of Ritualized Behavior on Anxiety*. Interacting Minds Center, Aarhus University. Seed Funding. €6,000

- 01.09.2014 Investigator (PI: D. Xygalatas). *Exploring the effects of rituals on identity fusion: A cross-cultural study*, Oxford University sub-grant on Ritual's Impact on the Contemporary World. €60,000
- 01.06.2012 PI: *Religion and cooperation: The intersection of neuroscientific and evolutionary perspectives*. Masaryk University Graduate Fund. €860

Awards

- 22.08.2016 Best student abstract award at the International Association for the Cognitive Science of Religion Conference held in Vancouver, Canada.
- 01.02.2011 Dean's award for an outstanding MA thesis at Masaryk University, Brno, Czech Republic
- 28.05.2009 Best presentation at a Student Scientific Conference on Religion held in Pardubice, Czech Republic.

Keynote & Invited Talks

- 28.05.2018 "Evolutionary and Cognitive Science of Religion", *Conference on Cognition and Artificial Life, Brno, Czech Republic*.
- 14.12.2017 The power of sacred rhythms: effects on collective effervescence, cooperation, and morality", *IAST-Foundation Royaumont Conference: The Origins of Music in Human Society, Royaumont, France*
- 26.04.2017 "Ritual Behavior and Anxiety", *Religion and Science Colloquium, IBCSR, Boston University, Boston, USA*

Selected Conference Presentations

- 14.05.2018 "Punitive gods, morality, and extended prosociality", *Future Directions on the Evolution of Rituals, Beliefs and Religious Minds, Erice, Italy*
- 21.08.2017 "Measuring Ritual in the Field: The Short-/Long-term of Effects Ritual Behavior on Stress in Mauritius", *IAPR-Conference, Hamar, Norway*
- 24.05.2017 "Psychophysiological Effects of Ritualization: Evidence from the Lab and the Field", *29th APS Annual Convention, Boston, USA*

Public Outreach

- 22.05.2018 "Anxiety, Rituals, and Religion" *Czech Science Café, Czech Centrum in Berlin, Germany*
- 07.12.2017 "Religion as a Complex Adaptive System: The Evolution of Coordination, Cooperation, and Morality", *Biological Thursdays, Charles University, Czech Republic*
- 12.04.2012 "How can science help us understand religion?" *Science Café, Brno, Czech Republic*

Links to media:

Interview on [Verge of Discovery](#)
 Coverage by [Discover Magazine](#)
 Popular summary for [anxiety.org](#)
 Article on [muni.cz](#)

Lecture for [Biological Thursdays](#)
 Interview on [Rozhlas Brno](#)
 Article on [Czech Radio](#)

Teaching

- July 2016 *Interdisciplinary Ethnography Field School in Mauritius* organized by Aarhus University, Denmark
- Fall 2012 *Cognitive Science of Religion*, Department for the Study of Religions, Masaryk University
- 24.05.2017 *Religion and the Social Brain*, Department for the Study of Religions, Masaryk University

Other activities

- 0.1.09.2011 –31.08.2014 Editor in the journal *Sacra* at Masaryk University

References

Dimitris Xygalatas
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Journal Articles and Book Chapters:

Lang, M., Krátký, J., Shaver, J. H., Jerotijević, D., and Xygalatas, D. (In Press). Is Ritual Behavior a Response to Anxiety? In Slone, J., & McCorkle, W. (Eds.). *Empirical Studies in the Cognitive Science of Religion*. Bloomsbury Academic.

Shaver, J. H., DiVietro, S., **Lang, M.**, & Sosis, R. (2018). Costs Do Not Explain Variance in Trust Among Secular Groups. *Journal of Cognition and Culture*, 18 (1-2), 180-204. doi: [10.1163/15685373-12340025](https://doi.org/10.1163/15685373-12340025)

Xygalatas, D., Kotherová, S., Maňo, P., Kundt, R., Cigán, J., Kundtová Klocová, E., & **Lang, M.** (2018). Big Gods in Small Places: The Random Allocation Game in Mauritius. *Religion, Brain and Behavior*, 8 (2), 243-261. doi: [10.1080/2153599X.2016.1267033](https://doi.org/10.1080/2153599X.2016.1267033)

Xygalatas, D., & **Lang, M.** (2017). Religion and prosociality. In N. Clements (Ed.), *Macmillan Interdisciplinary Handbooks. Religion: Mental Religion*. (pp. 119–133). Farmington Hills, MI: Macmillan Reference USA.

Lang, M., Bahna, V., Shaver, J.H., Reddish, P., & Xygalatas, D. (2017). Sync to Link: Endorphin-mediated Effects of Synchrony on Cooperation. *Biological Psychology*, 127, 191-197. doi: [10.1016/j.biopsycho.2017.06.001](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.biopsycho.2017.06.001)

Pazhoohi, F., **Lang, M.**, Xygalatas, D., & Grammer, K. (2016). Religious Veiling as a Mate-Guarding Strategy: Effects of Environmental Pressures on Cultural Practices. *Evolutionary Psychological Science*, 3 (2), 118-124. doi: [10.1007/s40806-016-0079-z](https://doi.org/10.1007/s40806-016-0079-z)

Krátký, J., **Lang, M.**, Shaver, J. H., Jerotijević, D., and Xygalatas, D. (2016). Anxiety and Ritualization: Can Attention Discriminate Compulsion from Routine? *Communicative & Integrative Biology*, 9 (3), e1174799. doi: [10.1080/19420889.2016.1174799](https://doi.org/10.1080/19420889.2016.1174799).

Lang, M., Mitkidis, P., Kundt, R., Nichols, A., Krajčíková, L., & Xygalatas, D. (2016). Music as a Sacred Cue: Effects of Religious Music on Moral Behavior, *Frontiers in Psychology* 7 (814), 1-13. doi: [10.3389/fpsyg.2016.00814](https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2016.00814).

Lang, M., Shaw, D. J., Reddish, P., Wallot, S., Mitkidis, P., and Xygalatas, D. (2016). Lost in the Rhythm: Effects of Rhythm on Subsequent Interpersonal Coordination. *Cognitive Science*, 40 (7), 1797-1815. doi:[10.1111/cogs.12302](https://doi.org/10.1111/cogs.12302).

Lang, M., Krátký, J., Shaver, J. H., Jerotijević, D., and Xygalatas, D. (2015). Effects of Anxiety on Spontaneous Ritualized Behavior. *Current Biology* 25 (14), 1892–1897. doi:[10.1016/j.cub.2015.05.049](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cub.2015.05.049).

Commentaries:

Lang, M. (In press). Multifunctional Religious Systems and Perturbed Dynamics of Psychological Wellbeing. *Religion, Brain, & Behavior*.

Lang, M., & Sosis, R. (2016). Uncertain Malinowski: The Importance of Preritual Stress Data. *Current Anthropology*, 52 (2). doi: [10.1086/691212](https://doi.org/10.1086/691212)

Lang, M., & Kundt, R. (2016). Can Predictive Coding Explain Past Experiences? *Religion, Brain, & Behavior*, 7 (1), pp. 71-73. doi: [10.1080/2153599X.2016.1150332](https://doi.org/10.1080/2153599X.2016.1150332).