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Similarities and Differences between Religious Communities in Addressing Climate Change

The Case of Catalonia

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Abstract

This study explores: a) what is being done by religions present in Catalonia (Spain) to address climate change; b) what the worldviews of the different religions are with regard to climate change, and, c) if commonalities exist between religions, which elements they have in common when addressing climate change. We focus on SDG 12 (sustainable consumption) and 13 (climate action), two of the 17 global goals that represent an urgent call for action. We employ a qualitative phenomenological methodology involving discussion groups of fourteen different religions present in Catalonia. The results show that the religions implement good practices that contribute to climate action, and all of them have laid down principles to take care of the planet. All groups hold that a change in values is required to address the climate crisis, and translate it into action. Moreover, a clear intention to establish interfaith partnerships for climate action is observed.

Keywords

religious communities – Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) – sustainable consumption – climate action – interfaith dialogue

1 Introduction

Given the alarming evidence of social inequalities and of the deteriorating health of the planet, in 2015 the United Nations (UN) adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. At its core are the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which seek to raise awareness among global citizens of the need for a change of direction to achieve a more sustainable and safer future (UN 2015). The SDGs encompass a complex range of social, environmental and economic challenges, including poverty reduction, health promotion, gender equality, sustainable consumption and climate action, which must be addressed by all in a comprehensive and cross-disciplinary manner. Issues as complex as the climate crisis show that it is not possible to understand and mitigate them without adopting a holistic view capable of understanding the climate as a system that integrates multiple interdependent elements. At the end of 2019, the 25th UN Climate Change Conference was held in Madrid (COP 25). At the summit, the UN member countries were reminded of their political agenda on climate change for the coming years, based on the scientific report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC, 2018). It

shows the warming of the Earth in recent years, and the urgency of limiting the rise in global average surface temperature to 1.5 °C. In March 2021, during the Global Multi-faith Day of Climate Action, over 300 religious leaders urged politicians and finance institutions to present ambitious proposals for climate action before COP 26. They created a statement: “Sacred People, Sacred Earth” (GreenFaith, 2021).

Religion has potential to help address the issue of climate change. To be able to stop the increase in temperature, fast changes are required in all aspects of society, and the motivation to do so is crucial. Cardinal Turkson (2019) put it as follows at the Congress of Religions and Climate Change held in the Vatican: “If we want to forge sustainable development, we may need to change urgently and radically patterns of lifestyles, ways of producing goods, trading, consuming and wasting. Such a change requires deep motivation, a motivation that the technical language of development often cannot provide” (Vatican press, 2019). Understanding the cultural dimensions of climate change requires understanding its religious aspects (Jenkins et al. 2018). Religious beliefs play a key role in the motivations to address climate change (Francis 2015), and promote sustainable behaviour (Morrison et al., 2015). The values and principles of religions can contribute to more sustainable behaviour and consumption while enhancing interreligious dialogue (Francis, 2015; Grim and Tucker, 2014; Orellano et al., 2020; Christie et al., 2019). Pope Francis’ encyclical letter *Laudato si’* (Francis 2015), hereafter cited as LS, is a call to care for the planet as the common home of all, promoting sustainable use of resources. For example, the Dalai Lama, as a religious leader and Buddhist teacher, has often stressed the need for developing environmental ethics, including caring attitudes for all living beings (Dalai Lama, 2018; Dunne & Goleman, 2018). The Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew (Bartholomew I, 2009 and 2015) has made similar statements. In recent years, we have seen that several religions have created coalitions to promote climate action in different countries. Amongst them are the Coalition on the Environment and Jewish Life, the Catholic Coalition on Climate Change, Interfaith Power & Light (Schaefer, 2014) or Environment—churches and Christian organisations in Britain and Ireland. In 2015, a few months before COP 21 took place, the Interfaith Declaration on Climate Change (ACT Alliance, 2015) was signed by 154 religious and spiritual leaders of different beliefs. The declaration states that religious convictions teach us that the Earth and the entire universe are gifts received from God that human beings must respect, protect and preserve by all means.

To better understand the role of religion in achieving the SDGs, this article focuses on Catalonia, which is a region of Spain where a large number of religious communities are present. In Spain, freedom of religion is guaranteed by

the Spanish Constitution, and the Ministry of Justice protects freedom of worship. In Catalonia, the Directorate-General of Religious Affairs of the Catalan Government provides, amongst others, services such as the civil registration of religious entities. Religious assistance is ensured in hospitals and prisons, the calendar of religious festivals is promoted, guides are published to respect religious diversity, and research on religious plurality is encouraged. The religious landscape in Catalonia has changed a lot in recent years. Religious practice has notably decreased, especially members of those religions that have existed for centuries. On the other hand, religious plurality has become more visible in public spaces with the arrival of people from other cultures and religions (Department of Justice, 2022). Numerous interreligious agreements and commitments are made in Catalonia in areas that are not strictly religious, such as promoting peace, defending health, caring for the planet, or encouraging the use of the Catalan language (Department of Justice, 2022). However, they are based on the principles of recognising the dignity of all people and respect for freedom. Studies prior to this research show how thirteen religions present in Catalonia contribute to implementing the SDGs, but without delving into the reasons motivating their interest, nor into the values developed (Albareda, 2016; Gas-Aixendri and Albareda-Tiana, 2018).

Through focus groups with leaders and representatives of communities from fourteen different religions in Catalonia, the study found that the religions present in Catalonia implement good practices that contribute to climate action, and all of them have laid down principles to take care of the planet. All groups hold that a change in values is required to address the climate crisis, and to translate it into action. Moreover, a clear intention to establish interfaith partnerships for climate action is observed.

The structure of the article is as follows. First of all, we ask the following questions: Can religions provide values and motivations that contribute to developing a climate culture? Are religious entities performing good practices with regard to climate culture? Does climate action, or, more generally, creating a climate culture, constitute an element in common between the different religions? Prior to justifying why religions can contribute to addressing climate change, and to providing a literature review on this topic, we conducted a qualitative study using focus groups considering fourteen religions present in Catalonia. It concerned the following three research objectives: 1) Analyse **what** is being done by religions to address climate change; 2) Know **what** the **worldviews** of the different religions are with regard to climate change; and 3) if commonalities exist between religions, find out which elements they have **in common** with regard to **addressing climate change**. After transcribing the interviews and analysing them using the ATLAS.ti programme, we show the

empirical results and discuss the results structured in the three research objectives and the commonalities observed between the different religions addressing climate change. Finally, conclusions, study limitations, acknowledgements and funding are set out.

2 Literature Review

An important part of the scientific literature has presented theoretical reflections of a humanistic and interpretive nature on the relationship between religions and the environment or sustainable development (White, 1967; Boyd, 1999; Gottlieb, 2006; Sherkat, 2007; Tucker, 2008; Berry, 2014; Grim & Tucker, 2014; Reuter, 2015; Christie et al., 2019). There has also been an increase in research studies analysing the relation between religions and climate action in recent decades (Brown, 2013; Minton et al., 2015; Morrison et al., 2015; Jenkins et al., 2018). Although climate change is one of the greatest problems we face as a society, current mitigation policies are far from meeting the goals indicated by the scientific community to avoid dangerous warming levels, particularly those included in the Paris Agreement (Victor et al. 2017). Since a relevant part of total emissions are linked to personal consumption (Chuvieco et al. 2021; Ivanova et al. 2018; Jones and Kammen 2011), the analysis of factors affecting personal values and habits should be a critical component of climate mitigation policies (Gifford and Chen 2017; Ivanova et al. 2018). Among those factors, religious values and practices are a salient driver, particularly when they are linked to environmental motivations (Arbuckle 2017; McCammack 2007; Orellano and Chuvieco 2022). Religious beliefs contribute to understanding climate change commitment, both at the societal and individual levels (Gregersen et al. 2020; Morrison et al. 2015; Tsimpo and Wodon 2016). However, the empirical evidence is not conclusive. Other controlling factors may obscure direct relations between religious and climate commitment, such as political orientation (Arbuckle 2017; Smith and Leiserowitz 2013), although some researchers point out that this evidence is restricted to the North American context (Morrison et al. 2015). External factors, such as income or place of residence may also obscure those relations (Chuvieco et al. 2021; Fitzpatrick et al. 2015; Grebitus et al. 2012). Part of the inconclusiveness of the existing studies may rely on the conceptualisation of religious values, which implies considering multiple dimensions (Koehrsen 2015; Minton et al. 2015; Orellano and Chuvieco 2022). For this reason, studies dealing with climate and religious values should be based not just on quantitative analysis, but also on in-depth interviews and focus groups, to complement empirical evidence with more subtle relations and attitudes.

3 Research Methods

3.1 Religions in Catalonia

The population under analysis were members of the different religions present in Catalonia who participated on behalf of their spiritual or religious community. Almost all of them hold a government position in their community. This research project was funded by the Directorate-General of Religious Affairs of the Catalan government's Department of Justice, which awards grants for research projects in the field of religious diversity (RELIG, 2018). In 2014, 8,061 worship centres were registered throughout the Catalan territory, corresponding to thirteen different religious faiths (Department of Justice Catalan Government, 2014). The researchers contacted all the entities, the addresses of which were facilitated by the Directorate-General of Religious Affairs (DGAR—Direcció General d'Afers Religiosos). Representatives of twelve religions (of the ones registered in 2014, except Jehovah's Witnesses) replied to express their willingness to take part in the study. In accordance with their order of representation in Catalonia, they were members of: (1) the Catholic Church, (2) the Evangelical Church, (3) the Islamic community, (4) the Buddhist community, (5) the Orthodox Church, (6) Hinduism, (7) the Seventh day Adventist Church, (8) the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, (9) Sikhism, (10) the Bahá'í Faith, (11) Taoism, and (12) Judaism. After the researchers contacted, through acquaintances, representatives of (13) the Brahama Kumaris movement and (14) the Hare Krishna community, they joined the other religious entities despite not appearing officially on the map of religions. A total of fourteen different religious faiths hence participated in this study. Table 1 shows the percentage of religious entities or worship centres present in Catalonia, and Table 2 displays the percentage of participants of the religions represented in this research.

TABLE 1 Percentage of representation (in worship centres) of religions in Catalonia

Cult centres		% in Catalonia
1	Catholic	83,12
2	Evangelical	8,99
3	Islamic	3,19
4	Jehovah's Witnesses	1,46
5	Buddhist	0,84
6	Orthodox	0,68

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TABLE 1 Percentage of representation of religions in Catalonia (*cont.*)

	Cult centres	% in Catalonia
7	Seventh-day Adventist	0,33
8	Hinduist	0,29
9	Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints	0,18
10	Sikh	0,12
11	Bahá'í Faith	0,11
12	Taoist	0,07
13	Jewish	0,04

TABLE 2 Percentage of representation of the religions participating in the focus groups

	Participants in the FGs ■ "Nº of religions participating" removed, OK?	Nº of participants	Sample %
1	Catholics	4	20
2	Evangelicals	2	10
3	Islamic	1	5
4	Buddhists	2	10
5	Orthodox	1	5
6	Members of the Seventh-day Adventist Church	1	5
7	Hinduists	1	5
8	Members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints	2	10
9	Sikhs	1	5
10	Bahá'ís	1	5
11	Taoists	1	5
12	Jewish	1	5
13	Hare Krishnas	1	5
14	Brahama Kumaris	1	5
	Total	20	100

3.2 *Focus Groups*

The following were used as support material: the script of the focus groups (FGs), a consent form to allow recording and transcribing the FG conversations, a voice recorder, computers including the ATLAS.ti software programme (version 8) for coding and analysing the interviews, and computers equipped with cameras for the FGs, which were held through video conferencing (Meet).

The FG questions were designed by the members of the research project with the aim of obtaining the information necessary to achieve the research objectives described above: 1) Analyse what is being done by religions to address climate change; 2) Know what the worldviews of the different religions are with regard to climate change; and 3) if there are commonalities between religions, find out which elements they share with respect to addressing climate change. The questions asked can be consulted in Appendix 1.

The questions in the script served as a guideline to facilitate dialogue, but the idea was for the participants to express themselves freely. The fact that public administration representatives were present contributed to a more meaningful dialogue. A total of eight FGs were held, six of which took place face-to-face at the university leading the project, and two through video conferences during the COVID-19 lockdown. In the call for focus groups, efforts were made to bring together representatives of religions that have similar worldviews. A total of twenty-one representatives participated in the focus groups. In four of the groups, the head of research of the Directorate-General of Religious Affairs, the entity financing the project, and representatives of the Catalan Office for Climate Change also participated. As is logical, the members of the research project and authors of this article moderated the discussion groups and guided the dialogues.

Three to eight people participated in each FG. FGs are ideal for encouraging participation and dialogue amongst members. In this case, they played a proactive role in contributing to SDG 12 and SDG 13. The main researcher of the project took part in all the FGs as a participant with the aim of facilitating consistency in the data collection process.

3.3 *Data Analysis*

The methodology applied in this case study is of a descriptive and empirical nature. Non-parametric qualitative analysis techniques were used. The quality criteria suggested by Kyburz-Graber (2016), experts in sustainability research, and Engler (2016), an expert in the analysis of religions, were followed.

The FGs were held to gather data to achieve research objectives 1 and 2. Once the FGs were recorded and transcribed, a participating researcher from each FG performed a first open coding or thesaurus. When the eight thesauri were

developed (one for each FG), a comparison was made between codes, using axial coding, thus attaining a single global thesaurus (Appendix II).

This analysis process is based on coding the responses of the FG participants to previously formulated questions. It provides quantitative content to the free responses of the respondents. Coding here consists in classifying and grouping the free responses (or fragments of them) into categories that can be created before or during the analysis. Those responses include important ideas, concepts or topics according to grounded theory (Engler, 2011). Coding allows creating categories that act as containers to store the responses of the respondents based on the data provided to enable rationalising and quantifying them (Frequencies of codes totals and by religions, Appendix III). The ATLAS.ti programme was used as a tool to help researchers with qualitative analysis, since it allows, in a single place (the hermeneutic unit), to segment and code texts, and make comments by developing semantic networks, in other words, the intuitive graphic representation of the different components, which include codes, categories or code families and the relationships that have been established between them (Bencomo et al., 2004).

As a result of analysing, categorising and coding the FG transcriptions, conceptual maps were created. Different codes were established for the relevant concepts mentioned by the representatives of the different religions in the FGs. In each code, the frequency or number of times one of those concepts is mentioned in the FGs appears. The frequency is represented by the letter E (of 'enraizamiento', root in Spanish, the letter used for codes in the ATLAS.ti programme) followed by the number of times a particular concept was mentioned in the FGs.

4 Findings

The conceptual maps were obtained from each research objective, and allow observing the priorities of the religions in the research questions. The codes are grouped into code families or categories, establishing semantic networks in which possible relationships between codes are shown. To facilitate the analysis of the results, and to avoid using figures that are too complex, similar codes were put together.

4.1 *Community Level Climate Change Action*

Figure 1 shows religious actions to address climate change that are promoted and carried out as a community (good practices at community level) by religious entities. Activities such as training, reflection, and prayer, related to the

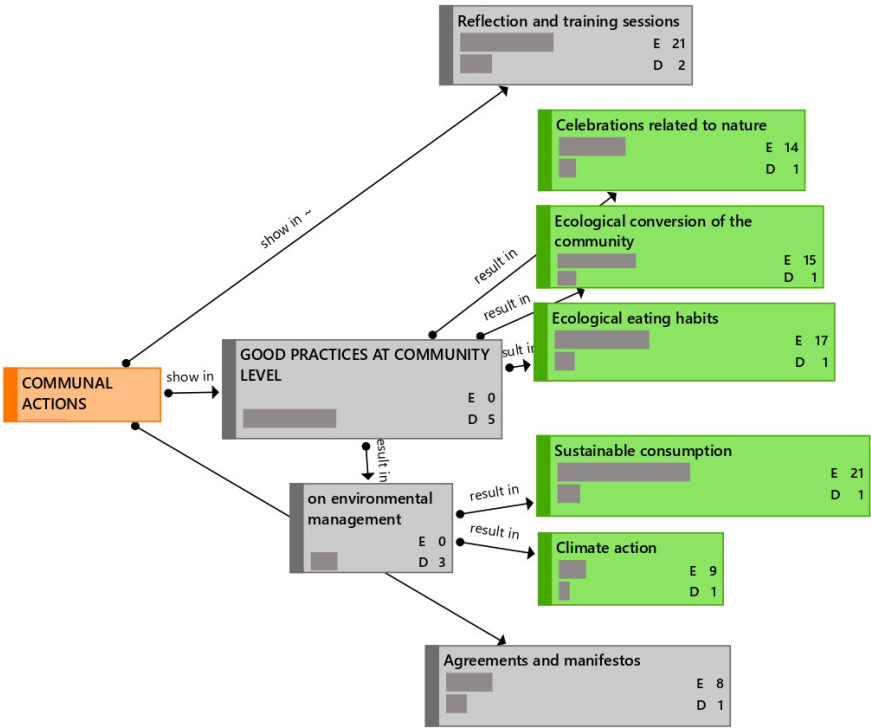


FIGURE 1 Communal religious actions with regard to addressing climate change
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care of the Earth, are included. Examples are activities like Creation Day promoted by Catholic and Orthodox communities, or training sessions on environmental issues. Likewise, actions showing commitment to the care of the planet such as the Laudato si' Commitment, promoted by a Catholic NGO called Justicia i Pau (Justice and Peace in Catalan), signed by 148 religious or educational entities and 1,494 members from civil society. Interreligious manifestos such as the Lausanne Pact, and agreements reached between religious entities and companies to ensure the sustainability of the products purchased by religious entities also appear in Figure 1. These commitments and public manifestos are the result of reflection and training sessions on environmental issues, which in turn constitute good practices at community level in which a high degree of commitment is observed. The codes that appear the most will be analysed in the discussion section. They are illustrated with quotes from the religious representatives, as well as sacred texts and particular views of the different religions.

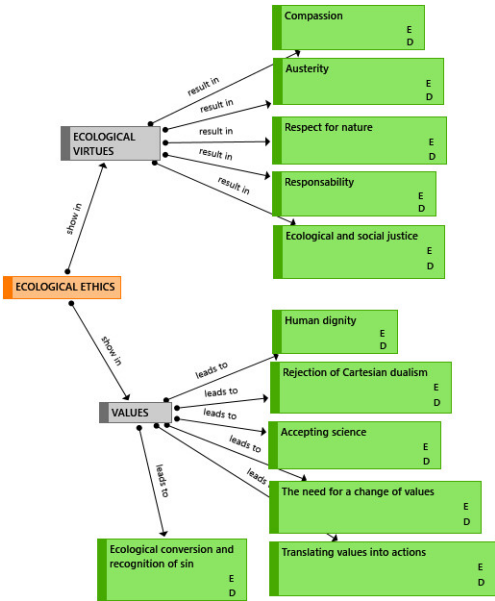


FIGURE 2 Ecological ethics: personal religious practices. Virtues and values

4.2 Individual Level Climate Change Action

Figure 2 also responds to the research objective of analysing what is being done by religions with regard to addressing climate change. In the presentation of the findings, the initiatives that arise collectively in the religious entities (Fig. 1) are separated from those that are carried out on a personal level. They represent ecological ethics or morals (Fig. 2). Figure 2 shows a complex network of ecological ethics into which virtues such as compassion, austerity, respect, responsibility and environmental-social justice, and values supporting environmental ethics are grouped.

4.3 Worldviews Related to Climate Change

Fig. 3 shows the analysis of the FGs with regard to the principles and beliefs of the different religions about nature, and responds to research objective 2: know what the worldviews of the different religions are with regard to climate change. Two categories of clearly differentiated codes appear: A) nature as a primordial unit in which living beings and the non-living environment form a whole, having a unitary and holistic conception, especially significant in Buddhism, Taoism and the Brahma Kumaris movement, and B) nature as divine creation, entrusted to the responsibility of the human being for its care in the Christian, Jewish and Islamic traditions. Both views, despite being very different, are based on principles and beliefs that underpin why religions have reasons to care for the planet, and, more particularly, to address climate change, as will be set out in the discussion section.

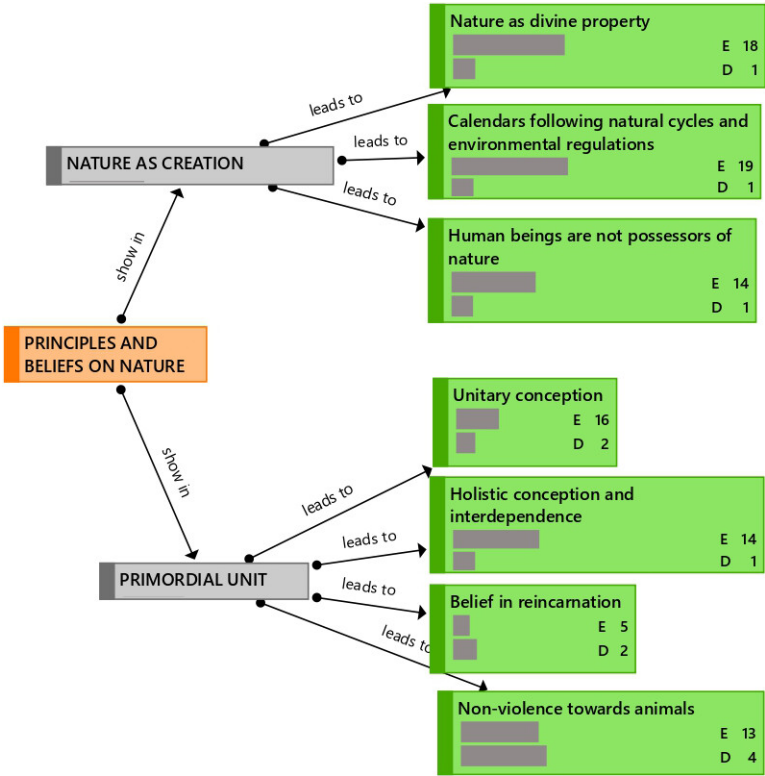


FIGURE 3 Worldviews related to climate change. Principles and beliefs on nature

4.4 Commonalities between Different Religions with regard to Addressing Climate Change

Figure 4 show the commonalities between different religions with regard to addressing climate change, both in promoting values to address climate change, as in initiatives of interreligious study groups, ecumenical religious ceremonies, cooperation in specific environmental projects, and the willingness for interreligious cooperation of all the participants as far as addressing climate change is concerned. The results shown in Figure 4 provide an answer to research objective 3, finding out which elements the different religions have in common when addressing climate change.

5 Discussion

The findings are analysed following the order of the three research objectives of this study and are shown in Figures 1–4. Figure 5 is a summary of Figures 1 to 4.

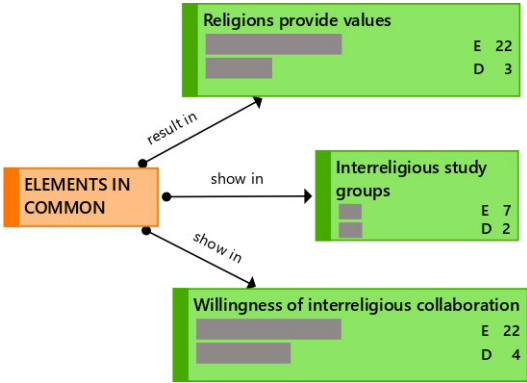


FIGURE 4 Commonalities between different religions with regard to addressing climate change

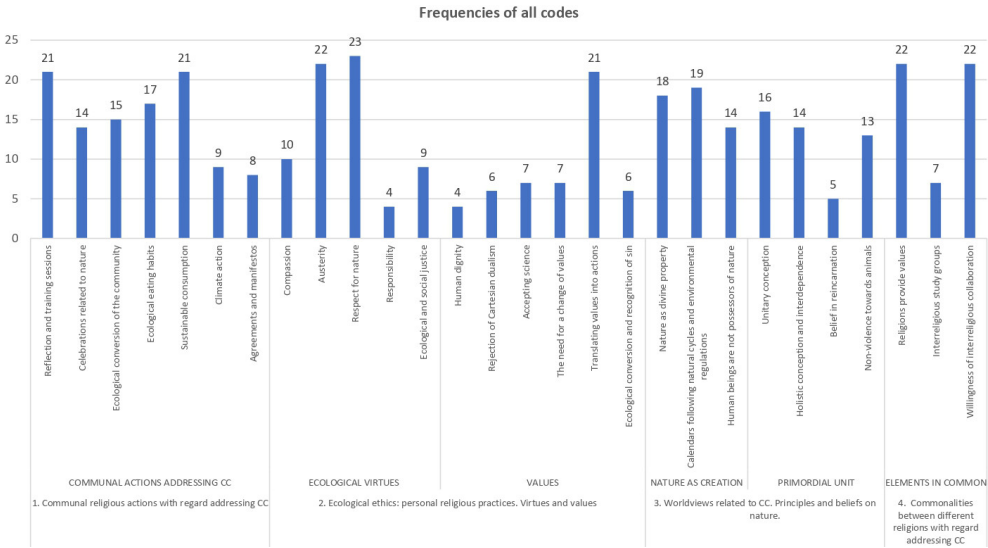


FIGURE 5 Frequencies of all codes (summary of Figures 1 to 4)

5.1 Communal Religious Actions Addressing Climate Change

With respect to communal religious actions addressing climate change, Figures 1 and 5 show the activities cited the most by the representatives of the different religions. As regards good practices promoted at community level by religious entities, the activity that appears the most is ecological eating habits (E 17). This concept implies having a vegetarian or vegan diet and fasting. The vegetarian diet is present in all eastern religions such as Buddhism, Hare Krishna, Hinduism, Taoism, Sikhism, and Brahama Kumaris. Although a diet rich in meat produces a high amount of greenhouse gases and therefore contributes to global warming (Greenpeace, 2018), the main reason why the

members of these religions are mostly vegetarian is due to the belief in transmigration of the soul, the possible rebirth of the human soul into an animal (Buddhism), and the fact that they do not want to kill animals for consumption because they consider it a violent act (Buddhism, Taoism, Sikhism and Brahma Kumaris). “Mormons are not told to be vegetarians, but according to their scriptures, meat should be eaten sparingly” (quote 5:2). In all religions, the habit of not wasting food appears. It has been grouped under the code of ecological eating habits.

Fasting is practised by Hare Krishnas, Mormons and Christians of different beliefs (Catholic, Evangelical, Orthodox and Adventist). Several contributions are highlighted: Mormons practise fasting one weekend a month, eating only two meals and giving the money saved thanks to this action to help those members of their community who are experiencing difficulties. “Two meals are saved and the money that would have been spent is given away. It is considered as the offerings of fasting. The bishop uses the money for families or people in need. It goes directly to helping them buy food or whatever it is people need” (quote 5:3).

In Figure 1, the code “ecological conversion of the community” (E 15) is also noteworthy. The Orthodox Patriarch Bartholomew I was the first to refer to environmental impact or deterioration as “ecological sin”, and Pope Francis echoed his words in LS 8–9. Along these lines, the Orthodox representative states: “The message of the Gospel is very clear, we must take care of God’s work. It is a responsibility, and not taking care of what He has given us is sin” (quote 8:2). This idea is picked up by the last Catholic pontiffs, and Pope Francis’ encyclical *Laudato si’* includes a chapter about “ecological conversion”, pointing out this conversion should be communal and collective. Other good practices at community level were grouped into the sustainable consumption code (SDG 12) under E 21. It encompasses actions such as reusing resources, saving resources, reducing plastic, and others, such as community decarbonisation, were grouped into the climate action code (E 9).

A pastor of the Evangelical Church affirms: “We have not used plastic or anything that is disposable for many years, everything is reusable. Last year, we had some brainstorming sessions on climate justice. In addition, we met with a Green Faith climate group to create protocols for action to become a green Church” (quote 8: 4).

Good practices in rituals or celebrations including natural elements or nature worship appear 14 times. The representative of Judaism comments the following: “Almost all our religious celebrations (99%) are agricultural. They are not related to an invented dogmatic cult, but to the seasons of the year” (quote 4: 5). The president of the Islamic Communities in Catalonia states:

“Islam has the tradition of praying for rain. If the rain does not come, Muslims feel guilty that God has punished them because there is no rain, and then they have to pray and ask God for forgiveness, so that He can provide rain for humanity” (quote 6:8). During the celebrations promoted by the Brahma Kumaris entities, meditation is practised and people go for walks in nature in silence. “The experience gained through meditation is like a river in the water cycle. The soul frees itself from impurities and returns as pure water” (Brahma Kumaris quote 9:5).

Within the category of “Reflection and training sessions” (E 21), there are training sessions of different kinds: proper waste management, environment-related celebrations such as the 9th Buddhism Conference in Catalonia in 2019: “Buddhism and the planetary crisis” (CCEB, 2019), training on self-sufficiency promoted by the Brahma Kumaris community, and training and resources offered by Catholic parishes to address climate change (Justicia i Pau, 2021). Especially significant are the agreements and commitments made by religious entities, the interreligious manifestos for the care of the Earth (Lausanne Covenant, 1974) or the Climate Culture Manifesto signed in February 2021 by all the religions present in Catalonia (GTER, 2021).

Although previous studies described the existence of communal religions’ actions addressing climate change and taking care of the planet (Francis, 2015; Grim and Tucker, 2014; Orellano et al., 2020; Christie et al., 2019) as well as recommendations to do so (Francis, 2015; Turkson, 2019), this empirical study show practical actions at the community level in Catalonia.

5.2 *Personal Religious Practices*

In all the FGs, concern was expressed by the participants with regard to climate change. They also acknowledged that there is a single global crisis, which is ecological and social. In the first FG, the director of the Catalan Office for Climate Change commented: “Climate change puts on the table is a crisis of a model of development and there are therefore numerous elements that are coinciding, and sometimes they are expressed without a religious component, like the topic of values, of growth or degrowth” (quote 2:79). The expert also pointed out that, at the office, they are looking for solutions from a scientific-technical rationality to adapt to climate change or to try to mitigate it, but that they do not have the necessary tools to work on the crisis of values that causes climate change. “These values from a religious perspective are fully coinciding, that is, although at the office we approach the issue from a certain sense of rationalism, that is, without elements of spirituality, more Cartesian. They do coincide with other views. We are basically talking about a crisis of values, of a system” (quote 2:79).

In the same vein, Pope Francis, in an online forum on Biodiversity organised by UNESCO in March 2021, said that climate change is “much more a moral than a technical issue” (Francis, 2021).

All the religious representatives and leaders recognise that the human being is responsible for climate change. They reject the denialist positions on climate change, and openly accept scientific knowledge about global warming (E 7).

During the FGs, the need for mutual contributions between science, technology and religion was expressed. Likewise, it was pointed out that the same concept is called differently depending on whether it is formulated from scientific-technical rationality or from religious ethics. The director of the Catalan Office for Climate Change states: “We change the names. What is called austerity, a religious component in religion, in our more rational part it refers to the concept of degrowth” (quote 2:62). The *Laudato si'* encyclical of Pope Francis dedicates the entire first chapter “What is happening to our common home” (LS, 17–19) to analysing the serious environmental problems regarding water, biodiversity loss, pollution and the climate, based on solid scientific foundations. Theological science and religions must rely on the contributions of science to understand climate change (Cook et al., 2016). However, science and technology alone are not enough to bring about a shift towards more sustainable consumption and specific climate action. Moral motivations are required to address climate change (Bain and Bongiorno, 2020), and the values of different religious worldviews provide them (Amri, 2013; Narayanan, 2013; Schaefer, 2016; Christie et al., 2019).

In Figure 2, the urgent need for a change in values (E 19), and for those values to be translated into actions (E 21) appear as high-frequency codes.

In addition to the desire to protect God's creation in the context of environmental ethics, the Mormon Church (Snow, 2018) and the Catholic Church consider there is an undeniable moral imperative (Francis, 2020 and 2021) to address climate change because it affects the poor and the disadvantaged more seriously. In some religions (Orthodox, Catholic and Evangelical), there is moral guilt when the relationship with creation is not properly cared for.

The vice-president of *Justicia i Pau*, a Catholic association, describes how “at her association they have considered the ecological conversion Pope Francis calls for in LS, on several levels, from the conversion of the heart to social commitment” (quote 5:15). The integral ecological conversion Pope Francis calls for has repercussions on the relationship with all creatures of the Earth, and needs a relational perspective (Turkson, 2018).

The FGs also stressed the relevance of certain ecological virtues. Those virtues that appear the most are mentioned in quotes.

The austerity code (E 22) appears in all the FGs under different names: austerity, temperance, frugality, rejection of consumerism, sobriety, moderation and simplicity.

The representative of the Hare Krishna community comments: “The first mantra of the Upanishads says that one should not want to have more than what has been given to him. There are other living things and we have to share” (quote 2:28).

A representative of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints affirms: “We have to live frugally, which does not mean living in a miserable way, but taking care of everything we have, and for everything to be as lasting as possible, without entering the capitalist era of buying for the sake of buying or spending for the sake of spending” (quote 5:1).

In this regard, the vice-president of Justicia i Pau comments: “With respect to frugality, we think that we can use, but not abuse things. For a Christian, the issue of consumerism is absurd” (quote 5:11).

“In the Bahá’í Faith, the issue of moderation in all things always comes up. There is an idea according to which the money that is left over after household expenses ... 19% of the remainder is given to rebalance wealth. It is a measure that has to do with the distribution of wealth” (quote 6:15).

A pastor of the Evangelical Church maintains: “This is about promoting an austere and frugal lifestyle. The tradition that Christian life has to be frugal and simple has always existed, even before the climate crisis. The fact of conceiving that everything we have is because God has given it to us” (quote 8:12).

The secretary of the Brahma Kumaris centre in Barcelona refers to an inner simplicity and austerity: “Principle of simplicity, through meditation. By practising meditation, the need for consumerism disappears. It is about using the resources we have in an accurate manner (austerity). First, I have to be ‘economical’ in the energy of my thoughts and words. It is a process that goes from the inside out” (quote 9:1).

In Figure 2, in the category of ecological virtues, a code that often appears is respect (E 23). It concerns respect for nature and for all living beings, which, in many cases, turns into an attitude of care: “the respect of this gift, the preservation of creation, as well as its fruitful and careful use” (Bartholomew I, 2009), and an attitude of compassion that leads to non-violence. “The ultimate aim of the Buddhist approach is to avoid harm and to bring benefit. To achieve this, we operate from key principles, such as compassion, versus strict rules” (Dunne & Goleman, 2018 p. 124).

The environmental and social justice code (E 9) appears as another ecological virtue. An Evangelical pastor relates justice to order in creation. “When we talk about biblical justice, it is a harmonious order, as things should be. That is

why we talk about economic justice, gender justice, ecological justice ... and we should always seek justice that goes beyond the issue of legality, that is where the theological meaning resides" (quote 8:19).

The representative of the Adventist Church shows the relationship between justice and ecology through food waste. "Several reports state that 14 % of the food produced worldwide does not reach people, it gets lost along the way. Poor management of food trade affects the ecosystem and affects those people who cannot survive. I believe there is a link between ecology, the environment and social justice. Eco-justice" (quote 3:23).

5.3 *Worldviews Related to Climate Change*

The answer to the question of what the worldviews of the different religions are is directly related to beliefs and the deep spiritual perspective (worldviews) on nature or on the Earth. This study shows two different worldviews: nature as creation, present in the monotheist religions in this study (Catholic Church, Evangelical churches, Islam, Eastern Orthodox churches, Seventh-day Adventist Church, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Judaism, Hare Krishna, Sikhism, Bahá'í Faith) and the worldviews that nature is a primordial unit (Brahma Kumaris community, Buddhism, Hinduism, Taoism).

"Nature as divine creation" appears 18 times (E 18), and all the other codes are derived from this belief, for instance that nature is not the property of human beings, but of God (E 14).

Catholics consider nature as a creation of God and therefore a gift (CDSI, 487; John Paul II, 1991; LS, 76). Nature is a reflection of its author, God, and has a goodness and consistency of its own. For each of the works of the 'six days', the following is said: "And God saw that it was good". Non-living things in creation also reflect God: "The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands" (Bible, Psalm 19:2). Nature is distinguished from God, but in the religions that believe nature is divine creation, this does not lower their commitment to taking care of it: "If we acknowledge the value and the fragility of nature, and, at the same time, our God-given abilities, we can finally leave behind the modern myth of unlimited material progress. A fragile world, entrusted by God to human care, challenges us to devise intelligent ways of directing, developing and limiting our power." (LS 78).

The Orthodox Church shares the theological view of nature with the Catholic Church. "God is the only Master of the Universe to whom everything belongs." (Destivelle, 2007:161).

The Adventist Church sees nature as divine creation to which respect is owed. "The issue of God the Creator is very important, as this message of respecting nature is linked to God the Creator. Life begins with creation, and

ends with a new creation, beginning and end join together. It is a core idea found in the entire biblical account.” (quote 3:13).

In the FG in which representatives of the Evangelical Church of Catalonia took part, the participants insisted on the non-sacralisation of nature: “In Protestantism, the ecological issue is related to the dimension of justice. We have a perspective of avoiding the sacralisation of anything in the world. We do not see the fact that nature is sacred as a motivation, but rather as a matter of justice” (quote 8:18). This view of not sacralising nature is also present in the Catholic, Orthodox, Adventist, Mormon, Jewish and Islamic religions.

As Pope Francis recalls in LS: “Beginning in the middle of the last century and overcoming many difficulties, there has been a growing conviction that our planet is a homeland and that humanity is one people living in a common home.” (LS 164).

The representative of the Jewish religion explained how the traditions of his religion follow a solar and lunar calendar, and the celebrations are agricultural holidays (E 19). The sacred texts such as the Talmud contain numerous prescriptions and instructions that contribute to avoiding environmental pollution. “The Talmud talks about environmental pollution. In the heavily populated cities in ancient times, you were not allowed to have kilns that were used for manufacturing pottery. The Jewish sages tried to keep the smoke away from the cities.” (quote 4:39).

Regarding the second worldview, nature as a primordial unit, Buddhism regards the universe as a divine unitary whole (E 16), in which all parts are interdependent (E 14). “At a global, universal level, it is the same. We are small bacteria within an organ that is the solar system or the Earth. Everything is connected. There are energies that circulate within a universe. There is life, and life, the divine, is the whole of everything.” (quote 2:37). “Everything is related, that is why it must be understood as this total identity. Everything resides in everything” (quote 2:38). According to Buddhism, all living beings, and all objects have the same value and everything must be respected because they are a manifestation of the same primordial consciousness. “Nature and human beings and animals, we are all nature, that is, respecting a person is respecting nature as well. Thus, if you consider that everything has this essential value that is a manifestation of primordial consciousness, it guides you in all your actions and behaviour at all levels.” (quote 2:54).

According to representatives of Taoism, “The law of Tao is the law of nature. Man and nature are united. If you hurt nature, you hurt yourself.” (quote 9:16).

In Hinduism, for its part, a deep kind of yoga that means union is practised: “I am not,” “union of the soul with others and with the universe (cosmic soul)” (quote 9:19).

The secretary of the Brahma Kumaris centre in Barcelona comments that they practise Raja Yoga meditation as a tool to learn to listen, live and feel the present moment: “Meditation is the bridge of communication between the Divine and the divine of the human being” (quote 9:16). It is a profound personal experience. Its aim is to reach an internal transformation that affects all of life through the connection with one’s own consciousness.

In summary, the analysis of these results related to worldviews on climate change shows two worldviews in the different religions present in Catalonia. Comparing the two worldviews mentioned leads us to believe that there are reasons to consider the planet and all creatures as intrinsic value because it is considered to be a divine creation, and has a sacred value. The dualistic vision, which separates nature from the human being, prevents us from understanding reality in a global way. In the West, the modern worldview within the thought of Descartes has negatively influenced the distancing of the human being in relation to nature, and has led to despotic attitudes towards it (Kureethadam, 2017). The rejection of Cartesian dualism (E 6) is shown in Figure 2. A Buddhist representative maintains: “you said that it is a more Cartesian approach, this has to change. We have to start adopting a more cross-disciplinary, more global approach. If we had a more holistic view, more sustainable behaviour would be encouraged. It is not a new consciousness.” (quote 2:77).

5.4 *Commonalities between Different Religions Addressing Climate Change*

In Figure 4, the code that appears the most states that in the face of the climate crisis, religions provide values (E 22). The solutions and measures to bring about a global change will not only come from scientific and technical measures because they are insufficient. Deep motivations that lead to a change in behaviour are required. “The solutions cannot be technical, they need to be about a change of worldview, and this is what religions can provide, they can provide criteria, values, ways of life, transformation ... And I think this is very important because the contribution of religions can be noticed.” (quote 3:12).

Religions can provide values to society such as austerity” (quote 2:61), because “If religiosity were present in daily life, we would not have to talk about ecology.” (quote 4:36).

All the participants agree that there is a global crisis and that change must be brought about, but this change is difficult. “Change is impossible without motivation and a process of education” (LS 15). Climate change will require inter-governmental co-operation and immediate action, but it is also important not to “underestimate the necessity of grassroot movements for achieving lasting change in our attitudes and behaviours” (Javanaud, 2020). Religions

must achieve significant potential to help in the global response to climate change, as they have different reasons for doing so (Veldman et al., 2013). If, on the other hand, the different religious and spiritual communities support each other, an influential change in society may be achieved. According to the president of the Buddhist Communities: “If we meet up, and support, and motivate each other, it is possible to achieve a small change that may be noticed.” (quote 2:13).

The second most repeated code that appears (E 22) in Figure 4 is the willingness of the different religions to collaborate with regard to addressing climate change. The climate crisis, or the current health crisis due to the COVID-19 pandemic, are global phenomena, and they need to be addressed internationally. Pope Francis had already pointed out that if we want to effectively combat, “we must act together, taking into account the need to implement a thorough examination of the current development model in order to correct its anomalies and distortions” (Francis, 2021). In this respect, one of the participants stated that “Climate change does not have borders. It is not a matter of working on one area. The problems we have in Catalonia regarding climate change are not caused by the emissions produced in Catalonia, but by everybody everywhere in the world. This forces us to work together” (quote 2:78).

In Catalonia, interreligious climate action initiatives, such as ecumenical events, interreligious manifestos, and conferences where reflections are shared on addressing climate change, have been undertaken. However, it does not seem to be enough, and therefore the following have been suggested: “Create working groups, symposia, ... which has already been done, or put people who hold positions of responsibility in their religion and think differently together at the same table. Encouraging dialogue allows us to know, and when you know you realise there are not that many differences, and you can work better towards a common goal” (quote 3:40 Benedictine monk). It is worth noting that the very research methodology of this case study enabled establishing an interreligious dialogue on the climate crisis in the different FGs.

Given the evidence that the sacred texts of the different religions do not specifically refer to climate change, as it is a problem that did not exist when they were written, the participants of the FGs suggested rereading the sacred texts in terms of current environmental problems, to bring climate change to light. All the participants acknowledge that environmental issues are an element the different religions have in common. “We all share the same planet, which is to bring out the best in people. The environment, the careful management of nature interests all religions, it is not merely a Christian matter. I very much like the idea, as the texts need to be reread taking into account current times.” (quote 3:41).

It is necessary to promote interreligious dialogue to address climate change, as is the case of the Interfaith Declaration on Climate Culture issued by the religious communities in Catalonia (GTER 2021), or the Multi-faith Action conferences for climate action that are being held prior to the 26th Conference of the Parties (COP 26), which will take place in Glasgow (Cerrillo, 2021). Together, religious groups and scientists can be a powerful force to address climate change (Müller, 2021).

To the question posed to all the participants in the FCS on whether climate change is an element they have in common, and of interreligious dialogue, 100% of the participants said yes.

6 Conclusions

Throughout this case study, three research objectives were examined in fourteen religions in Catalonia, and interesting debates covering numerous aspects related to the different religions' contribution to addressing climate change took place. The research objectives are: 1) Analyse **what** is being done by religions to address climate change; 2) Know **what** the **worldviews** of the different religions are with regard to climate change; and 3) if commonalities exist between religions, find out which elements they have **in common** with regard to **addressing climate change**. We employ a qualitative phenomenological methodology involving discussion groups of fourteen different religions present in Catalonia. The conclusions reached at the end of this research study are the following:

Religions can contribute to sustainable consumption (SDG 12) promoting values and virtues such as austerity, compassion, respect, and ecological and social justice, as well as carrying out communal actions such as making an efficient use of natural resources or substantially reducing waste generation through prevention, reduction, recycling and reusing. As far as climate action (SDG 13) is concerned, joint action of religious and scientific groups is required, and it is important to know how to transform religious values into a common climate culture.

In the different religions, there are reasons to consider the planet, and all creatures, as intrinsic value because it is regarded as a divine creation and has a sacred value. Under no circumstances are human beings considered possessors of nature, but part of it. Human beings must take care of and manage nature responsibility. A comprehensive and holistic view of sustainability and the planet needs to be adopted. In several religions, it is part of an ancient tradition.

With regard to the commonalities between the different religions addressing climate change, it is observed that religions provide the values society needs to overcome the climate crisis, and there is a willingness for interreligious collaboration through the publication of good practices, interreligious statements, liturgical ecumenical events during Earth Day, and other public events. Furthermore, the representatives of the fourteen religions that participated in the FGs agree that climate change and the care for our common home opens a door to interfaith dialogue, as it is based on elements that are present in different beliefs. This conclusion, together with the alliances already established between the religions addressing climate change, leads to deducing that the religious communities present in Catalonia, apart from contributing to the achievement of SDG 12 and SDG 13 (sustainable consumption and climate action respectively), are also contributing to establishing partnerships for the goals (SDG 17) in order to develop a new common climate culture.

This article contributes to the existing literature on the relationship between the different religions addressing climate change by providing an empirical study that allows confirming the theoretical framework of this relationship with practical experiences.

Faced with the great challenge of transforming a planet in crisis into the common home of all its inhabitants, all social organisations need to be involved, and religions play a leading role in this transformation. It has been observed that there are multiple commonalities in the actions promoted at the community level between religions, as well as in the virtues and values encouraged individually, to care for the planet. In the fourteen religions studied, two great visions regarding the planet and nature can be distinguished. However, although the rationale for why climate action and sustainable consumption must be carried out is different, in practice all religions respond to the moral imperative of taking care of the planet. Climate action is an element they have in common, and it promotes an interreligious dialogue. This article contributes to existing research with an empirical study in a European region in which numerous religions are present.

With regard to the study's limitations, because of the data protection law, it was impossible to reach all the desired participants. The fact that a negative response was obtained from the entities of one of the religions means that this study does not include representation of all the religions present in Catalonia. As a consequence of the current worldwide pandemic, face-to-face meetings with the representatives of the entities had to be cancelled and the process of data collection was completed virtually. In order to ensure the participation of all the religions present in Catalonia, including the religious communities that declined to participate in the FGs, we could analyse publicly available

documents published or the websites and/ or social media channels of the communities that declined to participate. It would be desirable in the future to carry out further studies with larger populations, which would enable comparing and enriching the views and good practices to address climate change in different countries or regions.

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