



Do religions matter? The empirical study of the religion-climate relation in Taiwan

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In the Anthropocentric era, the human-driven climate crisis has become a serious global issue. To mitigate the impacts of climate change, it is crucial for humans to adopt a more sustainable way of living. Human behaviors are shaped by their culture, where religious beliefs play important roles. As a result, people turned to religions for addressing with climate change issues.

Seeming to be unrelated, religions and climate issues have found connections through social systems and communication. By endowing climate issues with religions meanings, religions are able to resonate with the ecological crisis and take meaningful actions. Through this "resonance," religions contribute to climate issues by shaping worldviews, establishing sustainable habits, initiating actions, and influencing policies.

Religious communities have recognized the severity of the human-driven climate crisis. Their call for action reflects the fact that Taiwanese society has failed to respond to the climate crisis due to its endless pursuit of consumerism. To deal with the challenges, religious communities have advocated for "Ecological Conversion", which persuade people to save the nature for the sake of God.

How religions can empirically contribute to environment issues has been a long-discussed topic. However, previous literatures only focus on the Western-Christian World. Countries with religious beliefs other than Judeo-Christian ethics are seldom discussed. To explore the relationship between religion and climate in Asian contexts, this research will focus on Taiwan, a multicultural country with various religions.

Using the sample data from the 2020 Taiwan Social Change Survey, this study aims to explore the relationship between religion and climate by conducting factor analysis and ordinary least squares regressions.

The evidence reveals a weak connection between religions and people's climate attitudes in Taiwan. Among all the religions in Taiwan, Buddhists and Christians tend to have the most eco-friendly attitudes. The social networks within these two religious communities foster an eco-friendly atmosphere, which highlights the importance of environmental conservation. However, when it comes to peoples' willingness to pay, faith holders are less likely to show their supports.

By illustrating the religion-climate relationship in Taiwan, this study demonstrates how these two fields intersect in a non-Western society. It also provides implications for how religions can inspire people's willingness to engage in environmental conservation efforts.