Mapping the field of religious environmental politics

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Until fairly recently, consideration of religion has been marginal in or even absent from the scholarly discourse about environmental politics. Renewed attention to the intersection of these fields has been encouraged by several overlapping developments. Within environmental science, discussion of 'environmental values' has opened up towards a broader consideration of the role of religious institutions and personal belief in forming spiritual environmental values.[1] In a related shift, within the more specific policy discourse surrounding climate change mitigation and the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, policy-makers have devoted new attention to the role played by ethics and religious institutions.[2] The prominence of religious groups in the buildup to the Paris climate summit of 2015, through events like the 'People's Climate' marches which were held across the globe and the 'People's Pilgrimage' which began at a range of starting-points and converged in Paris, has given rise to a sense of a burgeoning social movement emerging from the religious grass roots.[3] Alongside other, earlier declarations by religious leaders, the recent encyclical by Pope Francis, *Laudato Sí*, signalled a new level of integration between Catholic concerns for social and environmental justice.[4] Yet much of the continued engagement with religion by large environmental NGOs has continued to bypass regional and intermediate social networks and organizations altogether, or has focused on religious grassroots groups merely as an avenue for information dissemination rather than as legitimate collaborative partners. As we seek to re-envision international environmental politics, this seems an opportune moment to provide a map which might guide more holistic forms of policy co-creation, outreach and engagement.

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1 Nigel Cooper, Emily Brady, Helen Steen and Rosalind Bryce, 'Aesthetic and spiritual values of ecosystems: recognising the ontological and axiological plurality of cultural ecosystem "services"', *Ecosystem Services* 21: B, Oct. 2016, pp. 218–29, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ecoser.2016.07.014. (Unless otherwise noted at point of citation, all URLs cited in this article were available on 10 Nov. 2019.)

2 Mike Hulme, *Why we disagree about climate change: understanding controversy, inaction and opportunity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

3 For further discussion of the increase in religious grassroots mobilization, see Jeremy H. Kidwell, 'Re-enchanting political theology', *Religions* 10: 10, 2019, pp. 550–64.

4 An encyclical is the highest level of official doctrinal statement for Roman Catholics. *Laudato Sí* was officially published on 18 June 2015.

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It is important to note that the audience for these kinds of interventions will necessarily be a hybrid one, extending across both practical policy and scholarly contexts. In this article, which is based on data gathered during five years of fieldwork, primarily with British Christian religious environmental movement organizations (REMOs), I probe the complexities of political engagement with religious environmentalism which arise from the many different organizational manifestations of these groups. This enquiry takes me into questions of polycentricity, scalar structuration, multiple social identities and eco-theo-citizenship. On the basis of this investigation, I suggest that effective high-level engagement with REMOs will be greatly enhanced by a nuanced understanding of the multiplicity of shapes these groups can take, the various scales at which they organize, and the unique inflection that a religious context can give to political action and group identity. My aim is accordingly to present as comprehensive a categorization of REMO groups as possible, and then to provide two brief vignettes through which I can begin to unpack the specific dynamics at work within these categories, highlighting the way that intergroup dynamics function across these categories, particularly at different scales. It is my hope that this exploration of these different coalescences and dynamics of religious environmentalism can serve as a resource for governments and NGOs seeking to enact effective pro-environmental behaviour change in the specific context of religion and religious organizations.[5]

Theorizing the field of environmental polities: taking account of scale

Environmentalist politics can coalesce in a variety of different ways. There are a growing number of individuals interested in and mobilized around environmental issues.[6] While many of these individuals are not members of any formal group(s), a significant number are affiliated with local environmental entities (e.g. transition towns, cooperatives, permaculture projects, etc.) and/or with regional, national and international environmental charities (e.g. Friends of the Earth, Greenpeace, WWF, etc.), and some choose to participate in more ephemeral social movements. Yet even as the number and influence of communities seem to grow, social and political science have struggled to engage with the concept of 'community' and other intermediate regional forms of political organization.[7] As I will suggest, there is a need for more sophisticated categorizations of environmental mobilization that can challenge a public policy environment shaped around binary understandings of individual/society. Particularly with regard to religious environmentalism, it is further necessary to unpack the significance of

[5] Jeremy Kidwell, Franklin Ginn, Michael Northcott, Elizabeth Bomberg and Alice Hague, 'Christian climate care: slow change, modesty and eco-theo-citizenship', *Geo: Geography and Environment* 5: 2, 2018, e00059, https://doi.org/10.1002/geo2.59.

[6] See A. Gustafson, P. Bergquist, A. Leiserowitz and E. Maibach, *A growing majority of Americans think global warming is happening and are worried* (New Haven, CT: Yale Program on Climate Change Communication, Yale University and George Mason University, 2019).

[7] Elizabeth Fraser, *The problem of communitarian politics: unity and conflict* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999); David Studdert, *Conceptualising community: beyond state and individual* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006).

these various categories in order to develop a better understanding of the ways in which they function on different scales and their impact on social networks.

There have been several significant theoretical responses to the under-theorization of scale and the role of intermediate polities in analyses of individual behaviour. In one classic example, during the 1970s and 1980s Anthony Giddens formulated his theory of structuration, arguing in particular for a 'duality of structure' in which study of structures and study of agents were not undertaken in isolation, but in which, on the contrary, the two were taken to be interrelated and interdependent. As subsequent scholarship explored, Giddens's theorization carried implications for hermeneutics, practices, phenomenology and other areas of enquiry.[8] As Rob Stones suggests,

> social structures are not reified entities denuded of human beings and their irreducible qualities, just as the views and experiences that prompt the thoughts and actions of social agents are not those of beings who are islands unto themselves, secreted away from social currents. The phenomenology and hermeneutics of practices play an indispensable role in structuration's conception of social structures, just as social structures play an equal role in the understanding of the phenomenology, hermeneutics and practices of agents.[9]

In a similar way, and around the same time, scholars such as Michel Callon, Bruno Latour and John Law were developing actor–network theory to emphasize the presence of 'heterogeneous' networks—bridging the gap between the study of human social networks and that of 'natural' (non-human or ecological) networks, and seeking to move beyond essentialized examinations of events towards more holistic observation of network interaction.[10] Though both approaches have had their critics, one abiding consequence of these theoretical innovations has been a new and more complex attention to the role of structures and networks in shaping political agency and action.

More recent work theorizing political groups and movements operating at different scales and on different levels within international affairs has not generally focused on the confluence of religion and environmentalism. However, resonant research can be found in analysis of marginal/minority groups, particularly in development studies and security studies.[11] Relevant attention to the multiscalar/transnational nature of environmentalism can also be found in environmental governance literature. A key contribution here comes from Elinor Ostrom, who in 2010 observed that the climate governance landscape was shifting towards a

[8] Anthony Giddens, *The constitution of society: outline of the theory of structuration* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), p. 25; discussed in depth in Rob Stones, *Structuration theory* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005).

[9] Stones, *Structuration theory*, p. 4.

[10] Bruno Latour, *Science in action: how to follow scientists and engineers through society* (Milton Keynes: Open University Press, 1987).

[11] For an example of this emphasis in international development studies, see esp. research on transnational actors, e.g. Ram A. Cnaan and Carl Milofsky, eds, *The handbook of community movements and local organizations in the 21st century* (New York: Springer, 2018). Michael Peter Smith provides a helpful summary in 'Translocality: a critical reflection', in Katherine Brickell and Ayona Datta, eds, *Translocal geographies* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2011), pp. 181–98. A great deal of attention has been given to the entanglement of religion in translocal/transnational configurations. See e.g. Peter G. Mandaville, *Transnational Muslim politics: reimagining the umma* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2003).

configuration which might be described as 'polycentric'.[12] As Bulkeley and colleagues suggest, 'today, climate change governance encompasses a much more diffused and overlapping system of instruments, sources of authority and practices'.[13] The situation is exacerbated by the emergence of these new agents of environmental governance on the scene at the same time as traditional multilateral instruments seem to be in significant decline. As Pattberg and Widerberg observe, 'from 2000 onwards … far less MEAs [multilateral environmental agreements] have been adopted and a general "stagnation" in international law has been observed'.[14] On one hand, as these authors observe, 'agency and authority of actors "beyond the state" has become a prime occupation for global environmental governance scholarship', yet the texture of 'civil society' input often remains undefined within this literature.[15] Following the broader interdisciplinary turn in environmental governance literature, a number of scholars have made attempts to illuminate this complex field using social network analysis.[16] These studies have confirmed that the agential field is not so much fragmented and incoherent as characterized by complex, yet perceptible, polycentric agencies. One of the key features of these advances in research is to conceptualize political agency as distributed variably across a multidimensional field (as emphasized by actor–network theorists), rather than along a scalar continuum.

I will argue in this article that conceptions of religious environmentalism need to be updated to account for similar distribution across a complex and polycentric field of agents. A prerequisite for this kind of reconceptualization is to establish the different forms of organization which appear across that field, particularly inasmuch as they vary in scale from small and local to large and international. With this in mind, after a description of my methodology, I will go on to provide a more granular categorization of religious environmental movement organizations. This will be followed by a final section of analysis that will draw on two brief vignettes in order to indicate how agency can work in ways that are complex and somewhat unexpected.

It is important to note that while there are good theoretical reasons for this reconceptualization, my purposes are also practical. Religious environmentalism has recently experienced a sudden growth, both in terms of participation

[12] See Elinor Ostrom, 'Beyond markets and states: polycentric governance of complex economic systems', *American Economic Review* 100: 3, 2010, pp. 641–72. For an explicit translation of this approach to environmental governance, see also Andrew Jordan, Dave Huitema, Harro van Asselt and Johanna Forster, eds, *Governing climate change: polycentricity in action?* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018). For a different take, albeit one alert to the significance of religion, see Gabriel Ignatow, *Transnational identity politics and the environment* (Lexington, KY: Lexington Books, 2007).

[13] Harriet Bulkeley, Liliana B. Andonova, Michele M. Betsill, Daniel Compagnon, Thomas Hale, Matthew J. Hoffmann, Peter Newell, Matthew Paterson, Stacy D. VanDeveer and Charles Roger, *Transnational climate change governance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), p. 62.

[14] Philipp Pattberg and Oscar Widerberg, 'Theorising global environmental governance: key findings and future questions', in *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 43: 2, 2015, p. 685. For more in-depth diagnosis, see Donald K. Anton, '"Treaty congestion" in contemporary international environmental law', in Shawkat Alam, Jahid Hossain Bhuiyan, Tareq M. R. Chowdhury and Erika J. Techera, eds, *Routledge handbook of international environmental law* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2012).

[15] Pattberg and Widerberg, 'Theorising global environmental governance', p. 693.

[16] Rakhyun E. Kim, 'The emergent network structure of the multilateral environmental agreement system', *Global Environmental Change* 23: 5, 2013, pp. 980–91.

and in terms of the development of formal organizations and local networks. To give one example, one of my research subjects, the Eco-Church network in England and Wales, grew from just over 200 members in 2015 to over 1,700 members by 2018.[17] Its growth over this three-year period has quickly made it the most numerous community-level environmental organization in the UK. This kind of rapid growth is not uniformly distributed globally—many national religious eco-networks remain quite small—but it nonetheless points to a shift in the potential horizon of such activity. Alongside this increasing prominence of REMOs, the dynamics of religious organizations across scale are arguably even more complex and intertwined than those of commensurate secular organizations. A better understanding of these dynamics will aid policy-makers and third-sector groups, and increase the efficacy of policy formation and consultation. Limited funding prompts environmental agencies and NGOs to target their outreach in specific ways. A given organization will probably be confronted by a choice between engaging with elites (e.g. religious leaders), with intermediaries (NGOs with connections to specific places of worship) or with the general public. Which of these is most appropriate? How might an organization make an informed decision regarding its approach? As I will argue, the answer is not always obvious or straightforward, and there is a need for further research which can test out a range of case-studies in specific national policy contexts. The aim of this article is to serve as prolegomenon for subsequent research into REMOs and religious environmentalism. In what follows, I attempt to identify for the sake of further analysis the range of possible configurations that religious environmental politics might take. I begin this enquiry with a pragmatic assessment of the current political field of religious environmentalism in order to flesh out the range of structures and entanglements at work.

Methodology and approach

The set of categories that underpins my analysis is the result of an evaluation of primary data from a variety of sources gathered over a period of four years (2014–17). These research engagements, which were primarily with Christian religious environmental groups in the United Kingdom, included 32 semi-structured qualitative interviews, discourse analysis of websites and organizational publications, organizational mapping, social network analysis, and participant observation work. An important innovation in the methodology underlying this research was sampling work across scale: for example, interviews were conducted with national and international leaders and at the grass roots. My initial qualitative engagement involved representatives from 17 different religious environmental organizations and ten different non-religious environmental NGOs in the United Kingdom and United States.[18] Subsequent analysis for this study was a tiered process, building

[17] Compare this, for example, with Friends of the Earth, which has 129 local groups in England and Wales: https://friendsoftheearth.uk/local-groups/our-local-groups. The Transition Network reports a total of 27 hubs and 992 initiatives worldwide: https://transitionnetwork.org/transition-near-me/.

[18] Organizations selected for qualitative interviews spanned the full range of scale and included: Eco-Congrega-

on my findings at a national level to identify relevant international comparisons. The initial dataset was augmented and internationalized using a snowball approach which began with major international meta-network websites and Twitter accounts.[19] It is important to note that many of these networks overlap or have mutual representation; also that this list does not include unaffiliated persons and churches that were also consulted. My purpose was not to publish a comprehensive worldwide list of discrete REMOs, but rather to work with a large range of networks at an international level to confirm or deny the existence of identifiable organizational categories and genres. I acknowledge that international data are not comparable at every level, but they are sufficient for the purposes of this analysis and categorization. I hope that by setting a baseline for comparison, I will provide a platform for subsequent research to interrogate and expand on the set of categories presented here.

To date, there have been no attempts to comprehensively categorize the agents involved in specifically religious forms of environmentalism. Magdalena Kuchler has recently published findings from a similar kind of study, albeit one not focused on religious groups. Her study, which seeks to explicate the specific content of civil society participation within environmental governance using a multistakeholder framework, maps out the 'types of actors that are, in practice, involved in each stage of stakeholder interaction'.[20] Echoing my concern, her study begins with an emphasis on participation, but observes that simplistic maximization of participation is not enough; the concern is, rather, with the quality of 'input legitimacy' and, by extension, with providing a sufficiently nuanced account of the different forms of agency and the best context for their inclusion. I share Kuchler's concern that effective environmental governance requires a comprehensive sense of the ways in which these various heterogeneous inputs may be rendered most legitimate and, by extension, most effective. As I have already suggested above, this requires some attention to the scalar configuration of groups within a given set of regime complexes or architectures. However, there is a second layer behind this which also needs similar attention, and this demands more ethnographic sensitivity. Kuchler criticizes the notion of stakeholding inasmuch as it 'entails sorting actors and recasting them into categories that, in turn, can enable or constrain their ability to influence decision-making'.[21] In the present study, I have attempted

tion Scotland, Catholic Church in Scotland, Scottish Catholic International Aid Fund, Quakers in Scotland, Christian Aid Scotland, Scottish Episcopal Church, United Reformed Church Scotland, National Justice and Peace Network, Church of Scotland, Free Church of Scotland, Baptist Union of Scotland, Church of England, Eco Church England and Wales, Alliance of Religion and Conservation, Environmental Issues Network of Churches Together in Britain and Ireland, A Rocha, Earth Ministry (WA, USA).

[19] Additional analysis and modelling began with all self-identified member groups listed on websites of the European Christian Environmental Network (http://www.ecen.org/), GreenFaith international (https://greenfaith.org), Eco-Congregation (http://ecocongregation.org/), the World Council of Churches (https://www.oikoumene.org/), Caritas Internationalis (https://www.caritas.org), Season of Creation (https://seasonofcreation.org/events) and the Roman Catholic Church (http://w2.vatican.va/). Subsequent analysis of social networks using Twitter was used to identify further groups but is as yet unpublished. Code and raw data can be found here: https://github.com/kidwellj/sustainable_networks_paper.

[20] Magdalena Kuchler, 'Stakeholding as sorting of actors into categories: implications for civil society participation in the CDM', *International Environmental Agreements: Politics, Law and Economics* 17: 2, 2017, pp. 191–208.

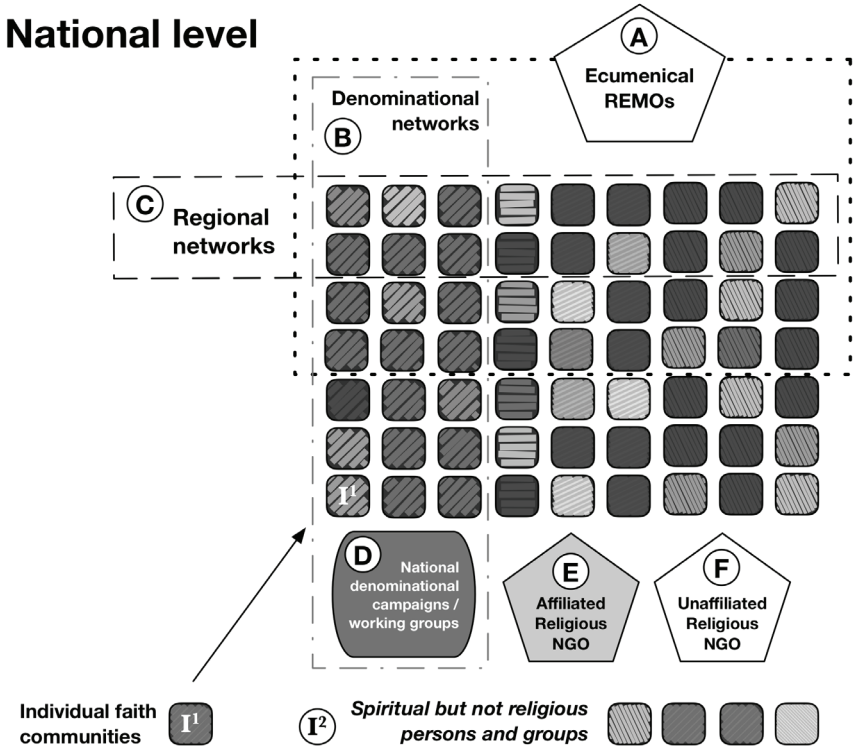
[21] Kuchler, 'Stakeholding as sorting of actors into categories', p. 205.

to present a categorization that is multidimensional and textured, taking into full account the challenges and nature of participation/non-participation within each category.

Part 1: Individual affiiation (I^1 and I^2)

In figure 1, I have attempted to visualize the broad range of scales and configurations in which religious environmentalism might be deployed. I will refer to this figure throughout the next two sections, in which I unpack these dimensions systematically.

Figure 1: A diagrammatic representation of religious environmentalism



Let us begin with smallest and most individual or local forms of environmental polity, which I have visualized at the bottom of the figure. One of the first key points of distinction, represented in the diagram by I^1 and I^2, lies in the nature of religious affiliation. Since the turn of the millennium, scholarship in religious studies has increasingly emphasized the complexity of religious affiliation. To give one well-known example, in the most recent UK census, finalized in 2011, 59.3 per cent of residents of England and Wales identified themselves as Christian. Yet general social surveys which ask people to indicate whether they are part of a worshipping community show a significantly different picture, with only

around 10 per cent of the population attending worship on a regular basis.[22] Even for those who attend a specific church, self-reported affiliation is complex, with one study conducted in Scotland suggesting that some individuals who attend a church that belongs to a specific denomination may actually report being affiliated to another denomination.[23] This complexity regarding formal affiliation is not limited to Christianity. Of significant relevance for the study of environmental action is the study of new religions, such as neo-paganism, that have seen significant growth in some parts of Europe. The 2010 registration with the UK Charity Commission of the 'Druid Network' was contested by many within the UK community of druids, and this contestation revealed the ambiguity of formal organizational participation for members of new religious movements.[24] A further complication at the individual level is the potential for multiple affiliations: that is, the possibility that individuals may identify themselves as belonging to multiple groups, e.g. Catholic and Pentecostal, New Age and Christian, etc. Many high-level studies and censuses that seek to identify religious affiliation fail to design instruments that can test for hybridity, and scholars have noted that multiple and cross-cutting identities are a particular problem for the non-profit sector.[25] The key point is that self-reported affiliation may be multiple, ambiguous and aspirational, and should thus be treated with care in large-scale instruments and in designing public policy engagement.

Developing a robust understanding that takes into account the full range of this complexity, especially in the context of religion, may require a number of different research methodologies. On one hand, there are religiously located environmentalists, for whom religious affiliation is firmly in the foreground. This can be seen in studies such as Sarah McFarland Taylor's account of the Catholic Green Sisters in the United States, or Lucas F. Johnston's of religious environmental movements focusing on interviews with elite actors.[26] However, we can also find *implicit* religion in the context of apparently secular environmentalist organizations. Bron Taylor's work on Earth First! uncovered religious underpinnings to the ethics of activists in the United States; and in a different, but related, way, Gretel Van Wieren argues that ecological restoration work can often be guided by 'a Spirituality of Environmental Action'.[27] Community is constituted and consoli-

[22] See Peter Brierley, 'Church attendance in Britain, 1980–2015', *British Religion in Numbers* (London: British Academy, n.d.), http://www.brin.ac.uk/figures/church-attendance-in-britain-1980-2015/.

[23] Steve Aisthorpe, 'A survey of Christians in the Highlands and Islands who are not part of a church congregation', *Rural Theology* 12: 2, 2014, pp. 83–95.

[24] Suzanne Owen and Teemu Taira, 'The category of "religion" in public classification: charity registration of the Druid Network in England and Wales', in T. Fitzgerald, T. Stack and N. Goldenberg, eds, *Religion as a category of governance and sovereignty* (Leiden: Brill, 2015).

[25] Bob Doherty, Helen Haugh and Fergus Lyon, 'Social enterprises as hybrid organizations: a review and research agenda', *International Journal of Management Reviews* 16: 4, 2014, pp. 417–36, https://doi.org/10.1111/ijmr.12028. Dennis R. Young, 'Organizational identity in nonprofit organizations: strategic and structural implications', *Nonprofit Management and Leadership* 12: 2, 2001, pp. 139–57.

[26] Sarah McFarland Taylor, *Green Sisters: a spiritual ecology* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007); Lucas F. Johnston, *Religion and sustainability: social movements and the politics of the environment* (Sheffield and Bristol, CT: Equinox, 2013).

[27] Bron Taylor, 'The religion and politics of Earth First!', *The Ecologist* 21: 6, 1991, pp. 258–66, http://www.brontaylor.com/environmental_articles/pdf/Taylor--ReligionPoliticsEarthFirst.pdf; Gretel Van Wieren, *Restored to Earth: Christianity, environmental ethics, and ecological restoration* (Washington DC: Georgetown University Press, 2013).

dated in a range of quite different ways by the various research subjects covered in these studies, but in acknowledging these concerns about the complexity of affiliation, we may still hold on to three key affirmations: (1) there are a significant number of environmentally active individuals who choose to affiliate themselves in some formal way with a religion; (2) this affiliation (increasingly) provides a specific location for some aspects of their environmentalism; and (3) there are specific forms of environmental citizenship and activism that predominantly take place within these formal communities and affiliations.

For the sake of simplicity, I have identified two basic categories at the local and individual levels: I^1 represents those persons or local groups who affiliate with a specific faith; and I^2 represents those persons or local groups who would define themselves (and their environmentalism) as religious or spiritual but do not have a formal affiliation. For religious environmental groups that coalesce at the local level, particularly in the case of I^1 but possibly also with I^2, I have found that there is also a micro-scalar differentiation which should be noted: namely, that with religious environmentalism, an eco-group will quite often be situated within a larger polity (e.g. church, cathedral, mosque, etc.).[28] In my analysis of qualitative interviews and organizational mapping, I have found there to be four fundamental categories which can be used to describe the different composition of local groups (see table 1). It is important to note that all four of these categories, which I describe generically as an 'eco-group', may appear on the outside to be the same. This appearance masks a range of possible scenarios.

Table 1: Four categories of local 'eco-groups'

Category	*Description*
1. Lone voices	Single individuals who work on environmental issues, in the midst of either indifference or hostility in the wider organization/community in which they are situated.
2. Local heroes	Single individuals whose work is conducted with sanction by and/or indirect support from the wider organization/community within which they are situated.
3. Small but active	A small and generally self-contained group of 3–12 persons; the wider organization/community may be aware of the group, but feels no significant sense of connection or solidarity with the eco-group.
4. Large with differential involvements	Many people involved at varying levels of participation; the wider organization/community is not involved in an active and sustained way, but self-reports may suggest that some affinity to the group is felt.

[28] On micro-sociality, see Jane Wills, '(Re)locating community in relationships: questions for public policy', *Sociological Review* 64: 4, 2016, pp. 639–56, https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-954X.12431; Studdert, *Conceptualising community*.

Further research is required to test out the differences in group composition and identity across these categories. Overall, I would suggest that attempts by NGOs to support religious eco-groups, or governments seeking to engage on the level of public policy, should seek first to understand the composite or hybrid nature of the group, and then seek to identify a mode of support which is appropriate to the group category. For example, 'lone voices', which are 'groups' with just a single very active member, may need help finding ways to connect with others within their organization or community. Other groups may be more effective at outreach within their organization, but still composed of a single individual or couple. These 'local heroes' may need to be encouraged to bring others into their group. Type 3, 'small but active' groups, are the closest to the stereotypical understanding of a 'green group' within a faith community, where the work of the group is largely carried out by a small but stable core of individuals. It is important to appreciate, again, for the purposes of effective practical engagement, that type 4, groups that are 'large with differential involvements', may appear to be better resourced than they actually are, as the full range of members are only occasionally involved, while a smaller committed core is more integral to group work. In some cases, these large groups may already be at an optimal size and better suited to mentoring other smaller groups or consolidating their successes; in such cases, engagement from outside may be best designed to draw on these groups as exemplars or 'beacon' schemes for other commensurate networks.

My key overall point here is that individual groups have different compositions, and it may be necessary to formulate campaigning and outreach strategies that can be adjusted to map onto the very different needs of each of these four types of local group across the bottom level of the scale.

Part 2: National (A–F) and international

I turn next with this descriptive work to the regional and intermediate (subnational) coalescing of eco-active religious individuals and groups. It is here that polycentrism becomes particularly relevant as one finds a range of different and possibly overlapping forms of network that are expressed at different levels of scale. The illustration in figure 1, above, includes three sets of small boxes which are meant to signify individual eco-groups (I^1). These groups may belong to different religions or denominations (signified by different types of cross-hatching), and the affiliation of an individual place of worship with their wider denomination can be strong or weak (signified by the random shading of various boxes from dark to light). Individual eco-groups may also participate in several different overlapping national-level networks, as indicated by the different boxes drawn around subsets. Two types of national-level meta-grouping, E and F, do not have formal participation of individual member groups, but may nevertheless engage with religious eco-groups for campaigns or mobilizations.

Table 2 presents a random subset of national groups, chosen merely to provide a concrete illustration of each category: there are dozens of other examples in each

category that might equally well have been chosen, and there is nothing specifically exemplary about the seven shown here.

Table 2: Some examples of national religious environmental groups

Name	*Website*	*Category (figure 1)*
Eco-Congregation Scotland	http://www.ecocongregation-scotland.org	Ecumenical (A)
Gronnkirke	https://kirken.no/gronnkirke	Denominational network (B)
Shrinking the Footprint (UK)	http://www.london.anglican.org/mission/shrinking-the-footprint	Denominational campaign (D)
Live Simply UK (Catholic Agency for Overseas Development)	https://cafod.org.uk/Campaign/How-to-Campaign/Livesimply-award	Religiously affiliated NGO (E)
Christian Aid	https://www.christianaid.org.uk/campaigns/climate-change-campaign	Unaffiliated religious NGO (F)
Anglican Communion Environmental Network	https://acen.anglicancommunion.org	International denominational hierarchy, environmental subcommittee
Alliance of Religion and Conservation	http://www.arcworld.org	International ecumenical group

The most visible form of national-level grouping is the classic REMO (category A in figure 1), often situated within a particular religious tradition, but also often working in an ecumenical way (across different denominations or religious traditions). In many cases, groups may affiliate unofficially with a majority religion (as in the UK and US, where many ecumenical REMOs work from offices located within Christian organizations). However, it is important to note that there are also often networks relating to other religions, such as the UK-based EcoIslam. In all cases, membership can be variable, with some networks consisting of less than ten affiliated communities and others exceeding 1,000. It is important to stress that these groups are often entangled with those in category B, which represents networks explicitly affiliated to a specific religious denomination (examples within Christianity could include the Roman Catholic, Methodist or Lutheran churches, among many others). In some cases groups are formally constituted within a Christian or other religious denomination. Gronnkirke is organized by the Church of Norway (a Lutheran denomination of Protestant Christianity). In contrast, Eco-Congregation Scotland describes itself as ecumenical, that is, working across several different denominations, including the Church of Scotland (a Presbyterian

denomination of Protestant Christianity; hereafter CofS for brevity), the Roman Catholic Church, the Scottish Episcopal Church, the Methodist Church and many others. Going one step further, in terms of ecumenical self-identification, is Interfaith Power and Light in the United States, whose member groups span a number of different religions. In other instances networks may be run by unaffiliated organizations. In England and Wales, for example, Eco Church is run by an ecumenical Christian charity, A Rocha UK, without any official denominational links, and with relative independence from any denominational organization (in contrast to Eco-Congregation Scotland, which has staff members seconded from specific denominational groups). These relationships are complex, and I provide some analysis of the tensions and complexities of denominational and organizational affiliation below. In the case of public policy engagement, these distinctions are important because affiliations can imply a much smaller base of member groups than one might expect. For example, public policy engagement with Gronnkirke will not reach every single church within that particular denomination, and, given the dynamics outlined above, individual groups are unlikely to represent the entire worshipping community.

There are also regional networks which serve as overlapping subgroupings (marked as category C in figure 1). To take one example, Eco-Congregation Scotland has a series of 20 networks, ranging from the Ayrshire network in the south to the Orkney network in the far north. In my research in the UK, I have found that networks arise for several different reasons, and in ways that reflect the strength of local affiliation. Some arise in a bottom-up and more or less spontaneous way, representing a coalescence of groups sharing a particular religious allegiance around a particular urban conurbation or rural bioregion. In other cases, 'local networks' are the result of ecumenical REMOs attempting in a top-down way to support the development of regional expressions in less spontaneously active regions.[29] Regional networks are often small, with uneven representation across five to 15 individual groups, and can themselves embody communities of highly committed individuals. In this case, public policy engagement on the regional level may naturally involve religious communities where there is a strong regional network in place; by contrast, if no such regional network is present, special effort may be required to ensure that regional policy engagement includes religion.

There are also denominational efforts which are constituted as campaigns rather than membership networks (category D in figure 1). The largest church in England, the Church of England, like the Church of Norway, has its own environmentally orientated membership organization, called Shrinking the Footprint. In effect, almost every diocese in the Church of England takes part in the efforts of Shrinking the Footprint.[30] However, campaigns disseminated through this network will not necessarily reach a wider group than outreach directed to the Church of England subset of the Eco Church network. In some cases, leadership

[29] This initial analysis arose from interviews conducted by the author with members of Eco-Congregation Scotland, 29 Aug. 2014 and 9 June 2015.
[30] http://www.london.anglican.org/mission/shrinking-the-footprint.

overlaps between the two organizations; in other cases, the key contacts for the two in specific regions are different individuals.

Finally, there is also a range of relevant NGOs with specific religious and denominational affiliations (category E in figure 1). In the United Kingdom, this includes examples such as the denominationally affiliated Catholic Agency for Overseas Development (CAFOD), which manages the Live Simply scheme, an eco-congregation network for Catholic parishes in England and Wales; and (turning to category F on figure 1) the large non-denominational charity Christian Aid, which has engaged in sustained campaigning to church groups on 'climate justice' since 2015.[31] Many of the charities in category F are not exclusively environmental in their orientation; for example, the National Justice and Peace Network is a grassroots network of Catholic churches and individuals in England and Wales which campaigns explicitly, but not exclusively, on environmental issues.[32]

Many of the organizations highlighted above also work across national boundaries, functioning as international organizations. This tends to happen in one of two ways. The first involves international denominational hierarchies, formed through the international aggregation of national denominational groupings to represent member churches at intergovernmental agencies such as the UN.[33] So, for example, the worldwide Anglican Communion brings together Anglican and Episcopal denominations in 165 countries and has an explicit objective to 'care for environmental issues at the United Nations and to raise awareness of those issues within the Anglican Communion'.[34] This work is carried out through specific bodies such as the Anglican Communion Environmental Network,[35] and also through ad hoc groups such as the Anglican Bishops for Climate Justice.[36] There are similar international networks connected to the Roman Catholic Church, the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople, the Lutheran World Federation, the World Methodist Council and the World Assemblies of God Fellowship, each of which has millions of members and thousands or hundreds of thousands of churches worldwide. Most of these groups have both official and unofficial environmental subcommittees which produce internal policy papers and outreach strategies.

Alongside and overlapping with these international denominational networks are international ecumenical organizations. The most prominent of these is the World Council of Churches (WCC), a gathering of primarily Protestant and Orthodox Christian churches. The WCC is particularly important because it has been the site of sustained and significant high-level work on religion and ecology

[31] https://cafod.org.uk/Campaign/How-to-Campaign/Livesimply-award; https://www.christianaid.org.uk/campaigns/climate-change-campaign.
[32] https://www.justice-and-peace.org.uk/.
[33] For more on UNDP engagement by religious groups, see Natabara Rollosson, 'The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) working with faith representatives to address climate change: the two wings of ethos and ethics', *CrossCurrents* 60: 3, 2010, pp. 419–31.
[34] https://www.anglicancommunion.org/mission/at-the-un/environment.aspx.
[35] https://acen.anglicancommunion.org/.
[36] https://acen.anglicancommunion.org/resources/anglican-bishops-for-climate-justice.aspx.

since at least the 1960s.[37] There are other ecumenical groups working at an international level, such as the UK-based Alliance of Religion and Conservation (ARC: http://www.arcworld.org/), and also a range of religiously affiliated international development NGOs which campaign on environmental issues, such as Caritas Internationalis.[38] Engagement with groups at an international level may seem comprehensive, particularly given the size of some denominations worldwide. However, each has its own boundaries, and, as with national policy engagement with religious groups, successful international engagement will require effort on several fronts and attention to possible overlaps across and gaps between networks.

Analysis

Religious environmentalism is becoming increasingly visible and increasingly consolidated as a political force and social movement. However, as the movement expands, actors have becoming increasingly heterogeneous and interconnections across groups have become more complex. The various transnational actors and institutions that represent religious environmentalism do not represent a coherent global commons. Further, even where a set of shared (religious) values appears to exist, one should not assume that connectivity across groups and networks implies a stable epistemic community with a coherent focus on political ecology at a national level.[39] As I have highlighted in the categorization above, there exists a range of often interactive or overlapping modes of religious environmentalism operating at multiple levels, from that of individuals and local communities up to the national and transnational scales.[40] This increase in both visibility and diversity parallels a broader shift in contemporary political structures. As a number of environmental governance specialists have observed, the new reality of environmental politics is far more polycentric than formerly observed, consisting of complex aggregate architectures. The effects of this new context for governance have been well noted, for example in the form of increases in interruptions to 'established scales of sociopolitical regulation'.[41] No longer can a binary focus on rational individuals or national governments (or 'societies') serve as the de facto contexts for environmental politics. At the same time as multinational corporations are circumventing national or regional political structures, oppositional social movements, sometimes seemingly spontaneously, have taken up symmet-

[37] For some history of the WCC's involvement in environmentalism, see Robert Booth Fowler, *The greening of Protestant thought* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1995); Guillermo Kerber, 'International advocacy for climate justice', in Robin Globus Veldman, Andrew Szasz and Randolph Haluza-DeLay, eds, *How the world's religions are responding to climate change: social scientific investigations* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2014), pp. 278–94.

[38] https://www.caritas.org/2016/05/caritas-work-laudato-si/.

[39] Michele M. Betsill and Harriet Bulkeley, 'Transnational networks and global environmental governance: the Cities for Climate Protection Program', *International Studies Quarterly* 48: 2, 2004, pp. 471–93; Peter M. Haas, *Saving the Mediterranean: the politics of international environmental cooperation* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990).

[40] I and my co-authors unpack the tension between local and national organizational levels in Kidwell et al., 'Christian climate care'.

[41] Neil Brenner, 'The limits to scale? Methodological reflections on scalar structuration', *Progress in Human Geography* 15: 4, 2001, p. 594.

rical tactics, working to bypass national governments and forge alliances at a transnational scale.[42] So we observe an interruption to traditional power structures and unpredictable engagements with political intermediaries such as national or regionally constituted forms of authority. In the context of this multiscalar reality, public policy deployment confronts new complexities.

These suggestions regarding the complexity of structuration and the consolidation of political agency across scales have already been made more broadly by political ecologists.[43] Yet characterizations of religious environmentalism (RE) have often attempted to minimize these complexities, perhaps in part to emphasize the viability of RE as a viable avenue for environmental policy engagement. As RE begins to mature and new public policy engagements with it begin to multiply, I want to affirm that these networks are complex and entangled, and that engagement cannot assume the efficacy of simple mechanisms for dissemination or concentration of agency which flow down evenly from the top to the bottom of group hierarchies. A natural question that arises in response to this analysis of religious environmental actors across scale is which level one should target for engagement. As I have suggested above, governments and other major non-religious actors mounting campaigns to change behaviour have traditionally tended to bypass explicitly religious organizations and target individual persons and households. Ultimately, I want to argue for a reorientation of public policy in this area to pursue a multiscalar engagement with RE. To do this successfully, however, requires an understanding not just of the configuration of the RE network but of the complexities of relations across levels within this network. In what follows, I demonstrate some of these complexities using two vignettes which expand outwards into a broader analysis: (1) the Roman Catholic hierarchy; and (2) the ecumenical Eco-Congregation Scotland.

Engaging local or global: top-down or bottom-up?

The most visible forms of environmental work produced by organizations at the national and international levels are policy statements, white papers and behaviour change campaigns. Demonstrating the abiding interest of researchers in these documents, the Forum on Religion and Ecology, hosted by Yale University, has collected an extensive list of these public statements ranging across the world's religions, from which one can see the diversity of organizations represented across their authorship.[44] Alongside sociological examination of religiously affiliated individuals, these kinds of official statements have received considerable public attention as a representation of religious sentiment on environmentalism, and several studies have assessed the ways in which these documents mobilize values

[42] Lynn Staeheli, 'Empowering political struggle: spaces and scales of resistance', *Political Geography* 13: 5, 1994, pp. 387–91.

[43] For one example, see the essays in Sheila Jasanoff, Marybeth Long Martello and Peter M. Haas, eds, *Earthly politics: local and global in environmental governance* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2004).

[44] http://fore.yale.edu/climate-change/statements-from-world-religions/.

and world-views.[45] However, as Veldman and colleagues note, 'denominational statements and education programs have had difficulty penetrating to the grassroots'.[46]

A good example for opening up this examination of the connection between top-level and grassroots action is the papal encyclical *Laudato Sí*, published in June 2015. Among respondents in my research, *Laudato Sí* was described as inspiring and supporting environmental action among Christians both inside and outside specifically Roman Catholic communities.[47] This breadth of reach is not accidental. As Christie and colleagues observe, in issuing this encyclical the Pope made use of a deliberately 'cosmopolitan appeal', addressing it to 'all people of good will'.[48] Yet there are indications that reception of this high-level statement has been mixed. Some sociological surveys have indicated that among a broader sample of Catholics (beyond those who are active in RE) the perspective of the majority (at least in the United States) on climate change remains unchanged; and it seems likely that in spite of the document's high-profile launch and wide dissemination, many Catholics have not even heard of it.[49] One often comes across the assumption that Catholic practice is a passive reflection of hierarchically dispensed doctrine. Yet, as Watling argues, 'despite attempts by the church hierarchy to promote "uniform" doctrine, Catholicism is and may have always been diverse—a variety of conjunctions between doctrine and practice, theology and organizational details, clergy and laity, in different contexts'.[50] This process of negotiation is rarely reflected in representations of RE, and that omission is reflected in the common practice of approaching only elite actors when seeking to engage with religious communities on environmental matters. My interview data confirmed this. As one of my respondents, a Catholic priest in Scotland, suggested, 'the Catholic church is the largest franchise in the world. It does not have a command control structure. It looks like that from the outside, but it doesn't work like that … Parishes do what they want.'[51] Authority is a complicated phenomenon, particularly in contemporary Catholic communities.

[45] For a general survey, see Robin Globus Veldman, Andrew Szasz and Randolph Haluza-DeLay, 'Climate change and religion: a review of existing research', *Journal for the Study of Religion, Nature and Culture* 6: 3, 2012, pp. 255–75. Two recent book-length studies that have focused on leaders are Johnston, *Religion and sustainability* , and Stephen Ellingson, *To care for creation: the emergence of the religious environmental movement* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2016).

[46] Veldman et al., *How the world's religions are responding*, p. 7. A longer analysis of the preference for and pitfalls of research that focuses on high-level statements can be found in Randolph Haluza-DeLay, 'Religion and climate change: varieties in viewpoints and practices', *WIREs Climate Change* 5: 2, 2014, pp. 261–79.

[47] This observation comes from the author's interview with a Presbyterian respondent, North Scotland, 9 July 2015.

[48] Ian Christie, Richard M. Gunton and Adam P. Hejnowicz, 'Sustainability and the common good: Catholic social teaching and "integral ecology" as contributions to a framework of social values for sustainability transitions', *Sustainability Science* 14: 5, 2019, pp. 1343–54, https://doi.org/10.1007/s11625-019-00691-y. See also C. Iheka, 'Pope Francis' integral ecology and environmentalism for the poor', *Environmental Ethics* 39: 3, 2018, pp. 243–59.

[49] *Catholics divided over global warming* (Washington DC: Pew Center, 16 June 2015), http://assets.pewresearch.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/11/2015/06/Catholics-climate-change-06-16-full.pdf.

[50] Tony Watling, '"Official" doctrine and "unofficial" practices: the negotiation of Catholicism in a Netherlands community', *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 40: 4, 2001, p. 574.

[51] Interview conducted by the author, North Scotland, 9 June 2015.

Another way to look at the range of reactions by eco-active persons and groups to organizational culture within their own denominations is to accept that belonging is a complex and synthetic process. Along these lines, Sarah McFarland Taylor argues in her extended study of the American Catholic Green Sisters that the 'sisters' complex combinations of traditionalist and progressive political and lifestyle approaches make categorizing the movement along conventional notions of "left" and "right" a challenge'.[52] She argues that the sisters take a dynamic approach to their tradition, seeking to 'retrieve, conserve, and then re-inhabit (in greener ways) aspects of Catholic religious life', and that this work, 'to reconcile simultaneous commitments to honor both tradition and change', provides a window into 'the creative process of religious meaning-making in action'.[53]

Other previous studies have tended to describe denominational identity as more bounded and ideologically constraining. On the basis of his work interviewing leaders of REMOs in the United States, Stephen Ellingson frames RE organizations as embedded within the denomination or religion which they identify as their parent organization. He suggests that 'the emergence of the religious environmental movement can best be explained by understanding how activists' embeddedness in particular organizational, cultural, and eco-political contexts shapes their choices'.[54] In his view, individual REMO organizations' primary concern relates to their effectiveness in the work of identity protection—convincing their parent organizations of their continuing legitimacy and fidelity. He frames this 'formidable task' in terms of their ability to 'navigate the constraints and opportunities posed by their embeddedness'.[55] In his view, this makes coalition work more difficult and promotes an emphasis on niche activism. While Ellingson's analysis is correct with respect to some REMOs, I want to argue that it is misleading to extrapolate this view generally, particularly outside the American context where his research was conducted.

On the other hand, a strong version of this kind of resistance might lead one to conclude that individual groups are anarchistic and self-interested, and this too would, I think, be mistaken. I want to affirm an alternative model, one which chimes with Sarah McFarland Taylor's view, noted above. One of the unique features of RE is that affiliation is often focused in the context of a small community. One might be tempted to infer from this observation that individual local groups are largely motivated by parochial and, by extension, exclusively local concerns. In analysis of data collected in fieldwork with eco-congregations, our research team sought to test out this question of local identity. This led us to conclude that Christian belief and Christian community stand in both resonance and tension with wider environmental identities. We called this phenomenon eco-theo-citizenship, in order to highlight the hybridity at the heart of RE.[56] We observed that members of an eco-group usually have some local attachment,

[52] McFarland Taylor, *Green Sisters*, p. 14
[53] McFarland Taylor, *Green Sisters*, p. 15.
[54] Ellingson, *To care for creation*, p. 25.
[55] Ellingson, *To care for creation*, p. 156.
[56] Kidwell et al., 'Christian climate care'.

whether to the building fabric of a church or to their wider worshipping community. However, most of our respondents also indicated that their identity straddled a transnational confederation of Christian believers. A key aspect of religious identity for our respondents was often found at the level of denomination; but none of our respondents indicated that their environmentalism was orientated in a denominationally specific way. Religious environmentalists are far from homogeneous; rather, their forms of belonging and orientation are often hybrid. The key point to be made here is that effective engagement with local-level RE can and should anticipate that there will be both local and global dimensions, and that people involved in RE may be implicitly trained to conceptualize their eco-action on more than one scale. It is also important to acknowledge recent work in sustainability studies which highlights the way that activities carried out in apparent isolation at the level of individual communities can contribute to wider sustainability transitions in significant ways. As Koehrsen suggests, the socially bounded nature of individual faith communities can enable a process of niche formation, and these micropolitical spaces can provide fertile ground for policy experimentation. This in turn can be upscaled through lateral dissemination, often in an ad hoc way across regional networks (see figure 1, category C).[57]

Denominations, ecumenicism and diversity

Just as the relationship between international Catholic denominational hierarchy and local RE can be complex, so the same holds true for denominations more broadly. In fact, at the national level, the dynamics of affiliation can seem to be simple, but upon a closer look turn out to be unexpectedly complex. Denominational participation in RE (figure 1, categories B and D) can vary quite widely. Similarly, those REMOs that are often deliberately framed as 'ecumenical' (figure 1, category A) can have implicit or perceived affiliations that have particular implications for participation by individuals in their campaigns and networks. We can see these factors in action in another case-study based on my research in Scotland. Although the Eco-Congregation Scotland (ECS) network is notionally ecumenical, as of 2016 it was nonetheless largely composed of CofS churches, which (on the basis of Geographic Information System analysis) accounted for around 74 per cent of overall network membership. This predominance can be explained in part by the fact that the CofS is the largest denomination among Scottish Christian churches, representing 40.20 per cent of overall church buildings in Scotland.[58] It is also the largest polity by participation, the 2011 Scottish census indicating that 32.4 per cent of Scots describe themselves as CofS. If one filters out of census respondents those who reported either 'no religion' or adherence to a religious

[57] Jens Koehrsen, 'Religious agency in sustainability transitions: between experimentation, upscaling, and regime support', *Environmental Innovation and Societal Transitions* 27, June 2018, pp. 4–15, https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.eist.2017.09.003.

[58] For more details of church buildings in Scotland, see Jeremy H. Kidwell, 'Mapping environmental action', unpublished paper, March 2019, http://mapenvcom.jeremykidwell.info/mapping_draft.html. Code and data available at https://github.com/kidwellj/mapping_environmental_action.

tradition not represented among the eco-congregation sites, the proportion of those remaining who indicated an affiliation with the CofS rises to 59 per cent.[59] Though this is a relatively high figure, it still does not meet the 74 per cent level of CofS participation in this network that I found in my GIS (geographic information system) analysis. Further emphasizing CofS dominance is the low participation by Roman Catholic parishes, the second largest Christian group in Scotland. While Roman Catholic churches make up just over 10 per cent of the church buildings in Scotland and 15.9 per cent of the Scottish population describe themselves as Catholic, less than 5 per cent of churches registered as eco-congregations in 2016 were Roman Catholic.

One possible reason for this uneven participation is structural: the ECS is part-funded by the CofS and also draws logistical support from two Presbyterian denominations in the form of work in kind provided by the CofS Climate Change Officer and the United Reformed Church (URC) environmental chaplain (the URC and CofS have in recent decades formed a close organizational affiliation). The ECS offices are also located in the national headquarters of the Church of Scotland. A similar situation applies in the case of the US ecumenical network Interfaith Power and Light (IFPL), which was founded by an Episcopal minister and has a very high number of affiliated Episcopal church groups.[60] The key point here is that while both of these networks (which represent category A in figure 1) are formally ecumenical, with member groups drawn from across the spectrum of Christian denominations, their actual representation may be more unevenly distributed than this suggests.

However, these networks are not quite denominational organizations disguised as ecumenical REMOs either. There are, after all, three clearly overrepresented denominations in the ECS, though this is not noticeable until the figures are viewed in terms of proportion of overall places of worship. While their numbers are small, representation by the 41 Scottish Episcopal churches in the ECS network stands at 11.9 per cent of ECS overall, and the eleven URC churches represent 3.2 per cent of the ECS network. These smaller numbers also stand out as overrepresentations when seen against their overall proportion of Christian places of worship in Scotland, which stands at 7.4 per cent for the Scottish Episcopal Church and 1.2 per cent for the URC. So in reality, overrepresentation within the ECS is not confined to the Presbyterian CofS, but applies to several Protestant denominations which are all noteworthy for having similar organizational cultures and an ethos of ecumenicism. While the many different Christian denominations can seem homogeneous on the level of values given their shared Christian theological identity, it is important to emphasize that denominations have distinctive and sometimes quite sharply contrasting organizational cultures. In particular, different denominational organizations have particular, and often conflicting, attitudes towards hierarchy and the best structures to facilitate

[59] https://www.scotlandscensus.gov.uk/documents/censusresults/release2a/rel2asbfigure12.pdf.

[60] For more detail on the history of IFPL, see Justyna Nicinska, *Religious environmental groups and global climate change politics in the United States and the United Kingdom: what motivates activism?*, PhD diss., Rutgers University, 2013, pp. 77ff.

decision-making. So, on the one hand, as Patricia K. Townsend argues, Presbyterian (and by extension, CofS) culture tends to focus on good governance by committee, other Christian denominations, such as the Roman Catholic Church, have a contrasting organizational structure which is explicitly organized around a hierarchy.[61] Many other Christian groups eschew both denominational committees and hierarchy for theological reasons, among them many evangelical and congregationalist groups. So what one finds in actual fact is that the ECS represents (or at least represented at the time of my analysis in 2016) a strong coalition of organizationally similar Protestant denominations with weak participation by two groups with contrasting organizational cultures.

My co-researcher Alice Hague, who conducted in-depth ethnographic work with three specific eco-congregations in Scotland, also highlights the way in which 'organizational structures are important in explaining environmental engagement', both as a 'potential resource for political activism' and in other cases as a hindrance to engagement.[62] My point here resonates to some degree with Ellingson's argument, noted above; however, I want to augment this analysis with the suggestion that these structures do not necessarily ensure a consistently 'Presbyterian' or 'Roman Catholic' form of environmentalism, but that denominational culture will necessarily represent part of the context for the development of environmental practices and identity formation, and this culture may be either for or against traditional forms of hierarchy and management within those organizations. It is also important to emphasize that being resistant to a particular organizational culture does not necessarily mean that a group or person is *less* religious in their environmental practice. On the contrary, indeed, responses and networks can often bifurcate or fragment into a conservative bloc that seeks to work within the dominant institutional culture and a radical bloc that seeks to transcend or transform that institutional culture.[63]

Conclusion

There are as yet few scholarly analyses in the environmental governance literature that focus specifically on religion. The consequences of this lacuna will become more significant if the presence of religious actors in global environmental politics continues to grow. The categorization and analysis I have offered here emphasizes the scalar complexity inherent in the field of religious environmental

[61] Patricia K. Townsend, '"How many Presbyterians does it take to change a light bulb?" Confronting global climate change in the Presbyterian Church, USA', in Veldman et al., *How the world's religions are responding*, pp. 193–208.

[62] Alice Hague, *Faithful advocates: faith communities and environmental activism in Scotland*, PhD diss., University of Edinburgh, 2017, p. 200.

[63] For examples of conservative/radical bifurcations within American Roman Catholicism, see case-studies by Michael Agliardo, *Public Catholicism and religious pluralism in America: the adaptation of a religious culture to the circumstance of diversity, and its implications*, PhD diss., University of California, San Diego, 2008; McFarland Taylor, *Green Sisters*. Laurel Kearns presents a synthesis in 'Saving the creation: Christian environmentalism in the United States', *Sociology of Religion* 57: 1, 1996, pp. 55–70, https://doi.org/10.2307/3712004, and 'The role of religions in activism', in John S. Dryzek, Richard B. Norgaard and David Schlosberg, eds, *The Oxford handbook of climate change and society* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), pp. 414–28.

politics. Effective and coherent public policy and third-sector engagement with these groups will be well served by agencies that can navigate these complexities, pushing beyond stereotypes and superficial mapping of religious identity onto political structures. As we move into an increasingly post-secular international environmental policy context, assumptions regarding the simplicity of religious organizations or the simplicity of value construction by religious people will need to give way to more nuanced models and analyses. In developing this survey, I have provided a preliminary model which foregrounds the organizational complexity of the emerging international religious environmentalism. To be most effective, policy engagement will need to work in a tactical and multilateral way, engaging grassroots RE alongside more traditionally affiliated RE organizations and taking into account the hybridity that exists across this spectrum.