

Environmental Psychology. Ecological Awareness among Religious Communities

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Environmental psychology: Areas of research

Studying interplay between humans and environment:

- 1) Environmental influences on human behaviour and mental wellbeing
- 2) Individual differences influencing environmental behaviour
- 3) Encouraging pro-environmental behaviour



Environmental psychology: Funding challenges

- Overland & Sovacool (2020) analyzed climate change-related grant awards from 333 funders from 1950 with a cumulative value of USD 1.3 trillion
- Hardly any social science research grants before 1990
- Between 1990-2018, only 0.12% of research funding directed to mitigate climate-change and facilitate energy-transition was spent on the social science of climate change mitigation

Top countries and funding bodies supporting social science climate research (based on the long search string, USD).

A. By country			B. By funding body		
Country	Projects	Bn \$	Organization	Projects	Bn \$
UK	1414	2.1	European Commission	1087	2.6
US	2979	1.8	US National Science Foundation, Directorate for Education & Human Resources	412	0.460
Germany	747	1.7	UK Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council	197	0.38
France	464	1.6	Research Council of Norway	563	0.36
Spain	367	1.4	US National Science Foundation, Directorate for Social, Behavioral & Econ. Sciences	720	0.18
Netherlands	488	1.2	US National Science Foundation, Office of the Director	75	0.18
Italy	423	1.2	European Research Council	69	0.16
Belgium	448	1.1	US National Science Foundation, Directorate for Geosciences	347	0.15
Sweden	656	0.9	US National Science Foundation, Directorate for Engineering	225	0.13
Norway	700	0.85	US National Institute of Food and Agriculture	517	0.11

Environmental psychology: Research output



Contents lists available at [ScienceDirect](#)

Journal of Environmental Psychology

IF=5.2

journal homepage: www.elsevier.com/locate/jep



SAGE journals

IF=6.2

Environment and Behavior



IF=2.8

Environmental Communication



Contents lists available at [ScienceDirect](#)

Energy Research & Social Science

IF=6.8

journal homepage: www.elsevier.com/locate/erss

nature
climate change

LETTERS

PUBLISHED ONLINE: 20 OCTOBER 2013 | DOI: 10.1038/NCLIMATE2024

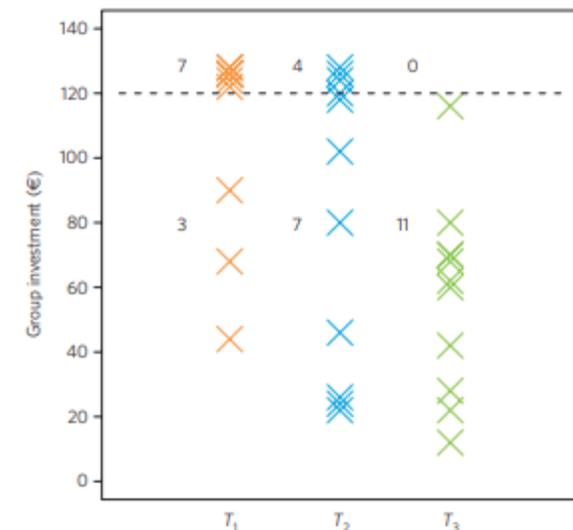
Intra- and intergenerational discounting in the climate game

Jennifer Jacquet^{1*}, Kristin Hagel², Christoph Hauert³, Jochem Marotzke⁴, Torsten Röhl⁵ and Manfred Milinski²

Economic climate-change game that rewards cooperation with:

- a one day delay (T_1)
- a seven weeks delay (T_2)
- several decades delay (T_3)

Intergenerational discounting leads to decrease of cooperation



Individual differences influencing environmental behavior: Religiosity

Stewardship beliefs



Religious liberalism

Religious beliefs

VS.

Eschatological beliefs



Religious fundamentalism

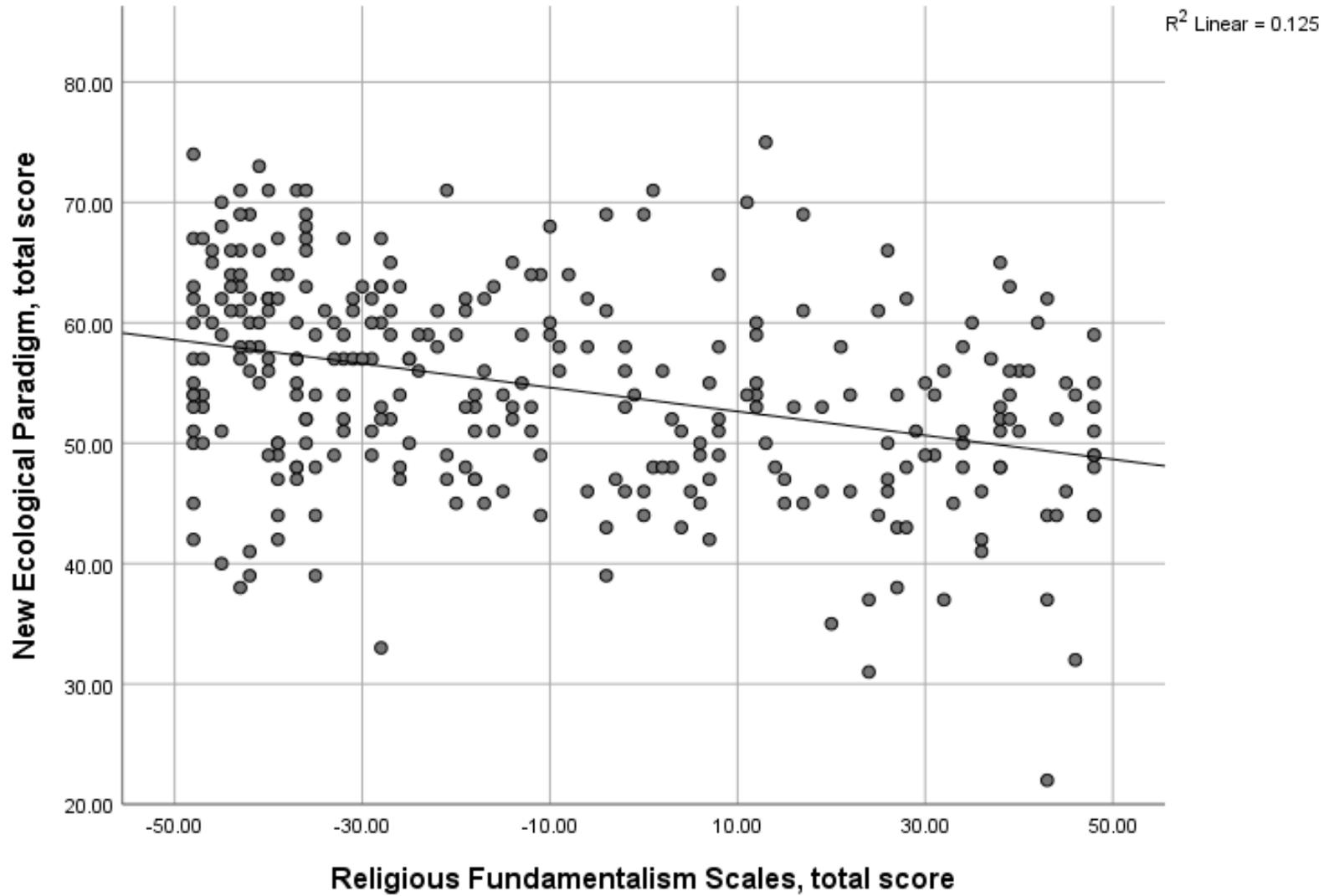
Religious practices

VS.

VS.

Original study

- How is religious fundamentalism/liberalism associated with environmental awareness among UK residents?
- How do Christians, Muslims and atheist compare in their views towards environment?
- Online data collection from 300 participants:
 - 100 atheists
 - 100 Christians
 - 100 Muslims
 - 50 males and 50 females in each group

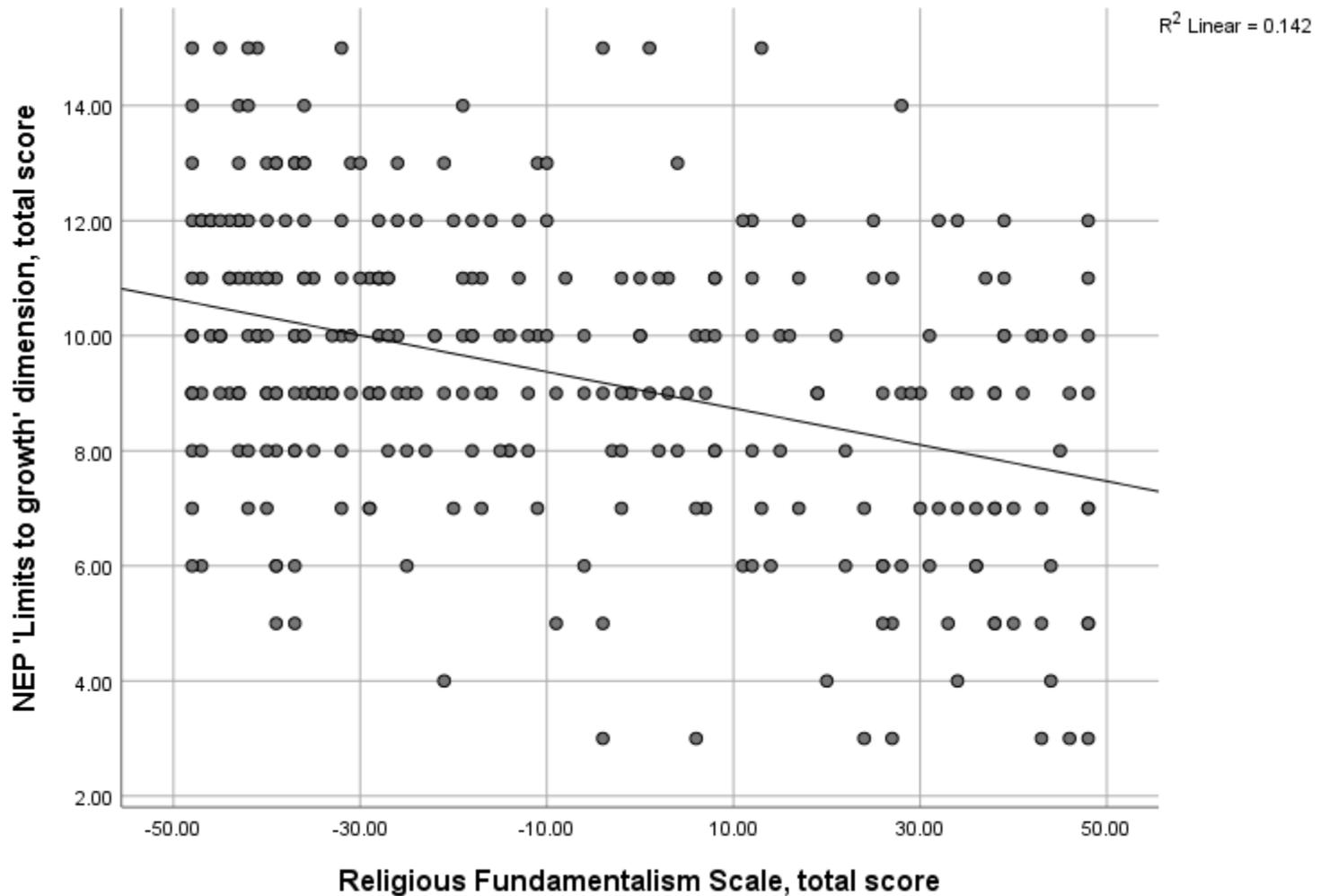


Religious
fundamentalism
negatively
predicts
ecological beliefs
(NEP total).

- *New Ecological Paradigm* questionnaire consists of five dimensions that assess different aspects of ecological beliefs
- Is religious fundamentalism particularly strongly associated with one of these dimensions?

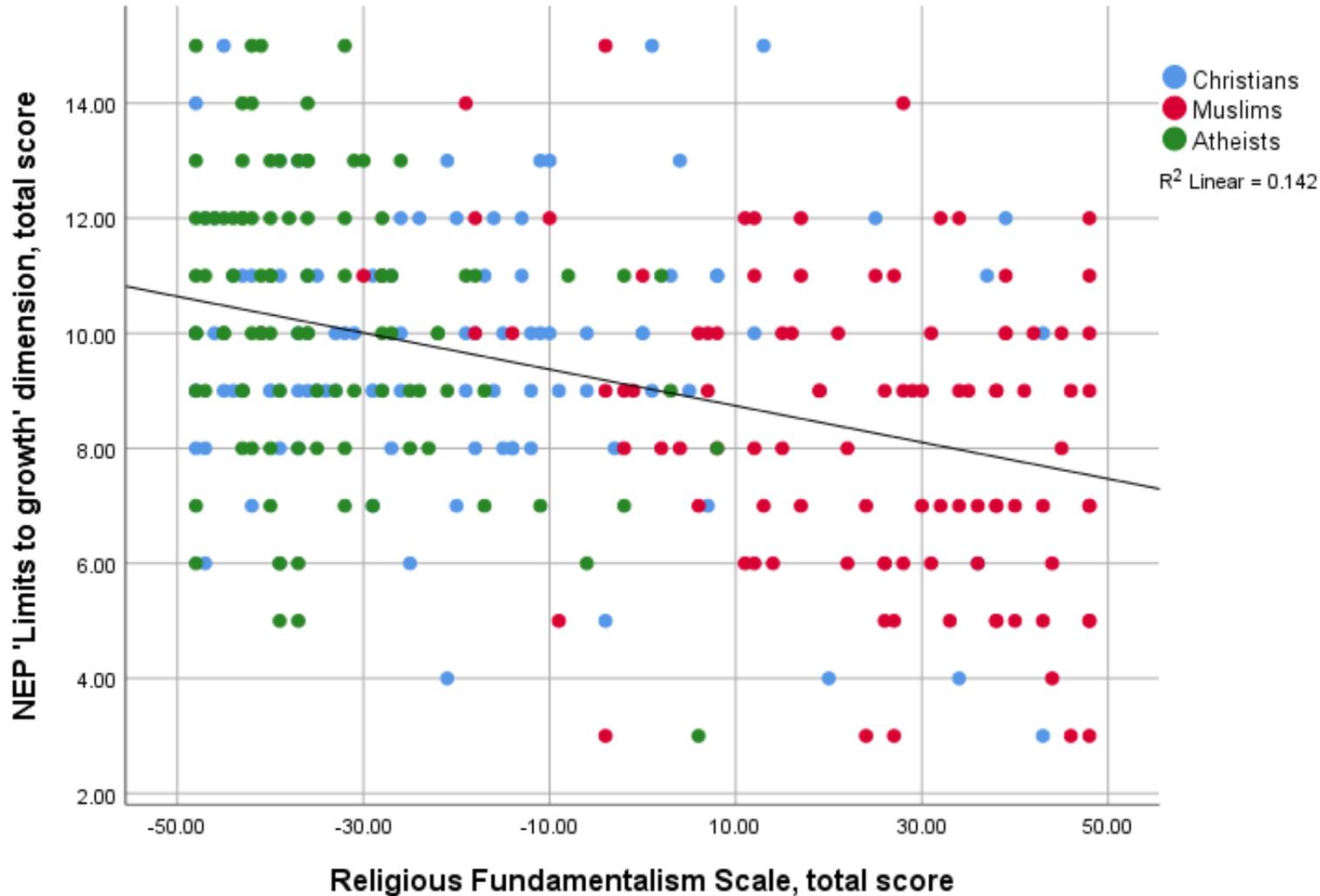
Predicted variable	R ²	F	Stand. Beta	t	Sig., p
New Ecological Paradigm: total score	0.12	42.38	-0.35	-6.51	3.2E-10
<i>New Ecological Paradigm: individual dimensions</i>					
Balance of nature	0.07	23.74	-0.27	-4.87	0.000002
Ecocrisis	0.05	15.18	-0.22	-3.90	0.00012
Antiexemptionism	0.04	12.63	-0.20	-3.55	0.00044
Limits to growth	0.14	49.05	-0.38	-7.00	1.7E-11
Antianthropocentrism	0.05	14.13	-0.21	-3.76	0.00021

- “Limits to growth”: Beliefs that the earth has limited resources



Individual 'Limits to growth' statements from NEP:

- We are approaching the limit of the number of people the earth can support.
- The earth is like a spaceship with very limited room and resources.
- The earth has plenty of natural resources if we just learn how to develop them. (*R*)



Between-group analysis:

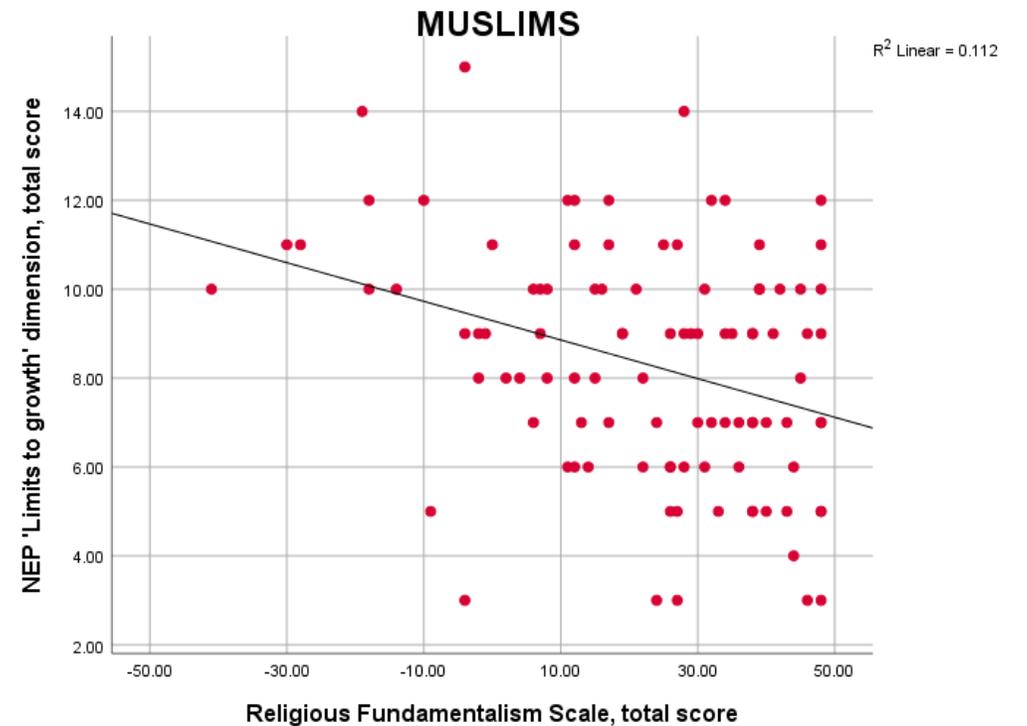
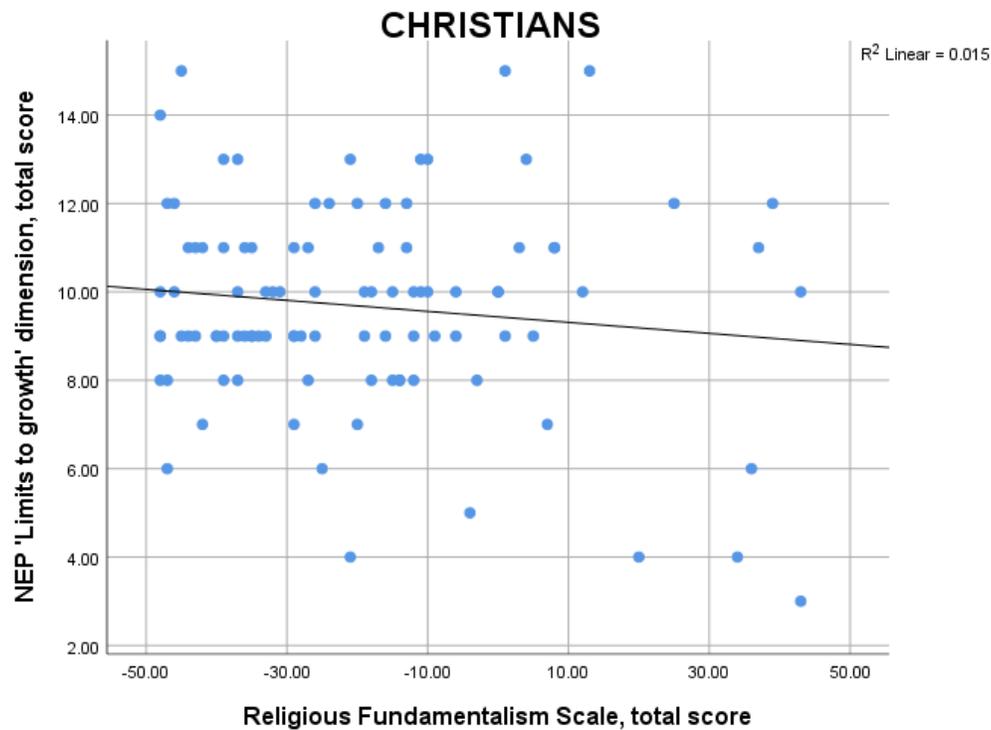
Religious fundamentalism:

Atheists < Christians < Muslims

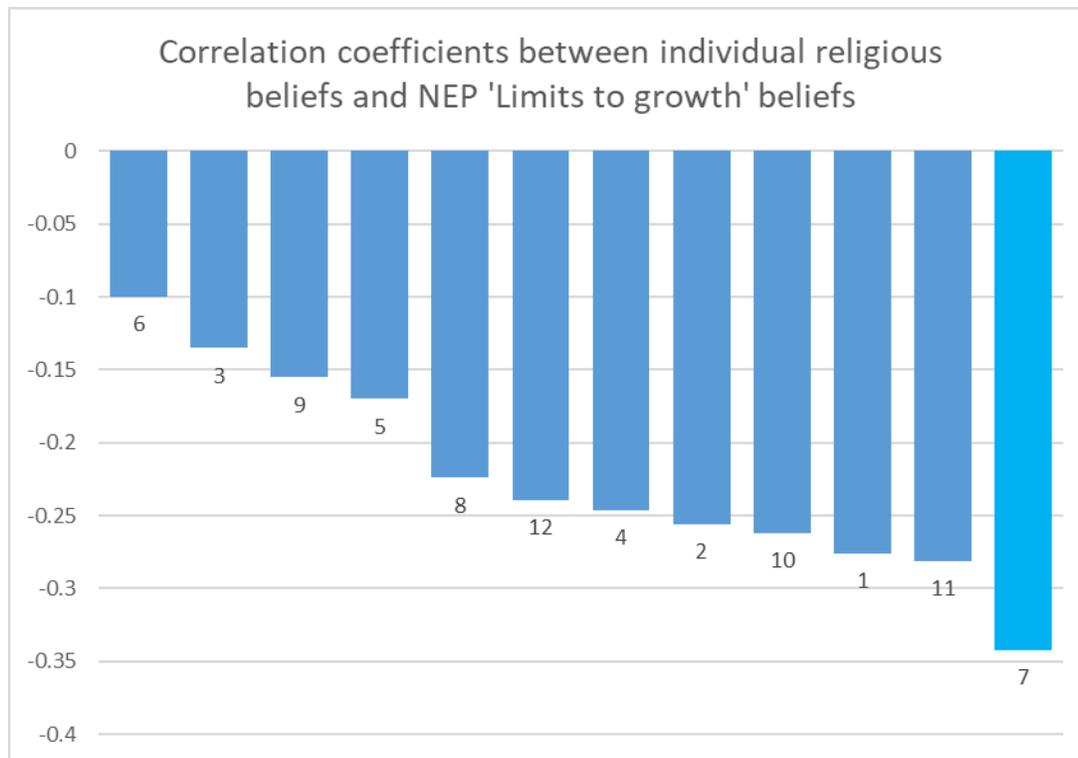
'Limits to growth' beliefs:

Atheists = Christians > Muslims

- Higher religious fundamentalism predicts weaker belief in the limits to growth among Muslim but not Christian participants



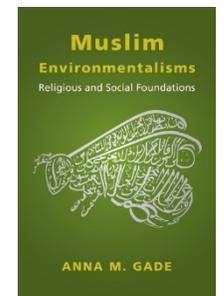
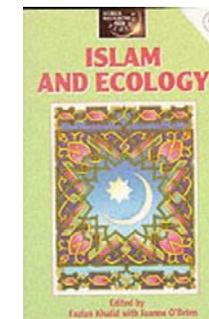
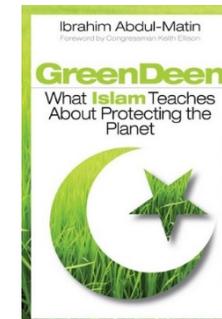
Unpacking “religious fundamentalism” – 12 belief statements



Item 7: “The Qur’an may contain general truths, but it should NOT be considered completely literally true from beginning to end.” (R)

Scriptural literalism underlies association between religious fundamentalism and disbelief in the limits of growth.

Is there something specific in the Qur’an about unlimited growth?



Future plans



Application for the collaborative PhD studentship under the London Interdisciplinary Social Science Doctoral Training Partnership (LISS-DTP) to study:

- What psychological factors underlie the link between scriptural literalism and ecological disbelief among British Muslims?
- What psychological/theological interventions could increase environmental awareness among British Muslims?