

Researching topic #17 -- SOCIETAL RESPONSES TO CLIMATE CHANGE – NON-ENVIRONMENTAL, “CIVIL SOCIETY” ACTORS (pro; con) [last revised 3/14/2021]

This prompt offers two kinds of help:

- A brief overview of the kinds of questions you might wish to explore as you study how climate change is likely to affect the food supply;
- A suggested strategy for how to search the literature as you prepare to write your paper.

OVERVIEW – SOCIETAL RESPONSES TO CLIMATE CHANGE – NON-ENVIRONMENTAL, “CIVIL SOCIETY” ACTORS, pro and con

By “civil society” Sociologists mean associations, organizations or institutions that are *neither* part of government *nor* part of the private economic sector. There are many such associations or organizations in the U.S., community organizations, volunteer organization, Kiwanis Club, Rotary International, Elks Club, the Red Cross, PTA, League of Women Voters, etc., etc.

For the most part, such civil society actors have not taken an active role in climate debates, but there is one very significant exception – religions, faith communities. (Since a large majority of people in the U.S. identify as Christian, those faiths may deserve the greatest amt of attention.)

You should investigate what the following faith communities have said and done about climate change:

- The Roman Catholic Church, especially in the US, but also the voice of the Vatican
- Traditional, “main line” Protestant churches
 - United Methodist Church
 - Presbyterian Church
 - Episcopal Church
 - Lutheran Church
- Conservative Christian churches
 - Southern Baptist
 - Evangelicals
- The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Mormons)
- Judaism
 - Conservative
 - Reform

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SUGGESTED STRATEGY FOR SEARCHING THE LITERATURE

I recommend the following sequence for searching the literature:

- 1 Start with a search of the most recent **reports from top scientific bodies and government agencies**;
- 2 Search **academic articles** using Google Scholar (scholar.google.com);
- 3 Do a **more general search** using Google or another search engine;
- 4 Search the **best newspapers** and **reputable climate websites**.
(NOTE that I do not suggest using Wikipedia.)

1 Search the most recent **reports from top scientific bodies and government agencies**

(NOTE: There are many excellent reports one can consult. You will find a lot of repetition, so you do not need to consult every source. Here I start with a handful of the most recent reports, followed by a more complete list.)

These publications should, in most cases, supply you with all you need:

IPCC's most recent full set of reports:

<https://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar5/>

EPA: https://19january2017snapshot.epa.gov/climate-impacts/climate-impacts-society_.html

U.S. Global Change Research Program:

<https://science2017.globalchange.gov/> (the science)

<https://nca2018.globalchange.gov/> (the impacts)

American Meteorological Society:

www.ametsoc.net/sotc2017/StateoftheClimate2017_lowres.pdf

A more complete list of best scientific and governmental sources:

International

Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP)
World Meteorological Organization

Agencies of the U.S. federal government

Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)
National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)
National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA)
U.S. Global Change Research Program

Scientific bodies – U.S.

National Academic of Sciences
Climate Change at the National Academies (climatechange@nas.edu)
National Science Foundation

Other professional bodies – American Meteorological Society

2 Search **academic articles** using Google Scholar (scholar.google.com)

(NOTE: Narrow and focus your search by using several phrases in quotes – such as “climate change”. For example, if you are searching for how climate change will increase the frequency of extreme weather events, don’t just enter “climate change,” search, instead for” “climate change” AND “extreme weather events”)

Search terms to use (you may certainly choose others):

“climate change” AND x, where x can be:

United Methodist Church

Roman Catholic Church

Evangelicals

Southern Baptist

Lutheran Church

Episcopal Church

Reform Judaism

Conservative Judaism

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Mormons)

(NOTE: For some citations you find on Google Scholar, you can directly download the PDF. For other citations, you may be able to find and download PDFs if your University library offers on line access to academic journals.)

3 Do a **more general search** using Google or another search engine

Use the same search terms to do a general search on Google or another search engine.

This will bring up information more recent than you find on scholar.google.com (it takes several years for research to be published in academic journals).

4 Search the **best newspapers** and **reputable climate websites**

New York Times, Washington Post, The Guardian

On line sources

Climate Central

GRIST

Society of Environmental Journalists

The Daily Climate

Climate Nexus

InsideClimate News

DeSmogBlog

Skepticalscience.com

Yale 350

(NOTE about on line sources: You will run into a lot of denialist disinformation on the internet, on websites, on blogs, on youtube. FYI, skepticalscience.com has a comprehensive list of denialist talking points (and refutations of those talking points). See, for example: <https://www.skepticalscience.com/argument.php>)

Finally, here are some other ideas to help you get started:

Some authors to search for: Bron Taylor, Bernard Zaleha, Randy Haluza-Delay, Robin Globus Veldman.

Articles about religion and climate change may be found in the *Journal for the Study of Religion, Nature and Culture*.

You should look at the websites of one liberal Protestant church. The Methodist Church in the U.S. would be a good one. Also consider looking up Pope Francis's encyclical, *Laudato Si*, and what the Catholic Church in the U.S. has said and done about climate change.

On the conservative side of American Protestantism, you can consult:

Bernard Zaleha and Andrew Szasz, "Keep Christianity Brown! Climate Denial on the Christian Right in the United States," Chapter 14 in *How the World's Religions are Responding to Climate Change: Social Scientific Investigations*, Routledge, 2013.

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Bernard Zaleha and Andrew Szasz, "Why Conservative Christians don't believe in climate change," *Bulletin of Atomic Scientists* 71(5; September/October), 2015.

-- PDF available at scholar.google.com

New links, March, 2021

<https://www.ncronline.org/news/environment/startling-inaction-climate-change-must-end-pope-says>

https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2019/jun/14/pope-francis-declares-climate-emergency-and-urges-action?CMP=share_btn_tw&fbclid=IwAR0Jk8PWbMqe9ElyHw52xZbbOB99I2jMRKDX48jxNxMQfqS9KcyIszYsXkw

<https://insideclimatenews.org/news/06082020/climate-change-pope-francis>