

Interactive comment on “On deeper human dimensions in Earth system analysis and modelling” by Dieter Gerten et al.

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Received and published: 22 March 2018

Thank you for your overall positive assessment of our paper and the helpful critical comments.

Indeed, as you note, we tried to address the possible and diverse roles of religion for global sustainability (and models of the earth system) as objective and careful as possible, pointing to both the positive and the negative sides – see our remarks in the final paragraph. We will consider pointing this out also in the Introduction in the revised version. Regarding your comment that such a paper and follow-up research “is necessarily a risky enterprise given the potential for strongly emotional and subjective reactions from fervent adherents of particular beliefs”. For the sake of forestalling

C1

misunderstandings, we intend to add a differentiation to the beginning of the paper regarding the aspects of religion that we wish to investigate: it is not about statements on the metaphysical ‘truth’ of any religion; we rather focus on the possible environmental impacts of religions as collective societal phenomena and tangible cultural forces. Also see our intended response to the other Referee’s comments.

It is a valuable suggestion to improve the framing of our paper and the suggested research field (religion in earth system analysis) regarding existing literature on wider socio-cultural research. For the revision we aim to briefly review existing key literature – while focussing on the other aspect you mention, i.e. that scientific inquiry of religious attitudes and their environmental relevance should be neutral and free of subjective statements (also see the above comment). In this context we will consider including a statement on the difficulty of achieving this very balance, especially in practice. Also see our intended response to the Editor’s remarks, for which we will point more explicitly to the ambivalence of religion.

Finally, we will carefully edit the revised version.

Interactive comment on Earth Syst. Dynam. Discuss., <https://doi.org/10.5194/esd-2017-125>, 2018.

C2