

Individual Activities and Results Collection Form

Full Name *

Enrica Martinelli

Research Unit *

Dropdown

Ferrara

Role in the Project *

- Principal Investigator
- Associated Investigator
- Researcher
- Altro:

2. Description of research activity undertaken

Research Activity *

During the reporting period, the research activities conducted within the Ferrara Unit focused on exploring the relationship between the religious factor, emergency rules, and sustainable development, with particular attention to the role of religion in contemporary crises.

The work was grounded in the key assumption that the religious phenomenon continues to represent a crucial and dynamic force in the global context, capable of shaping both social cohesion and conflict dynamics. The study aimed to investigate how religious communities can act simultaneously as agents of peacebuilding and as potential catalysts of division, and how these dynamics intersect with the pursuit of sustainable development.

The activities of the Ferrara Unit under the coordination of Prof. Martinelli were structured across several distinct phases.

In the initial phase, from 2023 to march 2024, prof. Martinelli conducted an extensive review and critical analysis of scientific and legal literature concerning religion, sustainability, and crises in contemporary societies, focusing in particular on the notion of polycrisis and its legal and ethical implications. During this stage, the main activities consisted of the collection and study of relevant sources, along with continuous discussion and exchange through meetings and calls among unit members.

Prof. Martinelli's research also concentrated on the environmental and ecological dimensions of Judaism, a topic that subsequently became the subject of her academic contributions and conference presentations.

In the second phase, from march 2024 to September 2024, alongside the line of research devoted to Jewish environmentalism, Prof. Martinelli examined how the religious factor operates in contexts of systemic crisis—social, environmental, and geopolitical—through the analytical framework of the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Particular emphasis was given to Sustainable Development Goals 3 (Good Health and Well-being), 13 (Climate Action), 16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions), and 17 (Partnership for the Goals).

Activities in this phase included both continued research and source collection, as well as the concrete refinement of the unit's thematic focus, culminating in the identification of a specific case study on which the team would concentrate its subsequent efforts. During this period, the Ferrara Unit also participated in the first PRIN project conference, held in Pisa, where Prof. Martinelli and her team presented their research objectives and preliminary findings.

The third phase, from November 2024 to February 2025, focused on a case study of the Sahel region, with specific reference to Burkina Faso and Niger, identified as emblematic contexts illustrating the complex interplay between environmental degradation, religious conflict, and fragile governance. This investigation demonstrated how religion can function both as a destabilizing factor – fueling radicalization and identity-based conflict – and as a potential instrument of reconciliation and social reconstruction, depending on the theological and political narratives involved.

During this stage, activities also included the planning, organization, and coordination—both scientific and administrative—of a two-day international and multidisciplinary conference designed to bring together distinguished experts in law and religion, ecology, and sustainability, as well as representatives of NGOs engaged in fostering dialogue with religious communities.

The conference, entitled “Religious Factor, Emergency Rules and Sustainable Development”, took place on 24–25 February 2025 at the University of Ferrara's Department of Law.

The aim was to further analyse sustainable development in its various dimensions—social, environmental, economic, health-related, and food-related—and to examine the interrelations between cultural and religious factors and emergency conditions within a state of polycrisis.

Particular attention was devoted to the contradictory aspects of the relationship between religion and sustainability, examined through the interpretive dichotomy of religion as peace builder and religion as war leader.

As an outcome of this conference, the Ferrara Unit's research also addressed the need for policymakers

to integrate considerations of religious pluralism, freedom of religion, and environmental ethics into sustainability governance frameworks.

The fourth phase, from March 2025 to July 2025, was devoted to participation in international conferences where Prof. Martinelli presented the unit's research lines and findings. These included the conference "Engaging Communities in Environmental and Climate In/Action: Narratives, Discursive Practices, and Transdisciplinary Approaches" (Bari, 23–25 June 2025), where she delivered a paper entitled "Different Shades of Green: Jewish Environmental Ethics," and the EUARE panel (Vienna, 11 July 2025) "Putting Sacred Ecology into Practice: Concrete Examples of Religious Involvement in Promoting Environmental Sustainability," where she presented "A Sustainable World: Environmental Protection in Jewish Tradition".

During this phase, Prof. Martinelli also prepared a scholarly contribution on the topic, which is soon to be published in the forum of a Class A academic journal.

The final phase, from August 2025 to October 2025, consisted of the work related to the writing of the final report to the project, collecting all the dates and results of the research conducted by the Unit, and of the planning and coordination of the concluding webinar "Religious Factor, Emergency Rules, and Sustainable Development."

This event served as the closing moment of the Ferrara Unit's activities, aimed at synthesizing the results achieved and outlining future research perspectives to be shared with the academic community. All the above-mentioned phases were marked by constant meetings and calls among the members of the research unit, coordinated by Prof. Martinelli.

3. Research Outputs and Outcomes

A. Scientific Publications

Published Works

Martinelli, E., "Different shades of green: Jewish environmental ethics" in Human Rights, Religions and the United Nations Agenda 2030, A. Angelucci, R. Bottoni, G. Camilleri, A. Cupri (eds), Ledizioni, Milano, 2025, pp. 67-83

Publications Accepted for press/In press

Articles/Essays in Preparation

Article in Preparation: Martinelli, E., "Jewish Spirituality and Care for Creation," forthcoming publication in a Forum dedicated to the results of the PRIN project "Religion and Emergency Rules," hosted by Ordines, a Class A open-access journal (Area 12 – Legal Sciences).

B. Conferences and Seminars

Organization of conferences and seminars related to the project themes

- Participation in coordination and dissemination meetings of the Ferrara Unit dedicated to defining the research framework and organizing scientific contributions to the project's thematic areas.
- February 24-25, 2025 - Ferrara: Conference "Religious Factor, Emergency Rules and Sustainable Development".

The international workshop, held at the Department of Law of the University of Ferrara, represented a pivotal event for the Ferrara Unit's research. It explored the multifaceted role of religion in emergency management—both as a constructive and as a potentially destabilizing force—highlighting the ways in which religious dynamics can contribute to the emergence, handling, and resolution of crises. The conference paid particular attention to the ambivalent relationship between religion and sustainability, structured around the dual paradigm of religion as peace builder and religion as war leader.

Session I – "The Contradictory Profiles of the Religious Phenomenon in the Dynamics of Sustainability"

Chair: Prof. Maria D'Arienzo, University of Naples Federico II

- Prof. Enrica Martinelli, University of Ferrara – Opening remarks
- Prof. Roberto Mazzola, University of Eastern Piedmont – "Sustainability and the Religious Phenomenon: Religions and Social Classes"
- Prof. Alessandro Ferrari, University of Insubria – "Sustainability and Distinction of Orders: A First Reflection"
- Paolo Naso, formerly La Sapienza University of Rome – "Religious Welfare and Global Migration"
- Prof. Nikolaos Maghioros, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki – "Profiles of Sustainability in the Orthodox Church: Theological Insights and Institutional Challenges"
- Prof. Peter Petkoff, University of Oxford – "SDGs as Interdependent Ecosystems: Religious Voices Reshaping Emergency Rules within the Agendas of the G7 and G20"
- Daniele Albanese, EU Program Manager, Talent Beyond Boundaries – "Migration Flows and Sustainability: Managing International Mobility as a Response to Polycrisis"
- Ba Boubacar, Director, Center for Analysis on Governance and Security in the Sahel (NGO Eveil / Walde Pinal) – "Approche de dialogue doctrinal avec les groupes djihadistes dans la région du Sahel central: enjeux, dynamiques et perspectives – Part I."

Session II – "Possible Paths to Sustainable Development? The Countries of the Sahel Area"

Chair: Prof. Elena Tamburini, University of Ferrara

- Prof. Pierluigi Consorti, University of Pisa – Opening remarks
- Prof. Giuseppe Castaldelli, University of Ferrara – "Environmental Emergencies: Risk Factors in the Sahel Ecosystem"
- Ba Boubacar – "Approche de dialogue doctrinal avec les groupes djihadistes dans la région du Sahel central: enjeux, dynamiques et perspectives – Part II"
- Dr. Valerio Colosio, University of Sussex / ACRA Foundation – "Social Cohesion, Traditional Religious Authorities and Protection of Vulnerable Minorities: ACRA's Bottom-Up Negotiation Experiences in the Francophone Sahel"
- Mario Mancini, President, NGO Progettomondo – "Sahel: Causes and Effects of a Humanitarian Crisis."

The conference concluded with a collective reflection on how religion shapes sustainable development processes and how scholars and policymakers can strengthen its positive potential, especially in fragile regions such as the Sahel.

- September 22, 2025 - Ferrara (15:00 -19:30)

Prof. Martinelli coordinated the final webinar, "Religious Factor, Emergency Rules and Sustainable Development," which served as the conclusive event of the Ferrara Unit's activities within the PRIN project. The webinar provided an opportunity to present the final outcomes, share results, and discuss future lines of inquiry.

The event opened with an introduction by Prof. Enrica Martinelli (University of Ferrara), followed by scientific contributions from Prof. Maria Cristina Ivaldi (University of Campania "Luigi Vanvitelli"), Prof. Elena Tamburini (University of Ferrara), and Dr. Sofia Osnato (University of Ferrara), who discussed the results with particular reference to the role of the religious factor in emergency dynamics and sustainable development processes.

Participation in conferences and seminars related to the project themes

January 9–10, 2025 – Pisa: Participation as speaker in the PRIN conference “Religions and Rules of Emergency: First Point of a Research,” held at the University of Pisa.

Prof. Martinelli presented the summary reports of the activities carried out by the Ferrara research unit, illustrating the results collected during the study on the contribution of religions for the realization of a path of sustainable development.

The conference "Religious factor, emergency rules and sustainable development" scheduled for 24 and 25 February 2025 at the Department of Law of Ferrara was also announced, a central moment for the research of the Ferrara unit on the occasion of which to delve deeper into the profiles most significant relating to the ambivalent role of the religious factor with respect to sustainable development.

On this occasion, the case study identified and explained by prof. Martinelli for the purposes of research and future study meeting at the Department of Law of Ferrara was also introduced. In this regard, the African continent has been identified as a case study, and in a special way the countries of the Sahel area, on which the in-depth studies of Ferrara unity have focused.

- February 24–25, 2025 – Ferrara: Conference “Religious Factor, Emergency Rules and Sustainable Development.” Introduction by Prof. Martinelli (as detailed above).

Prof. Martinelli introduced the work of the conference and summarized the work carried out by the Ferrara unit, the research perspective of the event and the expected results.

- June 25, 2025 – Bari: Participation as speaker in “Engaging Communities in Environmental and Climate In/Action” with the paper “Different Shades of Green: Jewish Environmental Ethics.”

Research Focus: The presentation investigates the intersection between Judaism and environmental ethics, posing the central question: To what extent can Jewish thought be considered inherently ecological, and how does it contribute to the development of a universal environmental ethic?

This inquiry arises within the broader framework of an ongoing global discourse on the moral, spiritual, and scientific dimensions of the ecological crisis. The study explores whether a genuinely Jewish environmental consciousness exists, and how traditional sources—biblical, rabbinic, and contemporary—can inform ecological responsibility in the context of sustainable development.

Content Overview: The paper opens by situating the ecological debate within a post-secular cultural landscape, where ethical, scientific, and religious perspectives converge to address environmental degradation. It emphasizes the crucial role of faith communities, particularly within Western contexts, in fostering moral reflection and inspiring sustainable practices.

A central section examines Judaism’s engagement with environmental issues, beginning with critiques of scriptural interpretations—especially Genesis—that have historically been accused of legitimizing human domination over nature. Against this background, the paper traces the rise of Jewish environmental movements from the 1990s onward, such as Shomrei HaAdamah, COEJL, Hazon, and Canfei Nesharim, highlighting their theological diversity and shared ecological commitment.

Through a close reading of key texts, notably Deuteronomy 20:19–20 and Mishnah Avot 3:7, the analysis reveals the pluralism and interpretive richness of Jewish tradition. The tension between anthropocentric and ecocentric interpretations is shown not as a contradiction but as an expression of Judaism’s dialogical approach, capable of integrating ancient wisdom with contemporary ecological awareness. Subsequent sections outline core ethical principles with ecological implications, including bal tashchit (do not destroy), tza’ar ba’alei chayim (compassion for animals), shmitah (sabbatical year), and tikkun ‘olam (repairing the world). These doctrines collectively articulate an ethic of responsible stewardship and active participation in the preservation of creation. Judaism thus conceives environmental ethics not as passive conservation but as dynamic co-creation—a continuous process of “mending the world” in partnership with God.

Finally, the paper establishes the intrinsic link between environmental ethics and social justice in Jewish thought. The biblical injunction “Justice, justice shall you pursue” (Deut. 16:20) is interpreted as a

mandate to protect the most vulnerable—both human and nonhuman—against ecological and social inequities. The rabbinic teaching of Rabbi Yohanan Ben Zakai (“If you have a sapling in your hand and they tell you the Messiah is coming, first plant the sapling”) epitomizes the Jewish imperative of hope, care, and ethical action toward creation.

Conclusion: The presentation concludes that Judaism embodies a comprehensive ecological ethos grounded in moral responsibility, interpretive plurality, and the inseparable bond between environmental and social sustainability. Jewish environmentalism thus emerges as a distinctive yet universal framework capable of enriching the global pursuit of an environmental ethic rooted in justice, compassion, and reverence for life.

- July 11, 2025 – Vienna (EUARE): Participation in the panel “Putting Sacred Ecology into Practice: Concrete Examples of Religious Involvement in Promoting Environmental Sustainability” with the paper “A Sustainable World: Environmental Protection in Jewish Tradition.”
Presentation abstract: The prevailing stance in Jewish orthodoxy is that environmental issues are extra-legal and not under the purview of Halakhah (Jewish law). While considered important, environmental protection falls only under *midat haḥasidut* (extraordinary piety). This ultimately translates into environmental protection being treated as non-obligatory and only under the purview of righteous behaviour rather than obligation. This has created a significant barrier to halakhically driven environmental decision-making. Indeed, a persistent problem can be identified within the discourse of Jewish law: namely, the paucity of scholars addressing that which is regarded by many as the most significant issue of our era, namely the environmental crisis and the suffering of our planet. The article argue that this worldview emerges from the process of conceptualizing the prohibition of *bal tashḥit* (waste not) the prohibition against wastefulness originating in Deuteronomy 20:19. This verse gave rise to two worldviews: the first was accorded a high level of priority, with the objective of preserving the environment being prioritised based on a sense of compassion for the non-human world. The second worldview is one which places significant emphasis on a self-concerned environmentalism, characterised by the belief that harm to the environment is equated with self-harm. Privileging this latter worldview creates a pathway to advance Jewish legal discourse and align it with mainstream environmentalism. Indeed, once environmental damage is recognised as damage to life, and thus to sustainability in all its forms, the full force of the Jewish legal system could be implemented to address these issues. The Halakhah upholds the sanctity of life. The direct harm to humans resulting from environmental damage necessitates the prioritization of an environmentally conscious ethical framework that is more aligned with contemporary times, to inform environmental decision-making with legal force.
- February 24–25, 2025 – Ferrara: Webinar “Religious Factor, Emergency Rules and Sustainable Development.” Introduction by Prof. Martinelli (as detailed above).
On this occasion, Prof. Martinelli coordinated and managed the entire preliminary phase of organization, planning and the subsequent phase of realization and management of the event and also dedicated herself to the preparation of her introductory report of the workshop work, in which she summarized the work carried out by the Ferrara unit, the research perspective of the event and the expected results.
- November 19, 2025 – Pisa: Participation in the PRIN final webinar presenting the outputs and outcomes of the Ferrara Unit’s research.

C. Other Outputs and Outcomes

Other Outputs *

- Development of a case study on the Sahel region analyzing the interconnections between religion, crisis, and sustainable development, maintaining contact with NGO representatives involved in the February 2025 workshop for future collaborations and events.
- Scientific contribution to the contents and bibliographic sources section of the project website dedicated to the Ferrara Unit's research results.
- Drafting of internal research reports summarizing findings for dissemination among project members.

Other Outcomes *

The research carried out by the Ferrara Unit under Prof. Martinelli's coordination yielded significant outcomes at both scientific and institutional levels.

Scientifically, it advanced the understanding of religion as a variable in crisis management and sustainability policies, demonstrating that faith communities are essential yet often overlooked actors in achieving the SDGs.

Institutionally, the study underscored the need to integrate religious dimensions into policy frameworks concerning environmental protection and sustainable governance, offering interpretive and methodological tools for scholars and policymakers alike.

The forthcoming publication of the unit's findings in a Class A journal forum will further enhance the visibility and academic impact of the Ferrara Unit's contribution to the PRIN project.

Additional Notes or Comments

The research activities of the Ferrara Unit, coordinated by Prof. Martinelli, have made a substantial contribution to the broader objectives of the PRIN project by deepening the theoretical and ethical understanding of the link between religion and sustainable development. The results highlight the potential of religious ethics—particularly Jewish environmental thought—as a moral and cultural foundation for ecological responsibility.

The Unit will continue to disseminate its findings through academic publications and seminars, consolidating its contribution to the national and international debate on religion, sustainability, and legal frameworks for environmental protection.

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