

Sunday the day of rest for fires, study suggests

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New research out of the University of Melbourne draws a link between religion and the incidence of fire around the world

Fires are more prevalent on a Tuesday and less likely on a Sunday, according to a new University of Melbourne study, which highlights the dramatic effect humans, religion and culture have on the global climate.

Climate scientist Dr Nick Earl, from the University's School of Earth

Sciences, found fires around the world appear to be strongly influenced by the working week and particularly days of rest associated with religion.

Of the more than a billion global fires that burned between the years 2001 and 2013, Sunday was the least active day with only 104 million fires.

That's nine million fewer fires, or eight per cent less, than the number of fires on a Tuesday – the middle of the working week.

"This study shows there's a very clear weekly pattern to fires around the world," says Dr Earl.

"Nature doesn't adhere to the weekly cycle, so this really highlights the influence we have on the planet when it comes to fires."

Studying weekly cycles – a human concept - in meteorological variables is a common point of research, since it allows scientists to examine the level of human influence on nature.

Dr Earl's study is the first time the seven-day weekly cycle has been analysed in relation to global fires.

While the weekly cycle was pronounced for Australia and the US, Dr Earl found the weekend minimum rate of fires was not consistent across the world.

For instance, areas with higher Muslim populations, such as the Kazakhstan region had Thursday and Friday minimums.

"But Friday is the 'day of assembly' and prayer for the Muslim faith, so it actually strengthens the argument for how religion impacts our [climate](#)

," Dr Earl says.

More information: Nick Earl et al. Weekly cycles of global fires - associations with religion, wealth and culture, and insights into anthropogenic influences on global climate, *Geophysical Research Letters* (2015). [DOI: 10.1002/2015GL066383](https://doi.org/10.1002/2015GL066383)

Provided by University of Melbourne

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