



ADDRESSING CLIMATE CHANGE: THE
APPLICATION OF ISLAMIC PRINCIPLES AND
VALUES BY A NON-GOVERNMENTAL
ORGANIZATION (NGO)

BY

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ABSTRACT

This thesis addresses practical Islamic applications to climate change by looking at a case study of an Islamic environmental NGO in Indonesia, LPBI-NU. A variety of qualitative research methods were used as part of the overarching approach adopted by the thesis. The case study of LPBI-NU was set in the context of issues such as the role of religion in addressing environmental degradation and the compatibility between religion and civil society. Though religion and civil society has long been deemed to be incompatible, this thesis argues that the urgency of today's environmental crises has made it a matter of critical importance to infuse civil society with a religious discourse. To take the argument beyond theory, an inquiry into LPBI-NU's operations sought to uncover useful lessons on how an Islamic organisation can participate in civil society to address climate change. The organisation, with its vision of bringing about *rahmatan lil 'ālamīn* (blessings to all mankind) via the application of *tawassuṭ* (moderation), *tawāzun* (balance) and *tasāmuḥ* (tolerance), showcases a promising strategy of engaging the Muslim masses by using the familiar vocabulary of the Qur'ān on the one hand, and collaboration with the state to address practical policy issues on the other.

ملخص البحث

يتناول هذا البحث تطبيقات عملية إسلامية في ظاهرة تغير المناخ من خلال النظر في دراسة حالة لمنظمة غير حكومية بيئية إسلامية في إندونيسيا تعرف اختصاراً بـ (LPBI-NU) وهذه المنظمة هي مؤسسة تُعنى بإدارة الكوارث وتغير المناخ. استُخدمت مجموعة متنوعة من أساليب البحث النوعي كجزء من منهج شامل اعتمد في هذه الأطروحة. منهج دراسة الحالة المقرر في هذا البحث عن منظمة (LPBI-NU) كان في سياق قضايا مثل دور الدين في معالجة التدهور البيئي والتوافق بين الدين والمجتمع المدني. على الرغم من أن الدين والمجتمع المدني يعتبران منذ وقت طويل غير متوافقين ، هذه الرسالة تقول إن إلحاح الأزمات البيئية الحالية جعلت من ذلك التوافق مسألة ذات أهمية حاسمة لنفح المجتمع المدني بالخطاب الديني. لاخذ الجدل الى ما وراء النظرية، سعى التحقيق في عمليات منظمة (LPBI-NU) لكشف الدروس المستفادة حول كيفية مشاركة المنظمة الإسلامية في المجتمع المدني للتصدي لتغير المناخ. المنظمة، مع رؤيتها لتحقيق مفهوم (رحمة للعالمين) عن طريق تطبيق الوسطية، الاعتدال، والتوازن، تعرض استراتيجية واعدة لجذب الجماهير المسلمة باستخدام المؤلف من مفردات القرآن من جهة، والتعاون مع الدولة لمعالجة قضايا السياسات العملية من جهة أخرى.

APPROVAL PAGE

I certify that I have supervised and read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Master of Arts in Muslim World Issues.

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Cemil Akdogan
Supervisor

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this dissertation is the result of my own investigations, except where otherwise stated. I also declare that it has not been previously or concurrently submitted as a whole or in part for any other degrees at IIUM or other institutions.

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**ADDRESSING CLIMATE CHANGE: THE APPLICATION OF ISLAMIC
PRINCIPLES AND VALUES BY AN NGO**

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Indeed, all praise is due to Allah. I praise Him and seek His help and forgiveness. I seek refuge with Allah from the evils of my soul and the wrong of my acts. He whom Allah guides, no one can misguide; and he whom He misguides, no one can guide.

I would like to thank my parents, Ghazali bin Ma'on and Khadijah Binte Awad for giving their blessings to me to undertake this journey. I would not have gotten this far without their prayers and guidance.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

GENERAL INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

The idea that humanity was facing an environmental crisis of monumental proportions, brought about by industrial development, exploded into public consciousness some four decades ago. Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring*, a damning critique of the increasingly widespread practice of using synthetic pesticides and insecticides in industrial agriculture, can be seen as one trigger for the formation of a mass movement that came to be labeled as New Environmentalism.¹

Several incidents occurred in the 1960's and 1970's to further fuel this fledgling movement. One such incident that attracted considerable public attention was the mercury poisoning that affected a coastal community in Minamata Bay, Japan.² After two decades of operations, it was found that a chemical factory was responsible for poisoning residents of Minamata through the high levels of mercury that it discharged directly into the bay.

Since then, philosophers, sociologists, policy-makers, businesses and non-governmental organisations have scrambled to find solutions to various environmental issues. However, these attempts have been beset with issues of competing priorities and competing views about the appropriate ethical bases for action. In the meantime, the publication of reports by the Intergovernmental Panel for Climate Change in 1990, 1995, 2001 and 2007, which confirmed that a whole host of practices were

¹ J. McCormick, *The Global Environmental Movement*, (Chichester: John Wiley & Sons, 2nd edn., 1995), 56.

² *Ibid.*, 71.

contributing towards human-induced climate change, contributed towards a greater sense of urgency to find workable solutions. Amidst all the gloom, some take heart that consensus is slowly emerging that technocratic solutions need to be accompanied by a reevaluation of man's ethical relationship with the environment.³

Muslims have been slow to respond to the crisis. Discussions on how to tackle various environmental problems from an Islamic perspective only gathered momentum in the late 1980's.⁴ Even then, most discussions tended to be theoretical in nature, focusing on how to build an environmental ethics based on Islamic principles, with most works taking a legalistic⁵ or philosophical⁶ perspective. Few workable policies on how to tackle the various dimensions of the crisis from an Islamic perspective have been formulated and few works have attempted to analyse how Islamic principles can be practically implemented in environmental programmes.

This slow response by Muslims is also seen in relation to the more recent issue of climate change. While the international community had begun working on building consensus towards an international response to climate change since 1990 (culminating in the Kyoto Protocol that came into force in 2005), only in 2009 did Muslims begin to mobilise to address climate change in a united and systematic manner.⁷

At the same time, the urgency of finding ways to mitigate and/or adapt to climate change can no longer be denied. Widespread consensus on this has been

³ J. Ronald Engel, "Introduction: The ethics of sustainable development" in *Ethics of Environment and Development*, edited by Joan G. Engel and J. Ronald Engel, (London: Belhaven Press, 1992).

⁴ Richard C. Foltz, "Introduction", in *Islam and Ecology: A Bestowed Trust*, edited by Richard C. Foltz, Frederick M. Denny and Azizan Baharuddin, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard Centre for the Study of World Religions, 2003); Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *Religion and the Order of Nature*, (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996).

⁵ M. Izzi Dien, *The Environmental Dimensions of Islam*, (Cambridge: The Lutterworth Press, 2000).

⁶ S.H. Nasr, *Religion and the Order of Nature*, (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996).

⁷ Alliance of Religions and Conservation, "Muslim Seven Year Plan to be core part of annual Japan-Muslim Nations Dialogue", ARC News and Features, < <http://www.arcworld.org/news.asp?pageID=300> > (accessed 7 March, 2010).

achieved recently as a result of several decades of research and dialogue by concerned parties. In 1972, the landmark report “The Study of Man’s Impact on the Climate” was published, which for the first time, gave a strong indication that human activities could have an impact on the regional and global climate.⁸ By then, people were becoming aware that the concentration of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases in the atmosphere was rising due to a whole host of human activities such as deforestation and the widespread use of fossil fuels, and that this could lead to more heat being trapped in the atmosphere and long-term changes to the global climate. It took some two decades more for a strong resolve to be formed within the international community that steps had to be taken to address climate change. At the Rio Earth Summit in 1992, the United Nations Framework Convention for Climate Change (UNFCCC) was formed to coordinate a global response to climate change.

However, at that time, the science of climate change was still young, and there was great uncertainty regarding the actual impacts of human-induced climate change. The Assessment Reports that are periodically produced by the Intergovernmental Panel for Climate Change (IPCC) gives the most authoritative picture of the current state of knowledge on climate change in any given period. The IPCC First Assessment Report published in 1990 was a relatively slim volume with 365 pages and tried to present a persuasive, though not quantitative case for human-induced climate change.⁹ The climate models that were used then to predict the impact of different scenarios of climate change were relatively simple and based on considerable guesswork. Such

⁸ W.W. Kellogg, “Mankind’s Impact on Climate: The Evolution of an awareness”, in *Climate Change*, D. Reidel Publishing Company, v. 10, pp 113-136.

⁹ H. Le Treut, R. Somerville, U. Cubasch, Y. Ding, C. Mauritzen, A. Mokssit, T. Peterson and M. Prather, “Historical Overview of Climate Change” in: *Climate Change 2007: The Physical Science Basis. Contribution of Working Group I to the Fourth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change*, edited by S. Solomon, D. Qin, M. Manning, Z. Chen, M. Marquis, K.B. Averyt, M. Tignor and H.L. Miller, (Cambridge, United Kingdom and New York, NY, USA: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

uncertainty meant that there was still widespread skepticism that climate change was taking place, or that climate change is largely a human-induced rather than natural process.

The Fourth Assessment Report of the IPCC published in 2007 is widely recognised as having provided the most authoritative and credible argument that the warming of the climate system is indeed underway.¹⁰ The report also convincingly argued that “[m]ost of the observed increase in global average temperatures since the mid-20th century is *very likely* due to the observed increase in anthropogenic [greenhouse gas] concentrations”,¹¹ hence silencing doubters who had earlier argued that climate change was largely due to natural processes rather than human activities.

The developments in climate science in the last few decades meant that the report was able to give the most accurate projections to-date about the progress of climate change. One of the most worrying projections was that “[c]ontinued [greenhouse gas] emissions at or above current rates would cause further warming and induce many changes in the global climate system during the 21st century that would *very likely* be larger than those observed during the 20th century.”¹² Some of the changes that can be expected include a greater frequency of hot extremes, heat waves and heavy precipitation, and an increase in the intensity of tropical cyclones. This could definitely be seen as an urgent call to action, for if we continue along the path of “business-as-usual” in our social, economic and political practices, we are likely to face a future of severe climatic disruptions on a scale never seen before.

¹⁰ Richard Black, “Humans blamed for climate change”, BBC News Website, <<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/science/nature/6321351.stm>> (accessed 30 November, 2011); Elisabeth Rosenthal and Andrew C. Revkin, “Science Panel Calls Global Warming ‘Unequivocal’”, The New York Times, <<http://www.nytimes.com/2007/02/03/science/earth/03climate.html?scp=2&sq=ipcc+2007+report&st=nyt>> (accessed 30 November, 2011).

¹¹ Core Writing Team; R.K. Pachauri; A. Reisinger, *Climate change 2007: synthesis report*, (Geneva: IPCC, 2007), 39.

¹² *Ibid.*, 72

The past few decades of research and discussion has indisputably identified climate change as one of the greatest environmental challenges of our times. Unlike environmental issues that had earlier gained attention and sparked off the environmental movement, climate change is a global issue requiring global solutions. Therein lies the challenge, for all countries, rich or poor, and no matter the level of greenhouse gas emission, could potentially be affected by climate change and thus have a part to play in addressing it.

It is increasingly being recognised that the grave challenge posed by climate change demands that all ways and means be employed to try and tackle it. Powerful secular organisations like the United Nations are even beginning to engage with religious organisations in a spirit of solidarity. A significant event that marked this milestone was the launch, in 2009, of a joint initiative between the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Alliance of Religions and Conservation (ARC) for working with the world's major faith groups in drawing up individual plans of action for tackling climate change using the resources of the respective groups. Remarking on the initiative, the UNDP's Assistant Secretary-General Olav Kjørven was reported to have said, "[w]ith their unparalleled presence throughout the world, the world's religions could be the decisive force that helps tip the scales in favor of a world of climate safety and justice for future generations."¹³ This represents a clear recognition of the important role that religions can play in addressing climate change. Such a position also marks a significant break from the long-standing view that only secular civil society organisations had a role to play in addressing the challenges faced by modern nation-states.

¹³N. Rollosson, "The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Working with Faith Representatives to address Climate Change: The Two Wings of Ethos and Ethics", in *Cross Currents*, v.60(3), pp. 419-431 , <Academic Source Premier, EBSCOhost> (accessed November 30, 2011).

Amongst Muslims, the momentum for addressing climate change has been building up rather slowly. A concerted effort to address the challenge begun only in early 2009; sparked by the same UNDP and ARC initiative described above. Then, a wide range of Muslim bodies, countries and organisations came together to begin the process of drafting a Muslim Seven Year Action Plan (M7YAP).¹⁴ Since then, further developments have taken place, with a conference held in Kuwait in July 2009 to gather together some 200 key Muslim leaders, scholars, civil society members and government officials from around the world to discuss the M7YAP in greater detail. This was followed-up by a two-day International Conference on Climate Change held in Bogor, Indonesia, in April 2010, to discuss the setting up of an umbrella body that would coordinate the execution of the M7YAP.

One of the outcomes of the Bogor conference was a declaration directed at the Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC), calling on Muslim countries to take the lead in addressing climate change.¹⁵ Unfortunately, however, the delegates in Bogor failed to achieve a resolution on the setting up of the proposed umbrella body, the Muslim Association for Climate Change Action (MACCA). In addition, the conference failed to conclude on the implementation of an environmentally-friendly haj, one of the items on the agenda for discussion. This presents a palpable set-back for ongoing efforts by Muslims to address climate change.

Interested observers can take heart, however, that despite the lack of an umbrella body, individual organisations in Muslim countries have seized the initiative to tackle the challenges presented by climate change within their means. This thesis

¹⁴ Alliance of Religions and Conservation, "Muslim Seven Year Plan to be core part of annual Japan-Muslim Nations Dialogue", ARC News and Features, < <http://www.arcworld.org/news.asp?pageID=300> > (accessed 7 March, 2010).

¹⁵ Adianto P. Simamora, "Muslim leaders told to confront climate crisis", The Jakarta Post, < <http://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2010/04/11/muslim-leaders-told-confront-climate-crisis.html> > (accessed 30 November, 2011).

takes as its case-study one such organisation, Nahd latul ‘Ulamā (NU) in Indonesia, which set up a special bureau in March 2010 to address climate change from an Islamic perspective. Efforts such as these are significant for taking the discourse about environment and Islam beyond the theological and philosophical to the realm of policy and practice. The time is ripe for much more extensive empirical research into how the Islamic perspective can be employed to address climate change.

OBJECTIVES

This study is situated precisely within such a research current. It aims explore how Islamic principles and values are used by a Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO) in Indonesia, NU to design community-based projects for mitigating and adapting to climate change. The study also seeks to analyse how NU’s strategies to confront the very modern challenge of climate change were influenced by its identity as an Islamic civil society organisation in a secular democracy. It was designed around the research question: “How can Islamic values be effectively incorporated in the climate-change related activities of NU?”

The specific objectives of the study, thus, were to:

1. Explore how Islamic principles and values are incorporated into the climate-change mitigation and adaptation projects of NU.
2. Analyse how NU’s identity as an Islamic civil society organisation in a secular democracy has influenced its strategies for addressing climate change.

It is hoped that such a study can contribute to the newly-expanding body of literature on the utility of the Islamic perspective in formulating policies and programmes to address climate change.

RATIONALE

Few studies have been done on the role of Islamic environmental NGOs. This could partly be due to the weak role of NGOs in Muslim nation-states with authoritarian governments. In addition, civil society movements are not part of the tradition of Islamic political life. Where they do play an identifiable role, Islamic NGOs tend to focus on political or social issues.¹⁶ Certainly in the case of Indonesia, studies on Islamic NGOs tend to be more concerned with the compatibility between Islam and democracy.¹⁷ Other studies focus on the role of NGOs like Muhammadiyah and NU in running social programmes and providing social services. It is only relatively recently that these two large NGOs turned their attention to environmental issues. In one of the few studies on the role of Islamic NGOs in Indonesia in addressing environmental issues, published in 2009, Hisako Nakamura and Takenobu Aoki noted that the women's wings of Muhammadiyah and NU had recently become involved in environmental education efforts.¹⁸ However, the report mainly described the activities carried out by the organisations and did not attempt to present an in-depth analysis of such efforts. Thus, this study seeks to plug the gap by presenting the results of an empirical study into the role of an Islamic NGO in addressing climate change.

In addition, while the foundation for formulating an Islamic response to environmental issues, particularly climate change, has already been laid through the existing body of work on the Islamic view of the environment, there is an urgent need

¹⁶ *Islamic Activism: A Social Movement Theory Approach*, Quintan Wiktorowicz (ed.), (Bloomington & Indianapolis :Indiana University Press, 2004).

¹⁷ R.W. Hefner, *Civil Islam: Muslims and Democratization in Indonesia*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000)

¹⁸ H. Nakamura and T. Aoki, "Islam and Environmental Improvement in Indonesia: Field Report on Muslim Activist Efforts at the Grassroots Level", in *Journal of the Faculty of International Studies*, Bunkyo University, v. 19(2), pp 83-92.

for more studies on the implications of incorporating Islamic principles in policies at various scales. Such studies can surface which principles are particularly useful in specific types of programmes and highlight strategies for successfully incorporating those principles.

The choice of Indonesia as a site of study has been made for the following reasons:

1. It is particularly vulnerable to the impact of climate change, making the search for effective solutions especially urgent.¹⁹
2. Islamic NGOs have long been at the forefront of tackling socio-economic problems in the country. The role of such Islamic organisations has become more important in the country in the Post-Suharto political order.²⁰

THESIS STRUCTURE

The thesis will be divided into seven chapters as follows.

1. Chapter One: Introduction
2. Chapter Two: Research Methodology
3. Chapter Three: Role of Ethics and Religion in Addressing the Present Environmental Crisis
4. Chapter Four: Religion and Civil Society

¹⁹ M. Case, F. Ardiansyah and E. Spector, "Climate Change in Indonesia: Implications for Humans and Nature", WWF Publications, <<http://www.worldwildlife.org/climate/Publications/WWFBinaryitem7664.pdf>> (accessed 8 March, 2010).

²⁰ M. Sirry, "The Public Expression of Traditional Islam: the Pesantren and Civil Society in Post-Suharto Indonesia", in *Muslim World*, v.100(1), pp 60-77, <*Academic Source Premier, EBSCOhost*> (accessed March 8, 2010).

5. Chapter Five: Islamic civil society in Indonesia
6. Chapter Six: Discussion and Analysis of Case-study
7. Chapter Seven: Conclusion

Chapter Two seeks to describe and explain the methodology employed in this study. The study was done using a set of qualitative research methods referred to as the case-study approach.

Chapter Three reviews the existing literature on the role of ethics and religion in addressing the present environmental crisis. It makes the argument that it is timely for the role of ethics and religion in addressing the environmental issues of our time to be widely recognised. It also presents the contribution of the Islamic perspective towards the understanding of environmental issues and the quest for solutions.

In Chapter Four, literature on the historical relationship between religion and civil society is reviewed in order to explain why religion's role in public space was denied for so long. The chapter argues that in confronting the grave challenges posed by climate change today, insisting on the separation of religion and civil society is no longer a tenable position.

Chapter Five explores the meanings of "Islamic civil society" within the context of Indonesia. The chapter argues that the various adjustments made by Islamic organisations to fit in with the political developments in Indonesia have allowed them to become important civil society actors that are well-positioned to tackle modern challenges such as climate change.

In Chapter Six, the spotlight is put on NU's efforts to address climate change. NU's Climate Change and Disaster Management Bureau is used as a case-study of how Islamic principles and values can be used by an Islamic civil society organisation

to address climate change. The various threads of arguments are brought together to conclude the study in Chapter Seven.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Climate change is an urgent problem requiring fast and effective responses. The responses offered by NGOs, states, international organisations, and businesses operating in the secular context leave much to be desired. This presents an opportunity for Muslims to present a viable Islamic response to the issue. However, while Muslims have started exploring which Islamic principles may guide our relationship with nature, few studies have been done to analyse how these principles can be applied in policy and practice. This study hopes to take a small step towards addressing such a lack by analysing the use of Islamic principles and values in a selected Indonesian NGO's programmes to mitigate and/or adapt to climate change. It is hoped that the findings from the study can guide future attempts to apply Islamic principles in similar programmes. In addition, such findings can give an indication to scholars of *fiqh* and philosophy on which Islamic principles need to be further clarified for greater understanding and ease of application.

CHAPTER TWO

METHODOLOGY

INTRODUCTION

This chapter describes and explains the choice of methodology for the thesis. It begins with a discussion on why the case-study approach has been chosen for the thesis, taking into account both the strengths and weaknesses of the approach. It then proceeds to explain the choice of particular qualitative research methods to support the case-study approach. The lingering concerns over the supposed merits of quantitative methods over qualitative methods are also addressed. The chapter rounds up with a brief discussion on the sampling technique adopted.

CASE-STUDY APPROACH

This thesis adopts the case-study approach. The distinguishing feature of the case-study design is that it focuses on a single ‘case’ or entity, which in this thesis is the Climate Change and Disaster Management Bureau of NU, commonly known by its Indonesian acronym of LPBI-NU. LPBI-NU is treated as a case of an Islamic civil society organisation that focuses on addressing climate change.

The term ‘case-study’ can be understood in a variety of ways by researchers; this thesis adopts the more specific meaning of the approach as an exploratory study in which the aim is not to test a hypothesis, but rather to find out the relationship between a set of variables related to the operations of a specific entity in a particular instance.¹ As pointed out by Judith Bell² in her guide for researchers in education and

¹ Gary D. Bouma, *The Research Process*, (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 4th edn., 2000), 91.

social science, “[t]he great strength of the case-study method is that it allows the researcher to concentrate on a specific instance or situation and to identify, or attempt to identify, the various interactive processes at work.” In this thesis, the case-study approach allowed the researcher to uncover the factors that influence LPBI-NU’s decision-making process when incorporating Islamic principles into its climate change projects. Amongst the variables examined, which influenced LPBI-NU’s strategies, is the political situation in Indonesia as well as NU’s identity as an Islamic civil society organisation. It is hoped that the approach is used effectively to provide readers of this thesis “with a three-dimensional picture that... illustrate[s] relationships, micropolitical issues and patterns of influences in a particular context”.³

The case-study approach is particularly suitable for exploratory studies in which the relationship between variables is not yet entirely clear.⁴ Thus, it lends itself well to this particular study’s exploratory nature, given the lack of similar studies which attempt to investigate how an Islamic civil society organisation operates to address climate change.

The foregoing discussion has explained how the strengths of the case-study approach will be leveraged upon in this study. However, the approach is not above criticism. One of the common concerns often raised is that case-studies “provide very little basis for scientific generalization”.⁵ In brief, the argument goes that the data obtained from case-studies of individual entities are too specific to form generalisations that are applicable to other contexts.

² Judith Bell, *Doing Your Research Project: A Guide for First-Time Researchers in Education and Social Science*, (Buckingham and Philadelphia: Open University Press, 2nd edn., 1993), 8.

³ *Ibid.*, 9.

⁴ Bouma, 174.

⁵ Robert Y. Yin, *Case Study Research: Design and Methods*, (Newbury Park, London and New Delhi: SAGE Publications, revised edn., 1989), 21.

It is true that case-studies are not good bases for forming generalisation in the commonly understood sense of “statistical generalisation”. Statistical generalisation refers to “an inference made about a population on the basis of empirical data collected about a sample”.⁶ It can be argued however, that case-studies can be used as the basis for “analytic generalisation”. In the latter, the empirical results of a case-study are compared with a previously developed theory in order to strengthen or revise the theory. Even in cases where the results of the specific case may not be easily generalised for other contexts, the rich data obtained from the case-study contributes towards the uncovering of patterns that could be tested by more quantitative approaches.

QUALITATIVE METHODS

The case-study approach is not tied to any particular method of data collection. It offers flexibility to the researcher to select methods that are appropriate to the study’s objectives and key questions.

In this thesis, qualitative research methods have been selected. In particular, the following methods were used:

1. Content analysis of written material related to LPBI-NU’s strategies and approaches.
2. Semi-structured interviews with the Head of LPBI-NU at the national level and with the Coordinator of Climate Change Adaptation Programme at WWF-Indonesia, who had been involved in a joint project with LPBI-NU.
3. Focus group discussion (FGD) involving a group of six LPBI-NU staff, *pesantren* teachers (Islamic religious schools) and volunteers who were

⁶ Ibid., 38.

involved in designing and implementing LPBI-NU activities that involved the *pesantren*.

4. Bibliographic research.

Qualitative methods, in general, were selected because, if carried out rigorously and systematically, they allow the researcher to answer the question, ‘What is going on here?’ often from the perspective of those who are in the situation being researched.⁷ Thus, qualitative methods are certainly well-suited to the thesis’s objective of exploring the decision-making process of an Islamic NGO when incorporating Islamic values and principles in its climate change projects.

According to Gary Bouma, in-depth interviews are a useful method “to find out what someone thinks or feels, and how they react to various issues and situations”.⁸ In this study, the semi-structured interview approach was used,⁹ whereby the researcher was guided by a set of pre-prepared questions (also often referred to as the interview schedule), but was free to pursue points of interest that emerge during the conversation. Compared to other questioning methods such as self-completed questionnaire surveys or standardised interviews, semi-structured interviews allow the researcher to generate richer data. As Deacon et. al. explains it, the method opens up more “opportunity to explore complex and sensitive social and personal issues”,¹⁰ since interviewees are allowed to “articulate their thoughts and opinions on their own terms rather than in relation to preordained response structures”.¹¹

⁷ Ibid., 171.

⁸ Ibid., 180.

⁹ David Deacon, Michael Pickering, Peter Golding and Graham Murdock, *Researching Communications: A Practical Guide to Methods in Media and Cultural Analysis*, (London: Arnold, 1998), 65.

¹⁰ Ibid., 68,

¹¹ Ibid., 68.