

The Islamic Declaration on Global Climate Change: An Ideological Discourse Analysis

Antar Solhy Abdellah ¹

¹ Professor of Applied Linguistics and TESOL, South Valley University, Egypt

Article Info

Article history:

Received: 25 September 2020

Revised: 23 October 2020

Accepted: 27 October 2020

Keywords:

Discourse analysis,
Ideology,
Religion,
Climate change,
Media analysis

Paper Type :

Research Article

Corresponding Author:

Antar Solhy Abdellah

Email:

solhyabdallah99@gmail.com

Abstract

Purpose: The present study seeks to undertake a discourse analysis of the Islamic Declaration on Climate Change using Carvalho's (2000) model of ideological discourse analysis.

Approach/Methodology/Design: Two stages of the analysis were carried out: textual and contextual analysis. A corpus of 15 newspapers and media websites was developed out of 85 results attained by Factiva to undertake the contextual analysis.

Findings: The results showed that the Islamic Declaration on climate change represents a critical moment in the history of caring for the environment in the Muslim world, that it represents mainstream Islam and common Muslim concern and not any single political or national agenda, that it bases its argument deeply on the Islamic faith represented in the scriptural texts, and that it has a potential influence both materially through policymakers and spiritually through changing peoples' attitudes. Combined with other religious statements on climate change, the message of religious leaders is meant to reach areas modern science and governmental reports cannot reach alone.

Practical Implications: While we attempted an ideological discourse analysis of the IDGCC in the present study, more studies are needed to analyze the influence of the IDGCC and other religion-inclined documents on people's and governments' actions to save the planet from the climate change crisis.

Originality/value: The IDGCC was based on the Islamic faith to represent the ideology of mainstream Muslims and the Islamic perspective on the environment. Like the other religious statements, it relies heavily on scriptural references and interpretations.

1. Introduction

Climate change has become one of the top topics of discussion in every gathering, whether political, scientific or even in most people's chats. Global warming has especially attracted the attention of scientists, policymakers, religious leaders, and environment activists among others. Recently, a group of 11 scientists and activists declared a climate emergency (Freedman, 2019). In response to these calls to take action against the changing climate, governments in different countries hold conferences and focus group discussions, fund scientific studies, issue world reports and disseminate information to the public sphere through the media. The media portals tend to frame these reports in order to convey a message to the public that represents the tendencies of the newspapers themselves whether

conservative, liberal, or neutral.

One area of applied linguistics that is interested in studying the framing of different texts is discourse analysis. Discourse analysis has developed from the simple analysis of texts on the supra-sentential level to more ideological approaches. Pennycook (1994) traces the developmental stages of the study of discourse analysis, and the importance of moving forward to an analysis of the ideologies rather than just the prepositional meanings of the text, analyzing what is not mentioned in addition to what is stated. Pennycook even sees language as part of discourse, rather than the other way round - a stand that has attracted much criticism. Brown (1980) explains discourse analysis as the exploration of how language is used beyond the sentence level: “the analysis of the functions of language can be referred to as *discourse analysis* to capture the notion that language is more than a sentence-level phenomenon” (p. 189). The other position is exemplified by Ball’s (1990) argument that “the issue in discourse analysis is why, at a given time, out of all possible things that could be said, only certain things were said” (p.3). Other more critical approaches to the study of discourse analysis include Fairclough’s (1998) critical discourse analysis (CDA), Foucault’s power-relations and social truths discourse analysis (as explained by Wiatts (2012), and Carvalho’s (2008) ideological discourse analysis, which is the one this study adopts in analyzing a key document in climate change discussion.

The present study aims to undertake a critical discourse analysis of the Islamic Declaration on Global Climate Change (henceforth IDGCC), following the ideological framework laid out by Anabel Carvalho in 2000. Although the IDGCC was issued in 2015, very few studies have been conducted in order to analyze it or to shed light on the overt as well as the covert message it aims to convey. Schaefer (2016) compared four statements on climate change issued by four different religious entities: the Catholic Pope, the Orthodox Eastern church, the Jewish Rabbis and the IDGCC. He traced points of similarities and differences among the four statements and summarized most of their arguments. He also made a final assessment of the influence of religious discourse in general in raising people's awareness of the problem and changing their attitudes. Ajape (2017) conducted a study to explore the treatment of the environment in Islam compared to other monotheistic religions and analyzed the IDGCC as a possible solution for the climate change challenge. Other than these two academic papers, to the knowledge of the researcher, there are no other studies that focused on analyzing the IDGCC, although it was reported and commented on in tens of newspapers and internet networks. Because the launching of the IDGCC marks a critical moment in the contemporary history of Muslims towards dealing with an environmental global issue, it is important to seek a deeper understanding of the process of producing this IDGCC as well as its influence. The study seeks to answer the following questions:

Textually:

- How is the declaration structured? What arguments does it make? What audience is targeted? Who are the authors? What are the discursive strategies employed?
- In its shortened version, which statements/arguments are focalized?

Contextually:

- In what way is this declaration linked to the controversy over the association /dissociation between science and religion?
- How was the declaration received? What was the effect of the declaration on other texts in the media?

So, in this study, a review of the theoretical framework of Carvalho's discourse analysis model is conducted followed by a detailed analysis of the document/declaration, and finally discussion and conclusions.

2. Literature Review

In 2000, Anabela Carvalho, professor of journalism at Universidade do Minho in Portugal, presented a paper at an international conference on logic and methodology in Köln, Germany. In her presentation, Carvalho made an assessment and a critical reading of different discourse analysis models used in analyzing media texts. She assessed van Dijk (1980, 1985) structural analysis, Gamson's et al. (1992) and Entman's (1993) framing model, and McComas and Shanahan's (1999) narrative model. She pointed out that each of these models / analytical tools had limitations that do not show different aspects of the nature of texts and the backgrounds and arguments not captured through any of the three approaches. She uses the metaphor of an x-ray machine, a still camera, and a video camera to show the different results attained from different models and to show their limitations. In 2008, Carvalho compared her model to Fairclough's (1998) CDA, and reached the same conclusion that her model represents a more encompassing tool for analyzing the ideologies of media texts. She explains that her model consists of two main parts: textual analysis and contextual analysis.

In textual analysis, she identified a set of dimensions of the text that matter the most in the construction of its overall meaning and that ought to be analyzed. These include:

1. Surface descriptors and structural organization

She proposes first looking at a few 'surface' elements of the text - the date of publication, the newspaper in which it was published, the author, the page (page number) in which the article appeared, and the size of the article. These indicators say something by themselves. As far as the author of an article is concerned, knowing her/his usual standings, ideological commitments and institutional belongings that can help us start locating the text in a certain context.

2. Objects

The second question to ask is: Which objects does the article construct? Objects are equivalent to topics or themes. However, the term 'object' has over 'topic' or 'theme' the advantage of enhancing the idea that discourse *constitutes* rather than just 'refers to' the

realities at stake. Objects of discourse are not always obvious, and identifying them is an important step towards deconstructing and understanding the role of discourses.

3. Actors

Who does the article mention? How are these actors represented? Here we are interested in the individuals or institutions that are either quoted or referred to in the text. Some of these actors may have worked as sources for the author of the article, others have not. Carvalho points out that “texts play a major role in building the image of social actors, as well as in defining their relations and identities” (p.22).

4. Language and rhetoric

In this stage, we identify key concepts and their relationship to wider cultural and ideological frameworks, in addition to the vocabulary used for representing a certain reality, e.g. forms of adjectivation, and at the writing style, e.g. formal/informal, technical, conversational. Rhetoric looks at metaphors and other figures of style employed in the text. Carvalho explains; “an emotionally charged discourse, with an appeal to readers' emotions, is often found in the press, and can have an important rhetorical role” (p. 23).

5. Discursive strategies and processes

“Discursive strategies are the forms of discursive manipulation of reality by social actors (Carvalho, 2000, p. 24). Manipulation in this respect means intervention on that reality in order to achieve a certain effect or goal. She lists some common discursive strategies as the selection of an angle of the (complex) reality s/he is talking about. Here she finds it beneficial to use the framing technique as an action or operation used by text producers. She explains that “framing involves selection and composition. Selection is an exercise of inclusion and exclusion of facts, opinions, value judgements. Composition is the arrangement of these elements in order to produce a certain meaning” (p.24). Other discursive strategies include positioning and legitimation.

6. Ideological standpoints

Ideological viewpoints are possibly the most fundamental shaping influence in a text. Yet discourse analysis does not always reveal them. In the text, we should then look for fundamental political and normative standpoints. Naturally, ideology is an overarching aspect of the text. It influences the selection and representation of objects, actors, the language, and the discursive strategies employed in a text. However, one should expect the ideological standpoints of an author not to be always explicit in the text: identifying them often requires a good deal of interpretive work.

Although Carvalho does not include *Silence* as a separate element in the textual analysis stage, she includes it under ideological standpoints. For the purposes of the present study, we have decided to deal with *Silence* as a separate phase, thus making the model consisting of seven elements in the textual analysis rather than six. Separating *Silence* is meant to emphasize its importance in the construction of social truths. This is a crucial component in other models that analyze discourse based on the ideological standpoints like the Foucauldian analysis where “the silence of discourse is as important as the discourse of silence”. (Waitt, 2012, p. 235).

II. Contextual analysis

In a second stage of the analysis, we look beyond the text/unit of analysis, at the overall coverage of an event or issue in more than one newspaper. How many articles are dedicated to the event? The number of articles is a crucial indicator of the importance awarded by the newspaper to the event; similarly, the omission of an event or issue is a significant indicator of the newspaper's valorization of such an event. There are two time-related dimensions of analysis that will be considered in this stage - synchronic and diachronic. This will be achieved by two main means of inquiry - respectively, comparison and historical analysis.

Recapitulating, here is an outline Carvalho's (2000) approach to discourse analysis after the slight modification of separating *Silence* as an independent element:

I. Textual analysis

1. Surface descriptors and structural organization
2. Objects
3. Actors
4. Language and rhetoric
5. Discursive strategies and processes
6. Ideological standpoints
7. Silence

II. Contextual analysis

- 1 Comparative-synchronic analysis
2. Historical-diachronic analysis

3. Methodology and Procedures

The research methodology applied to carry out the ideological discourse analysis of the text is Carvalho's framework for analyzing journalistic writing. The analysis is divided into two sections i.e. Textual and Contextual. For the textual analysis, Section I uses the tool of analyzing layout, structural organization, objects, actors, discursive strategies and ideological standpoint in the text. Section II applies the comparative-synchronic and historical-diachronic approach to the text for the contextual analysis.

4. Results and Discussion

I. Textual Analysis

According to Carvalho (2000), Textual analysis involves looking for seven main elements: surface descriptors and structural organization, objects, actors, language and rhetoric, discursive strategies and processes, ideological standpoints and Silence. Each element is detailed below.

1. Surface descriptors and structural organization

Date and Context: On the 18th of August 2015, a symposium was co-organized in Istanbul by Islamic Relief Worldwide – the world's largest Muslim international humanitarian and

development non-governmental organization – alongside the Islamic Foundation for Ecology and Environmental Science (IFEES/EcoIslam), which is the foremost global think-tank on study and action on eco-Islam, and Green Faith – the leading interfaith network on the environment. It was also supported by the largest global network of civil society groups working on climate change, Climate Action Network (CAN).

The newspaper in which it was published: It was posted on different websites but appeared mainly in *The Christian Science Monitor* on the same day it was issued, and the next day, 19 August 2015, in *Dhaka Tribune*, and the *Jakarta Post* among several other websites and newspapers. None of the news articles included the complete text of the declaration. Rather, reporters summarized it and commented on parts of it with a hyperlink to the full text. It is noticeable that each of the different newspapers framed the news about the declaration differently. The *Christian Science Monitor* framed it as a response to the Pope’s call for action on climate change. *Dhaka Tribune* framed it around the main statement that the declaration makes i.e., Islamic Climate Declaration calls for fossil fuel phase-out. The *Jakarta Post* presented this news within the bigger picture of efforts to overcome climate change. More on framing is included under contextual analysis.

Authorship: The authors are the hosted eighty carefully selected representatives of academics, religious authorities, inter-governmental organizations, civil society, practitioners, mobilizers across a broad section of Muslim communities. A team of five Islamic scholars delegated from the 80 was involved in crafting the initial document (Yeo, 2015). These were Ibrahim Ozdemir (professor of philosophy and founding president of Gazikent University), Azizan Baharuddin (a professor at the University of Malaya), Othman Llewellyn (environmental planner at the Saudi Wildlife Authority), Fazlun Khalid (founder of the Islamic Foundation for Ecology and Environmental Science) and Fachruddin Mangunjaya (vice-chairman of Center for Islamic Studies at the Universitas Nasional in Jakarta). AbdelmajidTribak, head of environmental programmes at ISESCO (the Islamic version of UNESCO), helped to convene environment ministers from around the Muslim world. Other Muslim scholars were then invited to give their input to the draft, which went through around eight or nine incarnations before it was presented to 60 participants at the week’s symposium, where it was fine-tuned and finalized during a late-night session in Istanbul. The process of authorship is, in fact, collective; through many preliminary drafts, revisions and modifications, till it was finalized. Since we know little about each one of the delegated five scholars, we assume that the main thing that groups them, in addition to their work on the environment, is their language background; English. This shows that the original text of the declaration is in English, while the other eleven languages- including Arabic- are just translations.

Headline: The main headline is: “Islamic Declaration on Global climate change”. Although it is the product of a two-day symposium, the producers of this document decided to call it a “declaration” rather than proceedings, report or recommendations of the symposium. It is meant to declare a stand and may carry apologetic connotations. The hidden message may be: here is the Islamic stand on a major problem for people of the world, Islam is not absent, is

not against world efforts, is not just what the media distorts, is up to date on world problems and has possible solutions. This document is meant to represent a critical moment in history; resembling the historical “declaration of independence” in the US, and other historical documents.

Subheadings: The document is in 6 pages and consists of a PERMEABLE, and two major sections labelled: WE AFFIRM, and WE CALL (capitalization in the original). Under the first section (WE AFFIRM) are listed 16 references to Quranic verses. Under the second section (WE CALL) are five subsections addressed to 1) well-off nations and oil-producing states, 2) the people of all nations and their leaders, 3) corporations, finance, and the business sector, 4) all groups to join us in collaboration, co-operation and friendly competition in this endeavour, and 5) all Muslims wherever they may be.

2. Objects

The main theme of the declaration lies in its religious perspective in addressing environmental issues. The authors of the text take as a start point their Islamic belief in one God who created the Heavens and Earths, and who has entrusted Man with the duty of taking care of this environment as Man is “selected to be a caretaker of steward on the earth” (p.1) The messages of the declaration are supported with quotes from the Qur’an. “Care for the creation is a fundamental part of the Islamic message”, it states, and humans are currently responsible for squandering gifts bestowed by Allah. It says:

“Our species, though selected to be a caretaker or steward (*khalifah*) on the earth, has been the cause of such corruption and devastation on it that we are in danger ending life as we know it on our planet. This current rate of climate change cannot be sustained, and the earth’s fine equilibrium (*mizan*) may soon be lost.”

It is the idea of balance, for which the Arabic – and Quranic word *mizan*- is used, that is central to the text. The argument is that God created everything in this world to function in harmonious and fine equilibrium. Man’s unguided deeds are putting the gift (the created environment) in jeopardy through the irresponsible acts of pollution. *Mizan* is not the only Arabic word that the text focalizes. *Khalifa* is another word which means -in this context- a caretaker, but it has other political connotations as to the historical Muslim rulers who were entrusted with their nation (Ummah). Using Quranic Arabic words in the declaration establishes the importance of the contextual connotational meanings that other languages – English for example- may not grasp.

The **permeable** sets the introduction to the text by referring to key events, and the COP (Conference of Parties- climate change negotiations) and the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment 2005, like the Kyoto Protocol 2012, and the Intergovernmental Panel on climate change (IPCC), 2014. Referring to these key events helps to situate the declaration within the context of the continuation of world efforts to find solutions to global climate change problems.

The **Affirmation** section of the text includes references to Quranic verses that all are centred around the importance of protecting nature, caretaking of ecological systems, and returning to a state of natural pure belief. The authors emphasize the Quranic word *fitra* (Quran, 30: 30), which can mean natural inclination, original purity, or basic truth. It is one of the culturally-loaded words which most translators of the Quran transliterate in addition to give lengthy footnotes on the meaning. The opposite of *fitra* in the Quranic repertoire is *fasad* (Quran, 30: 41); which translates into corruption, malpractice, or contamination. So, if *fitra* is the original pure natural state of things, *fasad* is the corruption that changes and befouls them.

Other Qur'anic references include words like *taqwa* (apprehension and awe in addition to careful obedience to God), *ihsan* (perfection and achieving the utmost good), *rahmah* (compassion and mercy). Furthermore, the declaration points to the example of the Prophet Muhammad, whom it says banned the felling of trees in the desert and established protected areas for the conservation of plants and wildlife to secure the environment of Madinah. It is also important to note that the affirmation section is the one section that is kept entirely in the short version (poster) of the declaration (see appendix). The permeable part was reduced to one sentence of 4 lines, and the Calling subsection was reduced to mentioning one group only; namely all Muslims. The other really effective players are not mentioned. It seems that the poster is made for propagation purposes to be distributed among Muslims only. The **Calling** section of the text addresses four separate groups with a series of demands for tackling climate change. First, it calls on the policymakers responsible for crafting the UN's climate change agreement in December (2015) to come to "an equitable and binding conclusion". Specifically, the deal should set clear targets and establish ways to monitor them, says the declaration.

It calls on well-off nations and oil-producing states to phase out their emissions no later than the middle of the century, turn away from "unethical profit from the environment" and invest in a green economy. It calls on people and leaders from all nations to commit to 100% renewable energy and a zero-emissions strategy as soon as possible and to recognize that unlimited economic growth is not a viable option. It adds that adaptation should also be prioritized, particularly for the most vulnerable groups. And it calls on the business sector, which it says should take a more active role to reduce their carbon footprint, also commit to 100% renewables and zero emissions, shift investments into renewable energy, adopt more sustainable business models and assist in the divestment from fossil fuels. It finally issues a call to "all Muslims wherever they may be" – including the media, education, mosques and UN delegations.

3. Actors

While the authors of this declaration are invisible as actors, there are certain entities that function as basic actors in delivering the message. The major actor would be the Quran¹

¹Although the Quran is not human, Muslims believe it to be the *uncreated* word of God. In other words, the Quran is the embodiment of God's speech. Reference to the Quran in this respect means reference to God himself.

itself. It is the most quoted source in the text with 16 references and detailed comments. The Quranic text works as the benchmark and the standard against which the authors of the text say Muslims weigh their deeds. Thus, Muslims' obligation towards facing climate change is, in fact, a response to the call of the Quran in this respect.

One other major actor is the prophet Muhammad who is cited to have taken important measures to secure the natural reserves in Madinah through establishing inviolable zones (harams), and protected areas (*himas*) for the sustainable use of wildlife. Using both the Quran and the prophet's biography in the permeable as well as in the affirmation section of the declaration serves as the ideological framework for speaking in the name of Islam. It is notable that the *Christian Science Monitor* mentions the statement of the critics of the Islamic Climate Declaration saying that since some of the biggest Islamic nations have not taken an active part in supporting the call, the declaration is not truly representative of Islam. Fazlun Khalid, a long-time Islamic environmental activist involved in drafting the Declaration refutes this criticism. "We are not set up like [Christian] churches; there is no Islamic pope," he said. "The Declaration is like a trigger – to say, wake up wherever you are, wake up and take care of the Earth".

In addition to these two referential actors, the text focalizes the five groups in the Calling subsection: policymakers, well-off nations and oil-producing states, people and leaders from all nations, the business sector, and all Muslims wherever they may be. Each is made both responsible and cooperator in facing global climate change. Specifying Muslims in the last call although they are included under the category of "people from all nations" marks an additional responsibility on Muslims in particular. We can mark the basic effective players in the field; policymakers, corporations, and the business sector, since the rest (people of all nations and Muslims) are just there for rhetorical purposes and their efforts would come second to the policies and measure taken by their leaders and countries.

4. Language and rhetoric

The language of the text is mainly formal. It refers to previous reports and events. It quotes from sacred texts, and it formats the statements in bullet points. The language is also quite technical, referring to scientific concepts like *greenhouse gas emissions*, *fossil fuel reserves*, *non-renewable resources*, *green economy*, and *a zero-emissions strategy*. However, instances of informality are also evident in the first plural pronoun (We) that marks the structure of the declaration: we affirm, we call, we recognize, we bear in mind etc). The use of the first person is meant for affirmation rather than appropriation between the writers and the audience. The audience would be in this respect all human beings who know about Islam and climate change, and whom this message can reach. The writers use (we) not to signify their particular identity, but rather to identify the Islamic stand. (We) thus can mean Muslim experts who represent the nation of Islam.

The key concepts resonate with the Islamic creed perspective on life and the environment. Metaphors are used to help emphasize this approach. The *mizan* (balance) example mentioned above is one effective trope in the Muslim creed. There should always be a balance between Muslim body needs and soul requirements, between the mosque and the public sphere, between private worship and the common good. The idea of having a balance is manifest in Islamic classical texts as well as modern-day sermons and even popular culture. In colloquial Egyptian Arabic, people say: “an hour for your heart and an hour for your Lord”; meaning that one should strike a balance between his pleasures and the duties he has to perform for his creator. The saying finds allusion in some classical prophetic tradition². The trope goes onto explain what would happen if the *mizan* (balance) is not observed. *Fasad* (Corruption) would be the result, and losing the *fitra* (original natural purity) would be the devastating consequence. Through this series of Quranic metaphors, the audience is invited to contemplate the case of the environment in today’s world. Muslims, in particular, are reminded of the Quranic examples which can act as a motivating force for them to take action.

5. Discursive strategies and processes

The discursive strategies used in the formation of the declaration are narrativization and positioning. Narrativities involve constructing a sequence of (predicted) events and (anticipated) consequences. This is evident in the *mizan* trope and the glimpses of the prophets’ biography. Positioning involves constructing social actors into a certain relationship with others. The foregrounded actors in this respect are the Quran, the tradition of the prophet, Muslims at large and the key players: policymakers, corporations, and the business sector.

6. Ideological standpoints

²Hanzalah Al-Usayyidi (May Allah be pleased with him) who was one of the scribes of Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), reported:

I met Abu Bakr (May Allah be pleased with him) he said: "How are you O Hanzalah?" I said, "Hanzalah has become a hypocrite". He said, "Far removed is Allah from every imperfection, what are you saying?" I said, "When we are in the company of Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) and he reminds us of Hell-fire and Jannah, we feel as if we are seeing them with our very eyes, and when we are away from Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), we attend to our wives, our children, our business, most of these things (pertaining to life hereafter) slip out of our minds." Abu Bakr (May Allah be pleased with him) said, "By Allah, I also experience the same thing". So Abu Bakr (May Allah be pleased with him) and I went to Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) and I said to him, "O Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), Hanzalah has turned hypocrite." Thereupon Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said, "What has happened to you?" I said, "O Messenger of Allah, when we are in your company, and are reminded of Hell-fire and Jannah, we feel as if we are seeing them with our own eyes, but when we go away from you and attend to our wives, children and business, much of these things go out of our minds." Thereupon Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said, "By Him in Whose Hand is my life if your state of mind remains the same as it is in my presence and you are always busy in remembrance (of Allah), the angels will shake hands with you in your beds and in your roads; but Hanzalah, time should be devoted (to the worldly affairs) and time should be devoted (to prayer)". He (the Prophet (ﷺ)) said this thrice. (Sahih Muslim, book 1, hadith 151).

We now look for fundamental political and normative standpoints. Naturally, ideology is an overarching aspect of the text. It influences the selection and representation of objects, actors, the language, and the discursive strategies employed in a text. It can be said that the ideological standpoint in this text is that of romanticizing a timeless ahistorical past where Nature was pure and friendly. Only through the irresponsible actions of humans, it changed and it is thus responding in catastrophic change. This romanization is based on the Quranic references as the model that has to be followed.

One ideological background that can be inferred from the text is, in fact, the Islamic stand beyond Global climate change. It is the Islamic stand towards science in the first place. It is notable that the declaration was not issued by a Muslim authoritative figure whether a person (like the Pope in Catholicism) or an institution (like Al Azhar in Egypt, or ministries of Islamic Affairs in other countries). It was issued by a group of well-selected scientists. The message here is that the relationship between Islam and science is not confrontational; Islam is not against science, or the scientific measures taken to solve the problems of humans on the Earth. It rather supports and encourages all scientific advancements within a bigger view of life and the hereafter. So, while Christianity has a long history of clashing with science that the Pope's encyclical of 2015 was seen as the unprecedented dialogue between religion and science in the Western history (Edenhofer et al, 2015, p. 907), Islamic IDGCC was received as a normal piece of literature calling for pious work supported with scientific facts.

Although a discourse on the integrated relations between Islam and science was common in the last decade of the 20th century and the first decade of the 21st century, such a discourse relied heavily on what was known as the Scientific Miraculous challenge of the Quran and the Sunnah, whereby some Quran verses were reinterpreted to support some recently proven scientific discoveries. However, the relationship between the verses and the discoveries was not straightforward and sometimes ill-based with no strong foundations either in science or in the classical interpretations of the sacred texts. Agnosticism and atheism began to emerge -mostly unannounced- among Muslim young people. The Scientific Miraculous challenge discourse began to retreat, and the biggest commission for such discourse changed its name from "*the International Commission on Scientific Miracles in the Quran and the Sunnah*" into: "*The international Commission of the Quran and the Sunnah*". Dropping *Scientific miracles* from the name of the Commission is indicating that they no longer focus on this discourse. However, there is still a sub-unit with the Commission that is devoted to "*the Scientific Signs in the Quran and the Sunnah*". So, even in the name of the sub-unit, the scientific miracles are reduced to just "signs".

Therefore, this declaration comes within an ideology that affirms the importance of Science in man's life and the support of the religious perspective for scientific cooperation. No more miraculous challenge is promoted, and, at the same time, support and encouragement is always there for the work of *religious* Scientists.

7. Silence:

By Silence, Carvalho (2000) means looking for what is obscured in the text, How the inclusion and exclusion of facts serve the creation of a certain meaning. One aspect that is obscured in this text is reference to the call of the Pope, known as the “Encyclical Letter Laudato Si’ (Francis, 2015). Although the Vatican text –encyclical- was issued two months before the Islamic declaration (on June 2015), there is no reference in the Islamic document to the Pope’s call. This can be attributed to the will of the symposium organizers to affirm the uniqueness of the stand of Islam on climate change that is a proactive declaration, rather than a reactive response to another religion’s call. Just as the Vatican document does not mention Islam or Judaism -although it refers to other Christian churches and other religions-, the Islamic declaration does the same by not naming a certain other religion.

It can also be said that the absence of reference to the Pope’s encyclical is not intended; as the preliminary version of the declaration had been drafted and revised six months before the day of the symposium as reports Fazlun Khalid (Yoe, 2015).

II. Contextual Analysis

According to Carvalho (2000), contextual analysis is undertaken through two time-related dimensions: synchronic and diachronic. This is achieved by two main means of inquiry - respectively, comparison and historical analysis, pursuing a *comparative-synchronic analysis* and a *historical-diachronic analysis*. Searching for instances of the IDGCC in newspapers using Factiva service, about 85 articles were yielded. After isolating the irrelevant ones, the repeated results, the ones that touch slightly on the topic, and the ones that report the event with no further comment, the list was collapsed to 15 articles. It is interesting that different articles framed the event of signing the IDGCC in different ways. Four themes were identified.

The *All Africa Global Media* network echoed the Christian Science Monitor in framing the events as a response to the Pope’s encyclical. Both newspapers used this title: ‘*Islamic leaders echo pope's call for action on climate change*’. The Christian Science monitor, however, added another article in the same issue and made its title seem more Islamic ‘*In the name of Allah, Islamic scholars urge action on climate change*’. The *Daily Monitor* on the 27th of November 2015, stated that the Pope’s ‘clarion call was echoed by Islamic leaders in August when signatories to the Islamic climate change Declaration called for all countries to phase out greenhouse gas emissions as soon as possible’. In the same vein, the *Buffalo News* on the 10th of January 2016 phrased the title as ‘Pope inspires clergy to join the environmental movement’.

Stopwatch, on the other hand, focussed more on the message of the IDGCC by getting the duties of Muslims, particularly, to the foreground in the title: *Taking action against climate change is a religious duty of Muslims, says Islamic climate declaration*, on the 19th of August 2015, and ‘*Islamic leaders urge phasing out of greenhouse gas emission*’ on the 21st of August 2015. The same view was further pressed by *Dhaka Tribune* on the 22nd of August 2015 which called Muslim countries to ‘*increase incentives to aid fight against climate*

change’ in response to the IDGCC. The same thing was done by *The Christian Century* on the 16th of November 2015, which reported ‘*Muslim leaders issue call to act on climate change*’. *Carbon Brief* was more precise by phrasing its title as ‘*the Islamic Climate Declaration calls for fossil fuel phase-out*.’

A third theme was locating the IDGCC within the world religions’ movement towards facing climate change, not just as a response to the Pope’s encyclical. This what *All Africa* chose to do on the 30th of October 2015 in which while the title was ‘*climate change unites Buddhists around the world*’, it reported on the IDGCC in addition to the statements produced by Jewish and Christian leaders. This stand was repeated again in the same newspaper on the 30th of November 2015 when the UN climate change chief thanked ‘*pilgrims for every single step to climate change Justice*’. The *Jakarta Post* echoed this trend by welcoming ‘*Muslims to join in efforts on climate change*’ on the 18th of August 2015. On the 24th of August 2015, *Scroll.in* followed the same path by referring to all religions by saying: ‘*climate change has become the one thing all religions are preaching against*’. All these media portals agree that the IDGCC was a response to a moral call that unites humans of all faiths against climate change.

Interestingly, a fourth trend was to link the IDGCC to religious Muslim concerns. This is what *the Guardian* chose to do on the 30th of August 2019 by referring the Muslim pilgrimage being at risk; ‘*with hajj under threat, it's time Muslims joined the climate movement*’. In a similar vein, *The Conversation* focussed on religious duty on the 19th of August 2015, ‘*Islamic climate declaration converts religious principles into greener practice*’, by referring to the five pillars in Islam and applying them to careful practice with the environment.

Discussion:

Unlike the papal encyclical, the IDGCC does not have a formal standing within Islam, as there is no single clerical authority in the religion. Instead, its standing depends on the standing of those who wrote and endorsed the document. The drafting committee is the ‘cream of the Islamic environmental movement’. Four of the scholars were involved in the 1998 Harvard conference that spawned the book *Islam and Ecology: A Bestowed Trust*, which delves into Muslim thinking on the environment. The hope is that imams and clerics around the world can incorporate it into their services, reaching out to the 1.6 billion Muslim populations around the world.

In an interview with *Carbon Brief*, one of the delegated signatories stated “even if we reach a fraction of them, that’s a significant number. In Islam, as a Muslim, I am supposed to interpret the Qur’an and behave according to its tenets myself – I don’t need a Pope to tell me what to do. And we hope this will open the eyes of Muslim individuals all over the world. Hopefully, some of the leaders of Muslim countries will also bear this in mind and it will affect their policies with regards to fossil fuel investments and dependence.” (Yeo, 2015). The influence of the IDGCC is evident in one key document.

The *Istanbul climate change Action Plan* in 2018 which was drafted based on the proceedings of the symposium where the IDGCC was signed and adopted most of its working principles. In effect of the IDGCC, one MA dissertation was defended in 2017 which drew on the IDGCC and the solutions it suggests for climate change. The study focussed on the differences between the three monotheistic religions in regards to the environment, the similarities and differences between their different statements on climate change, and the key concepts of *Mizan* (balance), *khalifa* (stewardship), *Amn* (harmony), and *Amana* (responsibility).

Schaefer (2016) answers the question: Did these religious-based efforts contribute to the positive outcome of COP 21? Were the representatives of nations that flocked to U.N. headquarters in New York City on 22 April 2016 to sign the Paris Agreement influenced by religious leaders and advocacy efforts by religious communities? Shaefer reviews the statements of different religions; Judaism, the Catholic Church, the Eastern Orthodox Christianity, and the IDGCC. He provides a statistical answer to these questions, as follows:

Researchers at the University of Michigan and Muhlenberg College concluded that the pope and his call to action contributed to a rise in the acceptance of the vexing climate change phenomenon across religions, that 15% of the people surveyed were more convinced climate change is occurring and should be addressed than they were in the earlier survey, that 60% support the pope's call to action on climate change but only 49% believe their religious leaders should discuss environmental issues within the context of their faith. (p. 15).

Although the statistics Shaefer refers to are concerned with the Pope's encyclical, Merchant (2015) believes that the IDGCC can be more effective than the pope's message. She explains: "According to an April Pew study, Islam is the fastest-growing religion in the world, with around 1.6 billion followers. By 2050, there will be as many Muslims as there are Christians of all denominations. The global population of Catholics barely tops 1 billion. Many Muslims also live in areas highly vulnerable to climate change, with predicted increases in drought, floods, and other extreme weather events as a result of higher temperatures".

Merchant (2015) also quotes Seyyed Hossein Nasr, an Islamic philosopher and professor at George Washington University, said that faith has much greater power to reach Muslims than politics. For instance, Egypt and other countries in the Nile basin have attempted to restrict the river's pollution, but it's unlikely for residents to stop their dumping practices without religious impetus from a local mosque. Islam is still very powerful in the Islamic world," he said. "If a priest says, 'Don't cut a tree, because it's a sin,' it will have much more effect."

5. Conclusion and Suggestion

In this paper, I used Carvalho's discourse analysis model for analyzing the IDGCC. The analysis was carried out on the textual as well as the contextual levels. The findings show that the IDGCC was based on the Islamic faith to represent the ideology of mainstream Muslims and the Islamic perspective on the environment. Like the other religious statements, it relies heavily on scriptural references and interpretations. The IDGCC is considered a sincere call for action that is free of any political or national agendas. It was signed by a group of distinguished scholars, scientists and activists that do not represent one country or one ideology expect their moderate understanding of Islam. By moving the case of immediate action from this world to the transcendental, People—particularly Muslims- are left to contemplate how they “will face their Lord and Creator”. While we attempted an ideological discourse analysis of the IDGCC in the present study, more studies are needed to analyze the influence of the IDGCC and other religion-inclined documents on people's and governments' actions to save the planet from the climate change crisis.

Conflict of Interest

The author of the article declares no conflict of interest.

Funding

This research study was not funded by any institution. The author conducted the study on his own expenses.

References

- Ajape, M. (2017). Islamic Declaration on climate change: A Solution to Global Warming? MA dissertation. Hamd Bin Khalifa University. College of Islamic Studies.
- Ajiri, D. (2015). Islamic leaders echo pope's call for action on climate change. *The Christian Science Monitor*. (August 18, 2015). Available online: <https://www.csmonitor.com/Science/2015/0818/Islamic-leaders-echo-pope-s-call-for-action-on-climate-change>. (accessed on 26 November 2019).
- Ali, R. (2019). With hajj under threat, it's time Muslims joined the climate movement. *The Guardian*. (30 August 2019). Available online: <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2019/aug/30/hajj-muslims-climate-movement-global-heating-pilgrims>(accessed on 26 November 2019).
- Aziz, M., &Buriro, G. (2018). A Critical Discourse Analysis of Carlo's' The Muslim Woman'. *International Research Journal of Arts and Humanities*, 46(46), 35-45.
- Ball, S. (1990). 'Introducing Monsieur Foucault' in S. J. Ball (ed.) 1990: *Foucault and Education: Disciplines and Knowledge*. London: Routledge
- Brown, H. (1980). *Principles of Language Learning and Teaching*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.
- Carvalho, A. (2000) “Discourse Analysis and Media Texts: a Critical Reading of Analytical Tools”, paper presented at the ‘International Conference on Logic and Methodology’,

RC

- 33 meeting (International Sociology Association), Köln, 3-6 October
- Carvalho, A. (2008). Media (ted) discourse and society: Rethinking the framework of critical discourse analysis. *Journalism Studies*, 9(2), 161-177.
- Earth-Mates Dialogue Center EMDC. (2010). *The Muslim 7 Year Action Plan (M7YAP) To Deal with Global climate change*. Available online: https://loe.org/images/content/090731/M7YAP_draft.pdf/ (accessed on 26 November 2019).
- Edenhofer, O., Flachslund, C., & Knopf, B. (2015). Science and religion in dialogue over the global commons. *Nature climate change*, 5(10), 907.
- Entman, R. (1993) 'Framing: toward clarification of a fractured paradigm', *Journal of Communication*, vol. 43 (4), pp. 6-27
- Fairclough, N. (2001). *Language and power*. London: Pearson Education.
- Francis, P. (2016). Laudato Si': On Care For Our Common Home. *Perspectives on Science and Christian Faith*, 68(4), 266-268. Available online from 2015: http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20150524_enciclica-laudato-si.html (accessed on 26 November 2019).
- Freedman, A. (2019). More than 11,000 scientists from around the world declare a 'climate emergency'. *The Washington Post* (5 November 2019). Available online: <https://www.washingtonpost.com/science/2019/11/05/more-than-scientists-around-world-declare-climate-emergency/> (Accessed, 26 November 2019).
- Gamson, W., Croteau, d., Hoynes, w., & Sasson, T. (1992) 'Media Images and the Social Construction of Reality', *Annual Review of Sociology* 18, pp. 373-93
- Gitau, B. (2015). In name of Allah, Islamic scholars urge action on climate change. *The Christian Science Monitor*. (August 18, 2015). Available online: <https://www.csmonitor.com/Science/2015/0818/Islamic-leaders-echo-pope-s-call-for-action-on-climate-change>. (accessed on 26 November 2019).
- Islamic Climate Declaration calls for fossil fuel phaseout. *Dhaka Tribune*. (August 18, 2015). Available online: <https://www.dhakatribune.com/uncategorized/2015/08/18/islamic-climate-declaration-calls-for-fossil-fuel-phaseout>. (accessed on 26 November 2019).
- Islamic Declaration on Global climate change*. (2015). International Islamic climate change Symposium, Istanbul, Turkey, 17–18 August 2015; Available online: <http://islamicclimatedeclaration.org/islamic-declaration-onglobal-climate-change/> (accessed on 26 November 2019).
- Jong, H. (2015). Muslims to join in efforts on climate change. *The Jakarta Post*. (18 August 2019). Available online: <https://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2015/08/18/muslims-join-efforts-climate-change.html> (accessed on 26 November 2019).
- Khyas, A. (2015). Islamic climate declaration converts religious principles into greener practice. *The Conversation*. (19 August 2019). Available online: <http://theconversation.com/islamic-climate-declaration-converts-religious-principles-into-greener-practice-46279> (accessed on 26 November 2019).

- McComas, K. & Shanahan, J. (1999) 'Telling Stories About Global climate change. Measuring the Impact of Narratives on Issue Cycles', *Communication Research* 26 (1), pp. 30-57
- Merchant, E. (2015). The Islamic climate change Declaration Could be More Effective than Pope Francis's Encyclical. *New Republic*. 19 August 2015. Available online: <https://newrepublic.com/article/122575/islamic-climate-change-declaration-more-effective-encyclical> (accessed on 26 November 2019).
- Narayanan, N. (2015). climate change has become the one thing all religions are preaching against. *Scroll.in*. (August 24, 2015). Available online: <https://scroll.in/article/750543/climate-change-has-become-the-one-thing-all-religions-are-preaching-against> (accessed on 26 November 2019).
- Pennycook, A. (1994). Incommensurable discourses?. *Applied linguistics*, 15(2), 115-138.
- Rife, J. (2015). Taking action against climate change is religious duty of Muslims, says Islamic climate declaration. *Stopwatch*. (21 August 2019). Available online: <https://www.christiancentury.org/article/2015-08/muslim-leaders-support-islamic-declaration-climate-change> (accessed on 26 November 2019).
- Schaefer, J. (2016). Motivated for action and collaboration: the Abrahamic religions and climate change. *Geosciences*, 6(3), 31.
- Schieler, S. (2015). *Egypt in the Future Tense: Hope, Frustration, and Ambivalence before and after 2011*. Indiana University Press
- Schouten, L. (2015). Why climate change unites Buddhists around the world. *The Christian Science Monitor*. (30 October 2019). Available online: <https://www.csmonitor.com/Environment/2015/1030/Why-climate-change-unites-Buddhists-around-the-world> (accessed on 26 November 2019).
- Stiener, A. (2015). Pope in Africa: We need courageous leadership to stop climate change. *The Daily Monitor*. (27 November 2015). Available online: <https://www.monitor.co.ug/OpEd/Commentary/Pope-in-Africa--We-need-courageous-leadership-to-stop/689364-2973686-xm5h02/index.html> (accessed on 26 November 2019).
- The international Commission of the Quran and the Sunnah. (2019). <https://www.ioqas.org.sa/departement-of-scientific-miracles-in-quran-and-sunnah/>
- van Dijk, T. (1980) *News as Discourse*, Hillsdale, New Jersey: Laurence Erlbaum
- (ed.) (1985). *Handbook of Discourse Analysis*, 4 vols., London: Academic Press
- Waitt, G. (2005). Doing discourse analysis. In Hay, I. (2012). *Qualitative Research Methods in Human Geography*. Oxford University Press.
- Weissman, S. (2015). Muslim leaders issue call to act on climate change. *The Christian Century*. (30 October 2019). Available online: <https://www.christiancentury.org/article/2015-08/muslim-leaders-support-islamic-declaration-climate-change> (accessed on 26 November 2019).

Yeo, S. (2015). Islamic climate declaration calls for fossil fuel phase-out. *Carbon Brief*. (August 18). Available online: <https://www.carbonbrief.org/islamic-climate-declaration-calls-for-fossil-fuel-phase-out>. (accessed on 26 November 2019).