

**ISLAM AND MUSLIMS THROUGH THE LENS  
OF WESTERN MEDIA: A COMPARATIVE  
ANALYSIS OF TALK SHOWS OF CNN AND BBC  
(2012)**

by

**NOOR HAYAT**

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## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
CNN	Cable News Network
CIA	Central Investigation Agency
GPS	Global Public Square
IAEA	International Atomic Energy Agency
ISI	Inter Services Agency
MENA	Middle East and North Africa
MP	Member of Parliament
NBC	National Broadcasting Company
NPT	Nuclear Proliferation Treaty
OIC	Organization of Islamic Countries
PBUH	Peace Be Upon Him
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UK	United Kingdom
USA	United States of America
USSR	The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
WMD	Weapons of Mass Destruction



# **ISLAM DAN UMAT ISLAM MELALUI LENSA MEDIA BARAT: SATU ANALISIS PERBANDINGAN RANCANGAN BUAL BICARA CNN DAN BBC (2012)**

## **ABSTRAK**

Fokus kajian ini adalah untuk menganalisis pemaparan Islam dan umat Islam dalam rancangan bual bicara *CNN* dan *BBC* yang disiarkan pada tahun 2012. Selepas satu dekad berlalu semenjak peristiwa 9/11, adalah penting bagi kajian dilakukan untuk melihat bagaimana *CNN* dan *BBC* membuat pementakan mengenai Islam dan umat Islam pada ketika ini. Data yang dikumpul diperolehi daripada laman web enjin carian *CNN*, *BBC* dan YouTube. Untuk menganalisis data, penyelidik telah mereka bentuk helaan kod. Penyelidik menonton sebanyak 623 episod *Piers Morgan Live* dan *Farid Zakaria GPS* dari *CNN*; dan *HARDtalk* dan *Newsnight* daripada siaran *BBC* sepanjang tahun 2012. Melalui persampelan bertujuan, penyelidik memilih 50 rancangan berdasarkan fokus utama program ini yang berkaitan dengan umat Islam atau Islam. Rancangan bual bicara ini memberi kesedaran kepada penonton tentang kepelbagaian dan perspektif baru mengenai isu-isu global. Rancangan bual bicara ini menemubual secara mendalam pemimpin-pemimpin dunia, pemikir antarabangsa, penghasil berita dan penganalisis yang memberikan pandangan mengikut kepakaran masing-masing berkaitan isu-isu yang berbeza. Secara teorinya, kajian ini dikaitkan dengan Teori Pementakan. Berdasarkan hasil dapatan, kajian ini mendapati bahawa rangkaian *CNN* dan *BBC* lebih berminat untuk membincangkan tentang peralihan politik dan transformasi serantau dunia Islam terutamanya isu berkaitan rantau Timur Tengah dan Afrika Utara (MENA). Isu keganasan perang, ekonomi dan agama kurang diberi pendedahan. Kajian juga mendapati perubahan kedua-dua rangkaian *CNN* dan *BBC*

tidak menggambarkan dan membingkaikan umat Islam sebagai pengganas dan ancaman kepada demokrasi Barat. Kajian mendapati terdapat perbezaan yang signifikan dalam pemaparan rancangan tersebut seperti pumbingkaian yang negatif adalah lebih besar daripada pembikaian yang positif dalam perbincangan di kedua-dua rangkaian berita. Walaupun terdapat perbezaan dalam menggambarkan Islam dan umat Islam, kedua-dua CNN dan BBC masih lagi memberikan peluang yang saksama kepada tetamu beragama Islam untuk membincangkan isu-isu berkaitan dengan Islam dan umat Islam.

# **ISLAM AND MUSLIMS THROUGH THE LENS OF WESTERN MEDIA: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF TALK SHOWS OF CNN AND BBC (2012)**

## **ABSTRACT**

The focus of this study is to examine the portrayal of Islam and Muslims in the talk shows of CNN and BBC broadcasted in 2012. After an eventful one decade passed since the incident of 9/11, it is significant to investigate how CNN and BBC are framing Islam and Muslims now. The data was collected from the website of CNN, BBC and YouTube search engine. For data analysis, coding sheet was designed. The researcher watched 623 episodes of Piers Morgan Live and Farid Zakaria GPS from CNN and HARDtalk and Newsnight from BBC broadcasted from January 2012 to December 2012. Through purposive sampling, the researcher selected 50 programs where the major focus of the program was Muslims or Islam. These talk shows create audience awareness about diverse and new perspectives of global issues. These talk shows bring people in-depth interviews of world leaders, international thinkers, newsmakers and analysts who give their expert opinion on different issues. This study is theoretically linked with Framing Theory. Based on the results produced, the study finds that CNN and BBC Networks showed more interest in discussing the political shifts and regional transformations of the Muslim world especially political issues pertaining to the Middle East and North African (MENA) region. The war on terror, economics and religion was given minor coverage. The study also suggested that both CNN and BBC networks are not portraying and framing Muslims as terrorist and a threat to western democracy. The study found significant and meaningful difference as proportion of negative framing was greater than positive framing in the discussions of both news channels. Although there are

differences in the portrayal of Islam and Muslims, both CNN and BBC still provided an equal opportunity to Muslims guests to discuss issues related to Islam and Muslims.

# **CHAPTER 1**

## **INTRODUCTION**

This chapter discusses the background, the research questions to address the research issues and the objective of the study. It also provides the statement of the problem and outlines the rationale of the study. In addition, it summarizes the background history, ownership and control of CNN and BBC and provides a brief introduction of all selected talk shows.

### **1.1 Background**

The masses generally rely on the media as the sole source to other sources of information about current events. As Walter Lippmann (1922; cited in Reza, 2011) observed, representations and 'pictures in our heads' are primarily reflected in 'pseudo reality' from media coverage. These very images are disseminated to audiences as clear and present facts. This process takes place on a recurring basis by many media institutions (Norris et al 2003). Media practitioners in any capacity play a vital role in creating such mental pictures by converting social reality into mediated reality. Mass media has shaped new ways of exchanging information and dependency on information has increased substantially to the satellite communication in making, remaking, manipulating and distorting different images and perceptions in the minds of target audiences (Christopher, 1997).

Therefore, media holds a dominant position in conveying, explaining and articulating specific discourses that help represent (and misrepresent) minority groups (Cottle, 2006). Similarly, van Dijk (2000) states that media discourse are the main source of people's knowledge, attitudes and ideologies. When this discourse is specifically about minority groups and additionally the audience has limited 'contact' with these groups, the role of media as the sole provider of information becomes even more critical (Ameli *et al*, 2007).

It's a common perception that Islam and Muslims in the world is shaped by media coverage through stereotyping in TV shows, movies, cartoons, and other media. In general, Muslims are portrayed as an 'other' within the media (Said, 2007). It suggests that this misrepresentation can be linked to the development of 'racism', namely Islamophobia that has its roots in cultural representations of the 'other' (Said, 2007).

The conflict between the West and Islam is not a new phenomenon. The past stands witness to the fact that the conflicts and military confrontation between the West and Islam trace back to the era of Prophet Muhammad in the seventh century and run through the Byzantine empire, the crusades, the Spanish re-conquered, the fall of Constantinople, the eras of colonial and national independence, cold war era and post cold war era (Bernard, 2001). Many news stories about Islam and Muslims in the media today are inherited from historical depictions. As early as the 12th century C.E. European writers acquired knowledge of Islam for inimical reasons. For instance, writers disseminated information about the death of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) asserting that he died while drunk or killed by pigs (Reza, 2011). Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) is also depicted as a heathen 'idol who is worshiped like a Greek God' from the French song of Roland. Another report contends that he was a

false cardinal, who strayed from the Catholic Church and subsequently founded a new religion called 'Islam' (Ernst, 2003).

Over the past three decades, the Western media has produced a significant amount of news coverage on Islam, the Middle East and Muslim related cases. Events such as the Rushdie affair, the Islamic scarf controversy, the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) cartoons crisis, the 9/11 terrorist attacks and violent episodes in the Middle East have intensified the media's spotlight on Muslims. Many of these media stories present the American news audiences with a variety of Muslim stereotypes, from the Muslim terrorist and martyr to the victimized veiled woman and religious fanatic (Ahmad, 2006). The stereotypical images of Arabs and Muslims in America and Western countries have been persistent and the main difference between the past and the present lies mainly in the means, reasons, degree and content of these stereotypical images. For instance, in the past Arabs and Muslims were largely described as "erotic," "primitive," "ignorant," "slave traders," and other insulting terms. After 9/11 terms such as "terrorist," "fundamentalist," and "fanatics," were more commonly ascribed to Arabs and Muslims (Ahmad, 2005).

Western media has been biased towards portraying Islam and Muslims. The findings of several previous studies revealed that in the last three decades Western media followed conspiracy theory as well as adopted manufacturing consent approach for the portrayal of the Muslim world (Sadia, 2009; Glant, 2012; Kellner, 2007; Yenigun, 2007; Sofia & Fouziah, 2013; Al-Kahtani, 2002). Media constantly produced new prototypes to convey its apparently ingrained hatred of Islam. In the 1970s, they were haunted by the image of immensely rich oil Sheikh; in the 1980s haunted by the frenzy Ayatollah's and since the Salman Rushdie Affair, Islam has become a religion that spells death to creativity and artistic freedom. On the contrary,

none of these images reflects the reality which is apparently more complex (Seib, 2004; Ali, 2012).

The incident of September 11, 2001 changed the course of history. It was a catastrophic event, like the assassination of President Kennedy or the attack on Pearl Harbor (Glant, 2012). As Poole and Richardson (2004) note, Islam and Muslims make for newsworthy subjects, especially in a post 9/11 world. In most cases, American and Western media generally associate Islam and Muslims with underdevelopment, illiteracy, homelessness and failed states. It is viewed as a threat to democratic, liberal and secular societies. Thus CNN's breaking news of 9/11 used episodic titles in its coverage, i.e. "Attack on America". Then "War on Terror" and finally "Strike against Terror". According to Reynolds and Barnett (2003) in the first 12 hours of CNN's coverage after the incident of 9/11, the word *war* was used to describe the attacks 234 times. Symbolic comparison to Pearl Harbor was also made. CNN reporters described the attackers as cowards and madmen. Overall, stories of bravery, patriotism, camaraderie, sacrifice and the love for America formed the basis of CNN coverage. It was also the first network to display patriotic images of American flags flapping in the breeze, while its celebrity anchor Lou Dobbs was the first journalist to wear an American flag lapel pin (Aday et al 2005). This kind of coverage gave little space to the huge antiwar protests in the US and Europe (Chattarji, 2004). The mass media in America and its counterpart, UK such as British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) as well as other media have played a significant role in influencing the whole world to morally support the US in protesting against terrorism (Yousaf, 2013).

There is much academic attention has been devoted to studying the content of CNN and BBC as they are believed most prevalent and trusted global news brands.



The CNN and BBC are the two most formidable international sources of packaged TV news delivered to viewers worldwide with a global perspective (Eva, 2012). Undoubtedly due to their pervasive presence on the media landscape, and their pioneering strides in 24-hour news coverage. Many of these studies have been aimed at surveying the ever-changing landscape of televised cable news, and on studying viewers and patterns of televised news consumption (Ahmad, 2006). It was found out that CNN was the most-watched TV channel immediately after the terrorist attacks on 9/11. The marathon news coverage of such horrified incidents set a tone that was followed by the rest of the media. Therefore, images given by this TV network were the most influential ones (Ali, 2012). In the first decade of 9/11, CNN and BBC gave much coverage to the issues and events concerning Islam and Muslims that's why it would be significant to examine that after first eventful decade how both channels are presenting Islam and Muslims. Proponents of the CNN effect argue that CNN, and other global media networks like BBC, drive Western conflict management by forcing Western governments to intervene militarily in humanitarian crises against their will. The CNN and BBC World News which by nature of size, distribution, budgets and reputation have most impacted the global television landscape and have the greatest power to influence public opinion. Both channels address international and often multicultural audiences (Ahmad, 2006).

After the 9/11 attacks, American and Western media started connecting Islam with terrorism and fundamentalism to distinguish foes from friends and to strengthen the constructed connection between Islam/ Muslims and terrorism. So when President Bush openly declared "You are either with us or against us", this message was translated in context by the media by expending the conception of the "enemy"

to all Muslims, whether living in America or Middle East (Ruigrok & van Atteveldt 2007). It is said that this term was designed by U.S. policy makers and Western media conglomerates (Werner *et al*, 2000).

## **1.2 Problem Statement**

After the incident of 9/11, the Western media's coverage of Islam and Muslims reached an unprecedented intensity. Even on the first night of the incident American media started criticizing Islam and portraying Muslims as terrorists, fundamentalists, militants and anti-Western not only in the news, but also in the talk shows, interviews and discussions (Yenigun, 2006). After 9/11, American and Western media, especially CNN and BBC repeatedly showed images of Palestinians celebrating and handing out sweet after the attacks (Harb & Bessaiso, 2006). The so called threat from Muslims has been hyped by American news media to an extent that now Americans and Westerners perceive Muslims as an enemy of the world's peace and modernization. The West also perceives Islam as perhaps its most dangerous adversary after the demise of international communism (Dawisha, 2009). For instance, in an interview to CNN an outspoken opponent of Islam, Geert Wilders, who made the short film *Fitna* said that ideology of Muslims is a threat to freedom and Western society and claimed the Quran as a fascist book.

Many communication scholars believe that television talk shows have more margin than news to manipulate and twist the social reality into mediated reality as it can be fixed and planted by calling guests and experts who give their opinion according to the already set agenda (Timberg, 2002; Sadia, 2009; Al-Kahtani, 2002). Although conversations on talk show seem unstructured, but they are preplanned. Many interviews on talk shows are prepared for in advance by carefully selecting guests and screening questions (Timberg, 2002). It's a common perception that

through such discussions American news media has played a significant role in stereotyping Islam and Muslims negatively. They are to a large extent, responsible for creating the image that Muslims and terrorists are synonymous. The result of such misinformation and projection of stereotyped images is that the opinion of non Muslims about Islam and Muslims has become negative. After an eventful one decade passed since the incident of 9/11, it is now significant to investigate that how the Western media is portraying Islam and Muslims. Being the leading news channels in the world, it is also important to examine how CNN and BBC are framing Islam and Muslims through the discussions of talk shows.

### **1.3 Objectives of Research**

The research study is theoretically linked to Framing Theory. The main objectives of this study are as below:

1. To identify the dominant themes in the Talk Shows of CNN and BBC's portrayal of Islam and Muslims.
2. To examine the framing of these themes used for the portrayal of Islam and Muslims in the Talk Shows of CNN and BBC.
3. To investigate the similarity and differences of how these themes are framed in the Talk Shows of CNN and BBC.
4. To analyze the ideological perspective of the guest/expert appeared on the Talk Shows of CNN and BBC.

## **1.4 Research Questions**

1. What are the dominant themes in the Talk Shows of CNN and BBC's portrayal of Islam and Muslims?
2. How these themes are framed to portray Islam and Muslims in the Talk Shows of CNN and BBC?
3. Are there any similarities and differences of how these themes are framed in the Talk Shows of CNN and BBC?
4. What is the ideological perspective of the guests/experts invited in the Talk Shows of CNN and BBC?

## **1.5 Rationale of the Study**

The purpose of this study is to examine the portrayal of Islam and Muslims in the talk shows of CNN and BBC in 2012. The incident of 9/11 changed the global politics and government's handling of terrorism as it moved from minor concern to the war on terror. CNN, BBC and other Western media gave an exclusive coverage of this incident (Brunet, 2013). The conflict between the West and Islam is not a new phenomenon. Over the past three decades, the Western media has produced a significant amount of negative news coverage on Islam, the Middle East and Muslim related cases. Events such as the Gulf war, the Rushdie affair, the Islamic scarf controversy and the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) cartoons crisis has given negative coverage. The stereotypical images of Arabs and Muslims in America and Western countries have been persistent and the main difference between the past and the present lies mainly in the means, reasons, degree and content of these stereotypical images (Yenigun, 2007). The incidents of 9/11 further intensified the media's spotlight on Muslims whereby Islam was presented as a religion which breeds

terrorism. In the first decade of 9/11 many events has been happend whereby the death of Osama Bin Laden and his confidants is on the top of the list. It is very much significant to investigate that after an eventful one decade past since the catastrophic incidents of 9/11, how Western news media is covering and presenting Islam and Muslims (Sadia, 2009; Glant, 2012; Al-Kahtani, 2002).

An eventful one decade has been passed since the tragic incidents of 9/11, this study seeks how CNN and BBC are portraying and framing Islam and Muslims now. Many scholars believe that elite groups struggle to uphold existing power structures and the news media play a dynamic role in maintaining these dominant ideologies (Barkho, 2007; Madani, 2009; Brunet, 2013; Kabir, 2007). In the globalizing world mediascapes are mainly dominated by the West with large Satellite TV channels such as CNN and BBC (Graaf, 2009). The researcher selected CNN and BBC because of their large outreach to the millions of viewers in the whole world (Areilla, 1998). As a TV genre, talk shows are certainly generating awareness and giving knowledge to the viewers and help them to build up their perception about the changing political, religious, social and cultural trends in the world (Sattar, 2013). The rationale for selecting 'Piers Morgan Live', 'Fareed Zakaria GPS', 'HARDtalk' and 'Newsnight' is that these talk shows focus on international issues and engage public with different perspectives. These talk shows bring people in-depth interviews with world leaders, international thinkers, newsmakers and analysts who enlighten the audience with their expert opinion. This topic was also selected because the researcher wants to investigate that after one decade since the incident of 9/11, how CNN and BBC are presenting Islam and Muslims.

## **1.6 BBC**

The British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) was launched in 1931. BBC is the UK's public-service broadcaster and its headquarter is situated at Broadcasting House in London. It is the world's oldest national broadcasting organization and the biggest telecaster on the planet by number of workers, with more than 20,000 staff altogether, of which 16,672 are in public sector broadcasting (Kaye & Quinn, 2010:95). Its roots beginning as a radio telecaster, which today are worldwide for its still significant, long standing history: 90 years of production of both informational content and entertainment (Byerly, 2005).

The BBC is set up under a Royal Charter and works under its Agreement with the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport. Its work is supported essentially by a yearly TV license fee, which is charged to all British households, organizations and companies utilizing any type of equipment to receive or record live television broadcasts (Bredeson, 2011). The fee is set by the British Government, agreed by Parliament, and used to fund the BBC's extensive radio, TV, and online services covering the nations and regions of the United Kingdom (UK). From 1 April 2014 it also funds the BBC World Service, launched in 1932, which gives far reaching TV, radio, and online services in Arabic, and Persian and broadcasts in 28 languages (Carland, 2011).

In 1991, BBC decided to launch another channel called BBC World News to cover international information. However, its financial support does not originate from the license fees as other BBC channels, but from advertising and subscriptions. It is not meant for British audience, but for the rest of the world. It is free on air in many countries, so just a satellite receiver is required. As a worldwide news

platform, BBC has the biggest network of correspondents, reporters and bureaus if comparing with others (Bredeson, 2011).

The British Broadcaster presents itself as an organization that has been producing media content since 1922, by entertaining, educating and creating standards. The BBC also claims to believe firmly in the power of collaboration to produce all the content. Therefore, partnerships are claimed to be exceptionally significant to comprehend the professional approach of the workers inside the organization (Glant, 2011).

The value expressed by the Broadcaster is: "to enrich people's lives with programs and services that inform, educate and entertain." By doing so their objective is to be "the most innovative organization in the world." Around a quarter of BBC incomes originate from its business arm BBC Worldwide Ltd. which sells BBC programs and services internationally and also distributes the BBC's international 24-hour English language news services BBC World News and BBC.com, provided by BBC Global News Ltd. This study is based on the following talk shows of BBC (Graber, 2009).

### **1.6.1 HARDtalk**

HARDtalk is a leading BBC television talk show, comprising of in-depth half-hour one-on-one interviews. It is telecast four days a week (Monday to Thursday) on BBC World News and the BBC News channel. Launched in 1997, much of its worldwide fame is because of its worldwide range through BBC World.

Until mid 2005, the host was Tim Sebastian, whose famous and sometimes controversial style of intense and tough questioning brought a huge world audience to the show. It is normally broadcast late at night on the BBC News Channel. Until the mid-2000s, it was broadcast at around 11:30 pm, but in more recent times it has been broadcast an hour later at 12:30 am.

Since 2006, the show has been presented by Stephen Sackur, who was previously the BBC's reporter in Washington and Brussels and who is an experienced interviewer who has grilled U.S. Presidents George W. Bush and Bill Clinton. He is periodically replaced by a few other renowned BBC presenters such as Zeinab Badawi, Carrie Gracie and Sarah Montague. Other infrequent presenters have included Jon Sopel, David Jessel, Lyse Doucet, Nisha Pillai, Noel Thompson, Mishal Husain and Katya Adler (Bredeson, 2011).

In this talk show guests have included the Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf, South African President Thabo Mbeki, popular musician Boy George and evolutionary biologist Richard Dawkins. Heads of state interviewed in 2012 included Burmese President Thein Sein, who long led Burma's military junta (the interview made headlines around the world); and President Teodoro Obiang of Equatorial Guinea, who "rarely gives interviews" and whom Sackur subsequently described as having a "bunker mentality" and as "living in a parallel universe, a place where embarrassment does not exist". In 2010 Stephen Sackur talked to President Hugo Chavez of Venezuela, who rarely grant extended interviews to the Western media. Numerous other key principle players, members, ministers, confidantes and aides in Tony Blair's government have also appeared on the show, including John Prescott,



Peter Mandelson, Jonathan Powell and Sir Michael Barber and in December 2013 former Blair administration minister and current Shadow Foreign Secretary Douglas Alexander was interviewed on the show (Glant, 2011).

### **1.6.2 Newsnight**

Newsnight started on 30 January 1980, despite the fact that a short news bulletin using the same title had run on BBC2 during the 1970s. Its launch was deferred for four months by the Association of Broadcasting Staff, at the time the main BBC trade union. Newsnight was the first program to be made by means of a direct collaboration between BBC News, then at Television Centre, and the current affairs department, based a short distance away at the Lime Grove Studios. Newsnight is a weekday BBC Television current affairs program which specializes in analysis and frequently robust cross-examination of senior politicians and world leaders. Jeremy Paxman was its main presenter for 25 years, until declaring in April 2014 that he was stepping down. The program's regular presenters are currently Kirsty Wark, Emily Maitlis, Laura Kuenssberg and Evan Davis (from 2014).

Newsnight has been broadcast on BBC Two since 1980. It goes out on weekday nighttimes between 10:30pm and 11:20pm. At times it may have an extended edition if there is a particularly noteworthy occasion in the news as happened on 7 July 2011, when closure of the News of the World led to an extended program which continued until 11:35 pm. A weekly 26-minute digest edition of Newsnight is screened on the corporation's international channel, BBC World News (Peter, 2005).

## 1.7 CNN

The Cable News Network (CNN) is an American basic cable and satellite television channel that is owned by the Turner Broadcasting System division of Time Warner. The 24-hour cable news channel was established in 1980 by American media proprietor Ted Turner. At that time, CNN was the pioneer television channel to give 24-hour news coverage, and was the first all-news television channel in the United States of America. While the news channel has various affiliates, CNN primarily broadcasts from the Time Warner Centre in New York City and studios in Washington, D.C. and Los Angeles. Its headquarters at the CNN Centre in Atlanta is only used for weekend programming (Glant, 2012).

First, they used the programs broadcasted by CNN/U.S., however, in the early 1990's it was decided to improve their offer on the air in order to compete with BBC World News. As of August 2010, CNN is accessible in more than 100 million U.S. households. Broadcast coverage of the U.S. channel stretches out to more than 890,000 American hotel rooms and also carriages on cable and satellite providers throughout Canada. Globally, CNN programming airs through CNN International, which can be viewed by the audience in more than 212 countries. As of February 2015, CNN is available to approximately 96,289,000 cable, satellite and telco television households (82.7% of households with no less than one television set) in the United States. It also has one of the most visited global news websites, which is always renewed with content and design. As it claims [www.cnn.com](http://www.cnn.com) is among the world's pioneers in online news and data conveyance (Hamada, 2001).

In spite of the fact that CNN International emerged as a globally oriented news channel, there are a few allegations of a pro-U.S. editorial bias. CNN is criticized for giving an exceptionally slender and North American focus to the news (Nobre-Correia, 1995 cited in Medina, 2003: 84). Tom Johnson, CNN president in 1996, said, "There was obviously a consciousness that you needed to be neutral in terms of reference to us as Americans" (Flournoy and Stewart, 1997: 127). Although CNN International divided its services in the regions, it did not always present the local view on topics and it mainly covered news involving the United States. Wallis and Baran (2010) explored the scope of the coverage of selected news channels and demonstrated how CNN International covered the United States more than it covered other countries. On the other hand, contenders of CNN attribute its reputation to its presentation of news in a fair and balanced way. The lack of ideological and political predisposition is observed by the competitors as an advantage to pull in more viewers. This study is based on the following talk shows on CNN (Kaplan, 2006).

### **1.7.1 Piers Morgan Live**

Piers Morgan Live (formerly known as Piers Morgan Tonight) is a talk show on CNN that was hosted by Piers Morgan. The show premiered on January 17, 2011, and filled the previous Larry King Live timeslot. Piers Morgan Live was recorded primarily in CNN's studios at the Time Warner Center in New York City. It was declared on February 23, 2014, that Piers Morgan Live would be canceled the date of the final show was March 28, 2014 (Brian, 2010).

Throughout the show's run, Morgan had interviewed numerous guests, including politicians, celebrities and members of the public. His first guest was Oprah Winfrey. Soon after the show's debut, when the Egyptian unrest started, the show transformed from a Larry King Live-like interview format like to a breaking news-format program. Morgan had never anchored a live news show, but did have experience with breaking news as a newspaper journalist. In light of significant news occasions, for instance, the Arab Spring and the Japanese earthquake and tidal waves (tsunami), the proportion of recorded to live interviews was inverse of his expectations (Stelter, 2010).

### **1.7.2 Fareed Zakaria GPS**

Fareed Zakaria GPS is 60 minutes in length program that takes a comprehensive look at foreign affairs and the decisions affecting our lives. Every week it brings in-depth interviews with world leaders, newsmakers, and analysts breaking down the world's toughest issues. Fareed Zakaria GPS is a weekly public affairs show hosted by journalist and author Fareed Zakaria. As of November 2011, the show airs Sundays at 1pm Eastern Time on CNN. The show also airs Sundays at 1200 and 1900 GMT on CNN International. The "GPS" in the show's title stands for "Global Public Square," a reference to the show's emphasis on global issues and foreign affairs. On August 10, 2012, CNN suspended the program pending their investigation of suspected copyright infringement. After one week, the New York Times reported, "Time and CNN said they had completed their reviews, discovered no proof of counterfeiting and restored Mr. Zakaria to his requesting schedule" (Christine, 2012).

Fareed Zakaria GPS: Interpretation and Commentary on Iran and The GPS Primetime Special: Restoring the American Dream - Fixing Education won a Peabody Award in 2011 "for covering worldwide issues in a way that demonstrates their actual significance for viewers all through the world." Zakaria's interview with Chinese Prime Minister Wen Jiabao was nominated for an Emmy for "Remarkable Interview" (Brian, 2010).

### **1.8 Operational Definitions**

An operational definition describes a concept in terms of how the concept will be manipulated, measured, or observed. It is important to establish the exact intended meanings of all terms used in a study. It is especially important to do so when the study itself focuses on the characterizations, or understandings, of the meaning of certain words. For the purpose of this study, the following definitions of terms are offered.

*Islam, Islamic* and *Islamist* were used in this study to represent the religion of Islam, as described by the Prophet Mohammed (PBUH) and given to the followers of Allah, as well as those who study Islam.

The terms *Muslim* or *Muslims* refers to a person who follows the religion of Islam. Muslims consider the Quran to be the verbatim word of God as revealed to the Islamic Prophet and messenger Muhammad (PBUH). They also follow the Sunnah teachings and practices of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) as recorded in traditional accounts called hadith. The word "Muslim" is an Arabic word meaning "one who submits (to God)".

The terms *Arab*, *Arabia*, *Arabian*, *Arabs* and *Arabic* were used to represent a person from an Arab country and/or the language known as Arabic. The term Arabic was also used as an adjective describing other objects or ideas that are considered to be of Arab origin, ethnicity, or culture.

*Qualitative comparative analysis* is a data analysis technique for determining which logical conclusions a data set supports. The analysis begins with listing and counting all the combinations of themes and frames observed in the data set, followed by applying the rules of logical inference to determine which descriptive inferences or implications the data supports.

The categories used by researcher to characterize the terms also need to be operationally defined. For the purpose of this study, a *positive characterization* was defined as creating a beneficial, sympathetic, affirming or favourable response to the term. This included words, phrases, or sentences that portrayed Muslims, Arabs and Islam in a positive light. This also included sentences, words or phrases that described Muslims, Arabs or Islam as peace-loving, tolerant people who are against terrorism. These are portrayals that favourably or positively related to any of the key terms, creating a positive image or conception for the audience.

A *negative characterization* was defined as being seen by the researcher as harmful, discontinuing, antagonistic or unfavourable. This included characterizations that negatively related to Islam or Muslims, which created negative images or conceptions for the audience. Again, these instances created a negative conception or image of Muslims, Islam, or Arabs.

A *neutral characterization* was seen by the researcher as not characterized either positively or negatively. This kind of example did not create a positive or negative impression for the audience. In these examples Arabs, Muslims and/or Islam were not identified as either good or bad. However, neutral characterizations were not necessarily seen as fair, objective, or unbiased.

A *talk show* is a television programming genre in which one person (or group of people) discusses various topics put forth by a talk show host. Usually, guests consist of a group of people who are learned or who have great experience in relation to whatever issue is being discussed on the show for that episode. Other times, a single guest discusses their work or area of expertise with a host or co-hosts.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

This chapter gives a general overview about the American and Western media's portrayal of Islam and Muslims before and after the incident of September 11, 2001. In this chapter previous research finding on the media portrayal of Islam, Muslims and Arabs will be discussed. In addition, this chapter summarizes the definition, history and development of Television talk shows and gives an overview of the political impact of talk shows.

#### **2.1 Islam: A Brief Introduction**

After Christianity, Islam is the second largest religion in the whole world. Muslims are believers of Islam with around one billion worldwide. "Islam" is an Arabic word that means "submission to the will of God." Muslims believe in Allah (the Arabic word for God) and acknowledge Muhammad (PBUH) as the messenger of Allah.

Islam is the most geographically widespread religion in the whole world after Christianity (Edmonds, 1977). Islam is mostly dominant in Asian and African countries like Middle East, southern part of the former Soviet Union, Indonesia, Pakistan and Bangladesh. Muslims also prevail in large communities in Europe, America and China. (Nyang, 1999)

In Islam, the Quran is considered as the holy word of Allah. It was revealed to Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) by an Angel Gabriel and recited by Muhammad



(PBUH). For Muslims Quran is more than a holy book; it is considered to be divine and part of Godhead. The Quran is for Muslims what the Bible is for Christians. Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) for Muslims is the last of the prophetic line from Abraham through Moses, to Christ, each reiterating the faith of his predecessor.

Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) was born in Mecca in 570 AD. His father, Abdullah, passed away before his birth and his mother, Aminah, died when he was at the age of 6 years. His grandfather, Abdul Muttalib, first raised him and when he died, his uncle, Abu Talib, raised him. Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) got married at the age of twenty-five to Khadija, a wealthy ex-employer of his, who was around 15 years older.

At this time, the citizens of Mecca were infidels who used to worship idols. Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) never worshipped idols and shied away from pagan life. Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) experienced the visit of the Archangel Gabriel at the age of forty. Edmonds (1977) describes what happened:

Finally, during one of these pilgrimages to a secluded cave in the Mountain Hira near Mecca, Archangel Gabriel appeared to him. Gabriel commanded Muhammad to recite; Muhammad asked what he was supposed to recite. Gabriel replied with words that went into the Sura of Blood Clot in the Qur'an: Recite thou! For thy Lord is the most beneficent, created man from the Clots of Blood: recite thou! For thy Lord is the most beneficent, who hath through the use of the pen, Hath taught Man that which he know eth not. (p. 23)

Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) declared that he recited revelations from Allah sent through Gabriel. He also declared that he was the last messenger of Allah to all humankind. Consequently, Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and his followers, those were in small numbers faced hostility and many challenges of the citizens of Mecca; because they thought this monotheistic religion can be a great threat to the merchants and infidels worshippers of Mecca city. Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) left Mecca and migrated to the Medina city in 622 AD to avoid an assassination plan against him. This event is regarded as the start of the Islamic calendar.

Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) commanded his devotees to travel where they were received with open heart. This journey is called *Hijrah*, (an Arabic word meaning "emigration") thus, the year 622 AD is the year 1 A.H. (After Hijrah) for Muslims. Gordon (1991) describes the significance of this occasion by saying "this journey from Mecca to Medina is one of the critical events of Prophet Muhammad's life. It indicated not only his flight to wellbeing, but, far more importantly, laying the foundation of Islamic community" (p. 22). When Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) passed away, his followers spread Islam across the whole Middle East, North Africa, as far as Spain in the West, and as far as China and India in the East.

The religion of Islam is based upon five fundamental pillars. Peretz, Moench and Mohsen (1984) maintain that the first pillar is the fundamental belief in the Islamic faith and that a Muslim should bear witness to the oneness of God by reciting the following: "there is no god but Allah and Muhammad is his messenger or prophet" (p. 8). The second pillar is prayer, or daily prayers, that are offered five times a day between daybreak and nightfall. Alms-giving is the third pillar, a

payment equivalent to two and a half percent of one's possessions for one year, to be given to those who are in need or poor. Fasting during the month of Ramadan is the fourth pillar of Islam. During this holy month, Muslims refrain from food and drink from dawn to sunset. Pilgrimage to Mecca is the fifth pillar of Islam. This must be performed by an able-bodied Muslim once in his/her lifetime.

Shariah (the Islamic Law) is the religious path of law that all Muslims are expected to follow and it is based on two main sources, the Quran and the rituals of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). The Quran is the primary source of the Islamic law and its early revelations during the Mecca period (13 years) were centralized around one major fact: the oneness of God.

Qutib (1990) writes "The early revelations sent from Allah focused on the matter of faith only, not revealing the features of the system to be based on it or the laws that are to control its affairs" (p. 26). After the first Muslim society came into being in the city of Medina, the revelations of the Quran spotlighted on structuring general laws and a system of the government. This era of Quranic revelations is called the Medinan period. Muslims believe that the Quran has the key guidance for all humankind's livelihood, including the individual, the state, and the whole society.

The second major source of Islamic law is called the books of tradition ("Hadith" in Arabic). Regarding the meaning and the significance of the books of tradition to a Muslim, Guillaume (1954) asserts this fact by noting: "in theory, the life of the individual Muslim is governed by what the prophet said and did. In fact, by what he is reported to have said and done and the two are not always the same"

(p. 87). Exactly when records of deeds and words of the prophet were first written down we do not know; early tradition is at variance with itself on this very point. Some say that the prophet authorized the writing of his sayings; others assert that he forbade it. At any rate, it is certain that several small collections of traditions were assembled in Umayyad times (Guillaume, 1954).

It is significant to understand that for its followers that Islam is not only a religion, but also a way of life. Literally speaking, a religious Muslim should follow the “Shariah” (the Islamic religious path that includes the Quran and the books of tradition) in every area of his/her daily Life. Hanafi (1970) affirms this fact: "unlike modern Western society, in which religion is so often reserved for Sunday and special occasions such as marriage and death, traditional Islam is all embracing. All social relations are defined, determined and sanctioned by religion" (p. 12). Ruthven (1984) sums up the essence of the Quranic and Muhammad's teachings for humanity thus:

The global message contained in the Quran and in the model of the prophet's life to which it is inseparably linked historically and literally, has a certain timeless importance. It is, basically, that man is not the Lord of the Universe that he cannot do as he lists regardless of the ethical laws that inhere in its very structure - laws which, though he may continue to discover them for himself, are known in their entirety only to the Creator. For Muslims and non-Muslims who take the trouble to investigate its meanings, the Quran contains the guidelines to such limits but it cannot define them absolutely, nor does it seek to do so. (p. 140)