A critical discourse analytic approach to discursive construction of Islam in Western talk shows: The case of CNN talk shows

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Abstract
The present research aimed at examining the discourse of CNN as a mainstream media, through the application of critical discourse analysis. The goal of this research was to uncover CNN’s orientation in covering Muslim-related issues and to uncover how the elements described by van Dijk (2001) play their role in constructing the discourses of Islamophobic ideologies in CNN’s talk shows. To this end, an analysis was conducted at two textual and contextual levels, including 34 programs, out of 50 GPS talk shows aired in 2013. The textual analysis was done regarding the three levels of meaning, argumentation, and style and the contextual analysis with regards to levels of access and participants. The findings revealed that CNN’s representation of Muslim-related issues was biased and stereotypical at all levels; textual and contextual and the scope of the talk show was in line with the Islamophobic ideologies which prevail the Western media today.

Keywords
critical discourse analysis, Islamophobia, media discourse, representation

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Introduction

The media, in today’s information societies, go beyond the geographical borders of cities and countries and influence the public opinion at a global level. They are centrally concerned with the production of meaning. The intellectual tensions and arguments around meaning in the media have led to new ways of conceptualizing the ideological power of them, in particular, the development of the notion of ‘discourse’ (Williams, 2003). Media discourse is the main source of people’s knowledge, attitudes, and ideologies, both of elites and ordinary citizens. (van Dijk, 2000: 36). Miller (2002) states that media, through constructing the meaning about the world, represents it in many different and conflicting ways. So ‘what we know of society depends on how things are represented to us and the knowledge in turn informs what we do and what policies we are prepared to accept’ (Miller, 2002: 246).

Today, the issue of Islam and its representation as a threat to Western civilization and values has become an indispensable part of Western news discourse. As argued by Marranci (2004: 107) ‘the mass media through the misrepresentation of Muslim world and the representation of their life-style as alien from Western society, present a distortion and grotesque image of Islam to the audiences’ Edward Said explains this notion as the Orientalist view of Islam; the idea that the West sees Arab culture as exotic, backward, uncivilized, and at times dangerous (What’s Orientalism, 2011).

Based on these concepts, this study was undertaken to know how news media, CNN, misrepresent Islam by using an ideological tool named discourse. TV programs were focused on, because on one hand, despite the priceless attempts which has been made to analyze the images of Muslims in Western print media (Altheide, 2007; Khiabany, 2003; Saeed, 2007; Vrielink, 2013), little consideration has been paid to the analysis of TV programs and on the other, since CNN’s growth and diversification, including the creation of CNN International, has affected many facets of global communications and international relations (Gilboa, 2005: 28), so the analysis of this mainstream news media has become more and more important. The questions addressed here with regards to these considerations are:

1. How the actors or institutions associated with Islam are represented in the CNN data in this investigation? What actions are attributed to these entities?
2. What does an analysis of the Van Dijkian representational tools, employed in the present study, tells us about any possible differential treatment of Islam by the CNN?

Talk shows are platforms informed, among other things, by asymmetry in power relations and, as such, they are sites of consideration. This is because, on the one hand, there is a host (ess) who, regardless of whom he/she is addressing (powerful politicians or otherwise), is the initiator of discussions, and who has a great control over the presentation of content, and who can interrupt the flow of information at any moment. On the other hand, we witness what Bakhtin calls dialogism, that is,
an array of viewpoints presented by the guests. It stands to reason, therefore, to assume that such media forums as talk shows lend themselves readily to an analysis of discourse through a critical lens.

The focus of this study is on GPS, a CNN’s weekly talk show, because of its host Fareed Zakaria. The host Fareed Zakaria is an Indian-born, Harvard, PhD and foreign policy specialist who had turned itself to a media star. Zakaria’s career in media started to prosper by running Newsweek international, writing columns for Time magazine and the Washington Post, and hosting GPS, his own program on CNN. He was introduced by Esquire Magazine as the most influential foreign policy adviser of his generation. In 2010, Foreign Policy named him one of the top 100 global thinkers. The acronym ‘GPS’ stands for Global Public Square, a reference to the show’s focus on international issues and foreign affairs. Since 2008, when the program was first aired on CNN, many prominent figures in the world of politics have appeared in this show and many programs are dedicated to the issue of Islam and Arab world. Fareed Zakaria’s GPS won a Peabody award in 2011 with the programs named Interpretation and commentary on Iran and restoring the American dream-fixing education for covering global issues in a manner that shows their true importance for viewers throughout the world.

Many scholars used CDA to analyze and explain the relationship between language and society in different fields, such as in media discourse (van Dijk, 1996). Therefore, different kinds of models have been applied to analyze discourse, such as Fairclough’s model, van Dijk’s (1993) sociocognitive model, Wodak’s discourse sociolinguistics model, etc. Especially in the analysis of media discourse, van Dijk’s sociocognitive model has been widely referenced and applied. However, there is a singular need to describe, interpret, and explain the Islamophobic discourses of the news media due to the current rising of different fundamental Islamic sects like ISIS and the fear and terror caused by them throughout the world.

The analysis will be based on the critical discourse analysis (CDA) guidelines, set out by van Dijk (1991). This approach claims that in order to understand the role of the news media and their ‘messages’, one needs to pay detailed attention to the structure and strategies of such discourse (van Dijk, 1996: 10). In this approach, analyzing the concepts of discourse and language entails examining the contextual and textual properties of a text (van Dijk, 1993). The present study considers ‘access’ and ‘participant’ as two aspects to analyze the contextual elements and regarding textual properties, attention lies on the levels of meaning, argumentation, and style.

**Discursive construction of Islam: The Orientalist views representing Islamophobic ideologies**

There is an international cluster of terms and phrases referring to negative feelings and attitudes toward Islam and Muslims. The most widely known member of the cluster is Islamophobia (Richardson, 2012: 1). Islamophobia refers to a fear or hatred of Islam and Muslims (Rana, 2007: 149). Since the publication of Edward, Said’s Orientalism in the late 1970s, it has been widely accepted that ‘the West’ has
long associated Islam with negative images, sentiments, and stereotypes (Bleich, 2011; Said, 1978). Islamophobia emerged in contemporary discourse with the publication of the report ‘Islamophobia! A challenge for us all’ by the British Race Relations NGO: the ‘Runnymede Trust’ in 1997 (Bleich, 2011: 12). The Runnymede’s report defined Islamophobia as ‘a useful shorthand way of referring to the dread or hatred of Islam... and therefore, to fear or dislike all or most Muslims’ (Allen, 2013: 2).

Several events in modern times have colored the ways Muslims have been perceived by Western societies, but it was the 9/11 attacks that intensified anti-Muslim feelings and consolidated Islamophobia in Western countries. Allen and Nielsen (2002) reported that ‘after September 11th, some Europeans attacked targets that they perceived to be Islamic, and as such, associated with the terrorist acts’ (Allen and Nielsen, 2002 in Sheridan, 2006: 321). It was in the wake of September 11th that ‘the news agency, Reuters, decided to proscribe the use of the terms ‘Terrorism’ or ‘Terrorist’ (Macdonald, 2003: 155). Pratt (2011) who, admits these negative feelings and imaginations of Westerners about Muslims, explores those elements that shape and influence their perceptions of Islam. Among these factors, he finds media images as the most influential and believes that Western perceptions are media-shaped. He states ‘Westerners’ primary and for many their only exposure to Islam is via television news coverage, newspaper reportage, and cinematic perceptions’ (Pratt, 2011: 381). According to studies, ‘those Americans who paid more attention to media coverage of Muslim-related issues, were more likely to think that Islam is a religion of violence and Muslims should not have the same rights as other religious groups’ (Ogan et al., 2013: 35–41). No doubt ‘the media articulate appropriate ways of thinking and behaving, construct specific meanings through genres and narratives and are vehicles for carrying and conveying ideas of one group of people rather than others’ (Williams, 2003: 145). This notion can be proved based on the concept of ‘ideology’; what Wodak (2001) defines as ‘the social forms and processes within which and by means of which symbolic forms circulate in the social world’ (Wodak, 2001: 10). Gramsci (1971) contends that ‘the ruling groups in democratic societies gain dominance through a double process of coercion and persuasion and the media are among the key institutions of persuasion in modern societies’ (Izadi and Saghaye-Biria, 2007: 142). Hall (1982) believes that media do not reflect reality, but are ‘engaged in defining reality. Rather than transforming already existing meaning, the media, through the active work of selecting, presenting, structuring, and shaping, are making things mean’ (Hall, 1982: 6) and this is the essence of ‘representation’; what Hall (2003:15) defines as ‘using language to say something meaningful about or to represent the world meaningfully to other people’. In this definition, representation falls in the framework of ‘constructionist approach to language which believes in the role of representational systems in constructing meaning and rejecting the existence of meaning in things’ (Hall, 2003: 25). The constructionist approach is divided into two strands, ‘the semiotic’ and ‘the discursive’, but the latter is more concerned about the role of representation as the source of producing knowledge; what Michel Foucault is interested in.
The discursive model tends to focus more on ‘discourse’ and its role in producing knowledge and power (Hall, 2003: 43). In Foucault’s opinion, since ‘we can only have a knowledge of things if they have a meaning, it is discourse not the things in themselves which produce knowledge’ (Hall, 2003: 45). Like Foucault, ‘Said considers discourse to be a linguistic form of knowledge and power’ (Laughey, 2007: 139). He argues that within a discourse, all representations are tainted by the language, culture, institutions, and political ambiance of the representation (Windschuttle, 1999). Said’s Foucaultian conception which views discourse as a system of publicity that ‘produces and renders knowledge of such categories as the orient, literature, author, etc.’ is called ‘Orientalism’ (Prakash, 1995: 203). For Said, Orientalism is a set of discursive practices through which the West structured the imagined east politically, socially, ideologically, etc. It is a ‘style of thoughts based upon an ontological and epistemological distinction made between “the orient” and “the occident”’ (Buchowski, 2006: 463; Said, 1978). Said argues ‘that the real orient, meaning “the East” and especially “the middle East,” has been conceived by the West (Europe and north America) as one of its deepest and recurring images of “the other”’ (Laughey, 2007: 138; Said, 1995). So ‘the concept of Orientalism is extremely important to media studies for its introduction of the process of “Othering” in textual and discourse analysis’ (Said, 1978: 8). Said applies his theory to more contemporary instances of media and cultural imperialism. For instance, he argues that ‘two current terms prevalent in Western discourse about non-Westerns’ cultures “terrorism” and “fundamentalism” emerged in the 1980s from Western systems of power including news agencies’ (Laughey, 2007: 378; Said, 1997). As Min (1997: 147) states ‘due to the nature of news itself, it cannot be a totally value free reflection of facts’. She (Min, 1997: 148) points out that ‘an ideology of the powerful class is turned into a universal belief through the process of naturalization and the media play an important role in naturalizing these dominant ideologies’.

As it is argued in this article, what most media users in the West know and think about Islam and Muslims is largely due to the mass media (van Dijk, 1995). Since the media are introduced as ideological institutions representing the reality on behalf of the dominant groups in their discourse as Foucault, Said, and other scholars argued and deal with East and especially Muslim-related issues in a way that it produce a false description of Arabs and Islamic culture and since they define the Orient as a place isolated from the mainstream of human progress in the science, arts, commerce, etc. This study attempts to recognize CNN’s, one of the mainstream media, which has a particular role in shaping public opinion, attitudes toward Islam and Muslims. Hence, CDA is an appropriate approach to analyze the ideological underpinnings and underlying power relations of their discourse.

**Representation of Islam/Muslims in the media**

In the study of Islam and Muslims in the West, a major focus has been on the representation of Muslims in the mass media, especially in United Kingdom and
America. Among these studies, Said’s (1978, 1995, 1997) works are notable, because of his special portrayal of Muslims/Islam in Western media through orientalism. He showed the distorted image of Muslims by the American media and argued that Islam was depicted as a backward and irrational religion.

Gerges (1997) focused on American context, examined the way the U.S. public, media, interest groups, and foreign policy elite influence the making of American policy toward political Islam and concluded the contemporary security and strategic considerations coupled with negative media representations of Islam and Muslims influence the U.S. public; hence, foster the hardline foreign policy toward political Islam.

In another article, Godazgar (2007) analyzed 10 documentaries in the form of 14 programs using a qualitative documentary analysis model. He proved that these programs showed a modernist mode of representation, which reduces simplification and generalization and historicization and places emphasis on diversity rather than a stereotypical or simplified approach that can promote islamophobia. However, he indicated that the majority used modernist approach only in some parts and provided the simplistic approach.

In relating the discourse of fear and terrorism to the discourse of media with regards to Islam/Muslim, Altheide (2007) stressed the role of media in promoting terrorism by emphasizing on fear and an uncertain future. In this article, he puts an extra emphasis on the role of the ‘Project for the New American Century (PNAC)’ ideologies at joining terrorism with Iraq and the Muslim faith. He concludes that the mass media strategically promotes fear and uses the audience’s beliefs about danger, risk, and fear to achieve certain goals including the expansion of domestic control and to emphasize domestic support for the new U.S. role in leading the world.

Alazzany and Wong Bee (2014) used CDA to analyze the coverage of Islam and Muslims in the New York Times (NYT) in the wake of 9/11 events and the ensuing two years. Their study showed that despite the previous monolithic representation of Muslims/Islam, the NYT showed a more diverse picture as it showed Muslims to have two versions of moderate and extremist. However, they add that, it is always unclear where moderate Islam ends and where extremism or fundamentalism begins. They also proved the use of the essentialization strategies in affiliating extremism to all Islamic movements operating in the domain of politics.

As an extension to and a continuation of the above ever-increasing bulk of studies carried out on the issue of representation of Islam in the media, the present study seeks to consider the modes through which persons or practices affiliated with Islam are depicted or viewed in the wake of what has come to be called the Islamic Awakening (or more popularly the Arab Spring) and shed more light on the mechanism this specific vantage point is brought home to an international audience via the linguistic, stylistic, or textual tools of analysis. Moreover, the researchers tried to conduct an article in this area, because Islam is a religion with a large population of nearly 1.2 billion which are spread across the globe. Muslims has always been subjected to different kinds of prejudices, especially
prevailed in Western countries. These prejudices when fuelled by unbalanced media representation can cause the reduction of the Islamic tradition to a few simplistic clichés, such as hijab, jihad, honor killing, etc. Unfortunately, despite many research articles which exhausted this area of research paradigm, we are faced with the repetition of Islamophobic ideologies. This shows the need to conduct different articles of any kind to eliminate these prejudices. Hence, the researches, as practicing Muslims, clearly see the need to conduct another research due to the newly elevated anti-Muslim, anti-Islamic sentiments in the West.

An overview of CDA

According to van Dijk, the interdependence of research interests and political commitment is perhaps the most prominent feature of any CDA analysis. CDA’s aim is to solve actual social problems taking the perspective of those who suffer from the inequalities in society. Hence, they see discourse as a form of social practice. As truly observed by Fairclough and Wodak (1997: 258), ‘discourse is socially constitutive and socially conditioned. It constitutes situations, objects of knowledge, and the social identities of relationships between people and groups of people’. van Leeuwen (1993: 193) argues that ‘CDA is, or should be, concerned with two aspects: discourse as the instrument of power and control and discourse as the instrument of the social construction of reality’.

To find out how language users exercise power through discourse, it is necessary to examine those properties of discourse that can vary as a function of social power. Thus, van Dijk (2001: 99) suggests that one should concentrate upon the following linguistic markers: stress and intonation; word order; lexical style; coherence; local semantic moves such as disclaimers (local meaning, lexical meaning, meaning of words, and the structures of propositions, coherence, implications, presuppositions, allusions, and vagueness); topic choice (global meaning of the discourse, semantic macrostructures); speech acts; schematic organization; rhetorical figures; syntactic structures; propositional structures; turn takings; repairs; and hesitation. It should be noted that as Meyer (2001: 26) pointed out: ‘all these linguistic devices are more or less susceptible to speaker control, although not always consciously controlled or controllable by the speakers’.

A note on the method

The present study shares the emancipatory aim of CDA by highlighting the ideological foundation of news discourse about Muslims in the USA. The unit of analysis for CDA is text. At the outset of the study, 11 programs (February 10, May 26 and 12, August 25, December 15, April 21, March 31 and 17, January 27 and 19, and June 16) were randomly selected and read out of 34 programs discussing about Muslims by the researchers to arrive at a tentative list of analytical tools used at giving a partial view of the way Muslims were depicted. The same procedure was used by another researcher, in this case, an applied linguist and the results were
discussed to see the amount of consistency of the findings and to resolve the inconsistent categories. The transcriptions are available at (www.cnn.com). This study intended to determine how Islamophobic ideologies are expressed in GPS talk shows. Thus, the programs are analyzed in terms of contextual and textual element according to van Dijk’s analytical tools in three levels of meaning, style, and argumentation with regards to textual level and in two levels of access (i.e., the unequal access of Muslims to media outlets) and participants (i.e., positions, roles, and identities of the guest speakers) in contextual level. It is also worth mentioning that due to the oral nature of the data, the excerpts have to be long enough to be able to pass on the meaning in a proper way.

Findings and discussion

Analysis at the meaning level

According to van Dijk (1991), CDA in meaning level consists of many textual elements. The analyses done on Zakaria’s speech in the level of meaning revealed that implicitness, generalization, clarity and vagueness, and categorization are those elements the speaker benefited the most to convey his anti-Islamic feelings in this level. The excerpts are discussed as follows:

Excerpt 1

I recently put these very worries to a panel, a panel of Arab leaders, the prime ministers of Egypt, Lebanon, Libya, the Palestinian Authority, and the chief of government of Morocco... Now, you may have noticed that all of the guests on my panel were men. There is not a single female Arab head of state. So I asked my guests about the status of women in their countries starting with the new prime minister of Egypt, Hesham Mohamed Qandil... There are a number of Egyptian women who have told me that they believe the situation of women in Egypt today is worse than it was under Mubarak.

The implicitness is used as a means of conveying a meaning of which explicit expression can be interpreted as biased. In Islamophobic ideologies, women are always represented as oppressed in Islam. Here, Zakaria refers to the discriminations against women in some Islamic countries and depicts a negative image of Muslim women’s conditions in those societies. He indeed implicitly relates these inequities to Islamic rules and explores the origin of such unfairness in Islam’s teachings. This can be proved based on the comparisons he makes between the situations of women under Hosni Mubarak’s rule in Egypt and Muhammad Morsi’s as the country’s first democratically elected Islamic president. Morsi as a leading member in Muslim Brotherhood was an Islamist who intend to rule the country based on Sharia, far from traditional beliefs in Caliphates and by such a comparison Zakaria implies that becoming more
Islamic in governing a country means becoming more backward with regards to women issues. Though the presence of groups like Salafist Nour Party who believed in setting down the Islamic rules in strict ways, especially relating women; could intensify negative interpretations of Westerners of women’s rights in Islamic societies and Zakaria is not an exception. Indeed, referring to MW, Zakaria’s judgments are more similar to the stereotypes prevalent in Western media; the reports which tend to present MW as ‘passive’ and ‘oppressed’ (All-Hejin, 2014: 20; Roushanzamir, 2004) and according to them, ‘gender inequality’ is among the top responses American women give to open-ended questions like ‘what do you admire least about the Muslim or Islamic world?’ (All-Hejin, 2014: 21). The interesting point is that according to the studies conducted by Gallup between 2001 and 2007, Muslim women themselves are equally opposed to the idea that adopting Western cultures will help in their progress (All-Hejin, 2014: 3).

Excerpt 2

...Ganjí’s essay describes an Iranian leader (Khamenei) who, for much of his early career, was deeply hostile toward the West and the United States.

Most debates involve forms of generalization in which events or actions are generalized and represented in a broader manner (Van Dijk, 2003). It is evident where Zakaria states that ‘Ayatollah Khamenei was deeply hostile toward the west’. In fact, he generalizes about his position against some Western governors and presents himself as an enemy of all Western nations.

Talking about the issue of ‘Peace talks’ which is mainly related to Palestine and Israel, he uses the term ‘Middle East’ to generalize about the peace-related challenges of those two countries and relate them to all nations living in the Middle East: ‘The Middle East is in turmoil. Israeli and Palestinians bear fresh wounds from the recent conflict in Gaza’.

Zakaria makes other generalizations in his discourses about Islam or Muslims as:

1. Generalizing about the number of dissatisfied women in Egypt: ‘There are a number of Egyptian women who have told me that they believe the situation of women in Egypt today is worse than it was under Mubarak’.
2. Generalizing about the number of people who relate radicalism to Islam: ‘When people talk about Chechnya, there’s often a reference to radical Islam, violent Islam, militant Islam, but it wasn’t always like that…’
3. Generalizing about the positive attitudes of all well-meaning and tolerant people about brutality of Islam: ‘Why do you think Islam has such a kind of brutal image? You know, even well-meaning people, even tolerant people basically believe that at the end of the day, there’s something in the religion that seems to breed fanaticism or intolerance or violence’.
Excerpt 3

...Khamenei has pointed out that Iran’s democratically-elected government Mohammed Mossadegh was not anti-American. In fact, he looked to America for support as he broke free of a colonial relationship with Great Britain. But the United States and Britain organized a coup against Mossadegh 60 years ago this week actually. Then came the American-backed regime of the Shah, which for Khamenei was a western implant on Iranian society. The books Khamenei likes are all critiques of western society for the way it has treated the poor or African-Americans or Native Americans. He does not, incidentally, seem to recognize the strength of a culture that criticizes itself...

It is the management of clarity and vagueness of a discourse that strengthens or weakens its political or ideological dimensions (van Dijk, 1991). This is why the speaker remains pretty vague about the negative characteristics of the self and positive characteristics of the others when he talks about Iran’s coup in Excerpt 3. On the 60th anniversary of the coup, USA and Britain organized against Mosadegh’s government in Iran. While Zakaria in a live GPS program, talks about the issue, but does not give any detail about the two Western countries’ intervention in Iran’s internal affairs. Instead, he cleverly turns the subject and spells out what Ayatollah Khamenei, Iran’ current Leader, have stated about Viktor Hugo’s novel and provides many questionable specifics about him to announce that he is a powerful Muslim leader who is deeply hostile toward the West.

Excerpt 4

Modern Islamists are full of contrasts, conflicts, and contradictions. Some of the fateful seem stuck in the 15th century or even earlier, while others are racing into the 21st century. One of the sharpest takes on modern Islam that I have read in a long time is a new book by Turkey’s finest political analyst, Mustafa Akyol. It is called ‘Islam without Extremes: a Muslim Case for Liberty.’...Zakaria to Akyol: ‘Now, you grew up in Turkey, which is a secular country, you grew up as a believing Muslim, but liberal. What was your experience of growing up with regard to this issue?

The typical categorization form in this debate is the categorization of Islam and Muslims into two groups: ‘Modern Islam’ versus ‘fundamental Islam’ and ‘Liberal Muslims’ versus ‘extremes’. Islam in a secular country like Turkey, that is introduced under the name of ‘Modern Islam’; while in other Arab countries, it is considered as ‘intolerant religion’ which should be democratized. Accordingly, those who believe in the rules of ‘Modern Islam’ are called ‘Liberal Muslims’ (definition of modern Islam), while others are labeled ‘extremes’ or ‘fundamentals’. If the latent Muslims emigrate to a Western country according to the speaker’s classification in Excerpt 5, they will fall into the second category of immigrants, that is, ‘Muslim immigrants’ who are ready to get radicalized and become violent.
and dangerous terrorists; whereas members of the second category (that is, other immigrants) are excluded of such brutal acts.

Excerpt 5

There seem to be a pattern here, which is if you look at the London bombings, they seem to resemble the one in this sense: second generation or first generation or immigrant, but clearly almost always in these cases Muslim immigrants, something goes wrong in their immigrant experience, in the assimilation, and that becomes one of the triggers that puts them on a path to radicalization.

Analyses related to the level of style

Examining the GPS programs on the level of style reveals that Lexicalization is an important ideological tool for Zakaria to shape his Islamophobic discourses in this level.

Excerpt 6

‘… Law enforcement would need to do the almost impossible, sort out who are the radical Muslims, not prone to violence, and those who could turn into terrorists’.

According to van Dijk (2008), depending on the ideological standpoint of the speaker, similar meanings may be expressed in variety of words. Fairclough (1995: 34) defined Lexicalization as the ‘unwritten and unspoken conventions for the use of a particular word or expression in connection with particular events or behaviors, which are operative and taken for granted in the production and interpretation of [texts]’. He further argued that the goal of the analysis is highlighting the role of the lexicon, especially if it has been naturalized and accepted as the neutral code and identifying or creating alternative lexicalizations that are generated from divergent ideological positions (Fairclough, 1995: 36). In Islamophobic texts, the image of Islam is displayed as the face of terrorism, violence, fanaticism, and hatred. Islam and this image is so blended that speaking of one without referring to the other has become almost impossible. Here also the words that have an Islamophobic connotation are radicalism and Islamic radicalism, Islamic terrorist, terrorism, violence, chaos, and backward movement in Islamic countries.

Excerpt 7

… since the Madrid and London bombings, there have been just three Islamic terrorist attacks that have killed people in Western Europe

In reporting of the Middle East, ‘terrorism’ is the dominant theme of the headlines. Many scholars like Macdonald (2003) believed that after the collapse of evil Soviet Union, the evil Islam has been an appropriate replace. Bhatia (2006: 14), states that referring to terms like terrorists and extremists is an attempt at ‘denying the legality
of their opponents and emphasizing the need to maintain law and order. Terror and the closely related terms extremism and fundamentalism can be defined as blind unjustified violence, and therefore, it cannot be politically motivated.

Excerpt 8

... But the vast majority of those attacks did come from people who would have been Muslim radicals, Islamic radicals

Excerpt 9

The Boston bombings have reminded us that the war on terror is one that has to be fought at home as well. But how to find the next group of misfits who have no background with terrorists, who might get radicalized over the Internet and who go from talking radicalism one day to plotting terror the next.

The second important theme that is related to Muslim world in CNN is that of Radicalism, Fundamentalism, and Fanaticism. Islamism and its other equivalent terms like fundamentalism and political Islam are complex phenomenon taking numerous descriptions throughout the history of its creation. Some define it as a reaction to the Western form of modernization by traditional people and regard it as a backward and more importantly anti-democratic movement against West. After the 9/11 events, many Westerners and policy makers in the West intend to bring together all forms of Islamism to mean just one radical and hostile ideology that seeks its salvation in destroying West and all forms of Western modernity. But a few observations which should not be forgotten are that there are different forms of Islamism, but only a few blend Islam with violence. In Islamophobic discourses especially this form of misunderstanding is spread. The GPS text as is evident from the above excerpts also spread these misunderstandings.

Analyses related to the level of argumentation

Number game and topoi are the two ideological tools on the level of argumentation. Zakaria benefits the most to desperately talk about Islam and Muslims.

Excerpt 10

Well, the recent global terrorism index report covers the years 2002 to 2011. It shows that terrorism went up from ’02 to ’07 largely because of the conflicts in Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Iraq.

Excerpt 11

... Around the world, more than 140 people have been reported killed in terror-related attacks since last Sunday and many hundreds more wounded. In Iraq alone, at least 77 dead and 328 wounded in four attacks and at least 30 killed in Somalia.
Two NGO workers, 16 policemen, 6 civilians and a district governor were among those killed in multiple attacks in Afghanistan. Nine dead at a political rally in Pakistan, 16 injured near a political office in India, 8 shot dead by a gunman in Kenya...

The role that mass media play in promoting fear has become more distinct since the events of 9/11 and discovering terrorism by the United States (Altheide, 2007). According to Altheide (2007), invading Iraq and Afghanistan, expanding American military presence all over the world and other adjustments made in foreign policy, military budget, domestic surveillance, and attacks on civil liberties all justified as the acts against a vile enemy named as the ‘axis of evil’ by president Bush. These evil countries included Muslim countries which were considered as the greatest enemies of the West after the collapse of Soviet Union. Zakaria’s use of numbers and statistics in his speech as a means to show that what he is discussing and not just as mere opinions but as facts. In excerpt 10, he gives statistical information about the promotion of terrorism from 2002 to 2012 and in excerpt 11 he gives some numbers regarding the number of terror related deaths. This shows that he is trying to show Islamic terrorism as a major problem the world faces today and needs to be stopped fast.

As argued by Wodak, different forms of polarization and discrimination can be discussed by means of argumentation strategies or topoi. Within argumentation theory, ‘topoi’ are parts of argumentation which belong to the obligatory, either explicit or inferable premises. They are content-related warrants or ‘conclusion rules’ which connect the argument or arguments with the conclusion (Wodak, 2001: 73–74). Our analysis of the GPS talk show yielded the following (mostly inferable) topoi:

- **Topos of reality**: Zakaria with reference to different negative events in Islamic countries like war in Iraq, Al-Qaeda in Afghanistan, and terrorist acts happening all over the world like kidnapping Westerners in Islamic countries, wants to justify the war on terror began by Bush administration and tries to justify that the war has not ended:

  There is little doubt that the terrorists who seized the plant are brutal, nasty people, but are really a branch of al-Qaeda? Do they have global jihadist aims?...In recent years, it seems they have stumbled upon a far more lucrative business: hostage taking. Belmoktar and other groups like his in Mali and Niger have kidnapped Westerners and extracted princely ransoms in return. According to the U.S. Treasury, the average ransom for a western hostage held by AQIM in 2011 was $5.4 million. This sort of terrorism pays richly in this world, not the next

- **Topos of justice**: This topos is used to represent women’s status in Islamic countries; they are often represented as oppressed, living in a terrible situation
that needs an immediate action by Western countries. For instance, for Zakaria
to justify his remarks about women’s status, he confirmed that:

This is written by an Arab, about the Arab world with enormous amounts of data. By
any comparison with the rest of the world, the status of women in the Arab world
is poor.

In another example, he said:

If you look at the statue of women in Iraq, in Egypt now, as popular forces take over
these countries, it is sad to say the situation for women often worsens.

- **Topos of humanitarianism:** This topos is used to speak about the situation in
  Middle East and tries to represent it as a horrible one without referring to other
countries like Qatar that live in peace and also tries to justify the American led
intervention there. For example, Zakaria described the situation in Syria and
Middle East as:

  The civil war in Syria becomes a bigger humanitarian crisis by the day. That’s a lot of
  problems in just one region.

In another place, he argued that:

The Alawite, Christians, and Kurds collectively make up about a third of Syrians, so
this could become a large, many-cornered struggle. And, remember, with 180,000
troops in Iraq, the United States could not stop massacres, ethnic cleansing,
and massive human rights violations.

- **Topos of definition and name interpretation:** This topos is widely employed in the
data. One of the striking cases is the statement made by Zakaria in speaking
about the image of Islam, he describes Islam as having a brutal image and
concludes that there is something in this religion that is issuing fanaticism,
intolerance, and violence, glossing over the fact that there are more than 72
different sects in Islam and just a few blend Islam with violence. This is what
Tamdgidi’s (2012: 56) perceives as:

  Western imperial (oil-based) geopolitics that have helped over develop this static and
ultraconservative interpretations of Islam which have often been in fact breeding
grounds of Islamic fundamentalisms and terrorisms at the expense of marginalizing
and misrepresenting its dynamic, laboratory, and egalitarian interpretations.

- **Topos of uselessness/disadvantage:** According to the viewpoint taken by Zakaria,
Islam and Islamic terrorism, as they call it, is the greatest threat to the world in
general and the West in particular. Time and time again Islam is explicitly
juxtaposed to the words like fanaticism, fundamentalism, violence, and terrorism assumed to be a real global challenge. This overshadows the fact that on one hand, any act of terrorism and murder is forcefully rejected by Islam and on the other hand this is the Islamic countries that are hurt mostly by these terrorist events happening.

**Contextual level**

Van Dijk broadens the scope for CDA by emphasizing on socio-psychological factors and he concentrates his efforts within the theoretical discourse-cognition-society triangle. According to van Dijk (2001: 97–98), ‘cognition’ involves both personal and social cognition, beliefs, goals, evaluations, emotions and any other ‘mental’ or ‘memory’ structures involved in discourse and interaction. ‘Society’ includes local, microstructures of situated face-to-face interactions, and also the more global, societal, and political structures variously defined in terms of groups, organizations, social processes, political systems, and more abstract properties of societies and cultures. In his view, a mere study of text and talk simply will not do and ‘only through an integration of these accounts (discourse, cognitive, and societal) may one reach a sufficiently descriptive, explanatory and critical adequacy in the study of social problems’ (van Dijk, 2001: 98). In van Dijk’s idea, the power and dominance of groups can be identified by their control over and access to discourse (van Dijk, 1993: 225).

Concerning the level of access in this research, all the participants that were invited to talk about issues that are related to Islam and Muslim world tallied and the number and percentage of the Muslim participants and non-Muslim ones were calculated. The role and position of each participant were analyzed afterwards to understand the societal position of Muslim and non-Muslims invited.

**Access**

Out of the ninety two guests who spoke about the Muslim issues, 25 were Muslims and 67 non-Muslims. It shows that just 27.17% of them were Muslims and non-Muslims consisted of 72.82% of the participants. The results show an unequal access of the Muslims to express their ideas through CNN programs, namely GPS talk shows.

**Participants**

During the first step, all the participants speaking about Muslims were detected, next they were classified into Muslim and non-Muslim categories. All the participants were counted just once even if some of the participants were invited more than once.
**Non-Muslim participants.** Sixty-seven non-Muslims were invited to speak about Muslim-related issues, 15 non-Americans, and 52 Americans. They all were of highly prestigious and strategic position which is important for the credibility and impact of their assertions. There were 6 university professors, 16 CIA agents and security advisors, 10 politicians, and 17 authors and intellectuals. One of the guests was a Jewish MP of Majlis of Iran.

To talk briefly about some of these participants, we can refer to:

- Paul Wolfowitz and Reuel Gerecht, that were invited twice and were a member and former director of ‘the Project for the New American Century’ (PNAC), respectively. The PNAC ‘emphasized changing American foreign policy to become a hegemon and police its international interests as a new kind of benevolent American empire’ (Altheide, 2007: 293).
- Steven Groves, the leader of the heritage foundation’s Freedom Project states that as a conservative think tank, advocates American leadership on issues involving international political and religious freedom, human rights and democratic institutions.
- Peter Bergen, the director of the National Security Studies Program at the New America Foundation and Anne-Marie Slaughter who was named President of the New America Foundation.
- Anatol Lieven, a Senior Researcher at ‘the New America Foundation’, focuses on US global strategy and the War on Terrorism. ‘The New America Foundation’ is a nonprofit, nonpartisan public policy institute that invests in new thinkers and new ideas to address the next generation of challenges facing the United States’ (newamerica.net). New America’s National Security Studies Program researches and analyzes a wide range of global issues, from the inner-workings of al-Qaeda to overall national foreign policy strategy. With the presence of journalists such as Steve Coll and Peter Bergen, New America has carved out a policy niche in issues of Afghanistan and counter-terrorism.

**Muslim participants.** Out of the 92 participants who spoke around the Muslim issues, 25 were Muslims, 11 of them were politicians and leaders from Arab World and Middle East (7 Sunni leader and 2 Iranian Shiites that were invited to speak about the Iranian nuclear issues). Other twelve were professors, journalists, writers, an actor, a former FBI agent, and a US exchange student from Yemen. A noticeable issue was that thirteen of these Muslims were Muslim-Americans that were born and reside there or just had an American residency. Two of the guests were Turkish intellectuals, who were described as moderate or modernized Muslims. An important matter is that, the Shiite guests were never invited to clarify their ideologies and just were there as two politicians to speak about challenging political issues confronting Iran.
Conclusion

The findings revealed that the coverage of actors or institutions associated with Islam in CNN talk show GPS to be biased, that is, the presence of Islamophobic discourse was proved in the speech of the host Fareed Zakaria. According to analysis based on van Dijkian representational tools, the representation of Islamic societies in GPS talk shows is in a way that ‘Muslims’ and ‘Islamic communities’ are generally accompanied with words like ‘terrorism’, ‘injustice’, ‘backwardness’, ‘insecurity’, and ‘alienation’. In fact, any discussion about Islamic societies is followed by news of war, instability, violence, terror, and injustice and little is said about other achievements in these countries made in areas of science, technology, medicine, art, sport, and alike. Thus, the audiences are always provided with unpleasant images and news about Muslims.

Analyzing the programs based on the contextual elements of the discourse, namely, access and participants, demonstrates that, the number of Muslim participants was considerably lower than the non-Muslims and a review on participants’ political orientations proves that their attitudes about Islamic issues were not different from the speaker’s points of views and except some guests like Iran’s foreign minister; many of the Muslim participants, approved Zakaria’s remarks regarding Muslims or Islamic societies.

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