

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

The 9/11 terrorist attack incident is one of the infamous incidents that happened in America. This incident fueled widespread prejudice and discrimination against Muslims in the almost entire world, especially in America. Cainkar (2006) stated that due to the 9/11 attack incident, Muslims became the center of doubts and suspicions regarding their faithfulness and ties to terrorism. As claimed by Mosquera et al. (2013) negative stereotypes and treatments toward Muslims increased in many Western societies. For example, the FBI recorded a sixteen-fold increase in hate crimes (e.g., acts of arson, aggravated assault, property crimes) against Muslim Americans in the USA from 2001 to 2002 (Kaplan 2007, 15-24).

An evaluation of attitudes towards Muslims, Whites, and Blacks using the Implicit Association Test (IAT) as well as a host of explicit attitudinal measures in three studies among ethnically diverse samples of American university students showed that participants possessed more negative attitudes both implicit and explicit toward Muslims than toward Whites or Blacks. In addition, the way Muslims are stigmatized in American society could be seen in this study where in their opinion, about Muslims, participants most often connected Muslims with terrorist, violent, or destructive tendencies (Park, Felix and Lee 2007, 38-44).

In regard to the issue of prejudice, discrimination, and unfair treatment towards Muslims in America, one of the noticeable existences that need to struggle a lot is Muslim women. According to the data, 82% of American adults, who acknowledge Muslims, are discriminated against a lot, especially veiled Muslim women (Pew Research Center 2019). This phenomenon could be said related to the appearance of Muslim women which is contrary to Muslim men who generally have a similar appearance to other men in America, Muslim women could be identified easily as Muslim or related to Islam as the result of their choices using veil (Maghfirah 2020, 6). Their identity as women in which being viewed as emotional (irrational), weak, nurturing, and submissive in the traditional gender roles (Tyson 2014, 81) and their identity as Muslim which in this case have more negative stereotype after the 9/11 terrorism attack incident resulted in the need of Muslim women to struggle more in the American society.

Along with this issue, media – in this case, Television –which could be the bearer or provoker of meanings and pleasures, and of culture as the generation and circulation of this variety of meanings and pleasures within society (Fiske 2001, 2) has important roles in the way of constructing people's mindset. Gitlin (1980) argued that mass media are the distributors of ideology and this ideology is constructed and distributed predominantly through framing or how the information is organized and presented (Powell 2011, 93). Framing itself is described by Charlotte Ryan (1991) as "how news stories are made, i.e. how pieces of information are selected and

organized to produce stories that make sense to their writers and audiences” (p. 53). Thus, the information is being negotiated, managed, and comprehended by us through the frames that have been created for us (Goffman 1974, 239-264). Shook (2000) stated that every story has an angle and that particular angle is called “story focus” or “story commitment” by the reporters. Through this focus or lens where in case the lens of the dominant one’s perspective, the other will be portrayed in a biased manner as the result (Powell 2011, 93). Moreover, the outcome of the truth constructed by media will be the lasting images and stereotypes about groups, religions, and peoples (Maslog 1971, 350-353).

The result of the poll of Muslim Americans showed that 67% stated that the media grew more biased against Muslims after the 9/11 attack incident (Council on American-Islamic Relations 2002). For example, a research paper by Sjanne Adams in 2019 analyzed the American TV Series *‘Homeland’* and found out that in the 7 seasons of *Homeland* series, the Muslim women representation is dominated by female terrorist scene. Besides the representation of Muslim relation with terrorism, American television also has increased sympathetic portrayals of Muslims where Muslims are the unjust target of hate crimes (Alsultany 2013, 161-164). For instance, the study that is written by Rubina Ramji (2005) about the Hollywood styles in filming Muslims, mentioned that Muslim women images in Hollywood styles are still being dominated as the silenced and oppressed in accordance with the traditional gender roles.

However, according to Maghfirah (2020), the role of media was only circling around the image of Muslim women that is linear to gender stereotypes before, start to transform slowly helping Muslim women to deconstruct the negative stigma about them. *9-1-1: Lone Star Season 1 (2020) and Season 2 (2021)* are TV Series that portray the image of Muslim women as one of the main characters and one of the minor characters. This TV Series originated from FOX broadcasting company, a network TV from America that is owned by Fox Corporation. The fact that this series is produced by FOX is also an interesting factor to study this series. FOX network launched in 1986 using the strategy of targeting black viewership and counter-programming against other shows to suit that audience's taste which leads FOX to be the fourth network airing the largest single-crop of black-produced in television history with 25 percent of FOX's market occupied by Black-Americans by 1995. Due to this fact, FOX inadvertently fostered a space of black authorship in television (Zook 1999, 4)

9-1-1: Lone Star (2020 & 2021) TV Series is a spin-off of *9-1-1* TV Series that focuses on police, firefighter, and paramedic job in Austin, Texas. This TV Series shows how the character has tried to deal with their own personal problems such as Marjan Marwani, a Muslim woman firefighter character who has her own problem related to her career and religion and still do their job professionally. It is known that Muslim woman (hijabis) is also having difficulty in their career. The research found out that in America, women who wear hijab have a lower chance than women who do not wear hijab to be accepted into a job (Abdelhadi 2017, 11). A minor Muslim

woman character named Zara also appear in the third episode of Season 1 in relation to Marjan Marwani character dealings with one of her problems. It could be said that Muslim women encountered many restrictions in America, especially after the 9/11 attack incident. In *9-1-1: Lone Star* (2020 & 2021), there is a depiction of how Muslim women struggle in their job and the acts of challenging traditional gender roles where men are viewed as rational, strong, protective, and decisive; meanwhile, women are being viewed as emotional (irrational), weak, nurturing, and submissive (Tyson 2014, 81) in the American society where the prejudice and discrimination against Muslim have deepened as the aftermath of the 9/11 terrorism attack incident.

As mentioned before, the western media portrayed Muslim women as ones who are silenced, oppressed, and submissive (Ramji 2005, 34) has started to change recently (Maghfirah 2020, 11), as we can see in *Homeland* TV Series which also portrays Muslim women throughout the season 1 (2011) until season 6 (2017). In the first season of *Homeland* (2011), Adams found that the depiction of Muslim women is about Muslim women as oppressed wives with a total of 4 scenes. The second season (2012) depicted Muslim women as female terrorists (21 scenes) and in neutral portrayal (6 scenes). The third season (2013) depicted Muslim women in 3 scenes of an oppressed wife, 21 scenes of positive portrayal, and 4 scenes of positive portrayal. The fourth season has 1 scene of an oppressed wife, 13 scenes of female terrorists, 16 scenes of positive portrayal, and 4 scenes of neutral portrayal. The fifth season (2015) has 1 scene of an oppressed wife, 6 scenes of female terrorists, and 2 scenes of

neutral portrayal. Lastly, the sixth season (2017) has 5 scenes of the neutral portrayal of Muslim women (Adams 2019, 14-26).

From *Homeland* TV Series, it could be seen that Muslim women's depiction in western media start to change from just circled around the ties with terrorism, silenced, and oppressed characters into ones with the neutral and positive portrayal. However, this depiction of Muslim women as oppressed wife and terrorist characters still dominate the portrayals in this series. The neutral and positive portrayals also just showed that Muslim women are being victimized by society regarding their identity as Muslim after the 9/11 attack incident and depicted that they are the same as average people regarding their religious identity. For instance, in *Homeland*, Fara (a Muslim woman character) suffers from stereotypes that tie Muslim to terrorism in her workplace, however, this situation starts to change for the better and showed that Muslim women are also average workers as others in this series (Adams 2019, 18). 9-1-1: *Lone Star* TV Series portrays Muslim women in a different image by showing Muslim women as a character who has power that challenges the previous representation of Muslim women in American media. It showed that Muslim women have power that could challenge the traditional gender roles by portraying Muslim women characters as dominant, competitive, adrenaline-junkies, and independent by having their own career.

In order to analyze the issue, the sampling video data will be identified scene by scene with the images and the dialogues will be broken down along with the implication in the series using Fiske's semiotics as the method. In addition, in regards

to the object of the study, the power feminism theory which was proposed by Naomi Wolf will be used as the main theory by applying this theory to the result of the interpretation of Fiske's semiotics theory in this study. These two theories are chosen since television appears to reflect and construct beliefs, events, and cultures in society, and feminism are considered to be a part of the beliefs, events, and cultures that exist within society.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Based on the background of the study that has been stated before, the writer formulates the statement of the problem as follows:

How are Muslim women in American society being portrayed in *9-1-1: Lone Star* TV Series?

1.3 Objective of the study

In accordance with the statement of the problem, the objective of this study is as follows:

To analyze the portrayal of Muslim women in American TV Series *9-1-1: Lone Star* Season 1 (2020) and Season 2 (2021).

1.4 Significance of the Study

This study will examine the American TV Series *9-1-1: Lone Star Season 1 (2020) and Season 2 (2021)* which have a Muslim woman character as one of the main roles and one of the minor roles. Considering Islam as one of the recognized religions in the world and a major religion in Indonesia, by raising this issue, this study is expected to give a contribution to building an understanding of the portrayal of Muslim women in American media, as media held the role to represent the issue in the society and constructed beliefs in the society, which society has a deep prejudice and discriminate against Muslim, moreover after the 9/11 attack incident. It also aims to help a woman stand on their foot by themselves by showing the challenging of the traditional gender roles and states the independence of woman

1.5 Definition of Key Terms

1. Muslim women: refers to a term of someone who believes in Islam and lives according to its rules (Collins Dictionary)
2. Religious Identity: refers to how individuals develop their personal sense of religious and/or spiritual identity over the course of their lifetimes (Etengoff and Rodriguez, 2020)

3. Media: refers to The means of communication, as radio and television, newspapers, magazines, and the internet, that reach or influence people widely (IGI Global)
4. Traditional gender roles: the traditional gender roles cast men as rational, strong, protective, and decisive; meanwhile women as emotional (irrational), weak, nurturing, and submissive (Tyson 2014, 81)