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**“Oppositional Frames and the Representation of Muslim  
Americans in Newspaper Articles: The Impact of 9/11”**

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This analysis concerns how oppositional frames assign meaning to Muslim American identity before and after September 11, 2001. It specifically focuses on the framing of Muslims in the United States as an American ethnic group prior to the terrorist attacks of 9/11 and their framing as people with links to terrorists or as terrorists themselves after 9/11. Framing allows reporters to determine what story will be told, how it will be told and, most importantly, how it will not be told. Oppositional framing provides the appearance that news stories are giving two competing points of view, but this structure favors one perspective over the other and elides the multiple perspectives that exists any issue. Furthermore, the pervasiveness of the media has moved identity construction away from an experienced social interaction and to a disembodied, not spatially located projection that can advance political/economic interests or sell products. The *staging* of Muslim American identity in newspaper articles before and after September 11, 2001 requires both an image that other Americans can identify with, as well as an advancement of political interests that make Muslim Americans a *news-worthy* topic. Data for this research comes from newspaper articles about Muslim Americans published in the northeast region of the US and *The Washington Post* seven weeks prior to and following the September 11<sup>th</sup> attacks. This analysis demonstrates a shift in the framing of the Muslim-American identity from images of American ethnicity to those of political terrorists. While the opposing images are part of news stories from each time period, the September 11<sup>th</sup> attacks connect the global political interests of the United States to Muslims living in this country. The result is that after September 11, 2001 newspaper articles frame Muslim Americans in light of US global political interests.