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Abstract Only – Work in Progress

“Symbolically Muslim: Media, Hijab, and the West”

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This research examines newspaper reporting to question how the media represented the ideological interests of Western nations concerning symbolic representations of Islam in public following September 11, 2001. Critical discourse analysis is used to examine 72 stories that were published in the *New York Times* and *Washington Post* between 2004 and 2006. The stories covered the ban on *hijab* in France, the debate about *niqab* in Britain, and veiling by Muslim women in the United States. They show that knowledge about veiling in Western nations must include their national identities as well as their concerns about Muslims' assimilation/integration and Islamic terrorism. American newspaper media positioned France, Britain, and the United States as ideologically alike in spite of their different framings of religious freedom. Reporting supported the interests, values, and hegemony of the West with representations that created the common sense that Muslim women would not veil in public.