

Abstract for LEAP Presentation, October 18, 2013

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“Experiencing Media: The Boston Marathon Bombings”

My independent research this summer as a summer intern at Harvard University’s Pluralism Project began efforts to understand the impact of the mainstream news media on Muslim Americans – specifically, how young Muslim American females experience being Muslim Americans post-Boston Marathon Bombings. Focusing on the Muslim community in Western Springfield, I looked at how the Boston Marathon Bombings impacted young adults in the community.

Though the Boston Bombings did not directly impact Western Mass, the disdain towards Muslims created by the media still seems to have impacted the Springfield area’s view of Muslim Americans. Through participant observation and interviews with participants, I attempted to better understand the variety of experiences that these college-aged women through speaking to seven participants, half of which chose to cover their hair with the Islamic hijab and half of which did not observe the headscarf. This research helped me bring to light the different challenges these students faced as Muslims struggling to be accepted as Americans.