
IC In The News: Huffington Post Op-Ed "Political Activism in the Muslim American Sphere"

Recently, Nasser Siadat, Junior at New York University and ICNYU Student Leader, wrote an op-ed published by the Huffington Post entitled Political Activism in the Muslim American Sphere. To read the entire article in full, please [click here](#).

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Nasser Siadat

Political Activism in the Muslim American Sphere

I've always had a deep interest in politics and thought that my college experience would help further that interest. Like most of my classmates from high school, I ended up going to a great college, namely New York University. It just happened to be NYU's campus in the United Arab Emirates, more commonly known as the World's Honors College.

Political activism is a totally different experience when you are a college student studying in the UAE. For sure, there are no elections for national leaders in the paternal monarchy. One can tour college campuses all day and simply not find the t-shirts with catchy slogans or the campaign bumper stickers plastered to the backs of student laptops in the library that would easily be found in the United States. Turn the news on, and there definitely are no late night political ads or prime time debates.

Such a climate could be best described by the humor of one of my dear Emirati friends who I had the pleasure of touring Washington DC with this summer. As we walked past the White House, he turned to me with a smile and asked, "Is this where your sheikh lives?" My first two years

at NYU Abu Dhabi weren't so satisfying in terms of my political activism.

Growing up in the United States, the situation unfortunately hasn't been so different. In speaking to many individuals in the Muslim American community -- one of the fastest growing cohorts in the nation -- it's easy to observe one striking similarity between my time abroad and what I was beginning to observe right here at home; like the millions of Muslims we see on TV living in nations with long histories of election fraud or states without established participatory democracies, Muslim Americans are not actively engaging the political system on the home front.

This year, my junior year, I made the decision to spend the entire year at NYU's New York campus. A week ago, I made my way across campus to the Islamic Center at New York University, the only full time Islamic center on a college campus in the United States. It was from here that I and about 200 other undergraduate and graduate students - men and women of all walks of life, both Muslim and non-Muslim watched the first Presidential debates Wednesday night on a wall-sized projector screen. Prayer rugs were rolled up and stashed off to the side to make way for pizza boxes, soda cans, chips and an assortment of other snacks as the audience eagerly watched Obama and Romney discuss their domestic policy stances.

Indeed, the 2012 campaign season marks the first involvement in local and national politics for many of these students. Many of them come from homes of first generation citizens without an established tradition of political involvement. They like the vast majority of undergraduate student across the nation were unable to vote in prior elections due to their age....to continue reading please [click here](#).