



**Lina Darwish**

**Title: Impact of Twitter on Qatar youth perspectives: activism, digital authoritarianism, and democratization**

**Abstract:**

This paper aims to investigate the impact of social media on the political perspectives of young people in Qatar by employing an in-depth quantitative interview methodology with students aged 18 to 25 from universities in Qatar in order to assess how youth perspectives evolve in terms of their likelihood of political activism, change in state perception, and perceptions on democratic elements to Twitter usage. Evidently, a strong motivation for writing this paper was to assess the impact of social media on youth in Qatar, as the Arab Spring remains a prominent example of how youth in Tunisia and Egypt have been influenced by social media use to become digitally active. In contrast, there are no such blatant examples of digital activism in Qatar, possibly due to its political system or perceptions. However, to determine the role of social media in digital activism among Qatari youth, one must determine whether a change in attitudes due to social media occurred in the first place. Consequently, this paper aims to do so – while engaging with literature on youth digital activism in a few non-Gulf countries such as Egypt and Tunisia to highlight how digital activism transpires differently in Qatar youth based on the findings of the research. In order to accomplish this, thirty to forty in-depth interviews of youth containing 15 questions would be conducted with Qatari and non-Qatari youth from multiple universities in Qatar in order to assess their perspectives on aspects of freedom of speech in Qatar, their likelihood of becoming more digitally active through social media, and whether Twitter has influenced their view of Qatar's authoritarian regime. Non-Qatari youth were additionally chosen in the country due to the overwhelming migrant population in Qatar, and how their views may very well pose an effect on Qatar's sociopolitical climate equal to Qatari youth as well. In addition, the paper will emphasize some of the challenges and dangers associated with the use of social media to shape the political perspectives of Qatar's youth. Qatar's youth to include democratic beliefs, and how applicable is the existing literature to such considerations.

**Bio:**

*Lina Darwish is a Georgetown University class of 2023 graduate who majored in International Politics and obtained a certificate in media and politics with a focus on the Middle East. Her research passions lie in digital authoritarianism and more broadly, the impact of social media on political perspectives in the Gulf. Following her honor's thesis on the topic, she is currently conducting further independent research on how social media platforms influence the sociopolitical perspectives of youth in Qatar.*

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