

Middle East Dialogue 2015...Glorious Past, Uncertain Future

POLITICAL BLOGGING AND SOCIO-POLITICAL TRANSFORMATION: THE CASE OF EGYPT

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Social media played a crucial role in the instigation and orchestration of the wave of political change that has been sweeping the Arab world since 2011. In this presentation, Dr. Sahar Khamis focuses on a particular type of social media, namely political blogs, which played a valuable role in paving the road for socio-political transformation in the Arab world, through providing important venues for the exchange of ideas and the formulation of collective public opinion, as well as the documentation of significant events. Thus, encouraging civic engagement and public participation, on one hand, while providing platforms for citizen journalism, on the other hand. Focusing on the case of Egypt, in particular, Dr. Khamis presents the findings of a textual analysis of the dominant discourses in five of the most popular Egyptian political blogs, and how they paved the way for the eruption of the 2011 revolution by widely sharing an anti-governmental discourse which exposed corruption and violations of human rights, on the political front, while tackling taboo issues, such as sexual harassment, on the social front. In doing so, she sheds light on why and how the role of cyberactivists, in general, and political bloggers, in particular, has been changing and how this is related to the ongoing political developments in Egypt.