

Global Conversation with Orit Perlov

“Social Media Discourse: Evolving Doors in the Middle East”



On the 24th of February we had the chance to attend a conference held by Orit Perlov, who has worked for the Israel diplomacy and nowadays is working as a social media expert in the Institute of National Security Studies (INSS) in Israel. In particular, she is involved in the monitoring of social media discourse – mostly in the Arab world, and she focuses the most on public sector, so neither governmental, nor terroristic discourse, even if she has talked about the latter ones too.

According to her researches, in Arabic Countries 350.000.000 is the number of people estimated and one third of them is actively using social media. Within these, 51% are women and the rest are men. Taking the young generation, everyone is estimated to use social media and almost anybody is using this tool considering the generation of 45 years old and above. This is due to two reasons: the first, as Mrs. Perlov explained, is that the young generation feels the need to document everything and to post on social media, while older generation still respects private life; the second is that they are not used to changes and updates. Moreover, social media are mostly used by the upper and middle classes while there's almost no response when considering the poorest classes.

During the meeting she also focused on the way social media are used: this tool has been one of the major promoters of the arab spring, as an emancipation tool; but it can also be used for other aims, even in terroristic affairs, such as spreading of ideology and threatening of the global world.

In fact she has told about the Isis ideologies that are spread mainly throughout social medias all over the world.

Also, other very felt situations in the middle east, such as migrations and refugees are circulating globally through social media.

To conclude, Perlov has slightly switched the discussion to talk a little bit about the situation within the Arab world and the military relations with the USA and with Arab governments and terroristic organizations such as Isis and Hamas. She finally concluded telling about the situation of the “young and restless”: the young generation that in reality has not the chance to spread ideas because of the risk to be put in jail. So, also here, the role of social media is extremely important because allows minorities and other categories to be heard (women, young people, religious and ethnic minorities), that usually couldn't be heard otherwise.

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