

Guest Lecturer: Meryam Azar

Title

“Political communication during the Syrian crisis: comparative analysis of TV channels discourses 2010-2016”

Short Bio

Ms. Meryam Azar belongs to Tokyo University of Foreign Studies and her presentation was based on her master’s thesis submitted in September 2017.

Session

Ms. Azar works in an interdisciplinary field between media studies, social psychology and political science called “political communication”. Her presentation was entitled “Political communication during the Syrian crisis: comparative analysis of TV channels discourses in 2010-2016”. She started her presentation by asking the audience questions to elicit some background information on Syria from them which was an excellent way to spark their interest and keep them engaged throughout the session. She explained that the crisis started as a part of the Arab spring with small scale demonstrations suppressed by the government and later escalated into a very complicated conflict with international aspects. She pointed out the increasing dependence on the media as social and political instability was growing. Her research was seeking to highlight the impact of the competition between the political opponents in Syria on local and regional television channels and its influence on the public opinion about the news media. The research methodology involved comparative content analysis of political programs of the five most popular TV channels in Syria and survey analysis with 100 Damascus residents. Her findings show that high levels of political competition have polarized the media outlets to an extent that they lost their credibility among the public. She also shared her tips regarding field research and literature review techniques.

The participants asked Ms. Azar numerous questions as for the challenges she faced conducting field research in a conflict-affected country, her ways to select participants

and record their answers, her theoretical framework including “political contest model” by Wolfseld and “selective exposure” within the communication theory, possibilities of conducting a comparative case study with another country.

By Ivanova Polina（立命館大学大学院国際関係研究科博士後期課程）