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Title: **“Comparisons between Israel and Nazi Germany in contemporary German discourse”**

Panel: Israel Studies

Nazi comparisons are communicative strategies to express defamation against individuals or groups of people and to generate outrage in the space of public communication. Producers of such analogies direct towards the historical awareness of the recipients and furthermore anticipate their emotional reactions.

Since the beginning of the 1980s we can determine that rhetorical dereferencing on the NS past is made in connection with altercations concerning Israeli politics. In comparisons between National Socialists and Israelis a correlation is being established which defames the state of Israel as a continuity of the NS-dictatorship. Apart from the relativization of National Socialism, the portrayal of the victims of the past as perpetrators of the present is furthermore a relativization of guilt. This form of imagination and interpretation discloses the desire for the relief from and resistance to culpability. It also services refusal of remembrance concerning the NS past which is an functional element of anti-Semitism in the German post Holocaust society.

In a linguistic corpus study, that includes more than ten thousand e-mails which were addressed to the Embassy of Israel in Berlin and the Central Council of Jews in Germany between 2002 and 2014, I analyzed verbal antisemitic Nazi comparisons, e. g. “What Israel is doing with the annexation of Gaza is for me, personally, a form of a concentration camp!” (an e-mail to the Embassy of Israel with reference to the Israel-Gaza conflict in 2014). Most of the e-mails with comparisons to Nazi Germany were sent during periods of military altercations in the Mideast. However, writers produce constantly those derealization, also during times of de-escalation in the conflict. The systematic corpus-based study consists of quantitative evaluations as well as of qualitative analyses concerning the verbal realization of comparisons and antisemitic stereotypes in correlation with the corresponding discourses in the Middle East. These results reveal that analogies between Israel and the German Nazi regime were realized predominantly as utterances without typical comparative connectives. They address Israeli politicians in reference to different National Socialist officials, e.g. *Hitler* and *Goebbels*, or the Israeli military in reference to *Wehrmacht* and *SS*. Those expressions focus primarily on the actors and frame them as perpetrators of the present. On the

other hand producers of Nazi comparisons also describe Palestinians as victims by referring to Gaza as the *Warsaw Ghetto* or *Auschwitz*. In my lecture I shall present the results of this examination and illustrate them by using examples of the corpus data.