

Deterring effect

Stereotypical reporting on terror harms Israel's economy

Research Links:
www.cbs.gov.il/engindex.htm
www.goisrael.de
www.israel21c.com
www.perspektive-deutschland.de

One-sided reporting by foreign media has inflicted serious financial damages upon Israel's economy since September 2000: The losses incurred by industry and tourism since the outbreak of the "Al Aqsa Intifada" amount to an estimated seven billion Euro (8.9 billion Dollar) according to the National Bank of Israel. The fact that many investors and tourists stay away is primarily due to the media's one-dimensional portrayal of Israel as a war-torn country.

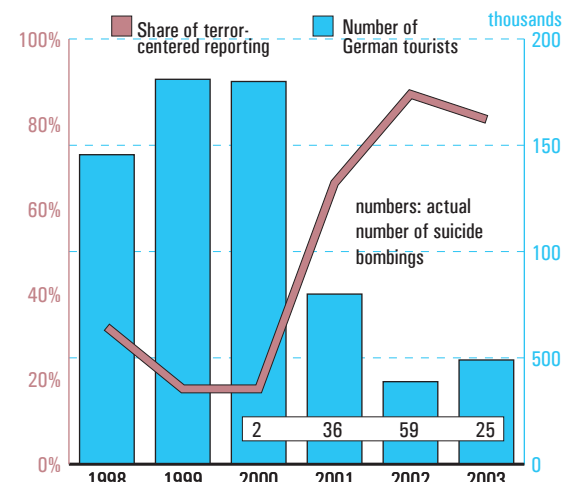
A clear correlation: development of travel habits follows the media's reporting

A **Media Tenor** analysis shows that German TV reporting has an immediate influence on the flood of tourists. The comparison of terror-centered reporting on Israel and the number of German tourists traveling to Israel shows a clear correlation: The more the media focuses on aspects of "terror in Israel", the less German tourists spend their holidays in the Jewish State. Our graphic also highlights the fact that the development of travel habits follows the media's reporting with a small time-lag. When the reporting about terror decreases, the number of travelers to Israel goes up almost proportionally.

Since the renewed violent flare up of the Arab-Israeli conflict German TV media seem to regard

only one aspect of Israeli reality as newsworthy: war. More than 80 percent of all reports about Israel in 2002 and 2003 reduced the country to a scene of terror and destruction. It cannot surprise that viewers who have to blindly trust the coverage due to their lack of own observation tend to abstain from an allegedly perilous journey.

Terror-centered reporting on Israel and number of tourists 1998 – 2003

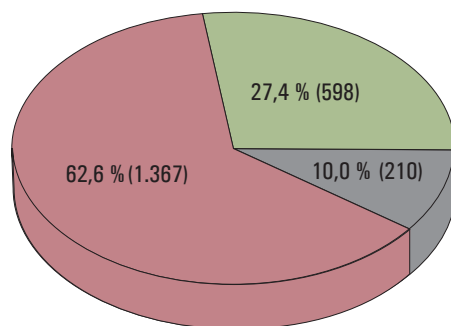


100%: all stories about Israel; bars: number of German tourists

Source: Media Tenor
01/01/1998 – 12/31/2003

Basis: all stories about Israel
in 7 TV news magazines

Topic structure of Israel coverage 2003 and 2004



- Israeli military actions
- Suicide bombings
- Other issues

Share of issues

Source: Media Tenor
01/01/2003 – 07/31/2004

Basis: 2,184 stories about Israel
in 23 media

But the stereotypical portrayal of Israel as a country of terror is not the only factor deterring travelers and investors. The topical selection further encroaches upon Israel's image: From January 2003 until July 2004 German TV media reported about Palestinian suicide terror in 219 cases. This compares with 598 reports about Israeli actions against Palestinians – reprisal raids, targeted killings, destruction of houses and settlement construction. This means that German TV reports three times as often about Israeli acts of violence than about the murders committed by Palestinian "Martyrs". The message is obvious: Israel provokes, Israel is the guilty party. The Palestinians are victims, suicide bombings a result of their powerlessness against Israel's policy of repression.

Dealing with a stereotype

Media Tenor's continuous survey of the topics "Israeli actions against Palestinians" and "Palestinian suicide bombings" shows that this theme is a common thread in almost all the media's reporting: We are obviously dealing with a stereotype

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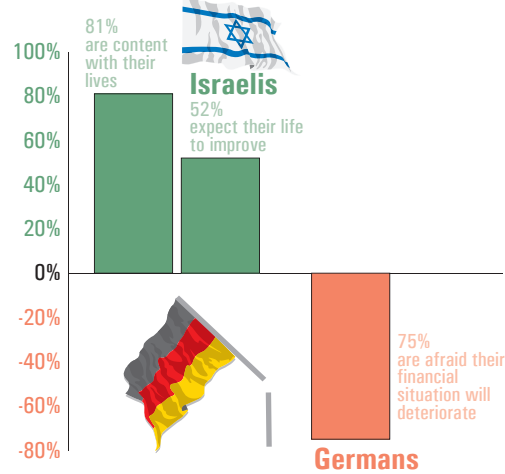
underlying the selection of news and molding the public's perception.

Israel is at war – at least according to the news on all important German TV broadcasting stations. To the viewer who is not able to get an own picture on the spot it seems as if no everyday life existed in Israel, as if all Israeli citizens were living in the trenches. Thus all the more of a surprise to German media consumers are the findings of a current survey conducted by the Israeli Central Bureau of Statistics: 81 percent of all Israelis declared they are content with their lives. 52 percent of Israelis expect their life to improve within the next years. Compare this to Germany: In an online survey by "Perspektive Germany" 75 percent of Germans said they are afraid their (financial) situation will deteriorate.

Drastic and ever growing alienation between Germans and Israelis?

The viewer is not able to comprehend were the Israeli's contentment comes from if he only follows German TV coverage. It may be enlightening to visit www.israel21c.com on the Internet: This site publishes positive news from Israel, in order to place stories such as "Israeli cell therapy tricks immune system into fighting cancer" in international media. Hope remains that the German media will escape its stereotypical patterns of reporting. Or else a drastic and ever growing alienation between Germans and Israelis will be the result.

Survey Israel vs Germany: Contentment of citizens



Share of interviewees in percent

Source: Central Bureau of Statistics, Israel; Online survey "Perspektive Deutschland" 2003

Basis:

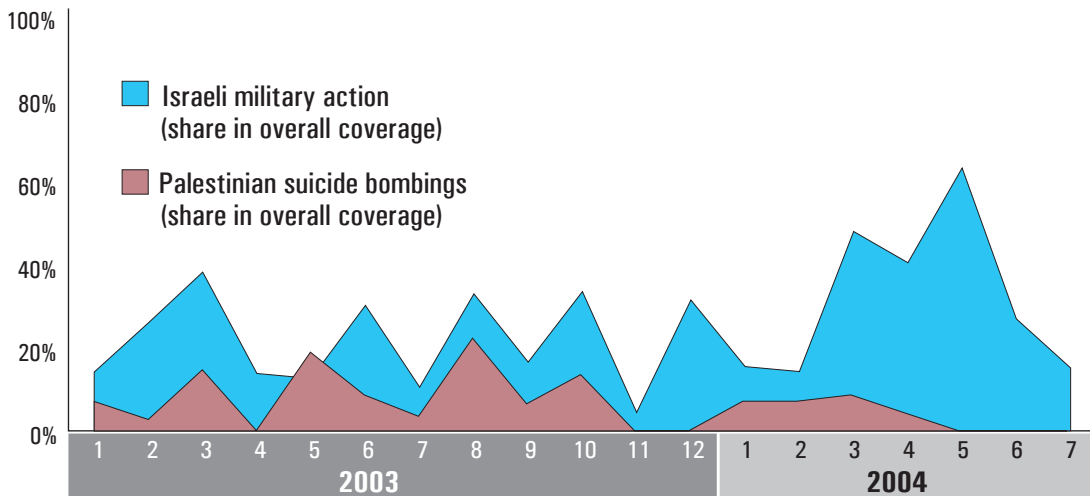
Media: Bild, Berliner Zeitung, Welt, Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, Frankfurter Rundschau, Süddeutsche Zeitung, taz; Zeit, Focus, Rheinischer Merkur, Spiegel, Stern, Super Illu; BamS, F.A.Z. Sonntagszeitung, WamS; ARD Tagesschau, Tagesthemen, ZDF Heute, Heute Journal, RTL Aktuell, SAT.1 18:30, ProSieben Nachrichten
Time: 01/01/1998 – 07/31/2004
Analysis: overall 5.645 stories about Israel (2001 – 2004) in 23 media; alle stories 1998-2000 in 7 media
Polls: „Perspektive Deutschland“, poll 2003; Central Bureau of Statistics, Israel, poll 2004

Open questions:

What are the specific reasons for the media's biased selection of news?

Which occasions for reporting can Israeli PR generate in order to prompt media reporting about positive facets of life in Israel?

Israeli violence is more important than Palestinian suicide bombing



Source: Media Tenor 01/01/2003 – 07/31/2004

Basis: 2,184 stories about Israel in 23 media