Genocide denial on the Internet: The cases of Armenia and Rwanda

Description

Title: Genocide denial on the Internet: The cases of Armenia and Rwanda
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Abstract: The regimes of truth within society, or those types of discourse accepted and made to function as true by truth-generating apparatuses, determine which events are classified as genocide and the types of evidence that are accepted as proof that a genocide has occurred. Genocide denial can be seen as an attempt to resist a regime of truth by putting forth an alternative analysis of a particular situation. Genocide deniers promote their discourse of denial as legitimate, scholarly efforts at historical revision with the intention of having another version of the truth exposed. Most research on genocide denial has focused primarily on the Holocaust, international debates to legislate genocide denial and the motivations and arguments used to deny genocide. This thesis qualitatively and thematically analyzes sixteen websites and twenty-eight documents to investigate the use of the Internet to produce and circulate discourses questioning the Armenian and Rwandan genocides. It argues that the Internet formulates a space and community in which genocide denial discourse is created, legitimized and disseminated. Then, through a vocabulary of motives framework, this thesis analyzes the logic of denial discourse to identify them as discursive strategies of truth production and to identify the ideological roots of denial. It is found that in Turkey’s case, denial is rooted in a sense of collective victimization and nationalism and its presence on the Internet demonstrates the existence of a regime of truth denying the Armenian genocide. For Rwanda, denial is call for the recognition of victim suffering and for justice in revealing an alternative discourse that has been subjugated to the accepted history of the genocide.

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Rwanda genocide suspect Charles Ndereyehe has been released after he was arrested on Tuesday evening at his house near Netherlands capital, Amsterdam, his political party has said. The Rwandan government had in 2010 issued an international arrest warrant for Mr Ndereyehe on charges of organising killings in the genocide. But it may not be the end of the case, as civil parties have already said they will move to a higher court, the AFP news agency reports.

Relations between the France and Rwanda have been turbulent ever since a French judge in 2006 accused several close associates of current Rwandan President Paul Kagame of being behind the assassination of Habyarimana. Genocide denial is the attempt to deny or minimize statements of the scale and severity of an incidence of genocide. Richard G. Hovannisian defines the denial as the final stage of a genocidal process and the erasing of the memories of the victim group. Following the physical destruction of a people and their material culture, memory is included and targeted as the last victim. Complete annihilation of a people requires the banishment of recollection and suffocation of remembrance. Falsification, deception and half-truths reduce what was to what might have been or perhaps what was. The former colonial power, Germany, lost possession of Rwanda during the First World War and the territory was then placed under Belgian administration. In the late 1950’s during the great wave of decolonization, tensions increased in Rwanda. The Hutu political movement, which stood to gain from majority rule, was gaining momentum while segments of the Tutsi establishment resisted democratization and the loss of their acquired privileges. November 1959. In November 1959, a violent incident sparked a Hutu uprising in which hundreds of Tutsi were killed and thousands displaced and forced to flee.