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GENOCIDE DENIAL ON THE INTERNET: THE CASES OF ARMENIA AND RWANDA

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Thesis submitted to the
Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies
In partial fulfillment of the requirements
For the MA degree in Criminology

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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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“You begin to liquidate a people (...) by taking away its memory. You destroy its books, its culture, its history. And then others write other books for it, give another culture to it, invent another history for it. Then people slowly begin to forget what it is and what it was. The world at large forgets it still faster.”

— Milan Kundera, *The Book of Laughter and Forgetting*

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INTRODUCTION: HISTORY REVISITED

On October 10th 2009, Turkish and Armenian Foreign Ministers signed historic protocols marking the first bilateral agreement between Turkey and Armenia in eighty-eight years. These protocols hoped to accomplish two tasks. In order to facilitate diplomatic relations, the first task was to reopen the joint border that has been closed between the two countries since 1993. More importantly however, these protocols hoped to establish a joint Armenian-Turkish historical commission to investigate the events of World War I and whether the deaths of 1.5 million Armenians during 1915 amount to genocide.¹

This political moment between these two countries and the call for a re-examination of history brings forth renewed concerns about historical truth and historical revisionism. What one camp considers denial of the Armenian genocide², another camp considers historical revision³. How do we distinguish then between denial and historical revision? Who is in the position to write history? How are certain histories granted legitimacy or authority over others? These questions bring us to the central issue of this thesis: the production of truth. Specifically, how do discourses questioning genocide attempt to create an alternative truth about genocide? How do these discourses challenge the truth produced by accepted discourse about genocide?

One of the premises of this thesis is that each society has discourses enforced by the power structures or the truth-generating apparatuses of society that are accepted and made to

¹ <http://www.cbc.ca/world/story/2009/10/10/turkey-armenia.html> (accessed 14/01/2010).

² See such scholars as Richard Hovannisian, Roger Smith, Robert Lifton, Taner Akcam, Yehuda Bauer, Irving Horowitz, Yair Auron and Vahakn Dadrian.

³ See such authors as Justin McCarthy, Heath Lowry, Guenter Lewy, Bernard Lewis and Norman Stone.

function as true (Foucault, 1980: 131). These regimes of truth affect discourses on genocide not only in terms of which events are categorized as genocide but also the evidence that is considered acceptable and mobilized as “proof” that a genocide has occurred. Following that perspective, genocide denial can be seen as an attempt to resist a regime of truth by proposing an alternative analysis of a particular situation, revealing “new evidence” or by presenting evidence that has previously been discarded.

This thesis is concerned with the production of alternative truths in the cases of the Armenian and Rwandan genocides. It looks at the use of the Internet as a means of propagating discourse that challenges the accepted historical truth and analyzes the arguments mobilized to produce alternative truths about genocide. In particular, this thesis examines the Internet as not only a vehicle for the production, dissemination and legitimization of these alternative truths but as a space and environment in which a community is created where discourses questioning genocide are accepted as truth. It then analyzes these discourses to see how they attempt to challenge the accepted truth in order to produce alternative truths in order to subvert or maintain power relations.

Chapter two traces the emergence of genocide denial as an area of study within the field of genocide studies and attempts to situate it within the discipline of criminology. It then examines the main themes and issues regarding genocide denial within the literature. First, it looks at the debate surrounding national and international frameworks legislating genocide denial. Next, the literature on the classification of arguments used to deny genocide and the motivations of denial is discussed in order to assist in identifying and analyzing the discourse of denial within the documents. Finally, a brief overview of the scientific literature on the Holocaust denial movement from its inception to its current

presence on the Internet sets the stage for examinations of other cases of genocide denial on the Internet.

Chapter three sets out a brief history of the Armenian and Rwandan genocides. It then outlines the conflicts regarding the meaning of these events and provides a brief overview of the arguments made by those who claim these killings did not constitute genocide.

Chapter four draws from the work of Foucault (1972; 1978; 1980) to discuss the production of truth and the discursive distinction between historical revision and denial. It also outlines vocabulary of motives theory as it applies to genocide denial in order to make sense of the logic underlying arguments questioning genocide. Finally, this chapter identifies key elements within media theory to understand truth production in the media. To this end, this chapter draws from Chomsky and Herman (1988) as well as alternative media theory. The conclusion of this chapter outlines the research problem and goals of the thesis.

Chapter five details the methodological procedures employed in the thesis. It examines the Internet as the context in which this research takes place and discusses documentary analysis as the main analytical method used. This chapter then specifies the analytical strategies involved in carrying out the research and ends with a discussion on the ethical considerations in conducting research of this kind.

Chapter six is the first of two analysis chapters. This chapter looks at the websites questioning genocide in the cases of Armenian and Rwanda genocide. It analyzes them utilizing the media theories in order to view the Internet as a space conducive to the creation of a community and to the production, circulation and legitimization of discourse questioning genocide.

Chapter seven analyzes the discourse questioning genocide found within the documents. Vocabularies of motive theory is used to analyze the arguments questioning genocide and to see them as strategies mobilized to create an alternative discourse about genocide. By revealing the underlying ideology of denial as well as the power relations created by these alternative discourses it is possible to conceptualize these alternative accounts as constituting a regime of truth in the case of Turkey and subjugated knowledge in the case of Rwanda.

Finally, chapter eight contains concluding remarks and a call for future research in the area of genocide denial.

CHAPTER TWO: REVIEWING THE LITERATURE ON GENOCIDE DENIAL

As a discipline, criminology has historically been preoccupied with areas of crime such as juvenile delinquency, crime prevention, penology, and street crime with little scholarly attention paid by criminologists to international crimes (Haveman & Smeulers, 2008: 4, Mullins & Rothe, 2009: 55). Generally, criminology has centered on the study of deviant behaviour by individuals within a state (Haveman et al., 2008: 8). The involvement of states and other organizations¹ in the commission of war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide changes the perspective of criminologists, requiring a new approach to the study of structural criminality or system criminality (*ibid*: 7).² Thus some scholars have called for a “supranational criminology” to address these issues.³

Supranational criminology takes a criminological approach to international crimes while maintaining interdisciplinary links with other areas of study including sociology, psychology, history, philosophy, law and political science. This new dimension of criminology focuses on issues such as war crimes⁴, crimes against humanity⁵, genocide⁶ and

¹ These acts can also be carried out by paramilitaries, militias and transnational organizations. See Mullins et al. (2009).

² For further discussions of studying state crime within criminology, see such authors as Ross, Barak, Kauzlarich et al., (1999), Rothe, Ross, Mullins, Friedrichs, Michalowski, Barak, Kaularich & Kramer (2009).

³ Some academics working in the field of international crimes have created a website dedicated to promoting this avenue of research and for individuals interested in international crimes and gross human rights violations. The website lists prominent scholars in the field such as Alexander Alvarez, Gregg Barak, David Friedrichs, Roelof Haveman, Christopher Mullins, Dawn Rothe and Alette Smeulers (www.supranationalcriminology.org).

⁴ Defined as “illegal actions which occur on the field of battle” (Mullins et al., 2009: 56).

⁵ Crimes against humanity are considered to be acts such as killing, deportation and rape but only “when committed as part of a widespread or systematic attack directed against any civilian population” (as according to the International Criminal Court Article 7).

⁶ “Genocide” is a term originally coined by Raphael Lemkin in 1933 and has been defined in the 1948 United Nations *Convention on the Punishment and Prevention of the Crime of Genocide*, as discussed below.

other gross human rights violations including aggression, terrorism and other forms of violence.⁷ It also includes:

... behaviour that shows affinity with these crimes, the causes and the situations in which they are committed, as well as interventions and their effectiveness. Interventions comprise penal systems – domestic, internationalized, supranational – in which the crimes are prosecuted and tried, as well as non-penal interventions (Haveman et al., 2008: 15).

Scholars of supranational criminology have called for a focus on genocide as a field of study. Researchers only started to direct their attention to genocide at the end of the twentieth century with several significant publications discussing genocide and state power (Horowitz, 1976; 1980), the political use of genocide and genocide prevention (Kuper, 1981; 1985) as well as the prediction of genocide (Charny, 1982; Chalk, 1989).

Genocide studies gained momentum in the 1990s with the Rwandan genocide in 1994 and the Srebrenica genocide during the Bosnian war in 1995. The literature on genocide increased in areas such as historical case studies and comparative studies of particular genocides (Chalk and Jonassohn, 1990; Melson, 1992; Prunier, 1995; Dadrian, 1996), issues of sexuality and gender including sexual violence as weapons of war and genocide (Salzman, 1998; Fein, 1999; Askin, 1999; Sharlach, 1999, 2000) and peace and nation building after genocide (Schabas, 1996; Minnow, 1998; Meredith, 1999).

As we moved in to the twenty-first century and witnessed the genocide in Darfur⁸ in 2004, genocide as a field of research expanded while still addressing many of the same areas such as historical case studies and comparative studies (Hovannisian, 2003; Dadrian, 2004; Smith, 2007), sexuality and gender in genocide (Lindsey & Levene, 2002; Schiessel, 2002;

⁷ See such authors as Kramer & Michalowski (2005), Morrison (2005), Mullins & Rothe (2008), and Haveman & Smeulers (2008).

⁸ See such authors as Mullins & Rothe (2007), Totten & Markusen (2006).

Rajandran 2004; Carpenter, 2008; MacKinnon, 2008; Buss, 2009; Mullins 2009a, 2009b) and the prevention of genocide (Totten, 2004, 2007; Staub, 2000; Staub, Pearlman, Gubin & Hagengimana, 2005; Woolf & Husier, 2005). Literature regarding legal issues surrounding the International Criminal Tribunal for Yugoslavia and Rwanda and restorative justice alternatives emerged (Schabas, 2000, 2005; Leman-Langlois, 2000; Eboe-Osuji, 2005; Fierens, 2005; Rothe & Mullins, 2006; Scheffer, 2006) along with literature on the genocidal process and on the actors involved: the victims, perpetrators and bystanders (Schabas, 2000; Cohen, 2001; Verwimp, 2003, 2005; Staub, 2003; Smeulers, 2004, 2008; Grunfeld & Hujiboom, 2007). Scholars within this area continue to explain the phenomenon of genocide (Alvarez, 2001, 2009; Mann, 2004).

Most of the literature focuses on the act of genocide itself; however, a few authors have turned their attention to the issue of genocide denial. Genocide denial is a complex, interdisciplinary area of research and this chapter attempts to highlight some of the debates and issues that emerge from the scientific literature. Existing literature on genocide denial focuses either on the psychological aspects of genocide denial or the legal framework of genocide denial. In both areas, the Holocaust is the most studied case and is often drawn upon in comparative case studies.⁹

The first section of this chapter will discuss the literature on national and international frameworks regarding genocide denial and examine the issue of free speech versus hate speech as it relates to genocide denial legislation. In the legal realm, research on this subject involves studying legislation and the right to free speech and often focuses on the Holocaust

⁹ See Lipstadt (1993), Shermer et al., (2000) and Zimmerman (2000). Some might say that it has become an industry (see Finkelstein, N. (2000). The Holocaust Industry: Reflections on the Exploitation of Jewish Suffering. New York: Verso).

as a case study (Cooper, 2008; Eltis, 2008; Garibian, 2008; Guttenplan, 2000, 2005; Whine 2008).

The second section will explore how the literature organizes the arguments used to deny genocide and the underlying motivations of denial. Israel Charny is a prominent author who has attempted to produce a psychological theory on denials of genocide (2000: 32).¹⁰ Other authors have also taken on this task and have made significant progress towards understanding the causes and motivations behind genocide denial. This began in the early 1990s with contributions to the literature on the psychological roots of Armenian genocide denial (Smith, 1990; 1994; 1995) and continued with Stanley Cohen's (1993; 2001) exploration of the denial of political atrocities.¹¹ Other literature has identified categories of arguments denying the Holocaust and the Armenian genocide through comparative studies (Aghajayan, 1998). More recently, Theriault (2004) and Jones (2006) have added to this literature on the classifications of arguments used to deny genocides and other mass human rights violations.

Finally, we will look at a brief overview of Holocaust denial and its evolution from its conception in the 1940s to its current presence on the Internet.

2.1 Genocide Denial: Issues Over the Legal Framework

Legislation concerning genocide denial primarily includes specific laws prohibiting Holocaust denial and other broader laws banning the incitement of hatred. Countries such as Germany, Israel, Austria and France have specific laws that make denying the Holocaust a

¹⁰ From his extensive research and content analyses of denials of known genocides such as the Holocaust and the Armenian genocide, Charny has created a heuristic framework of classifications of denial (2003: 30-32). See also Charny (1991; 1997; 2000; 2001).

¹¹ His work has contributed immensely to our understanding of the psychology of denial and the ways in which perpetrators, victims and bystanders are able to know and not know about these political atrocities.

crime (Bayzler, 2006; Garibian, 2008)¹². Recently there has been a move to criminalize denials of other known genocides such as Armenia and Rwanda. In October 2006, the French National Assembly adopted a bill penalizing Armenian genocide denial (Bayzler, 2006). In 2007, the European Union adopted legislation outlawing racism, xenophobia, and the denial of the Holocaust and the Rwandan genocide¹³. However, many European countries viewed this legislation as a distinct threat to free speech and academic freedom. Negotiations resulted in the legislation ultimately leaving considerable discretion to state authorities.¹⁴ “Publicly condoning, denying, or grossly trivializing crimes of genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes” had to be made an offence in each EU state, but “prosecutions could only succeed where such conduct is likely to incite hatred or violence”.¹⁵

This debate regarding restrictions of free speech and the criminalization of genocide denial is reflected in the stance taken by Slovakia, Italy, Spain, Denmark, Sweden, and the United States. Slovakia made Holocaust denial a crime in 2001 but this decision was repealed in 2005 (Bayzler, 2006). In Italy, a draft of a Holocaust denial law proposing a maximum sentence of four years was rejected in 2007 (Medoff & Grobman, 2007). Spain decriminalized Holocaust denial in 2007 while Denmark and Sweden have no legislation regarding Holocaust denial (Bayzler, 2006). In the United States, it is not against the law to

¹² Other countries include Belgium, Czechoslovakia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, and Switzerland (Bayzler, 2006; Garibian, 2008).

¹³ This legislation includes only genocides included under the statutes of the International Criminal Court (<http://www.frontpagemag.com/articles/Read.aspx?GUID=80D0BF73-5861-4B31-968E-98F0F9E81317>) (accessed 23/11/2008).

Rwanda has also moved to legislate denial within its borders. Article 13 of the constitution of Rwanda deals with “revisionism, denial and trivialization (banalization)” of the genocide, making it punishable by law to deny the genocide (Totten et al., 1997: 493).

¹⁴ <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/1385320/MPs-voice-concerns-over-EU-racism-law.html> (accessed 23/11/2008).

¹⁵ http://www.europa-eu-un.org/articles/en/article_6960_en.htm (accessed 23/11/2008).

deny the Holocaust or to propagate Nazi and anti-Semitic hate speech as per the First Amendment to the Constitution, which guarantees freedom of speech (Bayzler, 2006).

The United Kingdom and Canada have criminalized hate speech, but do not specifically criminalize genocide denial. Britain refused twice to adopt anti-denial legislation or to criminalize Holocaust denial and the display of Nazi symbols, stating that their *Public Order Act* of 1986 and *Religious and Racial Hatred Act* sufficiently dealt with acts of hate (Bayzler, 2006). Similarly, section 319 of the *Canadian Criminal Code* makes it a crime to “wilfully promote hatred against an identifiable group” (see Appendix A).

Efforts to criminalize denial have sought to balance the recognition of the right to freedom of speech and the need to restrict the incitement of hatred and racial discrimination. This struggle is evident when comparing the Canadian free speech cases *R v Zündel* and *R v Keegstra*.¹⁶ In 1985, Zündel was charged with “spreading false news” contrary to section 181 of the *Canadian Criminal Code* (see Appendix B) for disseminating substantial material denying the Holocaust including the infamous 1974 booklet *Did Six Million Really Die?* and other anti-Semitic, racist, extremist, and neo-Nazi publications (Bayzler, 2006; Lipstadt, 1993: 158). He was convicted and sentenced to fifteen months in prison. Zündel appealed his conviction; the section under which he was charged was upheld by the Ontario Court of Appeal on constitutional grounds but the conviction was struck down due to procedural errors at trial regarding the admission of evidence and the trial judge’s instruction to the jury.

¹⁶ There have been many similar Holocaust denial cases prosecuted internationally with varying results. For example, Robert Faurisson was one of the first and most notorious Holocaust deniers in France. He has been prosecuted several times for his statements and publications denying the Holocaust. In 1983 he was fined and received a three month suspended sentence and in 1990 he was charged under France’s *Gayssot Law* for claiming the gas chambers were a myth and fined 250000 francs, of which 20000 were suspended. His appeal was denied at the European Court of Human Rights (Bazyler, 2006). See also the cases of Jean-Marie LePen in France, Roger Garaudy in France, Siegfried Verbeke in Belgium, Hans Schmidt in Germany, Germar Rudolf, Juergen Graf in Switzerland, Gaston-Amaudruz in Switzerland and Guenter Deckert in Germany.

The case was sent back for a new trial and Zündel was again convicted of spreading false news (R. v. Zündel, [1992] 2 S.C.R. 731¹⁷). This conviction was upheld by the Ontario Court of Appeal but Zündel appealed to the Supreme Court of Canada arguing that section 181 infringed upon his freedom of expression guaranteed under section 2(b) of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* (see Appendix C). It was found that section 181 of the *Criminal Code* violated Zündel's right to freedom of expression and that the limitation which section 181 imposed on this right was not justifiable under section 1 of the *Charter* (see Appendix D). Section 181 was struck down due to its overbreadth; that it "may catch a broad spectrum of speech, much of which may be argued to have some value" and that:

To permit the imprisonment of people, or even the threat of imprisonment, on the ground that they have made a statement which 12 of their co-citizens deem to be false and mischievous to some undefined public interest, is to stifle a whole range of speech, some of which has long been regarded as legitimate and even beneficial to our society (R. v. Zündel, [1992] 2 S.C.R. 731).¹⁸

Therefore the violation of section 2(b) of the *Charter* was found to be unjustifiable in a free and democratic society. As a result the Supreme Court overturned Zündel's conviction.

In *R v Keegstra*, a Canadian high school teacher who communicated anti-Semitic statements to his students was convicted of willfully promoting hatred against an identifiable group (common religion), contrary to section 319(2) of the *Canadian Criminal Code* in the Court of Queen's Bench in Alberta¹⁹ (Eltis, 2008: 473). Keegstra appealed his conviction to the Alberta Court of Appeal who overturned the original judgment on the basis that section 319(2) infringed section 2(b) of the *Charter* and that this infringement was not justifiable

¹⁷ This case may be found online at: <http://www.canlii.org/en/ca/scc/doc/1992/1992canlii75/1992canlii75.html> (accessed 31/07/2010).

¹⁸ http://www.iidh.ed.cr/comunidades/libertadexpresion/docs/le_otroscanada/r.%20v.%20zundel.htm (accessed 23/11/2008).

¹⁹ See *Alberta Court of Queen's Bench*, (1984), 19 C.C.C. (3d) 254.

under section 1 of the *Charter*.²⁰ The Crown appealed to the Supreme Court of Canada, seeking the reinstatement of the original verdict (Kaufeld, 2006: 6). The Supreme Court decided that although section 319(2) violated the right to freedom of expression, this infringement was justifiable under section 1 of the *Charter*. By applying the *Oakes* test²¹, the Court found that there was a rational connection between the limit (section 319(2)) and the objective (protecting target group members and fostering harmonious social relations in a community dedicated to equality and multiculturalism), there was minimal impairment of section 2(b) of the *Charter*, and the harm done by hate propaganda outweighed the effects of the limitation (*R. v. Keegstra*, [1990] 3 S.C.R. 697²²). Both cases are examples of the delicate balancing act required to restrict hateful speech in a multicultural society that also values freedom of speech.

Canadian courts have successfully shut down online holocaust denial under section 13 of the Canadian Human Rights Act²³, which reads as follows:

Hate messages

13. (1) It is a discriminatory practice for a person or a group of persons acting in concert to communicate telephonically or to cause to be so communicated, repeatedly, in whole or in part by means of the facilities of a telecommunication undertaking within the legislative authority of Parliament, any matter that is likely to expose a person or persons to hatred or contempt by reason of the fact

²⁰ See *Alberta Court of Appeal* (per Kerans J.A., Stevenson and Irving JJ.A. concurring), (1988), 43 C.C.C. (3d) 150.

²¹ *R. v. Oakes*, [1986] 1 S.C.R. 103 established a method of determining whether a limit on a right or freedom can be demonstrably justified in a free and democratic society. The first part of the test entails determining whether the objective of the limiting measure relates to concerns that are pressing and substantial. In the second part of the test, it must be shown that the method chosen to effect the limit are reasonable and demonstrably justified. There are three parts of this proportionality test: a) there must be a rational connection of the limit to the objective; b) there must be minimal impairment of the *Charter* right or freedom; and c) there must be a proportionality between the effects of the limit and the objective being sought.

²² This case can be found at <http://www.canlii.org/en/ca/scc/doc/1990/1990canlii24/1990canlii24.html> (accessed 20/08/2010).

²³ The *Canadian Human Rights Act* (R.S., 1985, c.H-6) can be found here: <http://laws.justice.gc.ca/eng/H-6/page-2.html> (accessed 20/08/2010).

that that person or those persons are identifiable on the basis of a prohibited ground of discrimination.

In 1996, the Canadian Human Rights Commission received a complaint that Zündel had violated this section by establishing and operating “Zundelsite”, an online repository of Holocaust denial texts that exposed Jewish persons to hatred and/or contempt. In 2002, the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal determined that the use of the Internet constituted “telephonic communications” under section 13(1)²⁴ (See Appendix E) of the *Canadian Human Rights Act* and, as such, Zundel was ordered to remove the Zundelsite from the Internet.²⁵

Anti-denial legislation has received mixed reviews from academics, journalists and government officials alike. Some call for the strict enforcement of laws in order to prevent the reemergence of Nazism and to decrease the future risk of genocide (Bayzler, 2006; Charny, 1991; Smith, Markusen & Lofton, 1995; Theriault, 1998). As Simon Wiesenthal said, “there is no denying that Hitler and Stalin are alive today... they are waiting for us to forget, because this is what makes possible the resurrection of these two monsters”.²⁶ As the number of Holocaust survivors and eyewitnesses to the events diminishes due to the passage of time, proponents of anti-denial legislation believe these laws are needed more than ever to preserve collective memory (Bayzler, 2006). Others view genocide denial as a form of racial

²⁴ This section of the *Canadian Human Rights Act* has since been amended to include the Internet. See Appendix E.

²⁵ See http://www.chrc-ccdp.ca/proactive_initiatives/legal_milestones-en.asp?lang=en&url=%2Fproactive_initiatives%2Flegal_milestones-en.asp (accessed 31/07/2010) for further information regarding hate messages and section 13 of the *Canadian Human Rights Act*. See also <http://www.nizkor.org/hweb/people/z/zundel-ernst/chrc/j-remedy-and-order.html#REMEDY> (accessed 20/08/2010).

²⁶ From a meeting with President Jimmy Carter reported in *The Washington Post*, August 6, 1980 as stated on <http://www.kintera.org/site/pp.asp?c=fwLYKnN8LzH&b=242924> (accessed 23/11/2008).

abuse: a method of promoting hatred and the vilification of a vulnerable group that is intolerable in society and should be criminalized (Cooper, 2008; Guttenplan, 2005).

Those who oppose criminalizing denial, argue that the prosecution of genocide denial cases gives deniers not only a forum to disseminate their fallacious views, but free media publicity as well, as Ernst Zündel pointed out when he referred to his trials as advertisement worth a million dollars (Bayzler, 2006; Marouf, 2000). According to Lipstadt, the attention given to deniers in court “transforms deniers into martyrs” and “transforms the legal arena into a historical forum” (Lipstadt, 1993: 220). Lipstadt believes that the need to legislate genocide denial implies that there is a lack of historical evidence to prove that deniers lie and distort the truth and so there must be a reliance on the law.²⁷

If it is true that Holocaust trials are indeed, as Guttenplan (2002:14) argues, an argument about history and the veracity of known historical facts, then anti-denial legislation is the attempt to legislate historical revisionism and academic freedom. As a result, it would appear that the task of policing and controlling the discipline of history in society becomes not only that of historians, but now also that of politicians and lawmakers. By relying on the law to interpret the facts of history it is possible that the onus of determining truth and knowledge shifts openly from historians to politicians and lawmakers, with the political and legal realm becoming another authority structure for determining the “truth” in cases of genocide.²⁸

²⁷ On her blog, Lipstadt proposes that a better way of combating Holocaust denial is to teach as many people as possible the history of the Holocaust, “From both an ideological and strategic perspective, [truth and history] are far more powerful weapons than laws, especially laws that seem to counter the ideal of freedom of expression” (<http://lipstadt.blogspot.com/2006/02/i-was-not-dancing-hora.html>) (accessed 23/11/2008).

²⁸ See this interview for Front Page Magazine among Deborah Lipstadt, Roger Kimball, Dr. Gregory Glazov, Alan Dershowitz regarding Holocaust denial as a form of free speech: <http://97.74.65.51/readArticle.aspx?ARTID=27525> (accessed 23/11/2008).

2.2 Motivations and Arguments Denying Genocide

A large body of literature on genocide denial attempts to provide typologies or categories both in terms of the arguments and motivations for denial. Israel Charny and other scholars in this area have noted that those who deny genocide tend to follow basic patterns of denial in terms of the underlying motivations behind denying genocide, the tactics of denial and the arguments employed to deny genocide. This section attempts to make sense of the established literature on these patterns.

2.2.1 Motivations for Denial

There are generally two groups that engage in genocide denial: the perpetrator group, and those outside of the perpetrator group (Theriault, 1998). Denials by members of the perpetrator group can include later generations while denials by those outside of the perpetrator group can include academics, other governments and government-sponsored bodies as well as right-wing militia extremists (Theriault, 1998). Within both of these groups, motivations of denial can be found at an individual or collective level (Cohen, 2001: 7). Denial at the individual level is personal and has to do with the psychological mechanisms that permit unpleasant information to be filtered out of consciousness so as to avoid acknowledgement of it (Cohen, 1993: 108)²⁹. Collective denial involves the denial by entire groups or societies and can be further broken down into cultural and official denial. Whereas official denial is public, organized, structured, initiated and sustained by the state, cultural denial is neither entirely private nor officially organized by the state and can entail

²⁹ The thesis is interested in motivations for the denial of genocide that occur at the collective level, not the inner, psychological motivations that may occur at the individual level of denial. Therefore the individual motivations will not be discussed. For more details, see the work of Freud (1937).

entire societies or communities refusing to acknowledge that genocide occurred (Cohen, 1993: 109).

Ideological reasons, practical reasons, or both can motivate denial of genocide by the perpetrator group. In the first case, the perpetrating group may desire a superior national identity and admitting to the genocide would conflict with this goal and tarnish its national image (Charny, 2003). For other groups, denial emerges out of loyalty to the government or other forms of leadership and the desire to be good citizens through service to their state (Theriault, 1998). Finally, denial can function simply as a method of spreading hate and racist propaganda by promoting intolerance toward minority groups (Lipstadt, 1993; Zimmerman, 2000; Cooper, 2008).

More practically, admitting to genocide can invite unwarranted international attention and punishment of the perpetrator group, reversing the political and economic gains achieved through genocide. Governments or groups who admit to perpetrating crimes against fellow citizens may face demands for reparations (Cooper, 2008: 449; Theriault, 1998). In the case of the Holocaust, the German government accepted responsibility for Nazi crimes and paid millions of dollars in reparations (Cooper, 2008: 449).

The perpetrator group may put great pressure on its members to collectively deny the genocide and these members may fear the consequences of not denying such as condemnation, ostracism, and loss of livelihood (Theriault, 1998). Individuals may also seek to align their beliefs with those of the perpetrator group, if their employer or senior colleagues are part of that group, to avoid persecution (Charny, 2003). In Turkey, academics who publish material affirming the Armenian genocide risk reputational and financial ruin as

well as legal sanctions imposed upon them by the Turkish government.³⁰ Conversely, denying genocide within countries such as Turkey may also provide personal gain by advancing the career of academics or politicians, allowing them to increase their public prominence, academic exclusivity, and power (Charny, 2003).

Incentives for denial from those outside of the perpetrator group may include prejudice against the victim group and political ideologies. For example, Holocaust deniers are primarily motivated by ideology, such as anti-Zionism and anti-Semitism (Hovannisian, 1999: 287). Geopolitical and economic goals also motivate the act of denial. Incentive to deny the genocide of over 800 000 Tutsis and moderate Hutus may stem from the desire to destabilize the current government of Rwanda which has made progress in creating stability and stimulating the economy. Those that fled to the Democratic Republic of the Congo, including the leaders of the Hutu regime and nearly one million other Hutus, challenge the Rwandan genocide by claiming that the current Kagame regime is responsible for the genocide. They actively attempt to destabilize the government through these accusations, therefore causing problems in Rwanda, impeding progress towards stability and growth in the economy.³¹

2.2.2 Techniques of Denial: Literal, Interpretive, Implicatory

Cohen (2001) describes three forms of denying genocide: literal, interpretive and implicatory. Literal denial involves refuting that genocide occurred or the denial of having

³⁰ A recent example is Orhan Pamuk, a Turkish Nobel Prize for Literature winner who was charged with insulting Turkishness in 2005 for saying that one million Armenians were killed in Turkey during an interview. Although he was cleared of his charges in 2006, he may now face compensation claims. <http://in.reuters.com/article/worldNews/idINIndia-39672520090517?pageNumber=2&virtualBrandChannel=0> (accessed 11/10/2008).

³¹ This information was found in a conference transcript: *Beyond Hollywood's Rwanda: Truth and Justice, Security and Development* held on November 27th, 2007 at Emory University. This transcript as well as a webcast of the conference can be found at <http://www.rzhrg.org/genocide.html> (accessed 12/10/2008).

knowledge that genocide took place (Cohen, 2001:7). Turkey's denial of the Armenian genocide is a good illustration of literal denial at both a cultural and official level. The state's official position is that a genocide of the Armenian population never took place. Through concerted efforts to suppress any evidence of it and to keep it out of Turkey's recorded history, it is possible that Turkish society may fall into collective, literal denial (Akcam, 2005: 1).

Implicatory denial involves denying or minimizing both the psychological, political and moral implications of the atrocity using a wide range of excuses, justifications, rationalizations (or neutralizations) (Cohen, 2001: 7, 110). The denial of responsibility for genocide is the most common form of implicatory denial because it permits perpetrators to impose a different construction of the event from what might appear to be the case (Cohen, 1993: 110). For example, the extermination of the Jewish population by the Nazis is reframed as a Nationalist Socialist Policy for Jewish emigration (App, 1973).

Finally, with interpretive denial the raw facts are accepted that genocide occurred but these facts are given a different meaning from what seems to be commonly accepted as an established historical fact (Cohen, 2001: 7). At the official level, interpretive denial seeks to avoid moral censure or legal accountability on both a national and international level. Interpretive denial occurs through the use of euphemism to mask or sanitize harsh terms. For example, Serbians insisted on calling the genocide of Bosnians "ethnic cleansing" so as to remove some of the negative connotations associated with the word "genocide" (Cohen, 2001: 107). Legalism or legalistic defenses taken from an accredited and accepted human rights discourse is another method of interpretive denial. One of the main arguments of deniers is that the genocide with which they are concerned does not fit the reference definition of genocide and so it is not genocide. Denying responsibility by blaming forces

that are beyond the government's control is also considered a method of interpretive denial (Cohen, 2001: 107-109). A more recent example of interpretive denial concerns the genocide in Darfur. In 2005, a UN Commission of Inquiry decided not to label Darfur genocide on the basis that there was insufficient evidence of a state-based policy intended to exterminate a racial or religious group within Darfur (Prunier, 2005: 157).

2.2.3 Genocide Denial Arguments

Israel Charny has produced a classification framework of denials of genocide. Other authors³² have contributed similar classifications and have developed general arguments that individuals, academics and state officials make when denying genocide. The content of these models is quite similar with few minor differences. In order to avoid repetition and to make the established categories of denial straightforward, it is useful to amalgamate the different classifications of genocide denial³³. The arguments denying genocide can be grouped into four large categories: (1) attacks on the reference definition of genocide, (2) attacks on evidence of genocide, (3) attacks on victims, and (4) nationalistic hubris.

Attacks on the Reference Definition of Genocide

The reference definition of genocide is primarily considered to be the definition of genocide as outlined by the United Nations Resolution 260 in the *Convention on the Punishment and Prevention of the Crime of Genocide* (1948):

³² See Jones, 2006; Aghjayan, 1998; Theriault, 1998.

³³ In amalgamating the existing classifications of genocide denial to arrive at these categories, there is an intersection between both the techniques of denial explained earlier and the arguments used to deny genocide. For example, blaming forces that are beyond the government's control for genocide is a method of interpretive denial and also an attack on the reference definition of genocide. It must also be noted that a limitation of this categorization is that the same argument can fit different categories at the same time. This is not a result of errors in the construction of the categories but because the same argument can serve diverse purposes. These categories are still useful because they provide a simple way of classifying the arguments denying genocide.

Art. 2 In the present Convention, genocide means any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such:

- (a) Killing members of a group;
- (b) Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group;
- (c) Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part;
- (d) Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group;
- (e) Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group.

Art. 3 The following acts shall be punishable:

- (a) Genocide;
- (b) Conspiracy to commit genocide;
- (c) Direct and public incitement to commit genocide;
- (d) Attempting to commit genocide; Complicity in genocide.

Genocide deniers argue that a specific case of genocide does not meet the criteria of the reference definition of genocide. Often deniers will misrepresent the reference definition by exploiting its limitations and ambiguities so that the genocide appears to not fit the established parameters (Theriault, 1998; Charny, 2003). It is commonly disputed whether the perpetrators had the *intent* to destroy national, ethnic, racial, or religious groups.

There are two main methods employed to attack the reference definition of genocide. The first method is contextualization of the genocide by claiming that it was some event. This method is comprised of claims that the event was due to natural force such as starvation, disease, famine, or unintended force including civil war, generalized warfare, mutual conflict, deportation, or displacement. Contextualization also occurs by claiming that history is replete with genocide and the accused country should not be singled out (Theriault, 1998). The second method is the justification of the genocide by claiming that the deaths were a warranted response in self-defense against attack or threat of attack by the victim group (Charny, 2003). In both cases, while deniers acknowledge that mass deaths occurred they hold that they were neither centrally planned nor intentional deaths in a directed campaign of

extermination (Theriault 1998). Claims may also be made that not all victims were of one particular ethnic, religious, or political group and thus their mass murder cannot constitute genocide (Aghjayan, 1998).

Attacks on Evidence of Genocide

Genocide deniers also attempt to claim a particular genocide did not occur through the minimization, manipulation, and dismissal of genocidal evidence. Deniers will minimize final casualty figures in order to claim that the number of victims is exaggerated, casting doubt on mortality statistics to show that there were not enough deaths for the event to be considered genocide (Aghjayan, 1998; Jones, 2006; Theriault, 1998). The manipulation of victim population figures and information concerning demographic movements by members of the victim group such as deportation and emigration is also used to cast doubt on death toll information (Theriault, 1998; Zimmerman, 2000). Genocidal evidence is dismissed in four ways: (1) the repudiation of genocide survivor and eyewitness testimony as inherently unreliable and as a less legitimate source of information than others such as diplomats and officials (Theriault, 1998); (2) ignoring or rejecting key pieces of genocidal evidence and data such as documentary evidence which confirms intent to commit genocide or mortality statistics (Theriault, 1998); (3) exploiting gaps in physical evidence such as the absence of pieces of evidence or lack of access to evidence (Jones, 2006), and (4) exploiting difficulties in documenting genocidal evidence due to the passage of time where physical evidence of genocide may have been destroyed over the years (Jones, 2006). These arguments are used to show that the genocide did not take place because there is not enough evidence or the evidence is not of sufficient quality to prove without a doubt that genocide occurred.

Attacks on the Victim Group

Here, perpetrators attempt to deflect the blame from their actions by relativizing the suffering of the victim group. The perpetrating group accomplishes this by claiming that (1) members of the perpetrator group died during the atrocity, sometimes more than those who died in the victim group, and so the atrocity cannot be called a one-sided genocide (Theriault, 1998), and (2) they are the real victims and that the victims are actually the aggressors (Jones, 2006).

Nationalistic Hubris

The last category of denial addresses what Charny (2003) calls the “nationalistic hubris” of the perpetrator group. Perpetrators maintain an exaggerated national self-image or excessive nationalistic pride to advance the argument that the perpetrator group could not have committed the genocide they are being accused of because it is inconsistent with the culture and history of their country (Charny, 2003; Theriault, 1998, Jones, 2006). Primarily, they consider themselves to be peaceful, democratic and law-abiding and thus incapable of committing genocide (Jones, 2006).

Having discussed the motivations underlying genocide denial and the general categories of arguments denying genocide, the last section of this chapter we will look at arguments denying the Holocaust and their evolution as we trace the Holocaust denial movement from its debut in the 1940s to its current state.

2.3 Holocaust Denial

The Holocaust is irrefutably the most highly studied case of genocide denial. From the first discovery of the attempted annihilation of the European Jews both before and during World War II, Nazi apologists, anti-Semites and “skeptics” have sought to deny the accepted history

of genocide (Lipstadt, 1993). This section will discuss the arguments put forth to deny the Holocaust as well as the means and scope of their dissemination following World War II to the present.

2.3.1 The Early Holocaust Denial Movement

The Holocaust denial movement began in Western Europe in the post-World War II period (Levin, 2001: 2006). During this period, deniers such as Bardèche, Rassinier, Barnes and Hoggan did not openly deny the existence of the Holocaust. Instead, these deniers attempted to defend and justify the actions of the Nazis in order to minimize the importance of the Holocaust. This early group of deniers claimed that the Jews were to blame for starting World War II by taking action against the German people and thus their suffering was justified. This point was argued by Bardèche in 1947 and Rassinier in 1948. Barnes claimed that it was the Allies and not the Germans that were responsible for WWII in his book *The Struggle Against Historical Blackout*.³⁴

It was also claimed that eyewitness and survivor evidence concerning the concentration and extermination camps were completely falsified.³⁵ In 1947, neo-facist writer and academic Maurice Bardèche became one of the first public figures to claim that photographic and documentary evidence about the concentration and extermination camps was false and that the deaths in the camps were the result of disease and starvation. In 1948, Paul Rassinier, a central figure in Holocaust denial from its inception, published a series of books including *Le passage de la ligne* (Crossing the Line) and *Le mensonge d'Ulysse* (The Lie of Ulysses) in which he disputes the claim that the documentation confirming the

³⁴ A complete timeline of Holocaust denial events and publications can be found at <http://www.hdot.org/timelinedenial.asp> (accessed 05/10/2008).

³⁵ Lipstadt (1993) provides a comprehensive discussion of the intricacies of Rassinier's arguments in *Denying the Holocaust* pp. 51-64.

Holocaust was real, claiming that the eye witness testimonies were lies and that only 1.5 million Jews were killed while 4.5 million Jews emigrated from Europe between 1931 and 1945 (Zimmerman, 2000: xii, Lipstadt, 1993: 51). By the end of the 1960s, publications began to allude to the idea that the Holocaust was a hoax created by Communists, Jews and particularly Zionists. Rassinier and Barnes began to actively deny that the Holocaust happened in *The Drama of European Jewry* (1964) and *The Public Stake in Reivisionism* (1967) respectively.

The Holocaust denial that emerged in America³⁶ in the 1950s and 60s consisted of publications originating from fringe, extremist and racist groups³⁷. Except for deniers such as Barnes who attracted attention because of his scholarly associations, most deniers did not have the capacity or the sophistication to reach beyond small, anti-Semitic groups (Lipstadt, 1993: 65, Levin, 2001: 1009).

The arguments used to deny the Holocaust in this period illustrate several categories of denial. First, there are attacks on the reference definition of genocide by claiming that genocide was a justified response to the threat of the Jewish population and by denying responsibility for WWII. Second, there are attacks on the photographic and documentary evidence of genocide, specifically with regard to the concentration camps and demographic data. It can also be argued that this time period included attacks on the victim group by blaming the Jewish population for their own suffering and claiming that the Holocaust was a hoax.

³⁶ Levin (2001: 1003) suggests that the North American denial movement is particularly important because the most influential and far-reaching denial organizations are in North America, the First Amendment protection for both denial and hate speech, and the reliance of the North American denial movement on the Internet to promote itself to countries that would not otherwise be accessible.

³⁷ For example, Lipstadt (1993: 65) cites American anti-Semite W.D Herrstrom, an editor of *Bible News Flashes* and James Madole who published *National Renaissance Bulletin*.

2.3.2 The Holocaust Denial Movement Post-1970

Holocaust denial popularity renewed in both scope and intensity in the 1970s (Lipstadt, 1993: 17). According to Levin (2001: 1009), Holocaust denial was reinvigorated through mainstream academia, popular culture, and mass media by providing a platform for deniers to promote their message to both mainstream and extremist audiences. The Klu Klux Klan (KKK), in conjunction with Nazi groups, began to promote Holocaust denial along with other racist groups (White Aryan Resistance, National Assembly for the Advancement of White People, Butler's Aryan Nations) that had broken off from the KKK (Levin, 2001: 1010).

In the United States, Holocaust denial took hold as an organized propaganda movement in 1979 and was led by Willis Carto³⁸, who founded the now defunct anti-Semitic Liberty Lobby organization³⁹ (Lipstadt, 1993: 145). The newspaper *The Spotlight*, published by Liberty Lobby, has been described as “vehicle for a fringe subset of right-wing militia extremists who think America has been corrupted by Jews and international conspiracies aimed at instituting a one-world government” (Levin, 2001: 1013). Liberty Lobby has also been tied to the Noontide Press, a subsidiary with connections to the Institute of Historical Review (IHR)⁴⁰ that has been instrumental in the publishing, distribution, and widespread sale of Holocaust denial material (Lipstadt, 1993).

³⁸ The Anti-Defamation League (ADL), a Jewish civil rights organization, considers Willis Carto to be the “most important and powerful professional anti-Semite in the United States” (Lipstadt, 1993: 145). He was known to be the dominant economic and political force behind Liberty Lobby, until he was ousted in 1993 (Levin, 2001: 1010).

³⁹ Liberty Lobby existed from 1955 to 2001 and was an extremely right-wing American organization with direct ties to other anti-Semitic publications including *American Mercury*, *Washington Observer Newsletter*, and the Noontide Press (Lipstadt, 1993: 144).

⁴⁰ The Institute of Historical Review (<http://www/ihr.org/>) is an organization out of California created in 1979 and directed by Mark Weber, who specializes in twentieth-century American and European history. The IHR publishes the *Journal of Historical Review*. The website also includes news releases on various topics

The creation of the IHR by Carto was critical in attempting to bring Holocaust denial legitimacy and extending its reach to the mainstream public. This second “wave” of Holocaust denial from authors such as Harwood, App, and Butz included similar arguments to those of the earlier group but while earlier deniers “sought to vindicate the Nazis by justifying their anti-Semitism”, arguing the Jews deserved whatever befell them because they were enemies of Germany, the second group understood that they could neither deny nor justify Nazi anti-Semitism (Lipstadt, 1993: 52). They conceded that some Jews may have died at the hands of the Nazis but they denied the existence of the Holocaust as a whole (Lipstadt, 1993: 52). This second group of deniers employed the methods of scholars and academics including: giving publications a look similar to that of academic journals even though this discourse was not a part of mainstream academia, holding academic conferences on Holocaust denial and appearing to be intellectuals whose purpose was to fix historical errors (Lipstadt, 1993). The IHR created the *Journal of Historical Review*⁴¹ in 1980, devoting most of its publications to Holocaust denial and imitating “the serious and high brow language of academia” with articles focusing mostly on World War II and the Holocaust in order to “debunk the myth” of Holocaust denial (Lipstadt, 1993: 142). The journal includes articles by some of the leading figures in the denial movement such as App, Butz, Faurisson, and others (Levin, 2001: 1014).

The attempt to gain historical and academic legitimacy for Holocaust denial is exemplified by the work of Arthur Butz, a professor of electrical engineering at Northwestern University in Evanston, Illinois (Lipstadt, 1993: 123). His book *The Hoax of*

including Holocaust deniers and their trials as well as information about past conferences. Internet users have the option of ordering information or donating to the IHR in order to keep it afloat.

⁴¹ The *Journal of Historical Review* is a collection of articles, reviews, and essays on political, historical and cultural topics. Although suspended in 2002, there are 96 issues dating back to 1980 which can now be found online.

the Twentieth Century (1977)⁴² received a large amount of attention because of his position as a professor but also because it purveyed an aura of scholarship, seriousness and objectivity (*ibid*). His approach to Holocaust denial material subtly and significantly altered the nature of Holocaust denial itself by attempting to turn Holocaust denial into a legitimate historical project (*ibid*). In his book, Butz argued that:

- 1) Statements made by the Nazis about exterminating Jews during World War II were exaggerations; 2) German documents that prove the statements made by the Nazis are fraudulent; 3) The Nazis who confessed to the extermination did so under duress and innocent Nazis confessed under the belief that they would receive a deal from the victors; and 4) Jewish eyewitnesses lied because it was advantageous to do so (Butz, 1977 in Zimmerman, 2000: xii).

However, it was Austin App, a professor of English literature and major theoretician of Holocaust denial who would develop eight fundamental tenets in 1973 that became perhaps the most adopted set of Holocaust denial arguments by revisionist groups, including the IHR:

1. The Nazi's planned an emigration, not extermination of Germany's Jews. Had Germany planned an extermination, no Jews would have survived to go to Israel and collect indemnities from West Germany.
2. Hitler's gas chambers never existed; not in any German camps nor at Auschwitz⁴³. The so-called gas chambers were actually crematoria for disposing of bodies of people who had died from a variety of causes.

⁴² *The Hoax of the Twentieth Century* was published by Samisdat Publishing Ltd., a small, now defunct press from Toronto, Ontario owned and operated by Ernst Zündel during the 1980s and 90s. Samisdat Publishing also produced *The Hitler We Loved and Why* (Ernst Zündel), *The Six Million Swindle* (Austin App), and *Auschwitz, Dachau, Buchenwald: The Greatest Fraud in History* (Richard Verrall, alias Richard Harwood). By the 1980s, Samisdat's publications had become a worldwide distributor of Nazi and neo-Nazi paraphernalia as well as Holocaust denial pamphlets and books with its largest market being West Germany via postal service ([http://www.antisemitism.org.il/eng/Ernst Zündel](http://www.antisemitism.org.il/eng/Ernst_Zundel)) (accessed 09/05/2009).

⁴³ Robert Faurisson, one of today's leading Holocaust deniers and a former professor of literature at the University of Lyon, France, believes that the gassing of the Jews was a lie created by Israel and international Zionism to gain financially because it was "technically and physically impossible for the gas chambers at Auschwitz to have functioned as extermination facilities" (Lipstadt, 1993: 161). Faurisson testified along with Fred Leuchter (an "engineer" who actually held a bachelor's of art degree in history) as an expert witness at the 1984 Zündel trials that it was impossible that the Nazis would have operated a gas chamber in such close proximity to a crematorium because of the danger of explosion. Instead, these chambers were used as

3. The Jews who went missing and were still unaccounted for during the years of World War II did so under Soviet, not German, control.
4. The majority of Jews who supposedly died while under German control were spies, subversives, partisans and saboteurs, and were thus killed legally.
5. Since Israel has not opened its archives to historians to prove that the Holocaust existed, they perpetuate the Holocaust “hoax” by utilizing the charge of anti-Semitism against anyone who questions the Holocaust.
6. No evidence of six million Jews having died has been offered save for misquotes of Nazis and Nazi documents.
7. The burden of proof that six million Jews died lies with the accusers of the Holocaust.
8. There are discrepancies in the calculations of the number of Holocaust victims made by Jewish scholars, proving that there is no scientific claim to the six million number (App, 1973).

These eight points denying the Holocaust have not changed since the 1970s and they exemplify the categories of denial established in the previous section. Attacks on the reference definition are achieved by contextualizing the Holocaust as emigration not extermination, denying responsibility for the genocide and by justifying the Holocaust as self-defense against the Jews. The latter may also constitute an attack on the victim group since the Jews are portrayed as deserving of their own death. Nationalistic hubris is evident in the claims made by perpetrators that they are being singled out for punishment and should not have to prove that a genocide occurred.

More current high-profile deniers such as Ernst Zündel, David Irving and Roger Garaudy⁴⁴ have continued to question the planned destruction of European Jewry at the hands of the Nazis by disputing the existence of functioning gas chambers and the culpability

“delousing” houses based on the amount of residue left on the wall by the Zyklon-B gas (Lipstadt, 1993; Zimmerman, 2000). Barbara Kulaska’s book *Did Six Million Really Die?: Report of the Evidence in the Canadian ‘False News’ Trial of Ernst Zündel* documents Faurisson’s role in the 1988 trials. Faurisson also has a four-volume collection of his writings called *Écrits Révisionnistes* (1974-1998).

Only two German concentration camps remain, Auschwitz and Majdanek, with the Auschwitz gas chambers being the most highly contested site. The other four camps: Treblinka, Sobibor, Belzec and Chelmno were destroyed by the Germans so as to leave no evidence of the extermination of the Jews. Both Lipstadt (1993) and Zimmerman (2000) provide in-depth discussions of the gas chambers at Auschwitz.

⁴⁴ French author of *The Founding Myths of Israeli Politics* (1996) which trivialized the Holocaust (Lasson, 2007: 256)

of Hitler.⁴⁵ There has, however, been a shift in the publication and dissemination of Holocaust denial. The international publication and dissemination of Holocaust denial material has received a significant boost with the advent of the Internet to places where it would otherwise be inaccessible (Levin, 2001: 1003).

2.3.3 The Internet Era

Since 1996, the Internet has become a popular portal for the international spread of Holocaust denial (Fogo-Shensul, 1998). What was previously available only in print and communicated to a smaller audience is now made available via the World Wide Web. *The Spotlight*, Noontide Press and JHR can all be found online⁴⁶, allowing Holocaust deniers to reach a larger and international audience. It also has several benefits over traditional mass communication systems such as radio, television and print media (Carmichael, 2003: n.p). This contributes to its popularity among extremist groups, including Holocaust deniers (*ibid*). The internet is inexpensive; computer ownership or membership in a networked organization is not a prerequisite for creating and maintaining a website; content can be produced and disseminated easily permitting individuals greater authority and access to a larger audience than they may have had otherwise; and finally the enforcement of legal norms is difficult across the internet (Carmichael, 2003). In addition, denial information can be disseminated to a large audience in relative anonymity and interactive communication with audience members is easily achieved (Gerstenfeld, Grant & Chiang, 2003: 37).

⁴⁵ David Irving has published *Hitler's War* (1977), *The Destruction of Dresden*, and numerous biographies of Erwin Rommel, Josef Goebbels, and Winston Churchill and also, *Churchill's War* (1987) in which he believes Winston Churchill, not Hitler, was responsible for the deaths of the Jews and Allied Soldiers (Guttenplan, 2002).

⁴⁶ *The Spotlight* is available at <http://www.libertylobby.org/index.html>.
The Noontide Press is available at http://www.noontidepress.com/index.php?cPath=23_24.
The JHR is available at <http://www.ihr.org/>.

Two of the most comprehensive websites are Zundelsite⁴⁷, established by Ernst Zündel and his wife in 1996, and the Institute of Historical Review (IHR). The IHR already being an important player in the production of Holocaust denial information, the Internet has allowed it to grow exponentially. The increased access and use of the Internet has led to wide spread dissemination of IHR propaganda and Holocaust denial propaganda in general (Fogo-Schensul, 1998; 245). For example, in 1985, the IHR had only 42 paper publications. By 1997, the organization had moved to the Internet and its website could be linked to twelve other websites each with their own links to denial material, allowing significantly more accessibility than before (Fogo-Schensul, 1998; 245). Finally, the Committee for the Open Debate on the Holocaust (CODOH) site is another extensive Holocaust denial website founded by Bradley R. Smith that boasts not only a “revisionist library” containing Holocaust denial literature but also a “revisionist forum”.⁴⁸ In this forum, Holocaust deniers can congregate online from any country across the world to discuss, debate and post articles about the Holocaust.⁴⁹

⁴⁷ The Zundelsite (<http://www.zundelsite.org/>) contains information on Holocaust denier Ernst Zündel including biographies, publications, information on his trials as well as links to other websites containing Holocaust denial.

⁴⁸ At the time of this writing, 29336 articles had been posted on the forum with some topic threads entitled “Dr. Toben beats the thought police!” and “The effective way of distributing revisionist books”. The speed and ease with which Internet users can now come together to share and disseminate their views is an interesting development in the Holocaust denial movement.

⁴⁹ There are a number of comprehensive websites seeking to combat the spread of Holocaust denial. The Nizkor Project (<http://www.nizkor.org/>) is one such site providing vast archives of information on people, organizations, places and trials associated with the Holocaust in order to teach about the Holocaust and combat racist speech, hatred and Anti-Semitism. The Simon Wiesenthal Center (<http://www.wiesenthal.com/>) seeks to teach the lessons of the Holocaust, promote human rights and dignity and to condemn anti-Semitism, hate and terrorism. The website contains a library and archives but the Center also has offices worldwide. A quick sweep of Facebook groups shows the mobilization of Internet users around the world in combating Holocaust denial. Facebook is a social networking website launched in 2004 which permits Internet users to create an online personal profile and add other users as “friends” and join “groups” dedicated to certain interests. Group titles include “Fight Holocaust Denial” (4, 323 current members), “Do your part to combat Holocaust Denial” (1, 186 current members), “We Believe the Holocaust Happened” (1, 071 current members) and many others. Each Facebook group serves as a forum to educate its members on the Holocaust, engage in discussion and post

These Holocaust denial websites are underpinned by extremism, racism, and hate (Di Giacomo, 2002). Shermer and Grobman (2000: 238) argue that Holocaust revisionism is in a category of pseudohistory that seeks to deny history for “present political or ideological reasons”. As Di Giacomo (2005: 2) suggests, the denial of the Holocaust is perpetuated by anti-Semitic thought and may be seen as a reflection of hate. The Anti-Defamation League⁵⁰ (ADL) argues that Holocaust denial “has become one of the most important vehicles for contemporary anti-Semitism” and that it “is a contemporary form of the classic anti-Semitic doctrine of the evil, manipulative and threatening world Jewish conspiracy... that was instrumental in laying the groundwork for the Holocaust”.⁵¹ This line of thought suggests that at the core of Holocaust denial is an appeal to anti-Semitism and hatred. Holocaust denial is therefore seen as a strategy to pursue a political and ideological agenda.

The Internet provides a suitable environment for groups and individuals promoting these sentiments to establish an online presence to proliferate Holocaust denial.⁵² This sets the stage for the examination of other genocide denials present on the Internet.

information. However, Facebook is also currently home to Holocaust denial groups in which extremists use this form of media to spread their messages of hate.

⁵⁰ The Anti-Defamation League (ADL) is an organization founded in 1913 that “fights anti-Semitism and all forms of bigotry in the U.S. and abroad through information, education, legislation, and advocacy. ADL serves as a resource for government, media, law enforcement, educators and the public” (www.adl.org) (accessed 23/01/2010).

⁵¹ This conspiracy is the idea that “the ‘Holocaust’ lie was perpetuated by Zionist-Jewry’ stunning propaganda machine for the purpose of filling the minds of Gentile people the world over with such guilt feelings about the Jews that they would utter no protest when the Zionists robbed the Palestinians of their homeland with the utmost savagery” (Shermer et al., 2000: 80). The *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* is cited by Shermer et al., (2000: 81) as being the classic conspiratorial document of the twentieth century.

⁵² Since Holocaust denial, promotion of Nazi ideology, and the distribution of racist and anti-Semitic speech is legal in the United States under the First Amendment, many Internet sites with this type of content will originate from the U.S but are available to other countries with access to the Internet, even if this content is illegal in those countries (Bazyler, 2006).

CHAPTER THREE: THE ARMENIAN AND RWANDAN GENOCIDES AS CASE STUDIES

In the previous chapter, we established that researchers have identified a set of strategies and tactics used by Holocaust deniers to deny the Holocaust. Through two case studies this thesis will examine whether or not these strategies and tactics are used by deniers of the Armenian and Rwandan genocides and explore what this tells us about the social construction of the meaning of historical events and the political meaning of denial, power, language, and identity. This chapter will provide the necessary background information concerning the Armenian and Rwandan genocides in brief, explore the conflicts that have occurred since regarding the meaning of these events while outlining the growing international consensus that defines both acts as genocide and look at the role of the media in these genocides. Finally, it will outline some of the views of those who claim that the killings did not constitute genocide.

3.1 The Armenian Genocide

3.1.1 The History of the Armenian Genocide

From 1915 to 1917, the Young Turk regime in the Ottoman Empire systematically murdered more than one million Armenian men, women and children under the guise of deportation (Smith, Markusen & Lifton, 1995: 3, Adalian, 2007: 55).

Historically, Armenians had been treated as second-class citizens within the Ottoman Empire and as sub-ordinate to the Muslim population (Dadrian, 2004: 5). As early as the mid-1800s, the Armenians began to demand more rights and protest discriminatory laws.

The Empire responded by massacring Armenians in what would become known as the Hamidian Massacres (Cohan, 2005: 335).

When the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP), also known as the Young Turks, took power in 1908 they advocated for constitutionalism, egalitarianism and liberalism but by 1914 they had become dictatorial, xenophobic and intolerant (Adalian, 2007: 56).¹ Armenians suffered yet more massacres in 1909 in the city of Adana by Turkish counterrevolutionaries who called for a new Muslim orthodoxy (Cohan, 2005: 335, Balakian, 2003: 146). Almost 30 000 Armenians were killed in these massacres (Cohan, 2005: 335).

Tensions between the Armenians and the Young Turk government continued to grow as the Armenians pushed for administrative reforms and a certain amount of self-government and were further exacerbated when some Armenians serving in the Russian army fought alongside Russia, the Ottoman Empire's enemy during World War I in 1914. Russia defeated the Ottoman Empire, fueling anti-Armenian sentiment. The Ottoman government immediately blamed the Armenians of treason and sedition for their collaboration with the Russians (Adalian, 2007: 60, Dadrian, 2004: 219).

The Young Turk regime devised a plan to dispose of the Armenians. They had labeled the Armenians as traitorous, not only for their collusion with the enemy, but also because their resistance to Turkish governance did not fit in with the Empire's nationalist plan of Turkification (Adalian, 2007: 61, Akçam, 2006: 149; Balakian, 2003: 184). Thus the government planned to eliminate the Armenians and disguise their actions as a relocation policy (Adalian, 2007: 64, Akçam, 2006: 153).

¹ The CUP was governed by a dictatorial triumvirate made up of Enver Pasha (Minister of War), Talaat Pasha (Minister of the Interior) and Jemal Pasha (Minister of the Navy and military governor of Syria (Adalian, 2007: 55).

The genocide is said to have begun on April 24th 1915 with the murder of Armenian intellectuals, doctors, businessmen, artists and others (Cohan, 2005: 337). However, as early as winter of 1915 young, able-bodied Armenian men were being massacred in the labor battalions of the Ottoman infantry² (Balakian, 2003: 211). Following the deaths of the cultural leadership and the young men, the rest of the Armenian population was essentially left helpless (Dadrian, 2004: 227). Women, children, the infirm and the elderly were then forcibly deported into Syria and Mesopotamia by issue of the CUP³ (Adalian, 2007: 55, Balakian, 2003, 175). During deportation, the Ottoman Empire provided little food or supplies and many Armenians suffered from exhaustion, exposure, starvation and epidemics (Adalian, 2007: 57). By the end, some 1.5 million Armenians would perish through the policies of the Ottoman Turks (Balakian, 2003: 180).

3.1.2 Recognition of the Armenian Genocide

The Turkish government has denied that the killings of the Ottoman Armenians constitute genocide since immediately after the genocide and to this day, the Armenian genocide remains highly disputed.

When Europe began to hear of the massacres in 1915, the Triple Entente vowed to hold the Ottoman government responsible:

In view of these crimes of Turkey against humanity and civilization, the Allied governments announce publicly to the Sublime Porte that they will hold personally responsible [for] these crimes all members of the Ottoman government and those of their agents who are implicated in such massacres (Akçam, 2006: 2).

² Ottoman Labor battalions consisted of mostly able-bodied Ottoman Armenian men between the ages of twenty and forty-five that were conscripted into the Ottoman army (Balakian, 2003: 184). These unarmed men served a number of functions such as repairs and transport and were often worked to death or outright murdered (Adalian, 2009: 58).

³ See Akçam (2006) and Dadrian (2004) for more detailed information concerning these orders and the issue of the culpability of the CUP.

All three attempts at establishing the complicity of the Ottoman government in the massacres failed (Akçam, 2006: 2-3).⁴ This shows that even during the genocide it was recognized that crimes against humanity were taking place but the Turkish government uses the failure of the trials afterward to show that Turkey is not responsible for genocide.

There are numerous arguments made that deny the Armenian genocide. Generally, the Turkish government denies that genocide occurred because Turks and Armenians were killing each other during conflict. Therefore, it is claimed that the Turks had to protect themselves from Armenian rebels (Hovannisian, 2003; Smith, Markusen & Lifton, 1995). The Turkish government also argues that it cannot be held responsible for the deaths resulting from the deportation of the Armenians; Armenians died from disease and wartime conditions, not in a concerted effort by the Turkish government to exterminate the Armenians (Smith et al., 1995; Akçam, 2006; Hovannisian, 2003).

The Turkish government and community continue to politically influence international recognition of the Armenian massacres as genocide. The United States' wavering position on the genocide is one such example. In 2007 House Resolution 106⁵ that would recognize the Armenian genocide never made it to the House of Commons vote.⁶ Currently, the Resolution has passed the House Foreign Affairs vote but is likely to die on

⁴ The first attempt was made by the Ottoman government from 1918 to 1922 in order to obtain more favourable results for Turkey at the Paris Peace Conference. It was ultimately dissolved due to pressure from the Turkish nationalist movement since the nationalist government would garner no advantages from the trials (Akçam, 2006: 3). The second attempt came from the Allied Powers at the Paris Peace Conference in 1919. They failed to bring the Turkish government to justice due to conflicts of interest between Allies, and because at that time no international convention existed to include crimes perpetrated by a state against its own people (Akçam, 2006: 3). The final attempt was made by Great Britain who set up the Malta Tribunals to try suspects under British law. These failed due to lack of sufficient evidence in the British and Armenian archives (while the Ottoman military tribunals of 1918 had yielded much Turkish documentation) against specific individuals (Akçam, 2006: 3). Those who question the Armenian genocide often point to the failure of the trials to establish responsibility for the genocide as one of the reasons why the massacres cannot constitute genocide.

⁵ See <http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/z?c110:H.RES.106>: for a copy of the 2007 version of House Resolution 106 (accessed 05/08/2010).

⁶ <http://www.cnn.com/2010/POLITICS/03/06/us.turkey.genocide.debate/index.html> (accessed 05/08/2010).

the House of Commons floor.⁷ The United States continues to back down from officially recognizing the genocide for fear of angering the Turkish government. Critics within the U.S and Turkey say that such a Resolution would harm U.S-Turkey relations and compromise American activity in the Middle East as the U.S relies on Turkey for strategic military positioning.⁸

Another example involves the Toronto School Board's withdrawal of Barbara Coloroso's book Extraordinary Evil: A Brief History of Genocide (2007) because of protests from the Turkish-Canadian community that it unfairly labels the Armenian killings as genocide and incites anti-Turkish sentiment.⁹

The Turkish media also plays a role in framing the news in such a way as to support the dominant government ideology regarding the Armenian genocide. Turkish media has been described as "a state-related structure whose boundaries occasionally broaden, yet which ultimately conveys content inline with the official ideology" and frequently takes part in shaping public opinion (Salmi & Durgun, 2005: 68-69). The media also silences authoritative voices that would discredit the government's official narrative on the genocide by portraying these voices as traitors to Turkish nationalism. The *Hürriyet*¹⁰ is an influential, pro-nationalist newspaper that has been responsible for launching media campaigns against intellectuals within Turkey who question the government's official versions of history.

⁷ <http://articles.latimes.com/2010/mar/05/nation/la-na-armenian-genocide5-2010mar05> (accessed 05/08/2010).

⁸ <http://www.cnn.com/2010/POLITICS/03/06/us.turkey.genocide.debate/index.html> (accessed 05/08/2010).

⁹ <http://www.ngnews.ca/Community/2008-05-16/article-326812/Book-on-genocide-pulled-after-TurkishCanadian-community-objects/1> (accessed 05/08/2010).

¹⁰ See this document Turkey -- Guide to Major Turkish Daily Newspapers 2008 (found at: www.fas.org/irp/dni/osc/turkish-news.pdf) (accessed 17/08/2010) for an overview of the media landscape in Turkey.

The cases of Orhan Pamuk, Hrant Dink and Taner Akçam¹¹ are striking examples of the attempt to silence voices that oppose government ideology. All three faced a deliberate media attack for making public remarks that were said to “denigrate Turkishness” under Article 301 of the Turkish Criminal Code¹² and all three were prosecuted. Dink was first prosecuted for insulting Turkishness for comments he made at a conference in Urfa in 2002, “I am not a Turk, but an Armenian of Turkey” (Freely, 2007: 15). The second time he was charged for statements he made in an article that called on the Armenian diaspora to stop the hatred of “the Turk” that were taken out of context (*ibid*).¹³ Both Pamuk and Akçam were also prosecuted for insulting Turkishness for statements made affirming the Armenian genocide (Freely, 2007: 15).¹⁴ Dink, Pamuk and Akçam became hate figures in the press; defamed and ostracized as genocide supporters promoting hate against the Turkish community.¹⁵ Dink faced the ultimate consequences of this when he was assassinated on

¹¹ Orhan Pamuk, Hrant Dink and Taner Akçam are part of a group of Turkish scholars, journalists, publishers and human rights activists who vocally affirm the Armenian genocide. Pamuk, a novelist and Nobel laureate had close ties with Dink, editor-in-chief of the Turkish-Armenian newspaper *AGOS* (Freely, 2007: 15). Taner Akçam is a historian and author on the subjects of Turkish nationalism and the Armenian genocide (http://www.opendemocracy.net/article/turkey_and_history_shoot_the_messenger) (accessed 17/08/2010).

¹² See Appendix F. Freely (2007: 17) notes that “almost 80 other Turkish writers, scholars, publishers, translators and activists were prosecuted in 2005 and 2006 – some for insulting Turkishness, the state, or the memory of Atatürk, others for alienating the people from the army or seeking to influence the judiciary process”.

¹³ See http://www.opendemocracy.net/democracy-turkey/pigeon_4271.jsp (accessed 16/08/2010) for Hrant Dink’s personal account of events.

¹⁴ The charges of insulting Turkishness contrary to Article 301 against Pamuk and Akçam were ultimately dropped (<http://web.archive.org/web/20070503015749/http://www.thenewanatolian.com/tna-25027.html>) (accessed 16/08/2010).

¹⁵ For example, the *Hürriyet* condemned Akçam for outing Murad Gümen as the author of the “Tall Armenian Tale” website, an extensive and influential website promoting the “other side” of the Armenian genocide and the defamation of Akçam. In response to Akçam’s revelation, the *Hürriyet* published a number of articles that painted Akçam as a criminal who placed Gümen’s life in danger and a traitor to Turkey. This excerpt illustrates this:

“Taner Akçam fled Turkey years ago. He lives overseas, in the United States at this point, and gets fed by the Armenian lobby. He vomits hate towards our country in all of his books and his speeches. Recently he unmasked the website that was maintained by Murad Gümen, who has been defending the Turkish position on Armenian issues in the United States, and he revealed the latter’s identity which had been kept secret until now. This individual named Taner Akçam who has spent his life living outside of the country, writing articles and giving speeches against

January 19th, 2007 (Freely, 2007: 17). The vicious media attack these men endured as a result of vocalizing opinions that do not reflect the official narrative promoted by the Turkish government demonstrates the Turkish media's tendency to support and advance the government's agenda.¹⁶

There are, however, numerous members of the international community that have recognized the genocidal nature of the Armenian killings. For example, in 2005, Turkey renewed efforts to gain membership into the European Union with little success.¹⁷ In order to be admitted into the EU, Turkey is urged to acknowledge the Armenian genocide of 1915 but it currently has no recognition clause in its accession plan.¹⁸ In addition to the European Union's recognition of the genocide¹⁹, a number of prominent genocide scholars have passed a resolution²⁰ at the Association of Genocide Scholars' conference in Montreal on June 13th 1997 that recognizes the Armenian Genocide as such.²¹

Turkey...[T]his individual...escaped overseas, works in opposition to Turkey, betrayed his country, and serves the Armenian lobby by promoting the position that 'there was an Armenian genocide' all over the world!" ("Bravo Atilla Koç! This is How You Introduce Turkey!", *Hürriyet*, 23 June 2007).

¹⁶ Freely (2007: 17) notes that the "hate campaigns were vigorously criticized in Turkey's more democratic-minded papers, in the electronic network of Turkish and Armenian scholars, and in the networks of the Armenian diaspora". See the document *Turkey – Guide to Major Turkish Daily Newspapers 2008* for descriptions of more liberal and democratically oriented Turkish news outlets.

¹⁷ <http://africa.reuters.com/world/news/usnTRE4A47JZ.html> (accessed 03/06/2009)

¹⁸ <http://www.aina.org/news/20060911162550.htm> (accessed 03/06/2009).

¹⁹ In 1987, the European Parliament recognized the Turkish massacres of World War I to be a crime of genocide according to the United Nations Convention on Genocide (Dadrian, 2004: xix).

²⁰ A copy of this resolution can be obtained here: www.genocidescholars.org/.../IAGS_Resolution_1997_on_the_Armenian_Genocide.pdf (accessed 31/07/2010).

²¹ There have been a number of instances in which tribunals and committees have formally recognized the Armenian genocide. In 1984, a "People's Tribunal" was held in Paris by a group of public figures and it was judged that the Armenian killings were genocide. In 1985, the United Nations Subcommittee on Human Rights recognized the historical fact of the Armenian genocide and the United Nations Commission on Human Rights followed the next year (Dadrian, 2004: xix).

This discussion of the conflicts regarding the meaning of these historical events illustrates their continuing negotiation and illustrates the competition between discourses. It also highlights the inseparable nature of politics from discourse on genocide.

3.2 The Rwandan Genocide

3.2.1 History of the Genocide

In 1994, 800 000 Tutsis and moderate Hutus were murdered in Rwanda in approximately 100 days. The path to the Rwandan genocide consisted of a series of steps that began with Belgian colonialization and the establishment of ethnic divisions between Hutu and Tutsi, and ended with the deaths of hundreds of thousands women, children, and men (Caplan, 2007: 20, Lemarchand, 2009: 485).

Even though pre-colonial society in Rwanda was centralized and stratified, the Hutu and Tutsi shared the same language and culture, and conflict between the Hutu and Tutsi was neither very intense nor frequent (Caplan, 2007: 21). The Belgian colonial state “provided the crucible within which ethnic identities were reshaped and mythologized” and who implemented identity cards that specified Rwandans as either Hutu or Tutsi and whose policies supported one group over another (Lemarchand, 2009: 485).

In the 1950s, Belgian policies radically shifted to support Hutu politicians²² after many years of supporting Tutsi rule (Lemarchand, 2009: 495, Caplan, 2007: 21). The Hutu revolutionary process began in late 1959 with a Hutu uprising directed at Tutsi chiefs in which hundreds of Tutsis and Hutu were killed. This revolution culminated in 1961 with a Hutu-led, Belgian-assisted coup that led to a new regime under the Hutu rule of Gregoire

²² This was due to pressure from the United Nations Trusteeship Council and the Catholic Church to provide educational opportunities to Hutu elements (Lemarchand, 2009: 485).

Kayibanda (Lemarchand, 2009: 485, Caplan, 2007: 21). Shortly after, Rwanda gained independence (Lemarchand, 2009: 485).

Between 1959 and 1967, 20 000 Tutsis were killed and 300 000 were exiled and displaced into Uganda, Burundi, and Zaire (Lemarchand, 2009: 485, Caplan, 2007: 21). This Hutu revolution is crucial to the background of the genocide because the displaced Tutsis, determined to go back to their homeland, would form the rebel army *Rwandan Patriotic Front* (RPF) that would invade Rwanda in 1990 (Lemarchand, 2009: 486). More Tutsi would flee Rwanda to join the others in exile after more anti-Tutsi attacks by Burundian Hutu in 1972 (Caplan, 2007: 21).

The head of the Rwandan army, Juvenal Habyarimana, took power in 1973 and under his regime Rwanda made modest economic progress (Caplan, 2007: 22). This progress stalled in the late 1980s and the country suffered (*ibid*).

In the fall of 1990 the rebel army RPF made up of the children of the Tutsis exiled into Uganda invaded northern Rwanda (*ibid*). Ethnic tensions grew as the RPF soldiers were labeled “alien invaders” and anti-Tutsi propaganda ran rampant (*ibid*). The RPF invasion left Rwanda in complete disarray. Almost 300 000 Hutu were driven into interment camps and in early 1993 almost a million more were added to that number (*ibid*: 23). Anti-Tutsi violence continued for three and a half years: massacres of Tutsis were carried out in October 1990, January 1991, February 1991, March 1992, August 1992, January 1993, March 1993, and February 1994 (*ibid*: 23). Between the invasion of the RPF on October 1st, 1990 and the fall of Rwanda’s capital Kigali on July 4th, 1994 it is estimated that one tenth of Rwanda’s population was decimated (Lemarchand, 2009: 484).

A sequence of events would lead to the spiral into genocide, beginning with the Arusha Accords conference in Tanzania. The Arusha Accords, meant to bring the violence to an end

and create a power-sharing agreement between the Habyarimana government and the RPF, was not well received by some of the Hutu elite who stood to lose from this agreement. At almost the same time, the assassination of Burundi's Hutu president by Tutsis deepened ethnic divisions and reinforced the Hutu belief that power could never be shared with Tutsis because they were untrustworthy (Caplan, 2007: 25). Burundian Hutu attacked Tutsi and the RPF carried out reprisal killings of Hutu civilians leading to tens of thousands dead on both sides (Des Forges, 2007: 45).

The shooting down of president Habyarimana's plane on April 6th 1994, killing both him and the new Hutu president of Burundi after a meeting on the peace process in Tanzania encouraged further anti-Tutsi sentiment (Hewitt, 2004: 221).²³ Fear and uncertainty grew within Rwanda and Hutu extremists called for an immediate response to Habyarimana's death (Lemarchand, 2009: 490). The result was the genocide of approximately 800 000 Tutsi and moderate Hutu (*ibid*: 491).

3.2.2 The Role of Rwandan Print and Radio Media in the Genocide

The news media played a critical role in the genocide. Local Rwandan print and radio media provided the fuel for the genocide while the international media ignored the events going on in Rwanda. It was not until the genocide was over that the International community took notice of Rwanda.

The Rwandan media was crucial in promoting anti-Tutsi propaganda and was mobilized to create the conditions for genocide. The publication that had the most impact on

²³ There has been much debate over who is responsible for Habyarimana's death and there are a number of conflicting theories as to who shot down the plane: (1) that it was French soldiers; (2) that it was Belgian UNAMIR soldiers; (3) that it was the RPF; (4) that it was extremist members of the president's own political party (Prunier, 1995: 213, Hewitt, 2004: 221). See Prunier (1995) for his interpretation of the plausibility of these theories.

the country in the 1990s was the newspaper *Kangura* (Kabanda, 2007: 62). *Kangura* promoted hatred of any Tutsi and Hutu that sought change, freedom and democracy, and called for a pure Rwandan community free from the Tutsi 'enemy' (*ibid*). In the period of 1990 to 1994, *Kangura* used the Tutsi as scapegoats for the poverty within Rwanda and accused them of taking all of the privileges while the rest of the country suffered (*ibid*: 63). The current circumstances of the Hutu were portrayed as being the same as the conditions that led to the Hutu revolution in 1959 and called on the Hutu to denounce what they perceived as Tutsi hegemony (*ibid*).²⁴

Due to high rates of illiteracy among Rwandans, radio became an important method for the government to deliver messages to the population (Des Forges, 2007: 42). Two key stations were essential for the incitement and mobilization of the genocide: Radio Rwanda and Radio-Télévision Libres des Milles Collines (RTL). Radio Rwanda was the official voice of the government²⁵ and a tool used to incite killing and to mobilize civilians into a 'self-defence' force that supported the national army against the Tutsi (*ibid*). It was first used in the March 1992 massacre of Tutsi in Bugesera to convince the Hutu that they were about to be attacked by Tutsi and that they needed to protect themselves by attacking the Tutsi first (*ibid*).

²⁴ To this end, *Kangura* brought back the *Bahutu Manifesto* of 1957 which described the *Muhutu-Mututsi* social problem:

First and foremost, the problem is one of political monopoly enjoyed by one particular race, the Mututsi: political monopoly that under existing structures, develops into social and economic monopoly, which in turn, because of de facto selection in education, becomes a monopoly that pigeonholes the Bahutu as perpetual unskilled subordinates.
(Kabanda, 2007: 63).

²⁵ Radio Rwanda disseminated propaganda for the president's party, the Mouvement républicain national pour la démocratie et le développement (MRND) (Des Forges, 2007: 42).

The RTLM was created in 1993 by supporters of the MRND and the Coalition pour la défense de la République et de la démocratie (CDR) to supplement Radio Rwanda and to appeal to the ordinary citizen (Des Forges, 2007: 44). The RTLM reinforced the ethnic cleavage between Hutu and Tutsi through racist propaganda that painted the Tutsi as *inyenzi* (cockroaches) and reminded Hutu of the foreign origin of Tutsi and therefore their lack of claim to Rwanda, the unequal amount of wealth and power of the Tutsi and the brutality of past Tutsi rule (Chrétien, 2007: 55, Des Forges, 2007: 45).

The interim government used both Radio Rwanda and RTLM after president Habyarimana's plane went down to implement a 'self-defence' plan to incite and direct the widespread killing of Tutsi civilians and members of the Hutu opposition (Des Forges, 2007: 47). Authorities gave instructions and orders to listeners that announced the specific names of people to kill, the most effective killing tools to use and the places where Tutsi may hide, and to encourage the idea that the Tutsi must be killed before they killed the Hutu (Des Forges, 2007: 49-50, Hewitt, 2004: 221).

3.2.3 The Role of the International Media

The international media was severely criticized for not only ignoring the genocide as it happened but also for misconstruing the crisis in Rwanda. From an analysis of news magazine coverage in the United States, five inaccurate themes were identified:

- (1) The Rwandan violence was the result of irrational tribalism; (2) Rwandan people are little better than animals, ranging from the barbaric to the helpless and pathetic; (3) The violence is incomprehensible and, thus, is explained through comparison to biblical myths, supernatural causes, natural disasters or diseases; (4) Neighbouring African countries are just as violent and, thus, unable to help solve Rwanda's problems; (5) Only the West is capable of solving Rwanda's problems (Wall, 2007: 265).

Melvorn (2001: 91) states that the portrayal in the media that the violence in Rwanda was due to tribal hatred was incorrect and served to mask the fact that a deliberate slaughtering of Tutsi and moderate Hutu was taking place.

The international media have also been harshly criticized for their failure to cover the Rwandan genocide as it happened. Kuperman (2000) lists three factors for this:

First, the evacuation of foreign nationals left few reporters in the country after the first few days or in the capital after the first week. Second, the situation was legitimately confusing. Tutsi rebels were winning the civil war and retaliating against suspected civilian Hutu extremists at the same time that the civilian Tutsi population was being systematically exterminated. Third, even experts were slow to appreciate what was happening. The commander of Belgian peacekeepers stated on April 15 to Paris Radio France International that "the fighting has ... all but stopped".

Others have claimed that the situation in Rwandan was considered "too dangerous" and complicated and thus it was difficult to cover the story more thoroughly (Hilsum, 2007: 172). The media coverage that *did* occur on the ground in Rwanda focused on the humanitarian catastrophe: the refugee crisis and cholera outbreaks (*ibid*: 173), while international media coverage focused on other global events such as the conflict occurring simultaneously in Bosnia, South Africa's first multi-racial elections, the O.J Simpson trial and other international events (Choan, 2007: 162). No real time news coverage of the genocide in Rwanda occurred until after most of the massacres were over (*ibid*: 162).²⁶

Despite this, knowledge of the genocide made its way into the media in late April 1994 with the help of Human Rights Watch, Oxfam, Médecins Sans Frontières and others (Choan, 2007: 163).

²⁶ There was no real time news coverage of the situation in Rwanda because media outlets determined that it was too risky to send expensive satellite uplink into Rwanda (Choan, 2007: 162).

3.2.4 The Rwandan Crisis as Genocide

The International community showed a reluctance to recognize the slaughter in Rwanda as genocide as it was happening. To do so would necessitate action under the *United Nations Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide* (Melvern, 2001: 99) and the Security Council was hesitant to apply the label of “genocide”:

The Security Council condemns all of these breaches of international humanitarian law in Rwanda, particularly those perpetrated against the civilian population, and recalls that persons who instigate or participate in such acts are individually responsible... the Security Council recalls that the killing of members of an ethnic group with the intention of destroying such a group in whole or in part constitutes a crime punishable by international law (Security Council 1994).

However, there has since been official international recognition of the genocide. On November 8th 1994 the Security Council established the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) to:

...Contribute to the process of national reconciliation in Rwanda and to the maintenance of peace in the region. The International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda was established for the prosecution of persons responsible for the genocide and other serious violations of international humanitarian law committed in the territory of Rwanda between 1 January 1994 and 31 December 1994. It may also deal with the prosecution of Rwandan citizens responsible for genocide and other such violations of international law committed in the territory of neighbouring States during the same period.²⁷

The current government of Rwanda, under Tutsi rule, also recognizes the genocide, and has implemented legislation to combat the proliferation of genocide ideology. Article 33 of the Constitution of the Republic of Rwanda May 26, 2003)²⁸ states, “the propagation of ethnic, regional and racial discrimination or any other form of division is punishable by law”

²⁷ For more information, please see:

<http://liveunictr.altmansolutions.com/AboutICTR/GeneralInformation/tabid/101/Default.aspx> (accessed 02/08/2010).

²⁸ A copy of the Constitution can be found here:

[www.chr.up.ac.za/hr_docs/constitutions/docs/RwandaC\(rev\).doc](http://www.chr.up.ac.za/hr_docs/constitutions/docs/RwandaC(rev).doc) (accessed 03/03/2010).

and Article 13 has made “revisionism, denial and trivialization (banalization)” of the genocide punishable by law. Since ethnic hatreds between the Tutsi and Hutu groups are believed to be at the root of the genocide, this piece of legislation hopes to eliminate ethnicity from political discourse in order to achieve peace within Rwanda²⁹. Whether this can be accomplished through the use of this legislation has yet to be seen.³⁰

3.2.5 The Denial of the Rwandan Genocide

Even though there is a general consensus that the events in 1994 constitute genocide, there are still claims put forward to deny the genocide. These often involve contesting the use of the definition of genocide as defined by the UN Convention. Deniers will claim that any deaths were a result of mutual conflict and ethnic killings between the Hutu and the Tutsi. Others will attack the victim group by claiming that the genocide was one-sided against the Hutu.³¹ The “double-genocide thesis” is also put forward to claim that the RPF was killing Hutu just as the Hutu regime was killing Tutsi.³² Even still there are a number of individuals³³ who criticize the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda of a one-sided

²⁹ See Lemarchand (2009), Hintjens (2008) and Zorbas (2007) for further discussion.

³⁰ Lemarchand (2009) and Zorbas (2007) do not believe that this is necessarily achieved through these laws.

³¹ Adapted from statements made by Egide Karuranga at the “Beyond Hollywood’s Rwanda: Truth and Justice, Security and Development” conference held at Emory University, November 27th, 2007. A full transcript of this conference can be found at:

http://www.rzhrg.org/Genocide_Website/Transcripts/AndrewYoungEvent_completetranscript_15May08.pdf (accessed 05/06/2008).

³² Verwimp (2003) conducted a study to test the “double-genocide thesis” in central and southern Rwanda to determine whether the killings committed by the Hutu regime between April and June 1994 had a different character from those of the RPF before, during and after 1994. He concludes that in Gikongoro, Gitarama and Kibuye, many Hutu and Tutsi died but the killing pattern in the period between 1994 and 2000 was different for both groups (Verwimp, 2003: 435). He found that more Tutsi died in 1994 than Hutu, and that the term ‘genocide’ should be applied to the killings committed by the Interhamwe while another word such as ‘massacre’ should be used for the killings committed by the RPF (2003: 442). This argument of a double genocide on the part of both the RPF and the Interhamwe also fits in with the discourse deniers use that violence occurred on both sides and that the deaths were provoked and in self-defense. Deniers claim that Tutsis have been killing Hutus for years and that the genocide is an example of the Hutus fighting back.

³³ Such as Keith Harmon Snow, Chris Black, and Peter Erlinder.

“victor’s justice” for failing to indict any ethnic Tutsi and members of the ruling Rwandan Patriotic Front led by Paul Kagame for crimes against humanity committed in 1994.

The Armenian and Rwandan genocides appear to be quite different. The Armenian genocide occurred during World War I in near secrecy, with no media involvement. The debate regarding these events is still not settled and the perpetrating group, the Turkish government, continues to deny the genocide to this day. The media is mobilized to support state claims that the events did not constitute genocide. This is in stark contrast to the Rwandan genocide, which occurred fairly recently. The media played a large role both in mobilizing the conditions for genocide (Rwandan media) and in their inaction during the genocide (Western media). There has been a general consensus among the international community and the victim group since 1994 that the killings constitute genocide. Despite their differences, the cases of the Armenian and Rwandan genocides illustrate that as an international community, we continue to struggle with the social and legal meaning of these acts. This chapter has attempted to highlight the discussion surrounding these acts as genocide. Given the ongoing negotiation of the meaning of these events, this thesis will provide a window onto the competition between discourses thereby providing insight into the political meaning of denial, power, language and identity.

CHAPTER FOUR: EXAMINING GENOCIDE DENIAL THROUGH THEORY

A central issue of the thesis is to reflect on who is in a position to write history. The first part of this chapter will establish how this thesis views this issue by examining the construction of discourse, knowledge and truth and their relation to power. Next, given that most of the literature on genocide denial focuses on the techniques, arguments and collective motivations as accounts of questioning genocide, this chapter will explore a vocabularies of motive framework. Finally, since the Internet appears to be a new means that has revitalized Holocaust denial and created new venues for its growth, theories on the media will be mobilized to permit the examination of discourse on the Internet of other denials of genocide.

4.1 Conceptualizing Historical Revision

The historiographical scholarship on revision is limited in both volume and scope and there is intense debate within the discipline of history as to what constitutes revision, how we can distinguish between legitimate and illegitimate forms of revision, and whether revision is helpful or harmful to the study of history (Hughes-Warrington, 2007: 61). There is no firm consensus within the literature on a definition of historical revision. Some call it the “bread and butter” of historical scholarship while others call it a “fallacious rendition of the past” (Gkotsaridis, 2008: 725). Still others say that both of these views of historical revision are unsatisfactory (*ibid*).

Some consider it vital to historical scholarship because it allows new insight or understanding through an examination of empirical evidence and reinterpretation of existing

evidence (Lipstadt, 1993: 21, Shermer & Grobman, 2000: 34, Zimmerman, 2000: 142). It can be a critical, logical, scientific procedure that can create the conditions for a degree of reflexivity in Western historiography (Gkotsaridis, 2008: 728). However, historical revision may be considered “dangerous” because it “can challenge the core of a shared historical consciousness and the collective responsibility about the past... It can clash with “dominant memory” and the one endorsed and spread by the media and through state sponsored education” (*ibid*: 727).

Furthermore, there are limits to the development of historiographical alternatives. Some are considered legitimate re-interpretations of the past while others are considered to be illegitimate. According to Browning, “there is an important distinction between interpretations that deny the very existence of events and those that draw different conclusions from events whose existence is incontestable” (1992: 32). If historical narratives are a result of interpretations produced by historians that differ among historians (Eltringham, 2004: 152), how do we distinguish between legitimate historical revision and the revision most often associated with genocide denial?¹ Some might say that ultimately it is the techniques used by historical revisionists that are the basis for this distinction. For example, revisionist facts are arrived at when “participating scholars play by the rules of science, logic, and reason. That is, as long as scholars put forward their claims as testable hypotheses, then those hypotheses can be weighed against the evidence and accepted or rejected in relation to other interpretations” (Shermer & Grobman, 2000: 238). Historical revision may slip into the realm of denial when “someone refuses to accept the collective rejection of a hypothesis by his or her peers or shifts to a different field and refuses to play

¹ See Shermer et al., (2000: 248-250) for a series of questions and answers that attempt to distinguish between real revision and dogmatic denial.

by the rules established by a different set of peers” (Shermer & Grobman, 2000: 242). The denial of facts occurs when facts are molded to fit a preconceived result and there is an elimination of facts that contradict this preconceived result (Gkotsaridis, 2008: 736). The elimination, suppression, and forging of evidence of a historical event are the hallmarks of illegitimate revision. Again, it is important to note that there are no hard and fast rules to distinguish between legitimate and illegitimate historical revision and the debate in this area of the discipline of history rages on.

While the liminal and unpredictable nature of revision can allow for constructive and fertile critique in some cases, it allows for a certain ambiguity and openness that predisposes one to work in relative terms (Gkotsaridis, 2008: 729). Several scholars of history have pointed out that revisionism has been conflated with postmodernism and this conflation is what has permitted Holocaust denial to flourish (Appleby, Hunt & Jacob, 1994: 205, Gkotsaridis, 2008: 736); meaning that a “prior emphasis on the incontrovertibility of “facts” led to the postmodern critique that exposed this as a fallacy” and it is the overthrow of facts that can lead to the sort of relativistic nihilism that provides the fuel for revisionist conspiracy theories such as Holocaust denial (Kleinberg, 2007: 140). And so the term “revisionist” has been captured by a movement dedicated to the denial of the reality of the Holocaust (Spiegel, 2007: 1). That genocide deniers call themselves “revisionists” adds to the confusion we have about historical revision as they have “hijacked the term and succeeded in contaminating language by playing and cashing in on the fault lines of a mode of representation of history” (Gkotsaridis, 2008: 726). They represent their work as legitimate alternative interpretations of historical events that should be distributed along with the facts of genocide though they do not respect the process of scientific production (Theriault, 1998).

There are also varying degrees of what is considered “denial” in the realm of illegitimate historical revision. In the previous chapter we discussed what constitutes genocide denial and we may choose to think of genocide denial as existing along a spectrum of shadows. At the darkest end, or in the blackest shadows, we have what is known as literal denial. The blatant denial that the Holocaust ever happened even though there is a large body of evidence that establishes the Holocaust as a fact is one such example. But there are other various arguments that are put forward that are much more subtle, much more nuanced, and thus appear to be much more acceptable forms of revision (for example, the minimization of mortality statistics). These grey shadowy areas nevertheless deny that the historical event constitutes genocide. These arguments are re-interpretations that impose a different construction of the event and use a combination of elements and strategies to deny genocide. They are illegitimate because they denounce official interpretations and position themselves against official versions of history, as we will see in later chapters.

Furthermore, we must remember that these alternative discourses serve specific political and ideological interests. This is especially apparent when we look at the example of Holocaust denial and the outcome of *Garaudy v. France* specifically:

There can be no doubt that denying the reality of clearly established historical facts, such as the holocaust, as the applicant does in his book, does not constitute historical research akin to a quest for the truth. The aim and the result of that approach are completely different, the real purpose being to rehabilitate the National-Socialist regime and, as a consequence, accuse the victims themselves of falsifying history. Denying crimes against humanity is therefore one of the most serious forms of racial defamation of Jews and of incitement to hatred of them. The denial or rewriting of this type of historical fact undermines the values on which the fight against racism and anti-Semitism are based and constitutes a serious threat to public order. Such acts are incompatible with democracy and human rights because they infringe the rights of others (European Court of Human Rights, *Garaudy v. France* (dec.), no. 65831/01, echr 2003-IX).

This is not to say that historiography or historical study is not influenced by politics and

ideology. Indeed, historical information is heavily filtered by the victors of social struggles to favour their own versions of historical events over that of their defeated adversary (Foucault, 2003: 65-69). In other words, historical discourse is most often written by the victors and through it their power is reinforced (*ibid*). In addition “histories of the working class, women, minorities, indigenous peoples and others make it clear that gaps in historical knowledge are often linked to the fact that histories have usually been written by those in power...” (Shermer & Grobman, 2000: 23). However, as we have seen in the case of Holocaust denial, the purpose of revision is not to enrich the existing body of historical literature on the subject or to create academic debate and enhance our understanding of it: it is inherently political and ideological.

The underlying concerns regarding which histories can and cannot be legitimately conveyed and who is in a position to convey these histories is of the utmost importance here. This debate forces us to reflect on how we determine who is in the position to write history. The competing interpretation of histories presented by historians shows us that there is not one “true” history. Truth, as such, is produced by and through political, cultural, economic and dominating forces, and is linked in a circular fashion with systems of power that produce and sustain it (Foucault, 1980: 93). Power and knowledge exist in circular relationship where power produces knowledge and knowledge produces power (Foucault, 1980: 27). The production of truths and power-knowledge relations can only occur through the production and circulation of discourses (Foucault, 1980: 93). Discourses can be seen as “identifiable collections of utterances governed by rules of construction and evaluation which determine within some thematic area what might be said, by whom, in what context, and with what effect” (Fabion 2000: xvi). More simply, they are “organized systems of knowledge that make possible what can be spoken about, and how one can speak about it” (Adams, 1997:

91). However, there are discourses that have been subjugated by the privileging of another set of knowledges and have been exiled from the “legitimate domains of formal knowledge” (Foucault, 1980: 82; White & Epston, 1990: 26). These subjugated knowledges are local, popular, indigenous knowledge located at the margins of society and its regime of truth.

Each society has its “regime of truth”, or its “general politics” of truth, which consist of those discourses enforced by power structures or truth-generating apparatuses of society that are accepted and made to function as true; the mechanisms and instances which enable one to distinguish true and false statements, the means by which each is sanctioned; the techniques and procedures accorded value in the acquisition of truth; and the status of those who are charged with saying what counts as true (Foucault, 1980: 131). Whether a discourse is true or false is not as important as whether it is effective in practice and has real world effects (Hall, 1996: 205). Hall (1996: 205) states, “... when power operates so as to enforce the “truth” of any set of statements, then such a discursive formation produces a ‘regime of truth’”. We call discourse a “regime of truth” when it is effective in organizing and regulating relations of power (*ibid*).

Therefore accepted discourses concerning genocide are created by those historians and politicians who are able to exercise power and create what we consider to be true, established, historical facts about particular genocides. What is at stake for genocide deniers is to promote their discourse of denial as legitimate, genuine, scholarly efforts at historical revision in order to put forth as truth a series of discourses that serves their interests and that in return will generate power. However, in the majority of cases, these discourses are not considered to be *true* because they are not produced by people having been given the legitimacy of scientific discourse (or it has been taken away) and does not support the regime of truth by those in power.

The following section on vocabularies of motives provides the tools to understand the argumentative logic of discourses of genocide denial and the underlying purpose of these denials, not at the individual level but as a social instrument for the construction of truth and the exercise of power.

4.2 Vocabularies of Motive

Generally, authors² who conduct research on accounts denying genocide and other atrocities all use the same vocabularies of motive theoretical framework. Vocabularies of motive are narratives used to present actions in ways that are culturally appropriate and acceptable. They are “those situationally relevant and acceptable terms with which interpretation of conduct by social actors proceeds” (Mills, 1940: 904).³ In other words, for the purpose of this thesis they are rhetorical devices used to neutralize, rationalize and justify the act of genocide when others denounce it such as the international community.

Most work on vocabularies of motive has remained at the micro-level of interaction⁴, taking for granted that the authors of accounts are individuals rather than collectivities (Nichols, 1990: 128). Husting (2006: 16) points out that other authors⁵ have begun to extend the applicability of vocabularies of motive on a macro level in order to see the application of micro-level processes to the macro-level of collective agents and institutions. This application is especially important to understanding accounts of genocide denial that occur on a macro-level by collectivities like Turkish society which is supported and enforced by institutions such as the Turkish government in their denial of the Armenian genocide.

² See especially Cohen (1993; 2001).

³ Mills' work was influenced by Kenneth Burke's *Permanence and Change* (1936) and the work of George Herbert Mead (1934).

⁴ See Sykes & Matza (1957), Scott & Lyman (1968), Stokes & Hewitt (1975), Scully & Morolla (1984), Smith & Preston (1984), Brisset & Edgley (1990), Hopper (1993), Nelson & Lambert (2001), Bickerstaff & Walker (2002), and Monaghan (2002) for literature at the micro-level of interaction.

⁵ See Dunn (2005), Husting & Orr (2005), and Husting (2006).

The first part of this section expands upon this discussion of vocabularies of motive by looking at disclaimers and accounts as it applies to this thesis. The next section describes Cohen's (1993; 2001) analysis of the denial of political atrocities. Finally, we will look at the functions these vocabularies of motive serve in the rhetoric of genocide denial.

4.2.1 Disclaimers and Accounts

Disclaimers and accounts are two types of vocabularies of motive. Disclaimers are statements produced *before* the wrongful act to “ward off and defeat in advance doubts and negative typifications which may result from intended conduct” (Stokes and Hewitt, 1975: 3). Accounts are statements produced *after* the wrongful act to describe “unanticipated or untoward behaviour – whether that behaviour is his own or that of others, and whether the proximate cause for the statement arises from the actor himself or from someone else” (Scott & Lyman, 1968: 46). It is in this quote that we see the importance of Scott and Lyman's (1968) conceptualization of accounts to this thesis. First, it allows us to understand the logic of accounts constructed *after* the act of genocide.⁶ Second, it allows us to examine the accounts produced by bystanders of genocide and other groups such as governments, not only individuals. Two types of these accounts are justifications and excuses (Scott et al., 1968: 47). Justifications are vocabularies where responsibility for the act in question is accepted but the pejorative quality associated with it is denied (Cohen, 2001: 59). Excuses are vocabularies in which full responsibility may be denied for the act even though it is acknowledged the act is wrong (Brisset & Edgley, 1990). Scott et al., (1967: 47-50) identify four types of excuses: (1) appeal to accident, or the claim that unanticipated factors influenced the questioned behaviour; (2) appeal to defeasibility, or citing a lack of

⁶ Given that this thesis looks at accounts given after the fact of genocide, our focus here will be on accounts and not disclaimers.

knowledge, information, or will to complete an action; (3) appeal to biological drives; and (4) scapegoating, or blaming one's questionable behaviour as a response to the behaviour or attitudes of another.

Cohen's (2001) analysis of the denial of political atrocities includes an examination of vocabularies of motive at a collective level based on the work of Sykes's and Matza's neutralization theory (1957)⁷. Cohen applies their five techniques of neutralization⁸ to political accounts of denial: denial of responsibility, denial of injury, denial of the victim, condemnation of condemners, and appeal to higher loyalties. Cohen adds two more important accounts to those developed by Sykes and Matza: the denial of knowledge and moral indifference (Cohen, 2001: 77).

The presentation of the techniques will follow a logical order. Perpetrators of genocide may first deny having any knowledge that genocide occurred. This is difficult to do and more often accounts denying genocide involve denying responsibility for it, deflecting blame with a 'reframing' of the event by denying injury, denying the victim, condemning the condemners, appealing to higher loyalties and acting morally indifferent.

Denial of Knowledge

Denying knowledge that genocide has occurred includes denying knowing that the atrocity actually happened, but also denying one's role in it⁹. At the collective cultural level, people in a society may not know an atrocity has occurred since public knowledge varies according

⁷ Neutralization theory is a perspective of social control developed by Sykes and Matza in 1957 to explain why some youth drift in and out of delinquency. This theory proposes that youth feel a sense of moral obligation to be bound by the law but when this bond to the law does not exist, youth will drift into delinquency. Youth learn techniques that enable them to neutralize the values, beliefs and attitudes that make them law-abiding citizens.

⁸ Denial of injury, denial of the victim, condemnation of condemners, and appeal to higher loyalties are considered justifications while denial of responsibility is more similar to the Scott and Lyman's (1968) excuse of appeal to feasibility (Benoit, 1995 34).

⁹ For example, the railway workers who transported 'passengers' to and from concentration camps during the Holocaust. Did they really not know what was occurring (Cohen, 2001; 81)?

to political setting, the concealing of events by governments, length of conflict, control over mass media, visibility, geographical spread and the proportion of the population involved (Cohen, 2001: 78). What we see are gradations of the amount of information acknowledged (*ibid*: 79). A good illustration of the denial of knowledge is the language used during the Holocaust. Terms such as ‘deportations’, ‘special actions’, ‘executive measures’, ‘cleansing’, ‘liquidation’ and many others did not attempt to keep people ignorant of what they were doing but were used to prevent them from equating it with murder (*ibid*: 81).

At a more individual level, people may claim virtual blindness, IE. that they did not see what was going on. Individuals may also claim that they did not need to know, did not want to know, or refused to know that genocide was occurring. Once an individual cannot deny knowledge any longer, they may compartmentalize, or mentally lock away what occurred or they may simply express moral ambivalence and a lack of caring about the genocide (*ibid*: 85-87).

Denial of Responsibility

It is difficult for individuals, perpetrators, and perpetrating governments to deny having any knowledge of genocide. They are therefore more likely to evade responsibility for genocide. Here, perpetrators of genocide argue that they lack responsibility, agency, or intent; they may also state that what happened was outside of their control (Cohen, 2001: 88). Denials of responsibility include obedience to authority¹⁰, conformity, necessity and splitting (*ibid*).

¹⁰ Crimes of obedience refer to acts “performed in response to order from authority that is considered illegal or immoral by the larger community” (Kelman and Hamilton, 1989; 46). The hierarchical structure that crimes of obedience take place in make it difficult to establish responsibility for them. There are three conditions for crimes of obedience by low-ranking personnel: (1) the authorization of violence via orders given from those higher in the organizational hierarchy, (2) once the initial moral restraints associated with an act of violence are overcome, each subsequent step becomes easier in what is known as routinisation, and (3) the dehumanization of the enemy by depriving them of the qualities of being human (Cohen, 1993; 110). These conditions for

Denials of responsibility as a result of obedience to authority most often come from low-ranking personnel who receive and carry out orders but do not make or give the orders. These denials can also come from personnel higher within the authority structure because they are further away from the end results and can claim that the initiative was taken at a lower level or that their instructions were misunderstood and those who give the orders are usually not brought to assume responsibility for these orders. The second denial of responsibility often claimed by perpetrators is that they were simply conforming to the actions of everyone else. Individuals may feel the pressures, demands and expectations of the situation and sense a loss of agency. Under those circumstances, perpetrators feel as though they cannot be held responsible for what they are accused of (Cohen, 2001: 91). Appeals to necessity and self-defense are quite often used in accounts of genocide denial to justify the actions taken. Finally, “splitting” is a more radical, psychological form of denial of responsibility where perpetrators claim that they compartmentalized their actions and ascribed them to another part of the self (Cohen, 2001: 91).

Denial of Injury and Denial of the Victim

When perpetrators cannot deny knowledge of genocide, they will often try to reframe¹¹ what occurred in order to neutralize the wrongfulness of their actions. Denying injury is one such method. Perpetrators of political atrocities cannot so easily maintain that victims came to no physical harm. Instead, perpetrators will argue that the details of the event do not fit the

crimes of obedience ultimately allow the perpetrator to claim that they were helpless “cogs in the wheel” or simply obeying authority.

Bauman (1989) offers a more in depth description of this process. See also Arendt & Kohn (2003) for counter arguments to this logic.

¹¹ According to Goffman (1974; 21), a ‘frame’ is a “schemata of interpretation” that permits individuals to “locate, perceive, identify, and label” occurrences within their life space and the world at large. Frame analysis is most often associated with the work of Erving Goffman but numerous authors have contributed to this analysis in a wide range of approaches (Iyengar, 1991; Miller, 1997; Scheufle, 1999; Snow et al., 1986; Reese, 2001; D’Angelo, 2002).

legal definition of genocide that is being applied, that the culture of the country is used to violence and that the victims are part of a devalued ethnic group who do not experience pain as others do (Cohen, 2001: 95).

Another method of reframing is to deny the victim. Perpetrators consider themselves to be the real victims of genocide, while the purported victims are presented as exaggerating their victimization. Usually this argument comes from leaders, ideologists, officials, and countries where there is a political sense of victimhood¹² (Cohen, 2001: 97).

Condemnation of Condemners, Appeal to Higher Loyalties, and Moral Indifference

To deflect attention from their own offences, perpetrators will condemn their condemners, or appeal to higher loyalties. In condemning the condemners, perpetrators question their critics' right to pass judgment on the actions of the perpetrators (Cohen, 2001: 98). These accounts are usually found in the discourse of official denial used by the modern state to protect its image; their condemners are hypocrites, critics have no right to interfere, and double standards are being used to judge. The idea behind this is that many countries have sordid histories of genocidal violence and so they have no right to judge other countries that are accused of genocide. In questioning the motives of others, the deviance of one's own behaviour is further repressed (Rogers and Buffalo, 1974: 322).

An appeal to higher loyalties consists of the belief that a higher purpose is being served through denial practices. These higher loyalties can be nationalism, a higher cause, a transcendent deity, and the "truth" (Cohen, 2001: 98). For example, Serbians were portrayed

¹² "Victimhood" can be described as:

"... a state of individual and collective ethnic mind that occurs when the traditional structures that an individual sense of security and self-worth through membership in a group are shattered by aggressive, violent political outsiders. Victimhood can be characterized by either an extreme or persistent sense of mortal vulnerability" (Montville, 1990: 169).

during the Bosnian genocide as simultaneously heroic and victimized, appealing to a xenophobic nationalism and a sense of victimhood to justify their role in the genocide afterward (Ramet, 2007: 42).

Finally, perpetrators may not even realize the immorality of what they have done or that they have done anything wrong at all. This moral indifference is “the absence of even token appeals to conventional morality – no neutralization because there is nothing to neutralize” (Cohen, 2001: 77).

4.2.2 Vocabularies of Motive As Social Instruments

Vocabularies of motive serve the same functions at collective level as they do at the individual level (Husting, 2006: 12). At the individual level, accounts allow the deflection of blame away from the author of the account and thus the negative implications that emerge from the questionable act. Accounts restore tarnished reputations and identities and protect them from being rendered questionable (Husting, 2006: 12). This may also be true at the collective level. Perpetrating governments may seek to deny accountability for genocide in order to avoid the negative consequences that accompany admissions of guilt or responsibility. Accounts of denial may also function to repair and protect the national image of perpetrating governments. They serve as normative devices that allow the neutralization or normalization of questionable acts and the alignment of the conduct with social norms (Husting, 2006: 10; Hewitt et al., 1975: 843).

At the individual and collective level, vocabularies of motive also serve as social instruments that can be used to influence the individual actor himself or herself, or to influence others (Mills, 1940: 908). In this way vocabularies of motive can be considered “resources for the accomplishment of ‘power’” (Husting, 2006: 14). A strategically

deployed vocabulary of motive becomes a tool of power to influence those who condemn the act of genocide in order to make acceptable the actions of those accused of genocide. They also attempt to influence what society accepts as truth by presenting alternative accounts of the event in question. These vocabularies of motive denying genocide may have the ability to become regimes of truth when they are created, presented, and enforced by the truth-generating apparatuses of society. It is possible to see then, the importance of examining the accounts of genocide denial and their potential to be wielded as social instruments to influence of others.

We will now look at media theories to help us explain how these accounts questioning genocide are produced and disseminated on the Internet.

4.3 Disseminating Genocide Denial Through the Media

4.3.1 Traditional Media

Earlier in this chapter we discussed the production of truth using Foucault's conception of the relationship between power and knowledge. In this section we will be using Chomsky & Herman's (1988) Propaganda Model as a framework to look at how the media functions to produce newsworthy discourse. Foucault and Chomsky have distinctly different conceptions of power and as a result there have hardly been any attempts to bring these theoretical perspectives together. Whereas Chomsky sees power as *top-down* and hierarchical, Foucault sees power as *bottom-up* and as something that cannot be possessed¹³. This thesis seeks to allow Chomsky and Foucault to coexist. In order to do this, this thesis focuses on the

¹³ Foucault (1980: 93) sees power as being relational rather than having a fixed character, being in itself neither intrinsically good or bad; "Power is everywhere; not because it embraces everything, but because it comes from everywhere... power is not an institution, and it is not a structure; neither is it a certain strength that we are endowed with; it is the name one attributes to a complex strategical situation within a particular society". In other words, power is not something that can be possessed; instead, it is a consequence rather than a cause of action.

production of truth, using Chomsky's view of media as one means to this end. As Andrejevic (2008: 604, 606) points out, Foucault did not devote any of his major works to the study of journalism but discussions on the "relation between regimes of power and discursive formations such as those reinforced by the journalistic framing of news events and political debates fits neatly in with the concerns of those who would study the construction of what counts as news from a critical perspective".

The Propaganda Model has faced numerous criticisms from directly after its publication and into the early 2000s. In the late 1980s and early 1990s the PM was dismissed as overemphasizing the power of the "propaganda system", being a "blunt instrument of analysis" and being deterministic, functionalist and simplistic (Klaehn, 2010: 219). It was also said to "neglect the impact of journalistic professionalism" (*ibid*). Further engagement of the PM by scholars later on resulted in criticisms relating to its methodology and findings (*ibid*).¹⁴ Despite these criticisms, the Propaganda remains a useful and important tool for us in exploring the interplay between power and ideology and how the sourcing of media continues to be dominated by corporate and government bodies (Klaehn, 2010: 224-225).

The media referred to in this section is specifically "agenda-setting" media, as opposed to "popular media", the latter of which includes recreational news such as entertainment and sports. The agenda-setting media can also be referred to as the "elite media" because they determine what issues and events will become news in the lower-tier media and they create boundaries on the range of debate and future interpretation (Klaehn, 2002: 157). To clarify further, the term "elite" consists of those individuals or groups with large resources who set the framework in which everyone else operates. The "elite" include

¹⁴ See such authors as Corner (2003), Herring & Robinson (2003a; 2003b), Lang & Lang (2004a; 2004b), Brahm (2006) and Sparks (2007) for more information regarding criticisms of the PM during the time.

people who are wealthy, are part of the political class, corporate executives, university professors and even other journalists who are involved in shaping the way people think (Chomsky, 1997b: n.p). It is important to note who constitutes this elite media group because they determine who can speak and which subjects can be spoken about. The sources of mass media can manipulate them into following a particular agenda and framework (Chomsky & Herman, 1988: 23). The experts the mass media provides also give the official view of the news and by giving these experts exposure, the media accords them status so that they become contenders for opinion and analysis (*ibid*: 24). However, weight is given to official sources such as government and corporate organizations because they are considered recognizable and credible by their status and prestige (*ibid*: 19).

From this discussion we may be able to conceptualize the media as a possible truth-generating apparatus of society in that those who source and fund the media ultimately determine the discourse¹⁵ consumed by society through the use of filters. Thus, institutional sectors such as the media owners, the state, advertisers, corporations, banks, and other wealthy or political individuals and groups shape media practices by controlling funding and determining which experts are given the opportunity to speak and which topics are considered newsworthy.¹⁶ This means that individual deniers who are not backed by the state may not have the resources to produce and disseminate their own genocide denial material

¹⁵ The term discourse refers to who can speak and what topics can be spoken about.

¹⁶ This refers to Chomsky and Herman's first, second and third media filters. The first emphasizes that the media are strongly interconnected and share common interests with dominant institutional sectors such as corporations, banks, and government (1988: 14). In turn, these interests and the profit orientation of the dominant institutional sectors shape media discourse. The second filter, advertising, has a large influence on the news production process (Klaehn, 2002: 159). Most media must sell markets (readers) to buyers (advertisers) in order to remain financially afloat, which can directly influence media performance and cause it to reflect the interests of the sellers, the buyers, and the product (Klaehn, 2002: 159). The third filter has to do with the sourcing of the media. The individuals or groups that source the media can shape it to their agendas (Chomsky et al., 1988; 23).

and if their views are not acceptable¹⁷ to those who source and fund the media, they will not make into mainstream media consumption.

This makes producers of news¹⁸ powerful in the sense that they “make true” particular regimes of truth through their discursive practices (Hobbs, 2008: 12). The producers of news operate under their own discourses¹⁹, but also under that of the state and large corporate entities that devote substantial resources to sustaining their own sources. Producers of news work within the conceptual limits of these discourses, which shape the way the news is represented by media text. They interpret the “truth” of news events through particular discursive lenses (Hobbs, 2008: 11). Thus, what we learn and know to be “true” through the media about particular historical events such as genocide is articulated within the confines of a particular discourse and regime of truth, and is heavily tied up in power relations.

However, Chomsky & Herman (1988: xiii) recognize that “the news media are not a solid monolith on all issues” or entirely closed to dissent or debate (Klaehn, 2002: 155)²⁰,

Whatever the advantages of the powerful ... the struggle goes on, space exists and dissent light breaks through in unexpected ways. The mass media are no monolith (Herman as cited in Schlesinger, 1992: 308).

Thus we are able to see here the possibility of alternative media as providing a space for this dissent and debate to take place.

¹⁷ The prospect of receiving “flak”, or negative responses to a media statement or program may be why media outlets will not present certain facts and positions. Dominant social structures have the power and resources to pressure the media into adhering to their agenda (Chomsky et al., 1988; Klaehn, 2002: 160). “Flak” refers to Chomsky and Herman’s fourth filter in the propaganda model that is used to control media (Chomsky et al., 1988: 26; Klaehn, 2003: 359). The negative responses to media can be organized centrally, locally, or independently by individuals, and can be in the form of letters, telegrams, phone calls, petitions, lawsuits, speeches and bills before Congress, as well as other means of complaint, threat, and punitive action (Chomsky et al., 1988: 26).

¹⁸ Producers of news also include journalists and others in the news industry who have a hand in deciding which events are considered newsworthy.

¹⁹ Such as professional codes of ethics that hold such values as “objectivity” and “balance” (Hobbs, 2008: 11).

²⁰ See also Chomsky (1997a).

4.3.2 Alternative Media

With the creation and expansion of alternative forms of media it is no longer necessary to have vast financial resources to produce and distribute genocide denial discourse. Genocide deniers may have the opportunity to disseminate their version of the truth to a much larger audience than was once possible.

Alternative media are most often seen as a “positive” method of resistance, focused on changing the content of existing media structures and processes to create new spaces for marginalized perspectives and for the distribution of counter-information²¹ (Uzelman, 2005: 22). Whereas there are numerous difficulties in using mainstream media to attempt to present non-mainstream views,²² alternative media challenges the mainstream media to become more accountable to the public (Coyer, Dowmunt & Fountain, 2007: 147).

For Atton (2004: 5), alternative media are produced by the socially, culturally and politically excluded such as protest groups, dissidents, “fringe” political organizations, fans and hobbyists. In challenging dominant media institutions, media activists and groups have attempted to build their own democratic media, and worldwide efforts to challenge mainstream media can be seen as a social movement or a “media-democracy movement” (Uzelman in Langlois & Dubois, 2005: 20). According to Hackett (2000: 64), media democratization consists of “efforts to change media messages, practices, institutions and

²¹ Counter-information is information that is critical of the status-quo (Uzelman, 2005).

²² Many of these difficulties we discussed in the previous section including: the media’s conformation to pre-established notions of what is and is not news, its hierarchical nature and hierarchy of news sources, and the fact that it is frequently undemocratic with a preference for organizations that speak on their own terms and are professionalized in the processes of mainstream news management (Coyer et al., 2007: 147).

contexts... in a direction which enhances democratic values and subjectivity, as well as equal participation in societal decision-making”.²³

While Downing (2001: 95) employs “alternative” to denote media practices that “strengthen democratic culture”, Coyer et al., (2008) identify numerous competing labels and definitions of forms of media resistance. “Alternative media” is the most common label to describe the various forms of media resistance though “radical”, “independent”, “citizens”, “tactical”, “activist”, or “autonomous” media are terms also used for this purpose. The distinction between “alternative” and “autonomous” media is that alternative media tends to be reformist while autonomous media seeks to be revolutionary (Uzelman, 2005: 24; Coyer et al., 2008: 9). For the purposes of this thesis, we are going to use the term “alternative” to denote a parallel vehicle that allows the production and dissemination of otherwise filtered discourses. This is because alternative media provide the possibility of an alternative discourse; it does not matter what this discourse is, so long as it opposes the status-quo. It is possible that extremist groups like the neo-Nazis and fascists emerge through forms of alternative media, as we have seen in the case of Holocaust denial.

The Internet has become a formidable vehicle for the distribution of alternative discourses. Nissenbaum & Monroe (2004: 106) suggest that the twenty-four hour fast-paced turnover of Internet news content makes the Internet “a driver and transformer of the news rather than a mere conduit or repeater of mainstream news messages”. This permits some stories to receive more attention than they normally would in offline forms of media such as newspapers.

²³ For further reading on media democratization please see also Deetz (1999), Hackett (2001) and Vatikiosis (2005).

Alternative media also promotes the bilateral participation of people as producers and recipients of information, and the participation of audiences within their projects (Langlois et al., 2005: 9). This form of participation borrows from Deleuze & Guattari's (1987) use of the word "rhizome" to describe communication that is horizontal, multi-directional, without a center or hierarchy that allows the voices of diverse peoples, groups and understandings to be heard (Uzelman, 2005: 18; Langlois et al., 2005: 9). Participatory and dialogic alternative media can take such forms as podcasting²⁴, pamphlets to newspapers, peer-to-peer file-sharing networks, ezines or fanzines, pirate radio to e-mail, and text messaging (*ibid*, Coyer et al., 2007: 65). These initiatives blur the lines between creator, producer, and distributor (Coyer et al., 2007: 65). According to Atton (2004: 9), "producers of alternative media can be thought of as re-positioning themselves from a more or less passive audience, consuming the output of mainstream media, to become media producers themselves".

The Internet also offers opportunities for individuals to produce and distribute their own material via websites and blogs, which can foster a sense of community. While there are various ways of conceptualizing community, there are two important uses of the term. Community may be thought of in a territorial and geographic sense, such as neighbourhoods, towns, and cities, and in a "relational" sense, which is concerned with the "quality of character of human relationship, without reference to location" (Gusfield, 1975: xvi). In other words, the latter refers to the idea that members of a community share common ties and that there is significant social interaction among community members (Hillery, 1955).

²⁴ Podcasting is a method of distributing audio and/or video program content over the internet and allows audiences to receive the content automatically when it becomes available instead of having to check the website and download the content (Dubber in Coyer et al., 2008: 277).

Virtual communities, on the other hand, have been defined as “social aggregators that emerge from the Net when enough people carry on those public discussions long enough, with sufficient human feeling, to form webs of personal relationships in cyberspace” (Rheingold, 1993: 5). Henri and Pudelko (2003: 478-484) have created a typology of the types of virtual communities that exist on the Internet. The first type of virtual community is the community of interest in which information is exchanged about a topic (*ibid*: 478). The second type is the goal-oriented community of interest which contains ‘expert’ individuals on a given subject or subjects that come together to share knowledge and work to solve particular problems or carry out a project (*ibid*: 479). The third type is the learner’s community. In this type of community, students come together to learn and complete a collective educational project (*ibid*: 481). The final type of virtual community is the community of practice in which knowledge is shared among members of a professional community (*ibid*: 483).

There has been much debate about whether virtual communities can constitute community in the traditional sense. It has been argued that the “original concept of community emphasized local place, common ties, and social interaction that is intimate, holistic, and all-encompassing” and that virtual communities on the Internet do not have geographic and social boundaries, are psychologically detached, limited to specific areas of interest, and have limited concern for other members of the community (Driskell & Lyon, 2002: 378, 383). However, community networks can exist not only in local places but also in cyberspace, as Wellman (2001: 228) defines community as “networks of interpersonal ties that provide sociability, support, information, a sense of belonging and social identity... not limited to neighbourhoods and villages”.

Thus, we might view virtual communities as neither an alternative nor counter to communities in the traditional sense but instead as another medium through which social networks can be formed and sustained based on such things as shared interests and beliefs. Virtual communities for our purposes, then, can be conceptualized as online communities of interest based on the social bonds of shared ethnicity, culture, or common interest and not as communities based on geographic proximity (Papadakis, 2003: 1). Interactive elements found on websites such as forums, chat rooms, message boards, blogs, and newsgroups can permit information, knowledge, ideas, opinions, and philosophies to be exchanged between members of the community for discussion and communication on various topics of interest. This can create a sense of community or “the feeling that members have of belonging, a feeling that members matter to one another and to the group, and a shared faith that members’ need will be met through their commitment to be together” (McMillan, 1986: 9).

There has also been much debate about this type of engagement on the Internet as constituting a public sphere and whether virtual communities and the Internet can truly empower individuals to create the sort of rational-critical debate necessary for democracy. In the Habermasian sense, a public sphere is where citizens assemble, discuss and debate public affairs, and exchange opinions and through this reciprocal communication these citizens eventually form public opinion (Habermas, 1995). This reciprocal communication requires the free exchange of information and debate where there is discursive inclusion and equality such that democratic consensus can be reached (*ibid*). Authors have been cautious not to overstate the ability of the Internet to constitute a public sphere. While there are advantages to online communication such as: personal expression, connection of governments to citizens, increased access to information, promotion of interactivity enabling instant polling, instant referenda and at-home voting; these do not guarantee a fair,

representative and egalitarian public sphere (Papacharissi, 2002: 14). In other words, “online technologies render participation in the political sphere more convenient but do not guarantee it” (*ibid*: 15). Instead, some have looked toward the Internet as enhancing, revitalizing or extending the public sphere (Rheingold, 1993; Margolis & Resnick, 2000; Wilhelm, 2000; Dahlberg, 2001; Crossley & Roberts, 2004; Gerhards & Schäfer, 2010). Others continue to question whether new media and the Internet extend political capacities or limits democracy, as the Internet becomes dominated by a “few” (Papacharissi, 2002: 14). On the idea of the Internet as opening up a new democratic era, Herman and Chomsky (2002: p.xvi) believe that:

... [The Internet] has limitations as a critical tool. For one thing, those whose information needs are most acute are not well served by the Internet – many lack access, its databases are not designed to meet their needs, and the use of databases (and effective use of the Internet in general) presupposes knowledge and organization. [Furthermore] the privatization of the Internet’s hardware, the rapid commercialization and concentration of Internet portals and servers and their integration into non-Internet conglomerates – the AOL-Time Warner merger was a giant step in that direction – and the private and concentrated control of the new broadband technology, together threaten to limit any future prospects of the Internet as a democratic media vehicle.

Even though the Internet may not constitute a public sphere as such, there is still the potential for the Internet to constitute a public space in that it provides a forum for political deliberation, and enhances discussion (Papacharissi, 2004: 11).

It must be noted that the traditional-alternative media relationship cannot be viewed entirely as polar opposites and to do so would be to see traditional media and alternative media as wholly separate (Coyer et al., 2007: 4). Atton (2004: 4) instead sees the field as having “distinctly movable internal boundaries which are the product of specific societies at specific times”. In other words, what is considered to be “alternative” media in one time or context may be considered “mainstream” media at another, “[media practices] may articulate

to bourgeois (mainstream) values in one instance, but become joined with radical values in another” (Atton, 2004: 10). The Internet, then, is a hybrid that allows for both alternative and mainstream discourses to circulate. It is complex vehicle in which mainstream and alternative media do not always have to contend but may complement each other. Digital forms of traditional media such as newspapers and magazines are increasingly found alongside alternative forms of media on the Internet²⁵, and just as the Internet can serve as a platform for presenting alternative discourse the elite and governments have also begun to use the Internet to produce and circulate official discourses.²⁶

4.4 Research Problem and Research Goals

The literature on genocide denial reveals that much scholarly effort has been spent on analyzing the debate criminalizing genocide denial, and investigating the techniques and arguments used to deny genocide, as well as on the underlying motivations to do so, especially with regard to the Holocaust. Underlying these discussions are a number of assumptions about the ways in which discourse is accorded legitimacy and the relationship between power, knowledge and truth. Genocide denial as an area of research has not significantly addressed the issue of truth production with regard to discourses denying genocide.

Through two case studies, this thesis will test whether the same discursive strategies used to deny the Holocaust are also used to deny the Armenian and Rwandan genocides. It will examine how arguments used to deny genocide are alternative discourses that attempt to

²⁵ Herman and Chomsky (2002: xvi) have stated that the Internet has been infiltrated by “leading newspapers and media conglomerates, all fearful of being outflanked by small pioneer users of the new technology and willing (and able) to accept those losses for years while testing out new waters”. As a result, traditional media are now “colonizing the new media” (Klaehn, 2010: 224).

²⁶ Given that the traditional/alternative media dichotomy does not work, we will use the terms “online” and “offline” media.

create an alternative truth about a particular genocide. More specifically, this thesis looks at how these alternative discourses try to circumvent, challenge and attack the hold the accepted discourse has on truth, the strategies put in place to render this alternative discourse legitimate and how these discourses affect the power relations between the groups directly concerned as well as between the “perpetrator group” and the international community. This thesis will address the above by first identifying the arguments denying genocide using typologies produced by the literature on genocide denial. It will then use these arguments to examine the usefulness of these typologies in mobilizing strategies for truth production and power relations. Specifically, how are these arguments mobilized as discursive strategies for the production of an alternative truth? How do these alternative accounts of genocide serve as social instruments for the accomplishment of power? Finally, what are the dynamics of power attempting to be established by these accounts?²⁷

The Internet has revitalized the Holocaust denial movement and discourses denying the Holocaust can be found on the Internet. However, there is little scholarly literature exploring genocide denial discourse on the Internet.²⁸ As Ó Dochartaigh (2004: 7) points out, “social scientists interested in understanding different aspects of collective human behaviour cannot consider ignoring the Internet as a research resource”.²⁹ The Internet

²⁷ This thesis is interested in discourse that challenges all or some of the accepted discourse on genocide and on discourse that does not appear to have significant support from the “truth-determining agencies”. It does not attempt to establish whether this discourse is legitimate historical revision or not.

²⁸ With the notable exception of Di Giacomo (2002)’s work which looks at claims made by Holocaust deniers on the Internet as promoting hate, racism, and anti-Semitism. The literature regarding hate on the Internet is broad but this thesis has chosen to focus on genocide denial and not hate, as they are two different phenomena.

²⁹ Internet usage is growing at an astonishing rate. It is estimated that there are 1 596 270 108 Internet users worldwide comprising 23.9% of the world’s total population with China, the United States and Japan holding the top three positions of world users at 298 million (or 18.7%), 227.2 million (or 14.2%) and 94 million (or 5.9%) respectively (Internet World Stats, 2009). On its own, 72.5% of the American population use the Internet while in Canada, 73.2% of Canadians (19.2 million people) are Internet users with provinces British Columbia, Alberta and Ontario having the highest rates of use (Internet World Stats, 2009; Statistics Canada, 2008). With a percentage growth of 342.2% in world Internet use from 2000 to 2008, it is possible to visualize

provides access to these types of discourses and accounts that may use the “absence of censorship [on the Internet] to express extreme forms of prejudice and deviance” (Mann & Stewart, 2000: 18, 20). We have seen that the Internet is a hybrid form of media in which we find both agenda-setting discourses, such as official government discourses, and alternative discourses, such as those discourses that have been disqualified or are not accepted by the truth-generating apparatuses of society. We have also seen that the Internet has a greater reach potential than offline forms of media and that it allows the production and dissemination of information by individuals, including those who are socially, culturally, and politically excluded (Atton, 2004: 5). There are also elements provided on the Internet that permit the sharing of information, offer venues for debate and opinion and contribute to a sense of community. Thus, this thesis will analyze the production of discourses supporting the official discourse in Turkey as well as the production of alternative truths via the Internet by looking at the Internet as not only a vehicle for these discourses but by asking the question: can the Internet be constituted as an environment or space in which discourses questioning genocide are produced, disseminated and continued? What are the strategies mobilized on the Internet to render this discourse legitimate or to give it characteristics that might render it legitimate and acceptable in the eyes of those who visit the websites? Here, we are not talking about legitimacy as it has been discussed with regard to the internal and external legitimacy of a government³⁰ nor as it has been discussed in the Weberian sense of

the potential reach of genocide denial on the Internet. Previously, genocide denial spread through offline media forms would have had the potential to reach a much smaller audience than the Internet now permits. The growth in world Internet use points to its popularity and accessibility and greatly increases the potential audience for genocide denial worldwide.

³⁰ Internal legitimacy refers to how a government is perceived by the people subject to it and external legitimacy refers to how a government is perceived by other governments and relates to the source of power and the legitimacy related to the exercise of power (Aspremont, 2006: 882).

authority and relationships of command and obedience (Weber, 1958; Matheson, 1987; Aspremont, 2006). Instead, for our purposes legitimacy refers to the perceptions held by social actors that the websites and their content are credible, valid, trustworthy, and in some cases authoritative. In other words, legitimacy is the degree to which readers accept the websites and their content as credible and valid, and the degree of trust and confidence readers have in the discourse they are presented with. This legitimacy can be lost or gained depending on whether the strategies used to render the discourse legitimate are successful in the eyes of those who visit the websites, and perceptions of legitimacy can differ considerably depending on the norms, values, beliefs, practices and procedures of an individual (Jost & Major, 2001: 33).

The reinvigoration of Holocaust denial on the Internet also opens up avenues for other denials of genocide to appear through this medium, and given that the research on genocide denial has focused primarily on the case of the Holocaust, there is good reason to examine two other cases of genocide denial: Turkey's state-sponsored denial of the Armenian genocide, and the denial of the Rwandan genocide.

The official discourse in Turkey is denial of the Armenian genocide, with those who affirm the genocide being in the minority. Within Turkey, to acknowledge that 1.5 million Ottoman Armenians were murdered by Ottoman Turks in 1915 is considered an affront to Turkish nationalism and is punishable by law under the Turkish criminal code, article 301³¹ which criminalizes "insulting Turkishness". The culture within Turkey is such that its educational system indoctrinates youth from a young age with a Turkish version of history

³¹ See Appendix F.

primarily based on nationalism³², and those who question the Turkish version of events are often prosecuted or ostracized, limiting and dissuading academics from analyzing what took place. The historian in the Turkish state is a “servant of the state, who “remakes” and “reshapes” history according to the orders of the state” (Akcem, 2005: 1).³³ The Turkish government, then, is in a position to influence the mobilization of scientific production of discourse questioning the Armenian genocide, also impacting which experts are permitted to speak, the topics that can be spoken about and how this discourse can be disseminated while attempting to suppress dissident voices within Turkey. This poses an interesting issue of academic freedom and freedom of expression³⁴. In studying discourse questioning the Armenian genocide as it is found within websites on the Internet, we will be able to see whether it demonstrates the existence of a regime of truth denying the Armenian genocide created by the Turkish government and highlight the relationship between power and knowledge.

Very little academic research has been conducted on the denial of the Rwandan genocide. The literature on the subject currently appears to exist in the form of conference transcripts³⁵ and news articles³⁶ and these only briefly outline some of the arguments used to

³² In February of 2009, a father sued the Turkish Education Ministry for making his eleven-year-old daughter watch a graphic film denying the Armenian genocide by the Ottoman Turks in 1915 and alleging Armenian atrocities against the Turkish people. Human rights activists call this part of the Turkish state’s policy brainwashing its schoolchildren in order to preserve a nationalist status quo (<http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/world/Europe/article5818155.ece>) (accessed 10/01/2010).

³³ Since the Council of Europe has decided to open negotiations for Turkey’s accession into the EU, Turkish history and Turkey’s right to define that history have once again come into conflict (Akcem, 2005: 1).

³⁴ Famous cases of prosecution under article 301 are that of author Orhan Pamuk in 2005 and Eli Shafak in 2006. Both were charged under the article for insulting Turkishness but in both cases, the charges were dropped. See <http://hprsite.squarespace.com/curious-case-of-pamuk-032006/2006/3/5/the-curious-case-of-orhan-pamuk.html> and <http://www.todayszaman.com/tz-web/detaylar.do?load=detay&link=36674> (accessed 11/05/2009).

³⁵ Such as “Beyond Hollywood’s Rwanda: Truth and Justice, Security and Development” (Emory University, 2007) and “Post Genocide Rwanda Achievements and Challenges” (California State University, 2007).

³⁶ See “Rwanda’s genocide: First the deed, then the denial” by Gerard Caplan in *The Globe and Mail* (March 13th, 2007).

deny the genocide. This makes the denial of the Rwandan genocide a prime case for study. More so than this, the creation of anti-denial legislation within Rwanda as described earlier warrants further investigation into the production of truth regarding the genocide. These laws also have an impact on the way in which the genocide and the events leading up to the genocide are remembered and documented, and on the lived experiences of all citizens of Rwanda. Thus whereas in Turkey denial of the Armenian genocide is the dominant discourse, efforts to question the Rwandan genocide must rise up to challenge the official discourse of genocide. It is this point that makes the analysis of these cases together quite interesting.

CHAPTER FIVE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter will detail the methodological framework employed to achieve the research goals established in the previous chapter. The first section outlines the use of qualitative research methods in this thesis. The second section describes the Internet as the context in which this research takes place. Finally, the next sections describe the methods used to conduct the research including data collection, sampling procedures, analytical strategies, operationalization of important terms and ethical considerations.

5.1 Exploring Genocide Denial Through Qualitative Methodology

Qualitative research methodology allows the researcher to capture marginalized discourses (Cockroft, 2005: 365-366). Previous chapters have explored the concept of genocide denial as discourse that is not considered to be true because it is not produced by those who have been given the legitimacy of scientific discourse and because it does not support the regime of truth of the time. As a result, these discourses are generally excluded, ignored and judged within academia and are considered to be unacceptable forms of historical revision. Since this thesis studies marginalized discourses questioning genocide that have been disqualified from our accepted knowledge of history, qualitative methods are appropriate.

Qualitative research can be used to reveal diverse understandings of the world that some may find threatening (Lincoln & Cannella, 2004: 176). This is especially true of contentious subjects that examine or question regimes of truth (*ibid*). Previous discussions of the international debate to criminalize genocide denial point to its contentious nature. Furthermore, it is believed that engaging in a debate with those who deny genocide,

especially the Holocaust, accords them the status of being the “other side” (Lipstadt, 1993: 5). This implies that the study of genocide denial discourse is threatening to some because it has the potential of validating or legitimizing genocide denial, endorsing its position as a legitimate understanding of history. Qualitative research methods provide the tools with which to study issues such as discourses of genocide denial that question established regimes of truth and in turn this opens a social world that has previously been inaccessible (Cockroft, 2005: 366; Liamputtong & Ezzy, 2005).

Qualitative research also holds that knowledge about the world is socially constructed and that interpretations of the world by individuals in society must be studied (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003: 13). Given the social constructionist perspective of this thesis, qualitative research methodology allows us to investigate and make sense of how those who question genocide understand the accepted or official histories of genocide and how these histories are reconstructed and reinterpreted. This thesis also seeks to uncover the dynamics of power underlying these interpretations of genocide. Qualitative methods permits an examination of how these alternative discourses have the power to produce a social reality that is understood and experienced by those exposed to it to be solid and real in its consequences (Phillips & Hardy, 2002: 1-2).

5.2 Documentary Analysis

Documentary analysis is “a process of evaluating documents¹ in such a way that empirical knowledge is produced and understanding is developed” (Platt, 1981: 31; Bowen, 2009: 27). Through the analysis of documents questioning genocide, the phenomenon of genocide

¹ Where documents can include: letters, memoirs, diaries or journals, newspaper articles, epitaphs, film scripts, political propaganda pamphlets, government publications, diplomatic communiqués and more recently, web pages (Lincoln, 1980; Flick, 2006).

denial can be understood and the meaning underlying arguments questioning genocide can be uncovered (May, 2001: 175).

There are four criteria for assessing the quality of evidence available from documentary sources: authenticity, credibility, representativeness, and meaning (Scott, 1990: 7). The first criterion, authenticity, consists of whether the documentary evidence is “genuine and of unquestionable origin” (Scott, 1990: 6). Closely linked to this concept is credibility, or the “extent to which the evidence is undistorted and sincere, free from error and evasion” (Scott, 1990: 7). The use of the Internet as a portal for gathering documents presented the possibility that the documents collected for this thesis were neither authentic nor credible. That is to say, electronic documents “bear less evidence of authorship, provenance [and] originality” (Cullen, 2000). It is nearly impossible to certify that the document is the product of its author (*ibid*). Furthermore, the information found on the Internet has the potential to be unreliable or biased (Downing, 2001: 205). However, this thesis is not concerned with the authenticity or the credibility of each document. The intention here is not to establish the truth about the Armenian and Rwandan genocides but simply to analyze the discourse of denial contained with the documents questioning genocide. Therefore, the logic behind the way in which the authors have interpreted certain facts and evidence about the genocide is of interest here, not the authenticity and credibility of the documentary evidence.

The representativeness or typicality of a document depends on the aim of the research (Scott, 1990: 7). I am interested in both the typical and atypical methods of denying genocide (*ibid*). This is relevant in the sense that I want to demonstrate how “one interpretation of an event predominates to the exclusion others” but also include the other interpretations of the event (*ibid*).

Scott (1990: 9) states, “there is no single, widely accepted theory for the measurement of meaning” within documentary analysis. A challenge of using documentary analysis with documents derived from the Internet is that the social and political circumstances that could infuse the document with implied or internal meanings are often unknown. This is because in certain cases the author and the context in which the document is written are unknown (*ibid*). However, my interest was only with identifying the stated arguments questioning genocide made within the documents, not the implied or intended meaning of the documents or the context in which each was written. Thus, an analytical grid was created to reflect theoretically defined categories in order to code and classify the arguments found within the documents.²

Finally, another issue in documentary research is that “where there are simply not enough data, one is tempted to over interpret what is available, and to treat it as representative of the larger class that originally existed without any knowledge that it is really so” (Platt, 1981: 35). This is especially relevant with the use of electronic documents, as the nature of the Internet does not permit the researcher to know exactly what constitutes the larger class that exists. In this thesis, it was important to carefully make interpretations based on the set of websites and documents chosen for analysis and not to over generalize because “without knowledge of the other members of the class one cannot know what the conventions of the genre are, or indeed whether there is a defined genre and if so where its boundaries lie” (Platt, 1981: 35).

² See Appendix K.

5.3 Sampling

Purposive sampling was employed at multiple levels to derive a sample of websites and documents for analysis. The goal in sampling for websites and documents was to achieve a heterogeneous and diverse sample of viewpoints and discourses on genocide denial. Thus purposive sampling was appropriate in attaining a solid sample for contrast (Dattalo, 2009: 23). Purposive sampling allowed the population of websites chosen to reflect the various types of websites employed to disseminate denial material. Each website was chosen on the basis of whether it contained content questioning genocide.

At the beginning of the research process it was decided that only websites and documents in English would be analyzed since the researcher's first language is English. It is possible that this restriction limited the amount of material available for analysis. Despite this restriction, a suitable sample of websites and documents with diverse discourses questioning genocide was achieved.

The Internet contains a vast amount of information without a directory of websites or any systematic organization (Branham, 1997). The nonlinear nature of the Internet also makes it difficult to know where to begin looking for websites questioning genocide and how to continue looking for them (*ibid*). Two strategies were employed during the sampling process to overcome these concerns. First, the time frame for collecting the sample of websites was limited to a four-week period. This restriction was necessary since the Internet is constantly updated with new or modified information and the sampling process would continue indefinitely unless start and end dates were set for the collection of websites (Branham, 1997). Only those websites found during that time period were considered for analysis. Second, search parameters had to be set in order to establish a starting point for

sampling. This included choosing a search engine and key words to search for websites. To maintain consistency, only one search engine³ was used comprehensively to sample for websites. It is possible that other search engines may have yielded different information. However, this did not impede the ability to find a varied sample of websites for analysis. A number of key words were selected for each genocide in order to create a comprehensive search for websites.⁴ Searches using these key words were conducted five to seven times over this four-week period in order to see if new or different websites questioning genocide would be found. It is possible that the key words used to search for the sample of websites may have limited the results. However, it was not an option to use key words such as “Rwandan genocide” or “Armenian genocide” as these words are broad and would have made the search for websites questioning the genocides too wide. Thus it was necessary to use key words that were more specific to the denial of genocide.

Sampling for websites ceased when the point of saturation had been reached. In this case, the point of saturation was reached when no new modes of dissemination for discourses questioning genocide were found. Sixteen websites questioning the Armenian genocide were found but eleven were chosen for analysis. In order to achieve a diverse sample, it was necessary to eliminate five websites that were found to be very similar in style and content to

³ The search engine used was <http://www.google.ca>.

⁴ Key words for Rwanda included combinations such as: Rwandan genocide negation, Rwandan genocide denial, Rwandan genocide myth(ology), alternative explanations for the Rwandan genocide, and Tutsi Holocaust myth(ology). Key words also included names of individuals who have been labeled by others as Rwandan genocide deniers. Key words for Armenia included combinations such as: Armenian genocide denial, Armenian genocide lie, and the official website of the government of Turkey. Key words also included the names of individuals who have been labeled by others as Armenian genocide deniers. Some search results brought up information that was then used for other searches, and certain websites also contained external links that were explored for their potential in order to make the search for websites more comprehensive.

other websites found in the search. For the case of the Rwandan genocide, all five websites that were found during the search period were included in the analysis.⁵

Each website was thoroughly searched for documents to be analyzed. Generally, each website had some form of archive that provided links to documents. While the audio and visual content found on each website was noted in the description of the website, this material was not subject to analysis. Instead, this thesis focused on the description and interpretation of textual data found within the “written” or typed electronic documents in order to identify the arguments questioning genocide and to understand the discursive logic behind them.

The documents found on the websites were purposively sampled for contrast in order to identify and explore as many of the various arguments questioning genocide as possible. Sampling for documents concluded when no new arguments were found and the information became repetitive. Nineteen documents⁶ were chosen for analysis in the case of the Armenian genocide and nine⁷ were chosen for analysis in the case of the Rwandan genocide.⁸ This discrepancy in the amount of documents chosen for each genocide lies in the fact that the Armenian genocide has been in question much longer and its denial is much more established than the Rwandan genocide. As a result, there is less information available questioning the Rwandan genocide at this time. The number of documents chosen for analysis in each case reflects this gap in information.

⁵ See Appendices G and I.

⁶ See Appendix H.

⁷ See Appendix J.

⁸ It would have been exceptionally interesting to analyze the English version of Robin Philpot’s book, Rwanda 1994: Colonialism Dies Hard (available at www.taylor-report.com) however; it was not possible due to time constraints and the fact that there was no equivalent found online for the Armenian genocide. I attempted to look at the same “types” of documents for each genocide.

5.4 Operationalization: A Clarification of Terms

Operatively defining a term or concept in qualitative research generally entails stating the intended meaning of that term or concept “in relation to a particular study and providing some criteria for measuring the empirical existence of that concept” (Berg, 2004: 29). Here I have defined the terms “Internet”, “document” and “website” as they are relevant to my research project. I have also operationalized the concept of “genocide denial” in such a way as to be able to see how my research results fit into the existing body of knowledge I have encountered in working with the literature on the subject of genocide denial.

5.4.1 Internet, Documents and Websites

Loosely defined, we might think of the Internet as a technological means in which a group of worldwide computer-based information resources are connected together. In other words, the Internet is a network of networks of computers and this network enables “particular kinds of communication and sharing of information” (Edwards, 1997: 1; Hine, 2000: 27). We are interested in the Internet in a sociological sense as a means of extending the possibilities for communication, access to and sharing of information, and the connection of individuals internationally.

In its simplest form, a document is a written text (Scott, 1990: 12). However, documents are also “media through which social power is expressed. They are approached in terms of the cultural context in which they were written and may be viewed ‘as attempts at persuasion’” (May, 2001: 183). For the purposes of this thesis, documents referred to electronic documents created *for* the Internet, such as blog entries, not documents that were placed *on* the Internet, such as PDF files of physical documents. The reasoning behind this was to look at the uniqueness of documents only available through the Internet in order to

highlight the specificity of the Internet given my research problem. The access to these documents was considered open archival, meaning that anyone could access them but in a specific archive (the Internet) where they are published and accessible to anyone with interest and an Internet connection (Scott, 1990: 14-18).

When speaking of “websites”, I referred to a collection of related (World Wide) webpages that usually contain hyperlinks to each other and are managed by a single person, company, educational institution, government, or organization (Dale & Lewis, 1998: 518; Meriam-Webster Online Dictionary⁹).

5.4.2 Genocide Denial

To operationalize genocide denial, I looked for statements that challenged, contested and/or offered an alternative version of the “accepted historical truth” of a particular genocide that appears to lack recognition or support from the “truth-generating” and “truth-establishing” entities.

5.5 Analytical Strategies

I conducted my analysis in two stages. In order to examine the Internet as an environment where discourses questioning genocide could be produced, disseminated, and legitimated, I had to first describe and examine the websites in which these discourses are found. Then, I analyzed the documents found on these websites in order to explore the strategies mobilized for truth production. Both the websites and documents were analyzed for themes that emerged as being important to the description of the phenomenon of genocide denial (Daly, Kellehar & Gilsman, 1997). These themes then became the categories for interpretation and analysis. This section will describe the analytical strategies used to achieve this.

⁹ Available at: <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary> (accessed 27/07/2010).

5.5.1 Analyzing the Websites

The analysis of the websites first began by separating them into categories. The first category was personal websites and included blogs and forums. These websites generally referred to those websites that express personal views and opinions and that appeared to be created and run by individuals. News websites comprised the second category. These websites were broken down further into alternative news sites that offered news stories not typically heard in the mainstream media, and mainstream news sites that were online versions of popular newspapers. The third category consisted of official, government-run websites. The fourth category of websites included those websites run and maintained by an organization to promote their interests. Finally, the last category consists of websites that are created and maintained by individuals that have achieved the status of “professional” through training, education or experience, such as an individual that practices law or medicine.

For the Rwandan genocide, seven websites were analyzed in total: personal websites (2), news websites (2), organizational websites (2), and professional websites (1). Eleven websites were chosen for analysis in the case of the Armenian genocide: personal websites (6), news sites (1), governmental websites (1), and organizational websites (3). By doing this, I was able to distinguish certain categories from one another, while comparing others in order to see similarities and differences across the categories.

Next, I thematically analyzed the websites. At first, the themes were descriptive and based on the appearance of the websites. I asked myself this set of questions with regard to each website: Does the website have a professional or an amateur appearance? How is the website organized? Is it easy to navigate? Is there a relatively large or small amount of information provided on the site? Is the website or the information found on the website

specific to either the Armenian or Rwandan genocide? How many headings or links are there that lead to website content and what are they? Are there links to external websites? How many are there and what sort of other websites do they lead to? Is there multimedia content on the website including audio and video files and if so, what are they of? Are there images on the website and if so, what are these images of? Are there any interactive elements such as commenting capabilities, forums, and recruitment options? What are the methods of advertisement for this website, if any? Is there a site meter or a method of tracking the amount of visitors to the site? Is there a stated purpose to the website and what is it? What is the overall sense of the website?

From these descriptions, I was able to see patterns within the data and other themes emerged to become categories for further analysis. This allowed me to take my analysis of the websites to another level. I noticed that through the description of the websites, the concept of “legitimacy” emerged as an important theme. The appearance and organization of the website, the repetition of authors and content between websites, the use of site meters, amount of information on the website and certain website elements that acted as “filters” for discourse questioning genocide surfaced as important to the concept of “legitimacy”. These themes were developed as possible strategies of mobilizing legitimacy. I then looked at the ways in which these websites attracted readers through advertisement and the methods used to engage them with the website content and saw that they appeared to be strategies of commitment. I explored strategies of community building through the interactive elements found on the websites and also looked at how these strategies extended the “reach” of the website. Finally, by analyzing these themes as strategies I was able to see them as creating an environment on the Internet suitable for the production of alternative truth.

5.5.2 Analyzing the Documents

At the beginning of the research process and after having read much of the existing literature on genocide denial, I first analyzed the documents based on how denial has been talked about in the literature. Initially, I thought that the categorization of the arguments and vocabularies of motive theory would be central to my work. However, upon further analysis I found that the classification and categorization of genocide denial in the literature acted as a catalyst for other themes to emerge. One of the benefits of using qualitative research methods is that it offers the ability to use nonlinear research design. I was able to construct an initial research design that had the opportunity to unravel in multiple ways. This allowed me, as the researcher, and my research design to remain flexible and open to interpret the information as it revealed itself to me (Vacc & Loesch, 2000: 176).

First, I established an analytical grid to identify the arguments questioning genocide.¹⁰ This was an important exercise in order to make the evidence or arguments from the documents clear and comprehensible (Scott, 1990: 6). To formulate my analytical grid, I took the classifications of genocide denial from the literature discussed in chapter two and amalgamated them to derive my own categories of denial. I created four themes: (1) denials on the basis of the reference definition of genocide, (2) denials on the basis of genocidal evidence, (3) denials on the basis of the victim group, and (4) nationalistic hubris. Each theme was then broken down further into sub-themes and data chunks.

The first theme, denials on the basis of the reference definition of genocide, was divided into two sub-themes: contextualization and justification. The sub-theme

¹⁰ For organizational purposes, columns A through N of the analytical grid were used to identify the genocide (column A), the document number (column B), the date of publication (column C), the category of the online document (columns D through J), and the type of document (columns I through N). Columns O through AE listed the categories of arguments questioning genocide. See Appendix L.

contextualization contained four data chunks. The first data chunk includes the claim that the deaths were due to natural forces (including starvation, disease, and famine). Second, it is claimed that the deaths were due to intended forces (such as civil war and deportation). Third, it is argued that not all victims were of one ethnic, religious, or political group. Finally, the reference definition of genocide is contextualized using the claim that genocide has occurred throughout history and those accused of the particular genocide in question should not be singled out for punishment. Those who deny genocide justify the act by claiming that the deaths were in self-defence, or that victims were threats to the state and needed to be eliminated.

The second theme, denials on the basis of genocidal evidence contained two sub-themes: the dismissal of evidence and the manipulation of victim population figures. The dismissal of genocidal evidence was divided into four data chunks. Evidence of genocide may be dismissed on the basis that survivor and eyewitness evidence is unreliable, by ignoring or rejecting key pieces of evidence, by exploiting gaps in physical evidence due to the passage of time and by exploiting the difficulties of documenting genocidal evidence. The manipulation of victim population figures contained two data chunks. Those who deny genocide may minimize mortality statistics or misrepresent emigration and immigration statistics.

The third theme, denials on the basis of the victim group, contains one sub-theme: relativization of the victim group. There are two data chunks within this sub-theme that entail claiming that the genocide was not one-sided and members of the perpetrator group died, and by claiming that the victims were the aggressors and the perpetrators are the victims.

The final theme, nationalistic hubris, also contains one sub-theme: exaggerated national self-image. It is made up of two data chunks. First, it is claimed that genocide is inconsistent with the culture and history of the accused perpetrator group. Second, it is claimed that the accused perpetrator group is peaceful, democratic, and law abiding, and not capable of the genocide it is accused of.

I then took this grid and applied it to the documents by going through each document and identifying the arguments used to question genocide. This sort of thematical analysis required a “careful reading and re-reading of the data” in order for accurate themes to emerge from this primary analysis for further interpretation (Rice & Ezzy, 1999: 258). This task was complicated by the fact that some arguments could fit under one or more categories of denial. In these instances, it was necessary to choose which category the argument would be included under or whether the argument would be included under multiple categories. This decision was dependent on each individual argument itself and the category in which it appeared to fit best.¹¹

Once the analytical grid was complete, I wrote a preliminary draft of the analysis of the arguments and expanded on them using evidence from the documents. This exercise allowed new themes to emerge. Legitimacy again presented itself as an important theme within each category of arguments questioning genocide. It appeared that some categories were mobilized as strategies of de-legitimizing elements of official discourse on genocide

¹¹ For example, an argument given in A14 minimizes demographic data in order to prove that 1.5 million Ottoman Armenians did not exist in the Ottoman Empire in 1915. This argument can be considered both an attack on the evidence of genocide through minimizing demographic data but it can also possibly be considered an attack on the reference definition of genocide by denying that Ottoman Armenians constituted an ethnic group in the Ottoman Empire in 1915. In this case, since the quote itself questions demographic evidence of genocide it was decided that this argument fit best under attacks on the evidence of genocide.

while other categories were mobilized as strategies of legitimizing the claims made by those who question genocide. It also became apparent that another category of arguments was mobilized as resistance to official discourse on genocide. While each of the categories used the strategies listed above to begin to put forth an alternative truth, other categories emerged as concerted efforts at producing an alternative truth. Finally, in seeing the categories of arguments according to these strategies, it was possible to see how power, knowledge and truth work through these categories of denial. From this, I was able to understand the underlying logic of denial and identify the specific purposes of denial in each case.

5.6 Ethical Considerations

The Internet as a context of research poses new ethical challenges as the border of public and private spaces are sometimes blurred. Participants in an online conversation may not know they are being monitored (Brem, 2002). In terms of research using blogs, it is possible to assume the 'fair game-public domain' position (Hookway, 2008: 105). Since blogs are located in the public domain and are publicly accessible, individuals know they are publishing information into an area with unrestricted viewing and therefore ethical consent should be waived (Brem, 2002; Hookway, 2008: 105).

When conducting research in an area such as genocide denial, there are other ethical considerations to be addressed. For example, does this research facilitate, encourage and give voice to a discourse that harms others? It seems to be that writing about genocide denial is done at the peril of validating the work of those who deny genocide or being seen by others to be granting deniers too much attention. There is a fine line between attempting to understand the logic behind genocide denial and stepping into the realm of legitimizing genocide denial.

This begs the question of whether it is possible to be impartial and objective when writing on an emotionally infused and politically sensitive subject such as this. There is a danger of becoming what Theriault (2003: 236) calls “academically relativistic”. Academic relativism is “the belief that any viewpoint held by a scholar declaring expertise is automatically a credible perspective...” (*ibid*). This is a dangerous belief in that it “stretches the two-sides principle into a mechanical neutrality with respect to even the more important issues on which there is overwhelming evidentiary support for one position over another” (*ibid*). At its extreme, academic relativism is considered historical relativism, or the belief that “where there are competing versions of historical periods or events, there is no ultimate fact of the matter. Each perspective or side is as accurate as the other” (Theriault, 2003: 237). Historical relativism fails to take into account when historical events have more than one legitimate interpretation and when certain groups maintain a position that is at odds with the facts (*ibid*).

One way of addressing this ethical dilemma is to make it clear that this thesis does not dispute the existence or the facts of the Holocaust, the Armenian genocide or the Rwandan genocide and that it does not attempt to enter into a debate about these facts. It attempts to carefully present the claims questioning genocide without adding counter arguments or imbuing moralistic or normative tones. This is done in an effort not to engage in a debate and accord discourse questioning genocide status, validity and legitimacy in being the “other side” (Lipstadt, 1993: 5). It focuses on identifying techniques of truth and power. This research is meant to explore the production of discourse and truth-claims by seeing where and how genocide denial manifests itself as well as how it might be considered alternative discourse and a method of resistance to official histories of genocide. In this thesis, the term “resistance” is used to describe resistance to accepted histories of genocide as

the other side of the power of those entrusted with the task of generating truth and knowledge within society, not in normative terms as either a positive or negative force.¹² Thus, this thesis focuses on using the discourse of denial to elucidate the relationship between truth, knowledge and power and not on establishing or refuting the validity of this discourse.

¹² Foucault believed that power and resistance are coexistent and interdependent: “Where there is power, there is resistance... These points of resistance are present everywhere in the power network... by definition, they can only exist in the strategic field of power relations” (Foucault, 1978; 95-96).

CHAPTER SIX: MOBILIZING STRATEGIES OF TRUTH PRODUCTION

Those who challenge the official truth regarding the Armenian and Rwandan genocides need a vehicle to produce and disseminate their discourses. In previous chapters we have discussed the potential of the Internet for rendering accessible an alternative discourse to the one channeled by offline media. This thesis analyses the Internet as a form of media through which truth claims are advanced. This chapter focuses on the strategies put in place to facilitate the dissemination and acceptance of alternative discourses. The next chapter will focus on the discursive strategies deployed to produce an alternative truth. Specifically, this chapter will present how the producers of alternative knowledges try to ensure that the vessel of the discourse (the websites) is considered legitimate; how filtering strategies are put into place within the sites to give voice to certain discourses and silence others and how commitment to the site and to the cause is generated. All these strategies serve to construe the sites as a space for resistance, thus creating and encouraging a sense of community. This allows us to see how social actors use the Internet to produce and disseminate alternative discourse and as a space in which this discourse exists and is legitimized.

6.1 Producing “Truth”: The Issue of Legitimacy

In order for the alternative discourse questioning the Armenian and Rwandan genocides to be accepted as truth the vehicle through which it is produced and circulated needs to appear as a legitimate source of information. In other words, once the website itself has been attributed legitimacy by the reader, the discourse within the website has a better chance of being considered legitimate. There are two elements that can help or hinder this endeavor: the appearance of the website and the source or author of the website. Furthermore, there are

external strategies that are deployed for this purpose: the sourcing of information and the ability of the website to appear as a “specialty” website, the ability of the website to appear as an impartial and unbiased source of information, methods of filtering discourse and elements used to gauge website popularity.

6.1.1 Rendering Denial Legitimate: Ascribing Legitimacy

The first element that can help or hinder the representation of legitimacy to a website is its appearance. A well constructed and “professional-appearing” website can contribute to an appearance of legitimacy. If the website itself appears “professional” in terms of its web-design as well as knowledgeable and error-free in its content, a reader may be more inclined to consider the source legitimate and therefore see the arguments made on that website regarding the genocide in question as credible. This is illustrated by the ‘Ministry of Foreign Affairs for the Republic of Turkey’ website (Figure 1) and the ‘Armenian Genocide Debate’ website (Figure 2).



Figure 1 The Republic of Turkey Ministry of Foreign Affairs website

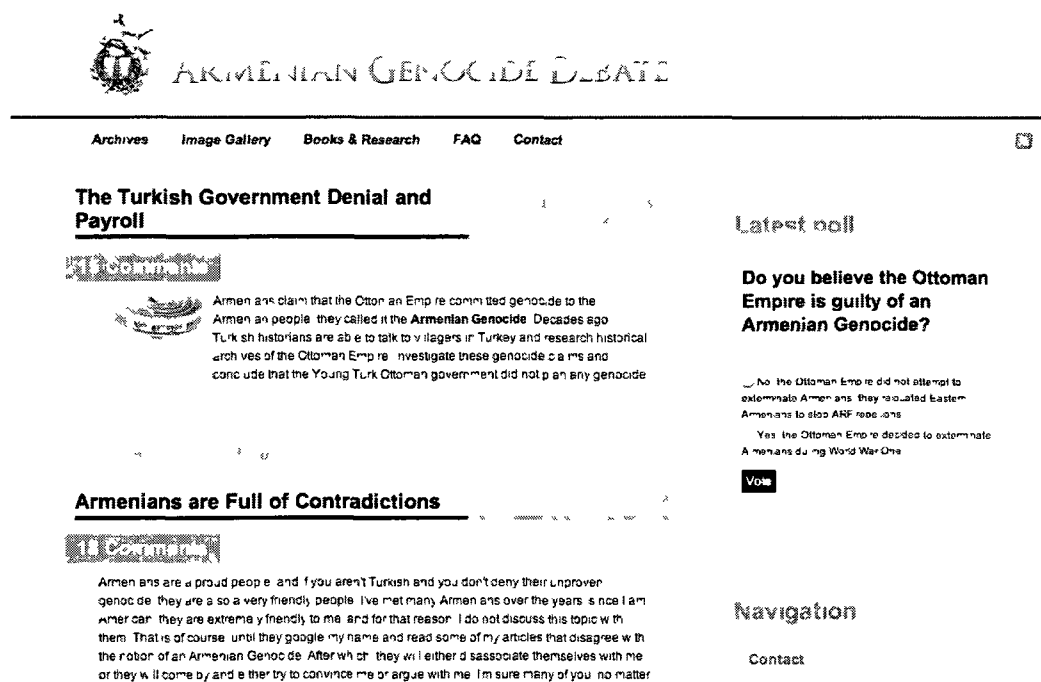


Figure 2 The Armenian Genocide Debate website

The appearance of the website can also hinder the legitimacy attributed to a website. For instance, the above examples contrast with websites such as ‘The Armenian Genocide Lie’ blog. It is more amateur in its appearance and construction (Figure 3). The numerous advertisements at the top of the page distract the eye from the content of the blog while the blog entries themselves contain spelling and grammatical errors, and no dates of posting.

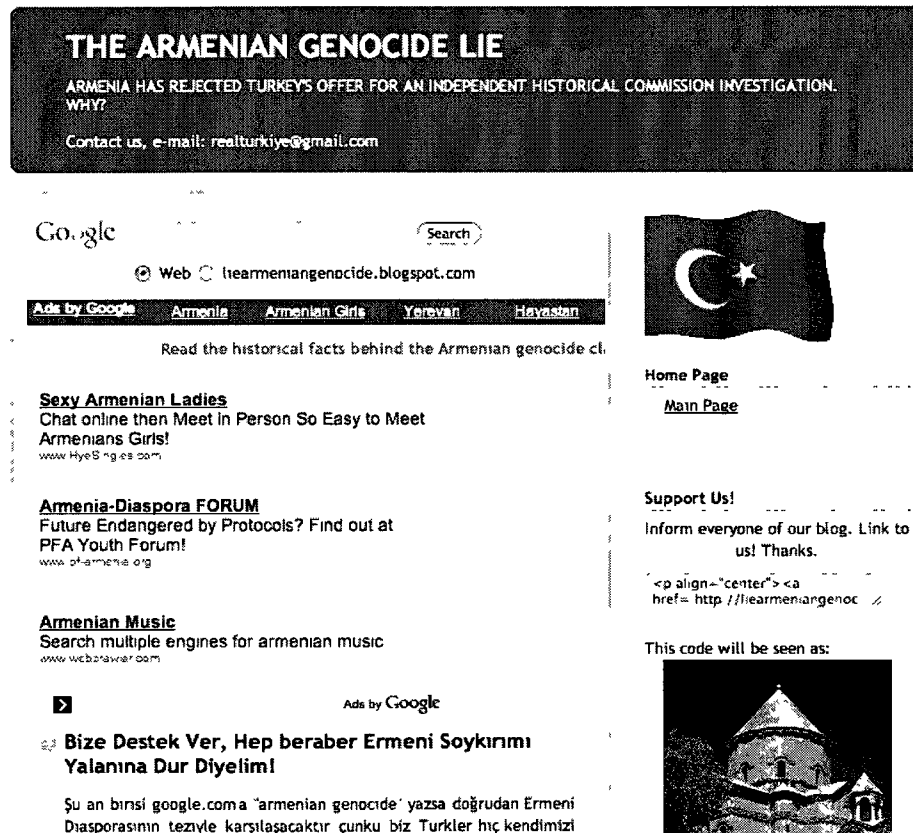


Figure 3 The Armenian Genocide Lie blog site

Similarly, the ‘Tall Armenian Tale’ personal website appears less professional with regard to its web design in terms of font size, font colour, and font choice. The organization of website content is comprehensive but the layout of the actual entries themselves are chaotic and difficult to follow. The use of various fonts in different colours and sizes with

addendums and comments interspersed throughout the main content of the entries can be distracting. The organizational website ‘The Third World Traveler’ has the same issues with font size, colour, and choice which makes the web design of the website appear more “amateur” (Figure 4).

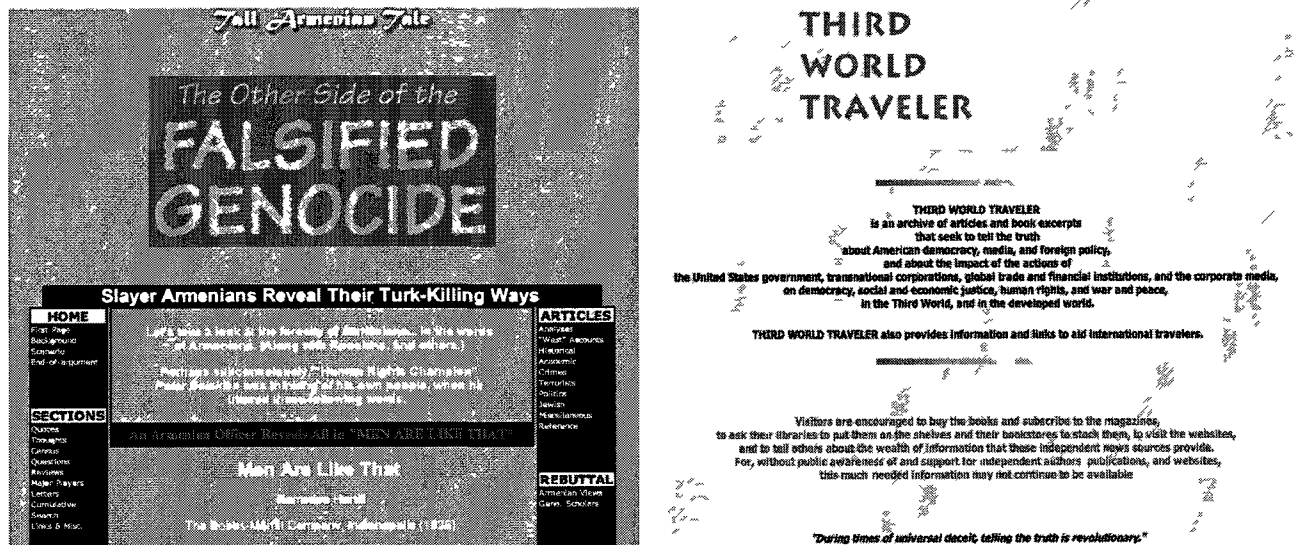


Figure 4 The ‘Tall Armenian Tale’ website and ‘Third World Traveler’ websites Note the font choice, size, and colour

If readers already subscribe to the logic of the arguments denying a genocide but seek a source to legitimate their beliefs, they may believe that what they know to be true about that genocide is legitimate based on the “professional” appearance of the website. Thus, it is possible that readers will attribute more legitimacy to the websites that appear “professional” and well organized such as the ‘Ministry of Foreign Affairs for the Republic of Turkey’ website and the ‘Armenian Genocide Debate’ website rather than websites that appear “amateur” such as ‘The Armenian Genocide Lie’ blog, the ‘Tall Armenian Tale’ website and

the ‘Third World Traveler’ websites. In turn, readers may attribute more legitimacy to the alternative discourse questioning genocide that is contained within the website.

The status of the source or author(s) of the website can also help or hinder the amount of legitimacy ascribed to a website and its content. It is possible that a reader will ascribe legitimacy to a website where the source or author is known and is believed to be trustworthy or credible. This is especially the case where the reader is undecided or unsure of his or her position on the genocide in question. If the source or author of the website is deemed to be credible, this once ambivalent reader may decide that the website and the information contained therein is legitimate and thus subscribe to that discourse. For example, the ‘Ministry of Foreign Affairs for the Republic of Turkey’ website is run by the government of Turkey which may be assumed to be a trustworthy source.

A website that does not state its source or author(s) or that uses nicknames or pseudonyms can hinder the website’s appearance of legitimacy. For example, ‘The Armenian Genocide Lie’ blog does not state its source or author(s). Other personal and blog websites use nicknames or pseudonyms. ‘Holdwater’ is the pseudonym and online persona for the author of the personal website ‘Tall Armenian Tale’ which questions the Armenian genocide and ‘sunkissed’ is the pseudonym for the author of the blog ‘Back To My Roots’ which questions the Rwandan genocide. Posting under a pseudonym offers the author a degree of anonymity as it limits the possibility of knowing the gender or location of the author. Readers may question the legitimacy of a website or the information contained within that website authored by those who are trying to conceal their identity. Thus, a website such as ‘The Armenian Genocide Lie’ blog which has a previously described “amateurish” appearance and unknown sources to authors may be attributed less legitimacy than websites such as the ‘Ministry of Foreign Affairs for the Republic of Turkey’ website

which has a “professional” and well organized appearance and is run by the government of Turkey.

6.1.2 Mobilizing Legitimacy: External Strategies

There are a number of external strategies mobilized that contribute to the legitimacy of the websites and the discourses located within them.

The First Strategy: Sourcing Information and “Specialty” Websites

The first strategy of mobilizing legitimacy is the attempt by the websites to appear scientifically rigorous through the sourcing of information. For example, in the case of Rwanda there are several names that appear multiple times. The name Keith Harmon Snow appears in two websites, the name Robin Philpot appears in three websites, the name Peter Erlinder appears in four websites, and the name Chris Black appears in two websites. For Armenia, there are four academics whose names repeatedly come up throughout the websites: Guenter Lewy appears on five websites, Justin McCarthy appears on four websites, Norman Stone appears on three websites, and Bernard Lewis appears on two websites. This repetition serves the purpose of creating mutual legitimacy. This means that by ensuring that the names of prominent academics and professionals in the study of history or genocide appear on multiple websites, a sense of legitimacy is offered to the content of the site. Since these academic figures appear often, a reader will believe that their work must be important and that the website and its content must be relevant, thus attributing it legitimacy. At the same time, this repetitive referencing can also serve to validate the beliefs questioning genocide a reader already has by providing a sense of “expert” and legitimate sources.

It also appears more professional and academically legitimate for publications to contain footnotes and bibliographies. The academic documents pertaining to Armenia made

use of endnotes and some bibliographic references (A16, A17). One of the government documents (A14) included a full bibliography, referencing names such as Justin McCarthy, Michael Gunter, and Heath Lowry and one of the professional documents pertaining to Rwanda (R7) contained an appendix and footnotes. Together these elements allow denial material to appear as though it has followed scientifically rigorous methods, and is academically sound and legitimate even though it is usually the same few references being recycled and the same few people speaking on the subject. As Shermer and Grobman (2000: 248) point out, outside verification is crucial to good science and history but deniers will routinely make statements that are unverified or verified by another denier.

Another strategy used by a website to mobilize legitimacy is presenting itself as a “specialty” website. The specificity of a website to a particular topic questioning genocide and the amount of information or documents questioning the genocide on it can attribute a sense of legitimacy to the website. The third party articles and other links bloggers gather for the archives of their blogs is a more useful library or repository of information for those seeking to learn a large amount of information in one spot, on one main topic than the larger websites. This is because larger, busier websites that are not specific to either the Armenian or Rwandan genocides are more difficult to navigate to find the information the reader is interested in, as opposed to blogs or personal sites where the work of gathering information is done for the reader. For example, the ‘Rwanda Documents Project’ is an immense catalogue of information but it is very specific to the Rwandan genocide and is extensively organized so that finding information on the subject is straightforward. The same can be said of ‘The Taylor Report’ website which contains a large repertoire of audio content primarily specific to issues in Rwanda and the ‘Ministry of Foreign Affairs for the Republic of Turkey’ website that contains a specific section with documents and links to other sources of

information questioning the Armenian genocide. This suggests that readers will grant legitimacy to websites that contain a large amount of information specific to the genocide in question because these websites appear to be an authority on the subject.

The Second Strategy: Appearing Impartial

The author(s) of a website also mobilizes legitimacy by presenting the website as an impartial library of information about the genocide in question in order to appear intelligent, unbiased and credible. This is accomplished through several methods. First, impartiality is claimed through the stated mandate or “FAQ” section of the website. For example, the ‘Armenian Genocide Allegation’ blog site states that the site “is an un-biased Information Database” and that their aim is “to collect information about the Alleged Armenian genocide, as much as possible [*sic*]”. The ‘Armenian Genocide Debate’ website does not have a stated mandate as such but contains a ‘FAQ’ section in which it addresses its stance on the genocide (Figure 14).

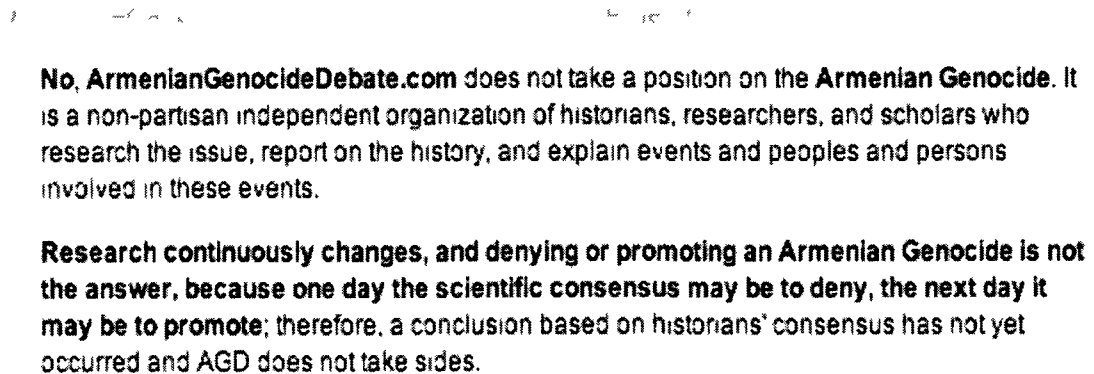


Figure 5 The ‘Armenian Genocide Debate’ website statement on its stance to the Armenian genocide.

In Figure 5, the ‘Armenian Genocide Debate’ claims not to take a position on the genocide despite content within the website that challenges the genocide. This makes it seem as though these websites allow readers to come to their own conclusions about the Armenian

genocide after having read the material. The ‘Armenian Genocide Allegation’ blog and the ‘Armenian Genocide Debate’ website point to the projection of the genocide as a debate when in fact the websites and their content do not appear to be impartial. Figures 6, 7, and 8 may help illustrate this point.

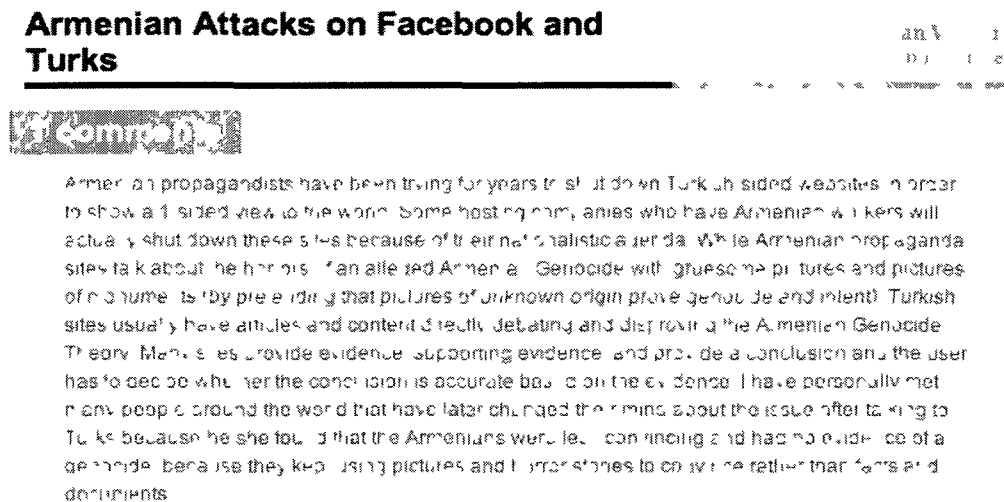


Figure 6 A snapshot of a blog entry from the 'Armenian Genocide Debate' website.

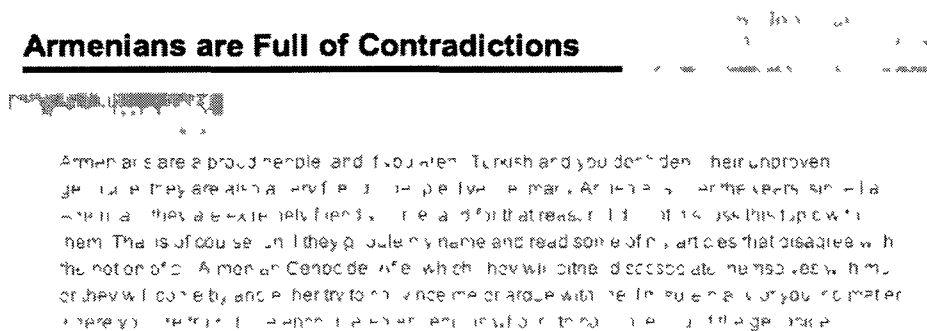


Figure 7 A snapshot of a blog entry from the 'Armenian Genocide Debate' website

Wednesday, April 09, 2008

So-called Armenian Genocide

An Armenian and Muslim Tragedy? Yes! Genocide? No!

Figure 8 A title from a blog entry from the 'Armenian Genocide Allegation' website.

Attempts at impartiality are also accomplished through referral or links to other websites with general information on either side of the “debate” concerning the genocide. This makes the website appear to take into account both sides of the event which suggests that the website is impartial and thus a credible source of information (Figure 9).

There are many Western sources that are the basis of evidence that may surprise many researchers. Both Armenian scholars, Turkish scholars, and Western scholars have used these sources to present a certain viewpoint or conclusion.

However, perhaps if one were to read the sources themselves they would be able to draw a more accurate conclusion of their own.

It is important to note that no matter what the perspective, many political positions on the Armenian Genocide Debate do involve archival material and thus no political position should be persecuted because each side's research is significant and substantial

British Archives



The British archives (), are mostly made up of communications and information submitted by **British Foreign Office** employees and diplomats

Figure 9 Note the link to the British National Archives from the 'Armenian Genocide Debate' website.

Furthermore, disclaimers stating that the website is not about hate or denial are offered to show impartiality on the subject of the genocide. In Rwanda's case, an explicit

disclaimer is made that hate speech will not be tolerated. In the ‘About’ section of the ‘Back To My Roots’ blog site the author makes this clear (Figure 10).

Caveat: This is NOT a hate blog. I will not tolerate hate speech of any kind, or mostly ignorant comments. Comments are moderated. There’s just no room for ignorance or hate.

Figure 10 Disclaimer found on the ‘Back To My Roots’ blog site.

This is also made evident on the ‘Hungry for Truth, Peace and Justice’ blog site (Figure 11).

Caveat: This is NOT a hate blog!

There is a zero tolerance policy with regard to hate speech of any kind and /or ignorant comments aimed at spreading lies of any kind about the ongoing crisis in the Great Lakes Region of Africa.

All comments are moderated.

Please keep in mind that on this blog there is no room for ignorance, hatred or misleading propagandas.

Figure 11 Disclaimer found on the ‘Hungry for Truth, Peace and Justice’ blog site.

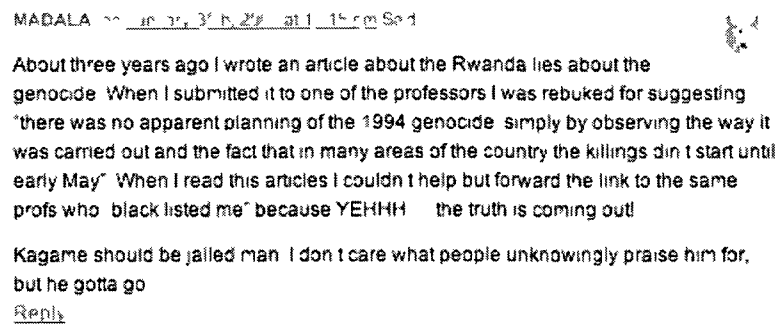
These proclamations offer a sense of legitimacy to the websites by making them appear tolerant, and unbiased. In turn readers may attribute more legitimacy to the authors, the website, and its contents.

The Third Strategy: “Alternative” Filters

Chomsky and Herman’s Propaganda Model (1988) outlines five filters that function in traditional media to determine the news that reaches the public. Similarly, we are able to see “alternative” filters that exist on the Internet from the analysis of the websites questioning genocide. Strategies are mobilized that work to select voices that are able to speak on certain subjects and to determine the content or discourse that is permissible to post on the websites.

In selecting certain voices and certain discourses, these filters legitimize discourse questioning genocide.

First, we see that certain websites function as conduits for the “voiceless” and for those whose versions of truth cannot make it through offline media filters or be accepted by the truth-generating apparatus of society (Figure 12).



MADALA ~~~~~ 3/11/2011 1:00 PM
About three years ago I wrote an article about the Rwanda lies about the genocide. When I submitted it to one of the professors I was rebuked for suggesting “there was no apparent planning of the 1994 genocide simply by observing the way it was carried out and the fact that in many areas of the country the killings didn’t start until early May”. When I read this articles I couldn’t help but forward the link to the same profs who “black listed me” because YEHHH the truth is coming out!
Kagame should be jailed man. I don’t care what people unknowingly praise him for, but he gotta go.
[Reply](#)

Figure 12 Commenter on ‘Back To My Roots’ blog

This example illustrates two important points. First, it shows that the Internet, and this commenting capability on this website in particular, has allowed this individual to have his or her viewpoint heard when it has been previously disqualified from academic debate. Second, it shows that commenter “Madala’s” version of the truth about the Rwandan genocide is validated and legitimated by not only the content he or she has read on the ‘Back To My Roots’ blog but also by the opportunity “Madala” has to voice his or her opinion through this interactive commenting platform.

The online news sites in the case of Rwanda also seek to provide access to discourse that may not be addressed through offline media and to provide perspectives from those who would not normally make it through the offline media filters. The ‘Scoop’ website in particular seeks to be the “hub of intelligence for the professionals (not just media) that shape what we read... to place no spin on the news and to give voice to perspectives not being

addressed through ‘traditional media’ sources” and to provide a news resource for newsmakers and news-influencers as opposed to news-consumers. Websites like the ‘Scoop’ and ‘The Taylor Report’ attempt to break the ‘manufacture of consent’ present in the offline media by striving for unbiased news sources and by publishing stories that readers will not have heard about from individuals whose stories are not being adequately represented in the news.

The mainstream news site ‘Chicago Tribune’ examined in the case of Armenia does not have a specific “about” section but it is an affiliate of the Tribune, whose “popular news and information websites complement Tribune’s print and broadcast properties and extend the Company’s nationwide audience”. The interesting point here is that an article¹ questioning the Armenian genocide was able to pass through the media filters and be posted on this website. This could be due to the fact that the author is Norman Stone who also wrote World War I: A Short History (2007). While Stone is known for his denial of the Armenian genocide, he is also a noted historian and academic in both Britain and Turkey. His status as an academic may be the reason why his work questioning the Armenian genocide was able to make it onto a mainstream media website. In turn, his status as a historian and academic lends legitimacy to his claims denying the Armenian genocide.

Methods by which readers are able to communicate and interact with each other on the websites can also be mobilized as alternative filters, and in turn, as a strategy of legitimacy. This is exemplified on the ‘Back To My Roots’ blog when a commenter offers dissenting views to those presented on the website (see Figures 13 and 14 below).

¹ Given the vast amount of articles on the ‘Chicago Tribune’ website, it is possible that there are more articles that question the Armenian genocide.

Kris on April 22nd 2009 at 4:47 pm Said

This Ngabo guy is definitely showing a lot of INTELLECTUAL DISHONESTY. This is typical of Kagame's and the RPF apologists. The Rwandan Genocide was a horrible event. The Rwandan Tragedy that began in October 1990 was even worse.

Figure 13 Community member “Kris” comments on dissenter “Ngabo’s” comment

sunkissed on April 23rd 2009 at 1:33 am

Ngabo are you purposefully trying to look hypocritical or what? Because I want to believe that you are less dense than this.



Figure 14 Blog author “sunkissed” responds to dissenter “Ngabo’s” comment.

The blog author permits dissenting comments in order to de-legitimize the arguments affirming genocide by discrediting them as “intellectual dishonesty” while simultaneously legitimizing his or her own discourse or that of other commenters by giving an opportunity to further argue their point. Permitting dissenting commenting also serves to show impartiality on the part of the blog author in that he or she appears to be allowing all viewpoints. Finally, allowing comments that challenge the blog author’s views rallies support for the “cause” of questioning genocide by eliciting other comments that support the author’s views and the website.

Other websites have built-in methods of filtering information. On the Facebook website there are two methods employed to this end. The first method is the internal regulation of content and activity of members by group administrators. The ten administrators of the group ‘Armenian Genocide is a HUGE Lie’ decide who is permitted to become a member of the group and the type of material posted to the group. This means that the administrators can remove anyone and censor any information that opposes their points

of view. They also have the ability to control the types of information and interactive elements available to its group members (Figure 15).

The image shows a list of settings for a Facebook group, each with a checkbox or radio button. The settings are as follows:

- ☒ Non-admins can write on the wall
- ☒ Show group events
 - ☒ Show profile box
 - ☒ Show profile tab
- ☒ Enable discussion board
- ☒ Enable photos
 - ☒ Allow all members to upload photos
 - ☐ Only allow admins to upload photos
- ☒ Show profile box
- ☒ Show profile tab
- ☒ Enable videos
 - ☒ Allow all members to upload videos
 - ☐ Only allow admins to upload videos
- ☒ Show profile box
- ☒ Show profile tab
- ☒ Enable links
 - ☒ Allow all members to post links
 - ☐ Only allow admins to post links
- Access ☒ This group is open

Anyone can find this group and see its posts.
- ☐ This group is closed

Only members can see the group's posts.
- ☐ This group is secret

Only members can see the group's posts.

Figure 15 Once a Facebook group has been created, the administrators are able to customize the group based on these preferences

The second method is the external regulation of the group and its content by the administrators of Facebook itself. The webmasters of the Facebook website monitor the

activity of the groups and can remove a group if it or its content is deemed offensive² (Figure 16).

Note: groups that attack a specific person or group of people (e.g. racist, sexist, or other hate groups) will not be tolerated. Creating such a group will result in the immediate termination of your Facebook account.

Figure 16 Facebook's policy stated on the first step of creating a group.

By controlling who can speak and what can be said through the use of “alternative” filters, certain discourses are privileged over others and accorded legitimacy.

The Fourth Strategy: Website Popularity

Finally, elements of website popularity such as interactive platforms and site meters are strategies of mobilizing legitimacy. Individuals utilizing the interactive platforms comment on the website content allowing mutual validation of the website and its content through the sharing of information and viewpoints. Site meters or visitor counters found on some websites such as the ‘Back To My Roots’ blog site³ and ‘The Armenian Genocide Lie’ blog site give the sense that many individuals access the websites even though it is possible that the same individual may return to the website multiple times and that there are more visitors to the site than there actually are. Even though these site meters also do not tell us how long the visitors stayed on the website or whether they looked at anything at all, website authors may use them in an attempt to give legitimacy to their websites by making it appear as

² In May of 2009, controversy arose concerning groups on Facebook that promoted Holocaust denial. Due to public pressure, Facebook removed several groups denying the Holocaust but not all of them. This remains a contentious issue for the website which supports free speech but does not condone hate speech. (<http://www.thetechherald.com/article.php/200920/3650/Facebook-hate-group-ban-opens-questions-of-free-speech-and-consistency>) (accessed 24/11/2009).

³ For example, the ‘Back To My Roots’ blog had 15, 423 views as of April 2009.

though the website and its content is popular and that many individuals who share similar beliefs frequent the website.

The websites questioning genocide are thus legitimized through the semblance of authority given to them by the “professional” appearance of the website, the sourcing of information through scientific or academically accepted methods, the specialization of the website and the amount of information it contains to the subject, the appearance of the website as impartial and unbiased, the filters that exist to legitimize certain discourses while de-legitimizing others and the interactive platforms available for the mutual legitimizing and validation of information. When a majority of these elements are in place, the website then appears as a legitimate source of information and in turn, the discourse contained on the website is more likely to be accepted as legitimate.

6.2 Generating Commitment To the “Cause”

There are a number of strategies deployed by websites to create commitment to and facilitate the growth of the “cause” of questioning genocide that aid in the attempt to produce and sustain an alternative discourse such as methods of financing, referrals, and elements that keep readers returning to the site for updates and for adding to the information available on the website.

It is possible that the “professional” or “amateur” construction and appearance of the website stems from who funds it and how much funding they receive. Larger websites such as the news and organizational sites are supported through funding from various sources including the readers and advertisers. For example, the Middle East Forum and the Foreign Policy Research Institute contain membership sections in which a reader can support each website monetarily for a subscription to the *Middle Eastern Quarterly* and *Orbis* journals.

The World Socialist Website contains a section that states, “the WSWS can’t operate without your help. Please donate as much as possible”. It then offers possible donations of twenty-five, fifty or one hundred dollars. These endeavors accomplish two important tasks. First, offering journal subscriptions increases readership of the website and is one way of keeping readers actively engaged with the website and its content. This coupled with monetary donations increases commitment to the “cause” of the website and facilitates its growth since these donations are often used to keep the organization and the website up and running.

Advertisement through referral is another strategy deployed to increase readership to websites questioning genocide which in turn generates commitment to the “cause” of the website. Figure 17 illustrates one way of increasing readership by cross advertising through referral of the ‘Back To My Roots’ blog and the ‘Hungry for Truth, Peace and Justice’ blog.

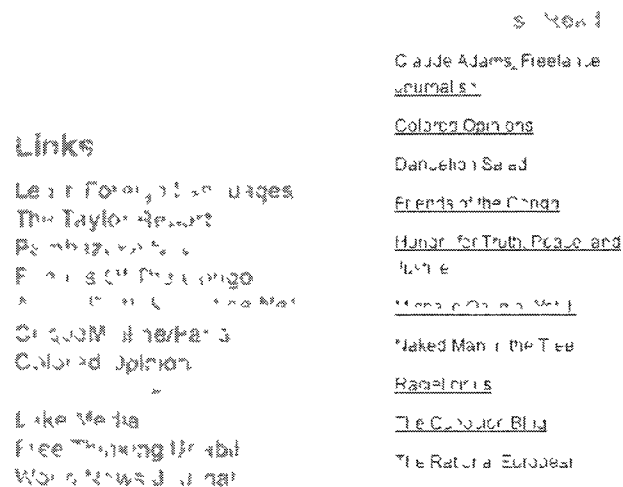


Figure 17 Cross advertising of the 'Back To My Roots' blog and the 'Hungry for Truth, Peace and Justice' blog. Also contains a link to 'The Taylor Report' website

Word-of-mouth promotion is another method of advertisement through referral employed by websites questioning genocide. The author of the 'Back To My Roots' blog requests that readers tell others about the website (Figure 19).

sunkissed on January 29th, 2008 at 7:18 pm said



Thanks Peter. Please pass the word this stuff needs to get out there!

[Reply](#)

Figure 19 Advertisement via word-of-mouth

This method actively recruits readers to aid in advertising the website which may increase readership while also generating commitment to the website and its cause by its readers.

Finally, the ‘Armenian Genocide Debate’ site has a section called “How Can You Help AGD?” where the author lists ways in which to aid in the advertisement of the website and to increase readership (Figure 18).



How Can You Help AGD?

(July 13)

Many people feel that there is not much they can do to help websites like ours websites that support free speech and debate on controversial issues. One must realize that debating is a tool to reach the truth. However, there is quite a number of genuine ways to help

ArmenianGenocideDebate.com

Here are some ways you can help ranked by its effectiveness!

1. You can have your website linking to ours using HTML
Armenian Genocide
2. You can carry our website link in the signature area of a forum using BBCode if the forum allows it
[url=http://www.armeniangenocidedebate.com]Armenian Genocide[/url]
3. You can write emails to owners of blogs and websites requesting them to help ArmenianGenocideDebate.com by linking to us using HTML or BBCode (as ideas above)
4. You can write articles and/or reviews of ArmenianGenocideDebate.com in news websites and forums; you can even email your local newspapers to write an article to endorse AGD.

Providing help in any way is much appreciated by our staff and we hope you can provide us with tips as well using our Contact form!

Figure 18 The 'Armenian Genocide Debate' website advertising methods

This type of advertisement through referral has its limitations. First, this method is predicated on the idea that readers have their own websites to advertise on, and that they will do so. Second, while individuals may read the material on the website they may not feel strongly enough about it to want to advertise the website or to write their own articles in support of it. The advantage of using reciprocal referrals for those who question genocide is that they give the impression that more information on the subject is present on the Internet than actually exists, making the website and the discourse it contains seem especially

prevalent, important and legitimate. Mutual referrals also seek to foster commitment to the “cause” of the website and increase readership through those individuals that do advertise the website or write articles about it which attracts other readers.

Websites questioning genocide also employ strategies to keep readers returning and contain interactive elements that engage readers with website content by providing elements for the exchange of information. In turn, this commits readers to the “cause” of the website and facilitates its growth through the addition of information questioning genocide.

One such strategy to keep readers coming back for more information and to add information to the website is by offering RSS feeds⁴ on the website, “I found your site on technorati and read a few of your other posts. Keep up the good work. I just added your RSS feed to my Google News Reader. Looking forward to reading more from you” (R13). Almost every website had RSS feeds and places to register to the website to receive regular e-mail notification of new information or content added to the website. Membership forums are also a method of keeping readers abreast of new information. The Facebook website requires individuals to first register and create a profile in order to join the group ‘Armenian Genocide is a HUGE LIE’. However, once a member of the group, individuals can be notified of new information added to the group.

Membership subscriptions, registrations or profiles for access to website information are other strategies of maintaining reader engagement while simultaneously facilitating commitment to the “cause” of the website. Readers are then able to add information, which in turn facilitates the growth of the cause. Two examples are found on the ‘Back To My

⁴ RSS (Really Simple Syndication or sometimes Rich Site Summary) feeds, according to Wikipedia.org are files that contain frequently updated information such as news headlines and blog posts in a way that allows it to be subscribed to using programs called feed readers or aggregators.

Roots' blog where a commenter posts more website links, providing additional information to the main blog entry (Figures 20 and 21).

afrikakorps on December 27th, 2008 at 5:30 pm Said 

additional background at
<http://www.globe-research.ca/index.php?context=va&aid=11432>
<http://www.commondreams.org/view/2006/2/24-2>
<http://africanhistory.com/selfnews/viewnews.cgi?newsid108483813491027.html>
 Reply

sunkissed on December 27th, 2008 at 7:11 pm Said 

that's afrikakorps! those are absolutely great links and resources the post will be updated shortly to include them feel free to browse around the rest of the blog
 Reply

Figure 20 Sharing of information on 'Back To My Roots'.

Nuri-Nink on January 1, 2009 at 9:33 pm Said 

Dear Madala,

Thanks for your comment. Please let that professor know that there is no shortage of reliable research papers explaining how knowingly RPF provoked a retaliatory genocide in Rwanda. Here is one of such papers:

Provoking genocide: a revised history of the Rwandan Patriotic Front
<http://humanrights.alcsp.org/m20090/Provoking-genocide-revised-history-of-rpf>
 or

Explaining the Ultimate Escalation in Rwanda: How and Why Tutsi Rebels Provoked a Retaliatory Genocide
<http://www.alcsp.org/m20090/Explaining-the-Ultimate-Escalation-in-Rwanda-How-and-Why-Tutsi-Rebels-Provoked-a-Retaliatory-Genocide>
 Reply

Figure 21 Sharing of information on 'Back To My Roots'.

Another example is from the Facebook group 'Armenian Genocide is a HUGE LIE'. The main page of the group offers numerous links to sources of information (Figure 22).

An excellent source of information

<http://kazabak.mil.doc.azerall.info/ru/armiyansvoyn251.php>

Democrats and the alleged genocide

<http://www.turkishdailynews.com.tr/article.php?enewsid=52947>

The KARBAGH GROUP <http://tu.facebook.com/group.php?gid=2212086046>

Ordumuzun Sitesinden:

http://www.tsk.mil.tr/en/nemi_sorumlu/aisiv_solguleriyle_ermeni

FREE E-BOOKS

<http://www.facebook.com/topic.php?uid=2211373447&topic=2793&post=9126&post9128>

The Talat Pasha Telegrams

<http://www.eraren.org/index.php?Page=Yayinlarik&SayiNo=15>

The Story Behind Ambassador Morgenthau's Story

<http://www.eraren.org/index.php?Page=Yayinlarik&SayiNo=18>

Art and Armenian Propaganda: Ararat as a Case Study

<http://www.eraren.org/index.php?Page=Yayinlarik&SayiNo=6>

The Armenian Issue and the Jews

<http://www.eraren.org/index.php?Page=Yayinlarik&SayiNo=4>

The Armenian File

<http://www.eraren.org/index.php?Page=Yayinlarik&SayiNo=19>

Links to over 50 articles in Western Newspapers documenting atrocities Armenians committed against Ottoman Muslims and Jews.

<http://www.facebook.com/topic.php?uid=2211373447&topic=4576>

Responses to Armenian claims:

<http://www.ermenisoyun.gen.tr/english/answers/index.html>

Figure 22 List of links to informational websites on the Facebook group ‘Armenian Genocide is a HUGE LIE’.

The posting of further information and links such as this adds to the discussion questioning genocide facilitating the growth of the discourse and ultimately the “cause” of the website.

6.3 Facilitating Community on the Internet

The strategies used to create individual commitment described in the previous section also offer a sense of community on the Internet. A sense of community is facilitated through the use of the same interactive platforms and referral opportunities that garner commitment to the “cause” of the website and that keep readers actively updated and engaged with the website and its contents. This done in a similar manner to the Zapatista (Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional or EZLN; Zapatista Liberation Army) movement in 1994 (Downing 2001: 217-229). Even though those who question genocide may not form an offline group like the EZLN, they also use online media⁵ for community building and resistance. Members of the EZLN communities were able to post and debate information that were not “cut by politically cautious editors, silenced by government scrutiny, or constrained by a need to maximize profits” as they would be in mainstream media (*ibid*: 223). Just as the Internet proved to be a crucial form of media for the Zapatistas in engaging their audience, disseminating their messages and facilitating community building through dialogue, the authors of the websites questioning genocide seek to foster the same goals by using the Internet as a strategy of community building in order to extend the reach of their denial discourse and as a way to give voice to the those views that would be silenced in offline media.

These virtual communities are about a shared sense of purpose or identity in line with the goals of the website due to the common focus that brings communities of interest

⁵ Downing (2001: 221) cites here that the EZLN used multiple forms of media including fax machine, videotape, audiotape, radio, telephone, newsletters, national and local newspapers, published books and articles, leaflets, graffiti, live performance, and artwork but he states that “yet, the most effective and innovative of any medium employed by Zapatista sympathizers was the Internet”, including e-mail, and web pages.

together (Papadakis, 2003: 5). As with the EZLN example, individuals have the ability to communicate alternative views of genocide that are not possible through offline media which in turn fosters a sense of shared purpose and identity. The 'Back To My Roots' blog seeks to provide "under represented and under reported stories, especially about Rwanda" and to present the "Rwandan side of the story not widely heard in large media outlets". The 'Hungry for Truth, Peace and Justice' blog focuses on "giving voice to the voiceless people in the African Great Lakes Region, to counter misleading propaganda about certain war crimes, crimes of genocide, acts of terrorism and torture committed in Rwanda and the DRC". It is argued that:

[t]he story of what happened in Rwanda... has been distorted and the truth unbelievably covered up, that few people in the general population know what actually happened, other than what was MISreported in the NYT and similar publications/books... basically if you heard about it in mainstream news, then half the truth had been blurred out" ('Back To My Roots' blog).

Other websites also reflect the desire to give voice to alternative views. The mandates of the organizational websites generally reflected the values and goals of the organization but they were also concerned with issues of free speech and providing alternate and more critical views of international issues that were not necessarily specific to the Armenian or Rwandan genocides. The 'Third World Traveler' claims to be:

an archive of articles and book excerpts that seek to tell the truth about American democracy, media, and foreign policy, and about the impact of the actions of the United States government, transnational corporations, global trade and financial institutions, and the corporate media, on democracy, social and economic justice, human rights, and war and peace, in the Third World, and in the developed world.

This website is a repository of alternative views, and perhaps critical views of the United States. This is illustrated by the series of links to number of other alternative news

sources such as Truthout, Znet, Dissident Voice, Truthdig, and Alternet.⁶ The 'Third World Traveler' also makes reference to public figures known for their alternative voices such as Noam Chomsky, and Carl Boggs.⁷ The Middle East Forum's mandate includes critiquing Middle East studies in North America and protecting public free speech. These websites bring us back to the notion of media democratization and the ability of those not being heard through offline media channels achieve a sense of identity and purpose in being able to produce and disseminate their own material that questions and counters the official view portrayed in the media.

These virtual communities are also about allowing individuals with marginalized social identities such as those from fringe political groups to engage in anonymous social interactions on the Internet along with members of socially sanctioned groups (McKenna & Bargh, 2000: 63). Often this is done under the guise of an online persona that allows the 'speaker' to write anonymously by use of nicknames or pseudonyms. These are most often found on personal and blog websites. It is within groups such as 'Armenian Genocide is a HUGE LIE' and other news groups that individuals can admit to having marginalized or nonmainstream viewpoints and opinions, and this is also where they can find and identify with others who share this interest (*ibid*: 64). Anonymity can provide protection of the identity of the author from the social ostracism and legal ramifications of their denial beliefs but also may allow the author to create a new identity that allows them to speak freely on the subject of denial with support and positive feedback, from other community members (*ibid*: 62-63, 64).

⁶ Other news sources listed include: Raw Story, Global Research, Antiwar, Information Clearing House, Global Post, Progressive Review, Nation, Mother Jones, Progressive, In These Times, American Prospect, Common Dreams, Tomdispatch, Progressive Populist, Dollars & Sense, Washington Monthly, Think Progress, Slate, Counterpunch, Consortium News, International Socialist Review, Lew Rockwell, and World Socialist.

⁷ Others include Michael Parenti, Walter Karp, William Shirer, George Kennan, and Harold Pinter.

Virtual communities are also where individuals go to seek emotional support, a sense of belonging and encouragement in their views (Riding & Gefen, 2004):

Your work on this website is enough to convince me that maybe you should be doing some kind of political work at the UN or even become the next Rwandan president. Great work (R1).

This praise serves as a form of encouragement for the author to continue posting his or her information questioning the Rwandan genocide but also serves as validation and legitimization to the author that his or her work is rational, worthwhile and is being read by interested individuals.

Furthermore, virtual communities encourage individuals from international locations to come together for the sharing of opinions, ideas and information on the websites, as we have seen in Figures 21 and 22 (Riding & Gefen, 2004: n.p). This permits the bilateral participation of individuals in creating and distributing their denial material as well as the participation of audiences to their efforts. This is important because sites such as the Facebook group 'Armenian Genocide is a HUGE LIE' are a self-sustaining process; as more members generate more content, the increased content attracts more members and thus widens the audience and reach potential of the website (Ridings & Gefen, 2004: np).

The sharing of information found within and between websites also extends the "reach" of the discourse found on the website. A basic and common discourse or knowledge of denial content is created through the repetition of links, articles, multimedia content, and authors. For example, three of the websites questioning the Armenian genocide contain a seven-part Youtube video documentary called the "Truth about Armenian Genocide". The 'Armenian Issue: Allegations and Facts' website contains several different articles concerning the relocation of Armenians that are similar or identical to the ones on the 'Armenian Genocide Lie' website. In the case of Rwanda, 'khante', a co-blogger on the

'Back To My Roots' blog may also be the same author that makes a blog entry on the 'Hungry for Truth, Peace and Justice' blog on May 23rd, 2009. Finally, articles such as "The Great Rwanda 'Genocide Coverup'" by Peter Erlinder can be found on at least two separate websites, 'The Third World Traveler' and 'The Taylor Report'. This repetition of the same or similar links, articles, multimedia content and names of authors also makes certain that the ideas contained within each are being distributed and access to this denial content may become easier and more widespread so that it may reach a larger audience.

Furthermore, it points to the existence of a "group culture" in which community members share traditions, beliefs, culture or a common background that come to characterize those members to themselves and outsiders (Johnston & Klandermans, 1995:128). This group culture is reflected in the sharing of information and resources and the degree to which members of the community actively support, collaborate and help one another on websites questioning genocide.

It is important however, to exercise caution to not overstate the ability of these blogs and forums on the Internet to form a public sphere. At first glance it appears that these blogs and forums do just this: individuals can come together, exchange information questioning the Armenian and Rwandan genocides, discuss and debate this information via commenting sections and discussion boards, and come to a general consensus regarding whether the events constitute genocide. However, consensus can only be reached as a result of rational-critical debate in which discursive inclusion and equality exists (Habermas, 1995). This means that assertions may be challenged and varying attitudes and opinions may be expressed and no one is prevented from expressing these attitudes and opinions. Thus we are limited in describing these websites on the Internet as a truly public sphere because of the

alternative filtering mechanisms that function to remove dissenting discourse that were discussed in an earlier section.

As a space, the use of the Internet in this case facilitates the drawing together of individuals internationally, provides a sense of purpose, belonging, acceptance and a place to express alternative views, and can enhance discussion of whether historical events constitute genocide but it is limited in its ability to be a public sphere because these websites do not enhance democratic debate on this topic.

6.4 The Internet As a “Space”

The analysis of the websites questioning genocide shows us that the Internet is not only a vehicle for alternative discourse but also a space for a sense of community, resistance and the development of a sense of legitimacy.

The Internet provides a space that is favourable for the *existence* of alternative discourse questioning genocide. Not only does the Internet provide a vehicle for the production and dissemination of an alternative truth but the Internet creates a sense of community where these discourses are shared, discussed, extended, encouraged and where individuals come together for a shared purpose and identity.

The Internet also provides a space for resistance to the accepted truth. Herman (2000) has questioned the potential of the Internet in challenging the assumptions made in Chomsky and Herman's (1988) Propaganda Model:

Some argue that the Internet and the new communication technologies are breaking the corporate stranglehold on journalism and opening an unprecedented era of interactive democratic media. There is no evidence to support this view as regards journalism and mass communication...

However, in the analysis of the websites questioning genocide, we have seen the *potential* of online media in breaking the manufacture of consent present in offline media to convey

alternative discourses.⁸ Online media seems to change the field of power relations where offline media had once exercised more control. It gives deniers the ability to produce and distribute their discourse of denial and thus, knowledge, given that power-knowledge relations can only occur through the production and circulation of discourses (Foucault, 1980: 93). Online media serves as the vehicle for the production and circulation of genocide denial discourse since deniers have a certain amount of power to produce, edit and circulate their discourse, permitting deniers to create their own “truths” and power-knowledge relations. By doing this, it is possible to see the work of deniers as a form of resistance to the discourse of genocide we receive through traditional forms of media. Some deniers continue to attempt to use offline forms of media to spread their “truths”. Others, however, seek to change the relations of power and respond to the rejection of their work by resisting and circumventing mainstream media using online media. This is because online media allows these individuals to be their own producers, editors and distributors of their content to a large, international audience.

Finally, the Internet provides a space that contains strategies employed to legitimize alternative discourse. This is accomplished by efforts to legitimize content by employing scientific or academic methods of sourcing and repetitive citing of authors so as to attribute them authority on the topic; providing large amounts of information specific to the topic while being able to appear impartial and unbiased on the subject of the genocide in question; by actively engaging readers through interactive platforms for the growth of the “cause” of

⁸ Downing (2001: 203-205) suggests caution in overstating the democratic nature of the Internet. However, both he and Coyer et al. (2007) provide case studies illustrating the Internet’s potential as a democratic medium. The Zapatista movement explained earlier is one such example.

the website and the mutual validation and legitimizing of content questioning genocide and where filters exist to legitimize certain discourses while de-legitimizing others.

An analysis of the discourse questioning genocide itself and the discursive strategies used to produce alternative discourse concerning genocide are the topic of the next chapter.

CHAPTER SEVEN: THE PROCESS OF CONSTRUCTING AN ALTERNATIVE TRUTH

This chapter identifies the arguments questioning the Armenian and Rwandan genocides within the documents and examines the discursive strategies deployed in constructing these as alternative truths. It will investigate how these strategies attempt to de-legitimize the official discourse while legitimizing alternative discourse and how the discourse questioning genocide is mobilized to create an alternative truth. Finally, it will examine genocide denial as a discursive construct that enables the analysis of power and ideology. Specifically, it will examine the dynamics of power attempted to be established by this new truth by looking at the ideological underpinnings of genocide denial.

7.1 Strategies of De-legitimizing the Accepted truth

There are three main strategies that attempt to de-legitimize the accepted truth about the Armenian and Rwandan genocides. First, the accepted version of history about the genocides is discredited on the basis that it is propaganda meant to persuade the public into believing false claims of genocide. Second, the accuracy and authenticity of official evidence confirming genocide is called into question in order to cast doubt on accepted versions of history. Finally, discourse that compares the Armenian and Rwandan genocides to the Holocaust is de-legitimized on the grounds that the history of these genocides are not similar to that of the Holocaust.

7.1.1 The Accepted Truth as Propaganda

In the analysis of the arguments questioning genocide, it becomes evident that the authors of the documents consider the accepted truth to be propaganda. Presenting the official history of the Armenian and Rwandan genocide as propaganda is employed as a method of delegitimizing accepted accounts of history by making it appear to be biased and misleading.

For example, authors questioning the Armenian genocide claim that western countries have been influenced by propaganda from Armenian lobbyist groups, especially those lobbying for legislation to recognize the Armenian genocide outside Turkey such as in the United States:

Public opinion especially in Western countries is affected by these films, books and articles published every year and their Parliaments are left under constant pressure to recognize the Armenian allegations as “undeniable historical truth” (A13).

In Rwanda’s case, certain documents refer specifically to a propaganda campaign launched by the Rwanda Patriotic Front concerning their need to stop a genocide that was never questioned by the western press, “True RPF propaganda is persuasive, and major media outlets support this propaganda [*sic*]” (R2). Another author states:

From the very start of their offensive, the RPF began a propaganda campaign claiming that they were motivated by the need to stop a “genocide”. This entirely false claim was never questioning by the western press, always eager to support their governments, even in the face of the fact that the Rwandan government several times asked the RPF for cease-fires so that civilians could be stopped, and the fact that Rwanda, then a member of the Security Council, demanded that 5,000 more UN troops be sent to assist in controlling the situation a request refused at the instigation of the US [*sic*]” (R7).

This author goes on to state that:

The RPF and its allies succeeded in all these objectives and continue their propaganda campaign today with continuous show trials both in Rwanda, through the Gacaca “trial” system and through the show trials of Hutus taking

place at the American and British controlled Rwanda War Crimes Tribunal in Arusha, Tanzania (R7).

The documents also point to the idea that there was a media-imposed version of the truth “that the Rwandan Genocide was planned and carried out by only Hutus...” (R8).

In the next sections we will see that once the official truth has been de-legitimized, those who question genocide are able to legitimize their own claims and put forth their alternative versions of the truth.

7.1.2 Attacks on the Evidence of Genocide

Attacks on the evidence of the Armenian and Rwandan genocides are used to construct the official discourse as illegitimate. This de-legitimization is accomplished through the minimization and dismissal of genocidal evidence.

In both cases of genocide, there is a “numbers game” that de-legitimizes the official data. Those who question either genocide de-legitimize genocidal evidence by showing large errors in the death toll statistics and demographic data often cited in the official version of events. This is done in order to cast doubt on the veracity of this data and to suggest that there may be more errors or lies in official versions of the genocides. Furthermore, authors seek to legitimize their claims through academia by citing statistics and scholarly studies meant to add credibility to their claims. For example, it is claimed that the death toll statistics for the Rwandan genocide have been exaggerated and that while many died, in actuality only 250, 000 individuals were killed unlike the reported 800, 000 (R7). In Armenia’s case, we also see a minimization and dismissal of evidence. Authors argue that the stated mortality rate of 1.5 million has been doubled and that this should be “viewed as grossly erroneous” and that “slightly less than 600, 000 Anatolian Armenians died” (A14). In addition, the author(s) of A14 also minimize demographic data by stating, “demographic studies prove

that prior to World War I, fewer than 1.5 million Armenians lived in the entire Ottoman Empire. Thus, allegations that more than 1.5 million Armenians from eastern Anatolia died must be false”.

Documentary evidence is also dismissed in both cases of genocide by attacking the credibility of the genocidal evidence. Evidence of the Rwandan genocide is dismissed in two ways: a key fax sent by General Romeo Dallaire warning of the genocide is rejected as fabricated, and authors claim that this adds to the lack of evidence of genocide of Tutsis (R7):

this fax is the single document upon which the claims of a planned genocide rest (...) [it] has been trumpeted by the ICTR prosecution as the key to plan to commit genocide. However, all the evidence presented at the Tribunal and elsewhere establishes that, in fact, the fax is a fabrication (...) to try to condemn the accused on trial before the ICTR and to support the now discredited idea that a genocide was planned by the former Rwandan government against the Tutsi population of that tragic country (...) [there is a] stunning lack of documentary evidence of a government plan to commit genocide (...) there are no orders, minutes, notes, cables, faxes, radio intercepts or any other type of documentation that such a plan ever existed.

Evidence of the Armenian genocide is dismissed first by claiming that documentary evidence has been fabricated.

[p]opulation has also been a popular field for fabrication. Armenian nationalists had a particular difficulty – they were only a small part of the population of the land they planned to carve from the Ottoman Empire. The answer was false statistics. Figures appeared that claimed the Armenians were the largest group in Eastern Anatolia... they were used after World War I to justify granting Eastern Anatolia to the Armenians and are still routinely quoted today (A3).

This accusation of fabrication of evidence also refers to the Talat Pasha telegrams¹, which contain the Ottoman government’s orders to exterminate the Armenians (A1, A3, A5, A18).

¹ The Talat Pasha telegrams are also known as Andonian’s documents and are found in The Memoris of Naim Bey: Turkish Official Documents Relating to the Deportation and the Massacres of Armenians, written by

A1 offers twelve points proving that the Talat Pasha telegrams are considered by the author to be forgeries.²

Second, eyewitness testimony is labeled as unreliable and invalid or, as one author put it:

... they brought in 90 year of Armenain-American [*sic*] senior citizens in wheelchairs to tell horror stories about Turkish massacres; apparently, politicians are dumb enough to think that someone who is ~90 years old can remember an event that is 92 years old. While in Turkey there are real 110 year old men in these ancient villages who have been recorded telling many horror stories of Armenian rebel gangs massacring and burning villages mercilessly, in hopes to provoke Turks to massacre Armenians...(A12).

Third, generally Armenian evidence is dismissed as being “of diminished value, having been derived from dubious and prejudicial sources” (A14). One such prejudicial source is cited in A14 as being the reports of Ambassador Henry Morgenthau. This document claims that Armenians rely on these reports as objective evidence of genocide when in fact Morgenthau sought to manufacture news that would allow the U.S to enter the war and he “openly professed that the Turks were an inferior race and possessed “inferior blood.” Thus, his accounts can hardly be considered objective”. A3 also suggests that Armenian evidence of genocide is tainted:

[t]hey do not admit that much of the evidence they rely on is tainted because it was produced by the British Propaganda Office in World War I... Nationalist apologists refer to English propaganda, missionary reports, statements by Armenian revolutionaries, and the like. They seldom refer to Ottoman documents, hundreds of which have been published in recent years, except perhaps to claim that nothing written by the Ottomans can be trusted although they trust completely the writings of Armenian partisans.

Aram Andonian in 1920. These telegrams are used as evidence that the Ottoman government ordered the extermination of the Armenian population in 1915 (Dadrian, 1986: 314).

² See Appendix K.

Here again we are reminded that the official version is propaganda. It is “tainted” because it is biased and does not take into account the Turkish side of the story and therefore lacks legitimacy.

De-legitimizing the evidence of genocide calls into question the accepted history of genocide and whether we can trust the scientific evidence that has been established on the subject. This doubt then creates the opportunity for those who question genocide to put forth their alternative versions of history.

7.1.3 Holocaust Comparisons

In a number of documents, the Armenian and Rwandan genocides are compared to the Holocaust (R1; A4, A6, A14).³ These comparisons are mobilized as strategies to de-legitimize official versions of history that point out the similarities between these genocides and the Holocaust. It is suggested that a genocide cannot be considered as such unless it follows the “criteria” that were necessary for the Holocaust to occur and that these criteria were not present in either the Armenian or Rwandan genocide.

For example, in the case of the Rwandan genocide:

Ngabo’s INTELLECTUAL DISHONESTY is best illustrated where s/he compares the Rwandan Genocide to the Holocaust against the Jews. There is a major difference: The Jews were attacked for the simple fact that they were Jews and had not violently invaded Germany and killed hundreds of thousands in Germany prior to the Holocaust. Nor was there a million displaced people inside Germany who had lost all of their relatives to the Jews attack (Jews never attacked). That is one major difference... The Jews did not assassinate German’s president or commit acts of terrorism in Germany prior to the Holocaust. The Tutsis who invaded Rwanda in 1990 had blood on their hands after committing atrocities for 4 years... The next difference is there were no Jews taking part in killing other Jews [*sic*] (R1).

³ Other literature has placed these comparisons under other categories of arguments for the denial of genocide, such as the relativization of suffering of the victim group. Considering its prevalence in the documents chosen for this analysis, it is worthwhile to create a separate category here.

This line of argument constructs the labeling of the Tutsi killings as genocide as illegitimate by denying the victims of the genocide. It is claimed that the Tutsis, unlike the Jews in the Holocaust, brought the genocide upon themselves through the assassination of their president and the years of war prior to the genocide. This denial of the victim group reframes the genocide and proposes an alternative version of events that the Tutsi brought about their own deaths by instigating the genocide.

A14 provides the most comprehensive explanation the Turkish government provides as to why the Holocaust “bears no meaningful relation to the Ottoman Armenian experience”:

1) Ottoman Armenians pressed the Ottoman government to become their own state while the Jews did not. 2) The Jews did not kill their fellow citizens in the lands in which they had lived whereas the Ottoman Armenians committed massacres against local Muslims. 3) The Jews did not take up arms with their enemies as the Ottoman Armenians did with the Russians against their own government. 4) The Nuremberg trials proved the guilt of the perpetrators of the Holocaust while the Malta Tribunals exonerated those alleged to have been responsible for the maladministration of the relocation policies. 5) There is evidence of Armenian-Nazi collaboration and pro-Nazi propaganda was published in the Armenian-language Hairenik daily and the weekly journal, Armenian. 6) Hitler did not refer to Armenians in plotting the Holocaust; the infamous Hitler quote is fraudulent. 7) There is a large amount of physical and documentary evidence on the Holocaust, proving the aims, methods, and results of the racist Nazi policies but there is very little scholarship on the late Ottoman Empire and much research must be completed as nothing yet has been discovered which establishes genocide.

Here we see the mobilization of elements of the accepted truth to legitimize the discourse of those who question the Armenian genocide. The author of A14 uses the verdicts of the Malta Tribunals to show that there was no intent to commit genocide. This author also legitimizes scholarship as a source of truth in establishing the claim that no genocide occurred.

The author of A6 de-legitimizes the analogy of the Armenian genocide to the Holocaust by claiming it is an emotional appeal, not a rational or moral one. In other words, this author argues that emotional appeals do not count; only rational or moral appeals can be considered truth. This author then uses what would be considered part of the official truth, the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire, to legitimize the idea that the conditions of life for the Armenians and Turks in 1915 were nothing like those of the Jewish population and the Germans during WWII:

We know what life was like for ordinary people and government leaders in Germany in 1942-43, when the mass killing of Jews reached industrial scale. It was orderly and safe; the Nazis were still mostly winning abroad, and in full, unchallenged control at home. Jews aside, no one starved to death in Germany then, and no German civilians were massacred or raped by enemy forces. There were no enemy forces on German soil in those years. The only enemies at home were the Jews, and they were never a real threat... life in Turkey was very different... it was an empire in dissolution....

Using part of the official truth to suggest an alternative discourse in this manner is an example of the social construction of the meaning of facts.

Comparisons of the Armenian and Rwandan genocides to the Holocaust suggest that the Holocaust is the “archetypal” genocide and the “gatekeeper” of what can be considered genocide. Thus, these genocides are de-legitimized on the basis that they do not follow the same criteria as the “model” genocide that has set the standard for what can be considered genocide. De-legitimizing the accepted history in this way then allows those who question genocide to put forward an alternative history that these were not genocides.

7.2 Strategies of Legitimizing Alternative Discourse

As we have begun to see in the previous section, elements of the accepted truth are often used to legitimize the claims of those who question genocide as a basis for their own

discourse. Discourse attacking the reference definition of genocide is routinely used for this purpose.

7.2.1 Attacks on the Reference Definition of Genocide

In this strategy of legitimizing alternative discourse, the official definition of genocide as outlined by the UN Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide is recognized as “truth” and is used to legitimize deniers’ claims that what occurred cannot be accurately or strictly labeled as “genocide”.

For example, in the case of Rwanda, it is argued that there was no conspiracy or intent to commit genocide, an element that is necessary for an atrocity to be considered genocide according to the UN Convention. Some documents (R1, R2, R5) claim that since Colonel Theoneste Bagosora, Colonel Anatole Nsengiumva, and Major Aloys Ntabakuze were not found guilty of “long-term planning and conspiracy to commit genocide” at the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR), the accusation of genocide is false:

judgments in the Military-I trial completely rejected the Prosecution theory of long-term planning and conspiracy to commit genocide by members of the former Rwandan military leadership. All four defendants were found “not guilty” of all counts charging conspiracy to commit genocide, based on the Chambers ruling that their actions prior to April 6, 1994 were based on war-time conditions, not planning to kill civilians or to carry out a genocide against Tutsi Rwandans. ... This raises the more profound question: if there was no conspiracy and no planning to kill ethnic civilians, can the tragedy that engulfed Rwanda properly be called “a genocide” at all? (Emphasis in original) (R2).

A commenter in R2 also states without further elaboration that:

There was no apparent planning of the 1994 genocide, simply by observing the way it was carried out and the fact that in many areas of the country the killings didn’t start [*sic*] until early May.

In this category there is also an attempt to challenge the overall definition of what constitutes “a genocide”. The example below claims that there can be genocidal acts during a period of conflict but that this may not constitute a genocide in totality:

The real news is that ALL of the top Rwandan military officers, including the supposedly infamous Colonel Bagosora were found not guilty of conspiracy or planning to commit genocide. And Gen. Gratién Kabiligi, a senior member of the general staff was acquitted of all charges! **The others were found guilty of specific acts committed by subordinates, in specific places, at specific times – not an overall conspiracy to kill civilians, much less Rwandan-Tutsi civilians... was it closer to a case of civilians being caught up in war-time violence, like the Eastern Front in WWII, rather than the planned behind-the-scenes killings in Nazi death camps?** (Emphasis added) (R5).

Also:

“the Military-1 trial was the first in which formerly suppressed documentary evidence was made available to the court... thus, no conspiracy, no planning ruling. However, individual defendants were found guilty under command responsibility for genocidal crimes committed by troops under their command. And... for multiple crimes, committed by multiple actors to be considered “a” genocide, rather than genocidal acts within a larger context which is NOT “a genocide” (i.e the WWII eastern front) [*sic*]” (R5).

The above example raises two important points. The first is that by recognizing that evidence had been suppressed at previous trials, the ICTR is (albeit unsuspectingly) legitimizing claims made by those questioning the genocide in the sense that if all of the information were made known a different “truth” about the genocide would be revealed. Furthermore, the author suggests that there was no intent to commit genocide and that the deaths were a result of war-time violence. This point is also illustrated here:

The Court specifically found that the actions of Rwandan military leaders, both before any after the April 6, 1994 assassination of former Rwandan President Juvenal Habyarimana, were consistent with war-time conditions and the massive chaos brought about by the four-year war of invasion from Uganda by Gen. Paul Kagame’s RPF army, which seized power in July 1994 [*sic*] (R5).

These examples begin to construct an alternative explanation that the deaths were a result to war-time violence and not a planned genocidal campaign.

In Armenia's case, it is argued Armenians died due to epidemic diseases, bad weather, lack of supplies, circumstances of war, "inter-communal warfare perpetrated by Muslim and Christian irregular forces that victimized both sides" (A5), and conflicts between Kurdish and Armenian groups (A2, A5, A6, A8). The author of A6 states:

...due to the chaos of war the dearth of supplies, the critical shortage of troops needed at fronts, and the competing tragedies playing out all around them, there was no chance that the transfer plan could be carried out humanely. It turned into a death march, comparable to the one our soldiers endured on Bataan during WWII, but made worse in the Armenian case by the fact that many of the marchers were the women, children, and old people left behind... still, we don't call the Bataan death march a genocide and there is even less reason to claim the Armenian death march was intended as such.

In this example the notion of a lack of intent to commit genocide arises as it does in the case of Rwanda, but this quote also offers an alternative definition for the deaths of Armenians: a death march.

The situation in 1915 is also put in this way:

Despite what Armenian propaganda tells us, there were certainly no plans to commit ethnic cleansing upon the Armenians forced to hit the road; most would eventually die of non-murderous reasons, such as famine and disease, the same causes claiming the lives of almost 2.5 million other Ottomans who died. The massacres that took place were mainly committed by lawless bands, mainly from Kurdish tribes.

The above quote illustrates the complex nature of the discourse questioning genocide. It works to de-legitimize the official truth by claiming the Armenian version of events is propaganda, rebuild an alternative truth by proposing a labeling of Armenian deaths as famine and disease, and legitimize claims denying genocide by pointing to their own victimization and by blaming other groups for the Armenian deaths.

There is also an attempt to legitimize claims that the genocide did not occur through academia and the use of historical analysis in order to argue that no specific orders were issued to destroy the Armenian population:

[Armenians] claim that Ottoman Empire instigated a policy of genocide against its Armenian citizens, but scholars have proven that these allegations are not based on historical facts but on myths, fake documents and forgeries (A5).

Certain elements of the official truth, such as the historical recognition that some Armenians took up arms during WWI⁴ are mobilized to legitimize claims that there was no genocide of Armenians. In these accounts, it is argued that the deportation of Armenians was justified due to the threat of Armenian rebels to the state (A3, A4, A7, A8, A11, A12, A14):

The “Armenian Genocide” was also begun by the extremists in the Armenians’ midst, terrorist Dashnaks, Hunchaks and others⁵. If not for the trouble these groups began, the resettlement process (or what Armenians refer to as a “genocide”) would not have taken place, as even Armenia’s first prime minister admitted (Emphasis in original) (A7).

After giving a lengthy historical account of Armenian uprisings another author put the situation this way:

After the deeds in Van⁶ and elsewhere, Muslims could only have expected Armenians were enemies who could kill them. Armenians could only have feared Muslim revenge. Most of these people had no wish for war but were driven to it (A3).

Also, the author of A14 states, “the Armenians took arms against their own government. their violent political aims, not their race, ethnicity or religion, rendered them subject to relocation”. This is an implicit appeal to the idea that the deaths were legitimate because the

⁴ See Hovannisian (2003, p. 36).

⁵ The “Dashnaks” (Dashnaksutiun, or Armenian Revolutionary Federation), along with the “Hunchaks” (Hēnchak, or Social Democratic Hunchakian Party) sought reforms for the Armenians within the Ottoman Empire, but ultimately they sought an independent Armenian nation. These groups looked to Russia, an enemy of the Ottoman Empire, for support against the Ottoman Turks and in attaining autonomy. The majority of Russian Armenians and a number of Ottoman Armenians formed an irregular volunteer battalion under Russian command. This force served a number of functions including combat and the Young Turk regime accused the Ottoman Armenians of betrayal and loyalty to the Russians during the war (See Dadrian, 2004, Hovannisian, 2003; Melson, 1992).

⁶ In the battle of Van (1896) Armenians fought against the Ottoman Empire’s armed forces in response to Turkish brutality in the region (Hovannisian, 2003: 42-45).

Armenians were terrorists that had to be eliminated, not because they met the criteria of being an ethnic group.

This strategy of legitimacy does not necessarily challenge the whole official version of the truth but questions parts of it. For example:

There is little argument that many Armenians perished during World War I, but there remains significant historical dispute about whether Armenian civilians died in the fog of war or were murdered on the orders of the Ottoman government (A16).

The strategies mobilized in this category ultimately point to a denial of responsibility. Elements of the accepted truth are used to legitimize claims that what happened to the Armenians and Rwandans were due to forces outside of the control of those accused of genocide (Cohen, 2001: 88). In turn this allows the construction of an alternative history that the mass amount of deaths were due forces such as war, deportation and famine.

7.3 Strategies of Resistance

7.3.1 Use of Language

Within the discourse questioning genocide, there is also an underlying resistance to the accepted truth. One strategy of resistance is a refusal to use the terms associated with the accepted truth. Generally, the use of the word genocide was avoided in favour of other words. The documents concerning Rwanda preferred to use the terms or phrases ethnic conflict (R3), politicide (R3), “genocide” (R2, R3, R5, R6, R7, R9), so-called “genocide” (R1), alternative explanation of the tragic events in Rwanda (R5), “Rwandan genocide” (R6), Rwandan Tragedy (R9), and the myth of the Rwandan genocide (R9). The documents pertaining to Armenia preferred to use the terms or phrases so-called genocide (A1), so-called Armenian genocide (A3), Armenian genocide question (A3), civil war (A3), massacre

(A4), genocide/massacre (A6), Armenian tragedy (A6), “Armenian genocide” (A7), “genocide” (A13, A19), ethnic cleansing (A17), and “so-called massacres” (A18). The use of these terms de-legitimizes the vocabulary used in official accounts by employing alternative terms or phrases that minimize the severity associated with the term genocide. This constitutes a denial of knowledge in that it prevents the equation of the event with genocide by calling it something else (Cohen, 2001: 81). Consequently, the genocide can be reframed as another type of event, such as a massacre or tragedy.

7.3.2 Nationalistic Hubris

Turkey’s nationalistic hubris is a strategy of resistance in the sense that these types of accounts are used to condemn the condemners in order to avoid being labeled as a perpetrator of genocide (Cohen, 2001: 98). Turkish deniers claim a double standard is being used to judge them since genocide has pervaded history:

The Turks are accused of “genocide,” but what does that appalling word mean? The most quoted definition is that of the United Nations: actions “committed with intent to destroy in whole or in part a national, ethnic, radical, or religious group as such.” Raphael Lemkin who invented the word genocide, included cultural, social, economic, and political destruction of groups as genocide. Leo Kuper included as genocide attacks on subgroups that are not ethnic, such as economic classes, collective groups and various social categories. By these standards Turks were indeed guilty of genocide. So were Armenians, Russians, Greeks, Americans, British and almost every people that has ever existed. In World War I in Anatolia there were many such “genocides.” So many groups attacked other groups that the use of the word genocide is meaningless. Why, then, is such a hollow term used against the Turks... the intent is to foster a negative image of the Turks by associating them with great evil (A3).

This example attempts to de-legitimize the official truth that would tarnish their national image by invoking a collective sense of victimization. The author believes the Turks are being unfairly persecuted, discriminated against, and singled out for punishment while many

other nations guilty of genocide according the reference definition of genocide are not being punished. Therefore the official truth is biased due to prejudice and should not be accepted.

Those who question genocide attempt to attain legitimacy then by painting Turkey in a positive light and as a country incapable of the atrocity they are accused of, “but they were so merciful that, when we found Armenians hiding in the island, we didn’t do anything to them” (A10). A5 also expresses exaggerated nationalistic pride aimed at attaining legitimacy:

actually, the Ottomans, whose empire was one of the most glorious in the history of mankind, never would had committed crimes of genocide [*sic*] (...) the Turkish people should not feel responsible for any such crime. They are not to apologize to anybody. On the contrary... the Ottomans were proud and tolerable, both as individuals and as a nation. Actually, many peoples that are in existence today, including their national and ancestral traditions, should be very thankful to the Ottoman Turks....

Another author comments that the film *Midnight Express* depicts Turkish prisons, unlike U.S prisons, as having more freedom for prisoners and no extreme assaults on prisoners’ psyches (A8). This supports the idea that Turks are more civilized and less capable of committing the genocide they are accused of, “this laissez-faire attitude has always been Turkey’s cultural reality, no doubt affecting as well the Armenians of the time who were actually sent behind bars” (A8). Thus those who question the Armenian genocide use nationalistic hubris as a strategy to resist the label of genocide by de-legitimizing the official discourse based on the idea that it promotes prejudice against the Turkish community and legitimize their own discourse by expressing their superior nationalism.

While nationalistic hubris is quite significant in the documents questioning the Armenian genocide, it is not a strong component in the documents for the Rwandan genocide. This may be because throughout history Turkey, from Empire to Republic, has maintained strong nationalistic ideals including Pan-Turanism and Pan-Islamism, and a

strong, collective national image. On the other hand, Rwanda has been described as “a land of two nationalisms, that of Rwandan Hutu nationalism and Rwandan Tutsi nationalism” (Clark, 2006: 72-73). However, recently there has been an attempt to foster a sense of collective nationalism within Rwanda through the elimination of references to separate ethnic groups.⁷

This section has analyzed the alternative language used to describe genocide and accounts of nationalistic hubris as strategies mobilized to resist the accepted truth. These strategies de-legitimize the accepted truth in order to legitimize claims that there was no Armenian genocide. The genocide is then reframed as something other type of event and an alternative account that the accused group is morally superior to genocide is put forward.

7.4 Creating an Alternative Truth

The previous sections have begun to outline alternative discourses for the Armenian and Rwandan genocide. Here however we will see that there are two categories, attacks on the victim group and victor’s impunity, in which there is more of an attempt to create an alternative truth.

7.4.1 Attacks on the Victim Group

This discourse suggests a denial of the victim based on claims that those accused of being the perpetrators of the genocide should be included in the victim group, and that the victims have exaggerated their victimhood (Cohen, 2001: 97). Those who question genocide mobilize these strategies that attack the victim group to put forward their own alternative history about the genocides.

⁷ Currently, references to Hutu, Tutsi and Twa ethnic groups have been eliminated. Rwandese citizens are now known as Banyarwanda or the “people of Rwanda” (Totten et al., 2009: 493).

In the case of Rwanda, two alternate versions of the genocide are put forth: the “two Hutu for every one Tutsi” argument (R3, R7), and the aforementioned “double genocide thesis”.

The “two Hutu for every one Tutsi” argument refers to the claim that not only were Hutus victims in the genocide (R3, R4, R6, R7) but more Hutu than Tutsi died, “...To put things in perspective, for every Tutsi that was killed, 2 Hutus were killed” (Emphasis in original) (R3). One author de-legitimizes the official truth regarding the Rwandan genocide to make an alternative claim that the real genocide was of Hutu by the RPF:

I appreciate your thoughtful comments, but like most in the US, you have been misinformed about what occurred in Rwanda... and who was responsible... and who were the victims, under what circumstances (R6).

The “double genocide thesis” is a slight variation of this whereby the RPF is accused of killing Hutu just as the Hutu regime was killing the Tutsi:

We had all accepted the story that the bodies that floated down River Akagera into Lake Victoria in Uganda were “Tutsis” murdered by “Hutus”. No one checked each body one by one to know who was who. But what we can tell from the data so far is that among those bodies we in Uganda saw were victims of the RPA when they made a special operation and rounded up Rwandese who were grouped as Hutus and finished them off. We are repeating for your information that among the Rwandese who were hacked and thrown into the River Akagera in April to May 1994 were these Hutu victims of RPA (R4).

Another version of the genocide points to the guilt of both sides, that both Hutu and Tutsis played the roles of attackers and victims, “the true story is that during that time, there were no angels in Rwanda” (R4):

In 1994, during the “genocide” both the Tutsi and Hutus played the roles of attackers and victims. In fact what happened is more so “politicide” than “genocide” as both groups are guilty (R3).

The victims are also blamed by bringing up the history of oppression by Tutsis of Hutus (R1). In this argument, those who challenge the Rwandan genocide de-legitimize the

official truth by pointing out the victim group's history of transgressions in order to call into question their worthiness as victims and impose their own version of the truth that the Tutsi were the aggressors or deserved their fate.

In Armenia's case, two alternate versions of history are offered based on the suffering of the Turks that has been largely ignored by other countries. The first claim is that the events of 1915 cannot be properly called a one-sided genocide because large numbers of Turks died as well, thus historians should not focus only on the suffering of Armenians (A2, A3, A4, A7, A9, A14). Some authors put the Muslim death toll at 2.5 million (A14) while others state that 500, 000 Kurds and Turks were massacred (A2, A7):

The world has yet to acknowledge the 500,000 Turks/Muslims who were killed by the Armenians (with a little help from the Russians) during the years of World War I, not far behind the Rwandan mortality, if numbers have something to do with determining magnitude. The world has yet to acknowledge the 5.5 million "Turks" killed and a further 5 million exiled, in the century ending circa WWI (Emphasis in original) (A7).

Those who question genocide use this argument to de-legitimize the official truth by suggesting that history is biased because it fails to acknowledge the deaths of Turks during this same time period and offer an alternative version of the truth that there was actually a genocide of Turks.

Paradoxically, A3 argues that:

if genocide is to be considered...then the murders of Turks and Kurds in 1915 and 1916 must be included in the calculation of blame. The Armenian molestations and massacres in Cilicia, deplored even by their French and British allies, must be judged. And the exile or death of two-thirds of the Turks of Erivan Province, the Armenian Republic, during the war must be remembered.

This example contradicts to the previous one in the sense that this particular author endorses the official discourse because it acknowledges the suffering of the Turks at the hands of the Armenians. Here we also see a resistance to blame in that it is argued that if the Turks are to

be accused of genocide, then the Armenians must also be held accountable for their crimes during World War I against the Turks.

The second alternate discourse refers to the idea of Turkish victimization. More specifically, it is claimed that the truth is the Turks were the victims and that the Armenians are actually the aggressors (A3, A4, A7, A9, A10). With reference to the 500, 000 Turks and Muslims killed by the Armenians, A7 points to the sentiments of Turkish victimization:

one can even go into a “civilized” European courtroom in 2007, present inarguable, concrete evidence, and the West will still choose to be in “denial.” Such is the state of anti-Turkish prejudice yesterday and today (Emphasis in original).

This discourse de-legitimizes the accepted truth by claiming prejudice against the Turks in order to propose an alternative claim that the Armenians committed genocide against the Turks:

[The Armenians were] waiting for the opportunity to “relaunch the war.” Their extermination plan would snuff out the lives of over 500, 000 Turks/Muslims (and others who did not fit the preferred racial/religious prototype, as the Jews) during the WWI years...an ethnic cleansing episode of great magnitude that has yet to be acknowledged in the prejudiced West (Emphasis in original) (A7).

In this version of events, the official truth is de-legitimized by discrediting the victim group as culpable of genocide and undeserving of sympathy or special status as genocide victims. Armenians are vilified and referred to as “vampires”, a term that has derogatory connotations. It is also claimed that the Armenian genocide:

is the proper term for the mass killings of Muslims by Armenian Vampires (such as Tashnak and Hinchak Bandits) throughout the Ottoman land. Armenians should be charged with genocide of Muslims by their intended murdering of a religious fraction of the population, just like Hitler [*sic*] (‘Armenian Genocide’ blog site).

This comparison of Armenians to Hitler is used to defend against accusations comparing the Turkish regime to that of Hitler. They resist this comparison, stating that the ‘Hitler quote’,

in which Hitler is quoted as saying “Who still talks nowadays of the extermination of the Armenians?”⁸ is used only to “tie Turks to Hitler’s evil” (A1). Thus, the construction of truth here involves de-legitimizing the accepted truth that holds the Armenians as victims of genocide by discrediting the Armenians as a group in order to put forward the claim that the Armenians are the perpetrators of genocide against the Turks.

7.4.2 Victor’s Impunity

In Rwanda’s case, an alternative truth is put forward involving what Peter Erlinder and Chris Black⁹ call “victor’s impunity”. This refers to the assertion that Kagame and the RPF have not been brought to justice for the war crimes they are guilty of during the period of 1990 to 1994, including the genocide of the interior Tutsis and the genocide in the Congo after that period (R1, R2, R5, R6, R7):

...since at least May 17, 1994 UN and USG documents show that massive crimes were committed by the RPF before during and after the April-July period...commonly called the “Rwanda genocide”. It also cannot be denied that the Kagame RPF military has invaded and occupied the Congo from 1996 to the present, resulting in more than 6 million deaths. IF my position is “genocide denial” it means that the RPF aggressors and criminals became the “good guys” for 90 days. But indictments by judges in Spain and France have come to different conclusions. The Spanish judge indicts Kagame for assassination of Habyarimana and some 300, 000 civilian deaths in 1994, and thousands in Kibeho refugee camp in 1995 (R6).

Those who make the claim of “victor’s impunity” have criticized the international justice system for ignoring evidence that points to crimes committed by Kagame and the RPF and for not bringing this regime to justice for these crimes. In the above example however, trial

⁸ He is quoted in a speech given before the invasion of Poland in 1939 in order to justify his genocide of the European Jewry (Apsel in Hovannisian, 2003: 195).

⁹ Peter Erlinder and Chris Black are both lead defence counsel for the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda. Peter Erlinder has contributed to the Rwanda Documents Project (www.rwandadocumentsproject.net). Erlinder has authored an article called *The International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda: A Model for Justice of Juricially Created "Victor's Impunity"?* in which he discusses in great detail the role of the Kagame government in the 1994 Rwandan genocide.

outcomes made within this same international justice system are mobilized to legitimize claims that Kagame is guilty of war crimes and must be held accountable in order to offer an alternative discourse that the Kagame regime is responsible for the genocide. As R1 also states:

Because it was found that genocide was not planned from inside Rwanda itself, Kagame and the RPF's insistence that they are after "planners" of the Rwandan genocide by going into the Congo is problematic. In fact it allows Kagame and the RPF to continue committing massacres and killing millions of people with impunity. If these people did not plan a genocide, and the ICTR prosecutions say they did not, and there was a war initiated and carried out by the RPF against them going on, then on what ground does Kagame have to go after them? Either by removing or exterminating them? ... Kagame can no longer comfortably hold his immunity. Nor can the RPF. It's becoming increasingly clear that the RPF is responsible for the murders in the Congo...

The author of R2 states Kagame is a "war criminal" and "a man who has used the Rwandan genocide, which he took part in; to carry out more killings resulting in more than 6 Million deaths in the Congo" and that he and the RPF are trying to "distract the world away from their bloodshed [in Rwanda], while simultaneously continuing the same dirty, and criminal bloodshed [in the DRC]".

The author of R8 also makes six observations that further develop and clarify this alternative discourse:

Kagame committed massacres against the Hutu population, adding to the hatred against those labeled Tutsi. 2) Kagame destroyed the coalition between the interior opposition parties and the RPF, a coalition that had prevented the war from escalating into an ethnic-based conflict. 3) Testimony from Lieutenant Abdul Ruzibiza, a former member of the RPF claims that Kagame instructed his men that had infiltrated within Rwanda and the Interhamwe to massacre interior Tutsis in such a way that the crimes could be blamed on the government forces and militia. 4) Kagame commissioned the shooting down of the plane transporting the Rwandan and Burundian presidents. 5) Kagame and his men opposed the intervention of international forces while the interior Tutsis were being massacred in 1994. 6) Members of the Interhamwe are now a part of the Kagame regime. (...) these previous observations demonstrate beyond a reasonable doubt that Paul Kagame has done everything possible to ensure that the interior Tutsis were exterminated.

Blaming Kagame and the RPF for the Rwandan genocide by drawing attention to their role in instigating the genocide and its current crimes in the DRC serves to de-legitimize the official truth in order to construct an alternative truth. This alternative truth is that the Kagame government and the RPF premeditated the genocide of the interior Tutsis, thus Kagame is responsible for the genocide.

The alternative histories described in both of these categories based on denials of the victim due to feelings of collective victimization and denials of responsibility due to claims of injustice will become especially important in the next section as we look at the underlying purpose of genocide denial in these two cases.

7.5 Alternative Accounts as Social Instruments

The social meaning of the killings in Armenia and Rwanda continue to be negotiated and there are groups that seek to deny these events for both political and ideological reasons. The Internet is one arena in which competing discourses are mobilized concerning the Armenian and Rwandan genocides. Earlier in this chapter we examined the strategies employed by those who question genocide to de-legitimize the official truth and legitimize their own claims in order to construct alternative versions of the truth. These alternative versions of the truth, or accounts, have the potential to become social instruments in the accomplishment of power with respect to knowledge production. Examining the ideological underpinnings of genocide denial accounts contributes to our understanding of how the truth is constructed and the political projects behind it. Through these accounts we are also able to see the dynamics of power underlying or attempting to be established by this new truth.

In Turkey's case, we have seen that the official truth is de-legitimized on the basis that it is hate. The websites and documents suggest that the Turkish community, regardless

of the country the individuals write from, harbours a sense of collective victimization in that they are being unfairly persecuted as the perpetrators of the Armenian genocide. The Turkish community especially feels that the purpose of the accepted truth about the Armenian genocide is to ignite hate and prejudice against them: “infusing history with myth, Armenians vilify the Republic of Turkey, Turkish Americans, and ethnic Turks worldwide” (A14). A19 states, “for many Armenians the issue is hate for anything Turkish and an attempt to write history for emotional fulfillment”. Therefore alternative versions of the truth, especially those of a genocide of Turks, are rooted in a desire for the recognition of Turkish suffering and victimization. Since the accepted history of the Armenian genocide is a direct attack on Turkey, the construction of an alternative history is a resistance to the perceived prosecution and the protection of the Turkish community.

Furthermore, the alternative truth serves a nationalistic and patriotic purpose in relocating Turkey on the international scene by defending its national image and reputation from damage associated with being accused of the Armenian genocide. Accounts denying responsibility by claiming Armenian deaths were due to forces outside of Turkish control seek to repair the dishonourable reputation of being a perpetrating country of genocide (Husting, 2006: 12). These accounts serve politically not only to protect Turkey, but also to discredit and attack Armenia’s national image and avoid the negative consequences associated with an admission of guilt such as the recognition of territorial claims and restitution to the Armenians.

Alternative accounts of the Armenian genocide are also used as social instruments in establishing a regime of truth within Turkey.¹⁰ These accounts indicate the types of discourse concerning the Armenian genocide that the Turkish government accepts and makes function as true. Thus, there appears to be a “general politics” of truth surrounding the events of 1915 that suggests a regime of truth within Turkey (Foucault, 1980: 131). The presence of websites questioning the Armenian genocide and their content demonstrates the existence of this regime of truth created by the government. The websites analyzed in this thesis are used to mobilize an alternative discourse questioning the Armenian genocide that seeks to de-legitimize the accepted discourse. The Internet allows website authors to produce, legitimize and circulate this discourse. They decide who can speak about this discourse and what can be spoken about by privileging some online community members and document authors over others and employing filters to de-legitimize or exclude dissident discourse while legitimizing their own discourse. Websites such as the Facebook group ‘Armenian Genocide is a HUGE Lie’ foster a sense of online communities of like-minded individuals, which permits education about and validation of discourse questioning the Armenian genocide through encouragement and reinforcement of each other’s beliefs and the sharing of links and other information. This works to legitimize the discourse questioning the genocide and extend its reach. In some cases, this discourse has the potential to have real effects in terms of the proliferation of tensions between Turkish and Armenian groups with the possibility of an incitement to hatred and xenophobia.

¹⁰ Foucault’s concept “regime of truth” is mentioned in one lecture in 1976 and although it is often cited, it has not been theorized about much further since (Weir, 2008: 368). We have discussed elsewhere what constitutes a regime of truth and this concept can be used to see Turkish denial of the Armenian genocide as a regime of truth.

We have seen that the Turkish government also uses the Internet to produce, circulate and legitimize alternative accounts questioning the Armenian genocide as a part of a larger program to establish a particular truth about the Armenian genocide. The Turkish government has the power to make this discourse true by enforcing its validity and its scientific status through the education and legal systems of Turkey (Hall, 1996: 205). In turn, this power is capable of forming agents and subjects (Atton, 2004: 67). We have seen the existence of this regime of truth through its “real effects”: Turkish denial discourse imposes a framework that structures what can be experienced, and influences what can be said, thought, and done by Turkish citizens (Hunt et al., 1997: 8). This discourse produces “kinds of people, with characteristic ways of thinking and feeling and doing, that live lives in specific contexts” (Hunt et al., 1997: 8). Teachers, academics, and intellectuals are produced within this discourse and it is the government of Turkey who authorizes who can speak, which views are taken seriously, and the discourse that is marginalized and prohibited (Hunt et al., 1997: 8).¹¹ The discourse questioning the Armenian genocide influences what can be taught in Turkish schools, shapes the understanding Turkish children have of what happened to the Armenians in 1915, and influences their thoughts, opinions, and actions as they age. Those who publish and circulate discourse promoting the official government discourse may receive prestige and “expert” status, while those that do not can be alienated from society and even legally prosecuted. Academics affirming the Armenian genocide can face losing prestige and status, and suffer legal and financial consequences. Examples have

¹¹ However, dissent is also present in Turkey. For example, Nobel Prize recipient Orhan Pamuk was charged with “insulting Turkishness” under Article 301 of the Turkish Criminal Code for comments made affirming the Armenian genocide but was later acquitted. This was also the case of Hrant Dink, a Turkish citizen of Armenian descent who openly debated official Turkish versions of history relating to the Armenian genocide. He was also charged under Article 301 but was later acquitted (http://www.ifex.org/turkey/2006/02/09/writer_hrant_dink_acquitted_trials/) (accessed 05/08/2010).

been given of academics and authors that have attempted to publish material affirming the Armenian genocide within Turkey and have been prosecuted by the Turkish government under its criminal code for having “offended Turkishness”. Prohibiting genocide affirmation through legislation illustrates one of the real world effects that the discourse questioning the Armenian genocide has. It is this ability to enforce the “truth” of these statements questioning the Armenian genocide that produces a “regime of truth” (Hall, 1996: 205).

The nationalist undertones in the alternative accounts given for the Armenian genocide do not appear in the accounts challenging the official truth regarding the Rwandan genocide. For example, the documents generally avoid referring to the Tutsi and Hutu as separate ethnic groups. Other words are used such as “ethnic civilians” (R1, R2, R5, R7) and “Rwandanese citizens” (R3). This suggests little collective identity as either Tutsi or Hutu, which is very different than the Turkish collective identity present in accounts questioning the Armenian genocide. Instead, as we have seen the accepted truth is de-legitimized on the basis that it ignores the Kagame regime’s complicity in the Rwandan genocide. Challenges to the official version of the Rwandan genocide thus appear to be rooted in three ideals. The first is a call for justice:

Kagame... and all of the war criminals who insult Rwandans by claiming they stopped the genocide will answer for their crimes. I am sure that reliable international community that is standing by while Kagame sets the record of the number of people killed will one day wake up and decide they have had enough. They did the same with Savimbi, Sankoh, Apartheid, and slavery. The criminals in Rwanda that include the current president Kagame will answer to their crimes. Mark my words (R1).

The second ideal is for the recognition of suffering and victimization:

... if Kagame were to be investigated, indicted, and prosecuted the world would learn that he initiated a major war crime and crime against humanity towards Rwanda...it would also be discovered that during the whole period, Kagame and the RPF committed massacre after massacre, and multiple war crimes against humanity...chased Rwandan citizens from their country into

the Congo...that in the RPF's attempts to exterminate the Refugees, about six million Congolese citizens were caught in the crossfire... (R2).

Finally, there is an appeal for the international community to do something about these injustices:

The truth about the Rwandan tragedy is slowly but surely coming out. As Prof Peter Erlinder pointed it out "had the US "impunity policy" not been in place, Kagame might have well been prosecuted along with Military-I defendants Bagosora and Nsengimva, as ICTR Prosecutor Michael Hourigan recommended in early 1997", let's unit our voice and tirelessly call upon the Obama administration to end this culture of impunity widespread in the Great Lakes Region of Africa [*sic*] (R2).

These calls for justice and a recognition of victim suffering show that the alternative truth regarding the Rwandan genocide has been largely ignored. These discussions suggest the possibility of this discourse as subjugated knowledge.

As we have seen, discourse denying genocide is generally ascribed little credibility in academic circles and as such it is disqualified as being "beneath the required level of cognition or scientificity" (Foucault, 1980: 82). Discourse questioning the Rwandan genocide has been subjugated to the regime of truth affirming the Rwandan genocide, at least within Western society.

A specific discourse has been produced and circulated through the truth-generating apparatuses within society that affirms the Rwandan genocide (Hunt & Wickham, 1997: 11). We might consider the media one such truth-generating apparatus. Here we are again reminded of Herman and Chomsky's (1988) media filters. The media is one channel that determines the discourse on genocide that is presented to the public in the sense that it determines the few individuals given the opportunity to speak. The sources of the media such as politicians, government and academics as well as those who finance the media also shape media content to reflect their interests. Academics that publish scholarly articles and

history books on the Rwandan genocide may also be considered a truth-generating apparatus of society because they produce knowledge but also have the power to make it true by enforcing its validity and its scientific status (Hall, 1996: 203). In practice, these truth-claims limit what can be said about the genocide and may also serve powerful interests, especially if we look at the effects it has had internationally and within Rwanda. For example, based on this history of the genocide, prosecutors of the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda have gone after and tried certain individuals that were labeled as the perpetrators of the genocide.¹² Also, this accepted history of the Rwandan genocide that points to the Interhamwe as the main perpetrators gave President Kagame and his regime the power and justification to enter the Democratic Republic of the Congo to search for more perpetrators of the genocide. We can see here that this discourse has real effects, and structures what gets done or not done, said or not said (Hunt & Wickham, 1997: 9).

These truths also work to exclude, marginalize and prohibit competing truths (Hunt et al., 1997: 11). Because this accepted history about the genocide has become privileged through the scientific methods of academia and through its circulation in the media, the knowledge regarding the genocide of those at a more local level (IE. the lived experiences of individuals in the African Great Lakes Region) and of those in the legal community representing the defense (IE. Peter Erlinder and Chris Black) has become subjugated to the knowledge we have already accepted about the genocide.

However, Foucault (1980) also talks about the possibility of an insurrection of knowledge where these individuals such as those listed above and others such as Robin

¹² Recall an earlier discussion of the ICTR trial in which three individuals (Colonel Theoneste Bagosora, Colonel Anatole Nsengiumva, and Major Aloys Ntabakuze) were tried as masterminds of the genocide and found not guilty of conspiracy to commit genocide.

Philpot¹³ who may have been held on the margins of society for their views begin to tell their stories, and share their knowledge. It is here that we see the importance of the Internet as a viable and successful vehicle for the production and circulation of discourse questioning the Rwandan genocide. Not only does it permit these marginalized voices to be heard, but readers of this discourse may view this information as legitimizing their beliefs, "...I was looking for some truthful websites to tell me the unbiased version of the so-called "genocide"" (R1), and "Now I finally have a legitimate website as proof that my version is in fact truthful" (R1). Another blog commenter states, "the beauty of the information age. It's not the same old story everywhere... I have been saying the information age will bring Kagame down. I am very glad the truth is finally coming out" which may in turn empower the authors. And so even though the denial of the Rwandan genocide is in its relative infancy and that much of it appears to exist and be circulated through alternative websites and blogs¹⁴, it is possible to see these methods as empowering and as individuals become empowered, their own truths and knowledges become validated and legitimized. This suggests that the Internet allows these discourses questioning the Rwandan genocide to attempt to challenge the general consensus we have about the genocide. The author of R6 believes that this is the case, especially with the establishment of his website¹⁵, "...this will change as the research and original documents become more familiar to interested researchers..."

¹³ Recall that Robin Philpot is the author of Rwanda 1994: Colonialism Dies Hard, a book that seeks to re-write the history of the Rwandan genocide.

¹⁴ Such as the 'Back To My Roots' blog, the 'Hungry for Truth, Peace and Justice' blog, the alternative news site 'The Taylor Report' and the Rwandan Documents Project website.

¹⁵ www.rwandadocumentsproject.net

As the above quotes suggest and as we have seen previously through the examination of readers' comments and postings, there is an audience that wants their versions of the truth validated, legitimized and brought to light. These truth-claims may not be meant to compete or rival other explanations about the genocide but may be struggling to surface as if they have been marginalized, forgotten, ignored or suppressed in the process of the formation of what we have accepted as true about the Rwandan genocide. For example, Peter Erlinder argues that,

... Other documents from August, September and October 1994 describe a conscious attempt by UN and US government officials to "cover-up" reports of RPF killings, including memos to secretary of State Warren Christopher. Apparently, US policy to create "impunity" for Kagame began nearly as soon as he took power (R4).

Chris Black also states,

The fabrication of the "genocide" fax is one more nail in the coffin of the Rwanda war crimes tribunal, ready to be buried under the weight of accusations of selective prosecution, political bias, unfair procedures, trial by hearsay, perjured testimony and the cover-up of the murder of two African heads of state and all in the name of colonialism masquerading as "international justice" (R7).

Both of these examples suggest that evidence has been suppressed or ignored in the task of producing accepted knowledge about the genocide.

The alternative discourses questioning the Armenian and Rwandan genocides are constructed in a way that follows a regime of truth (Turkey) and subjugated knowledge (Rwanda). It is not that these discourses are "as legitimate as" or are "on the same level" as the established historical discourse on the genocides; it is that they are being produced as competing discourses. And they are being produced in such a way that produces a regime of truth in the case of the Armenian genocide and what appears to be subjugated knowledge in the case of Rwanda. To those of us from the outside looking in on these discourses, we

know this to be unacceptable because the techniques used are in and of themselves unacceptable.

In this chapter we have identified and examined the discursive strategies used to construct alternative truths regarding the Armenian and Rwandan genocides. We have seen that those who question these genocides de-legitimize the official truth in order to legitimize their own claims and put forth an alternative truth. These alternative truths serve specific purposes for the fulfillment of power and in producing knowledge. For the Turkish community, denial is a call for the recognition of Turkish suffering and a bid to protect national image and its presence on the Internet demonstrates the existence of a regime of truth denying the Armenian genocide. Accounts questioning the Rwandan genocide also seek recognition of victim suffering but call for justice in bringing to light an alternative version of events that has been subjugated to the accepted history of the genocide.

CONCLUSION: THE INTERNET, ALTERNATIVE TRUTHS AND POWER RELATIONS

This thesis set out to analyze how alternative truths are constructed on the Internet in the cases of the Armenian and Rwandan genocides. To this end, this thesis analyzed websites and documents that question accepted histories of genocide. It mobilized themes of legitimacy, resistance, community and filters in order to reveal a process of truth production and the relations of power attempting to be established through these alternative truths.

Unlike in the past where a pre-existing community of deniers used offline media forms to circulate genocide denial material within this community, we have found that the Internet circulates discourse questioning genocide and creates a sense of community with a much broader range than before. Given the findings, the Internet is a space in which websites and the content of these websites are rendered legitimate and where a sense of community is created. The Internet is a space where information questioning genocide is shared, and validated and where filters exist to legitimize certain discourses and de-legitimize others in order to produce alternative knowledge regarding genocide.

We have seen how the discourses questioning genocide found on the websites analyzed are strategies deployed in the creation of an alternative truth. The process of constructing an alternative truth begins with discrediting and de-legitimizing official accounts of genocide as propaganda. Strategies attacking evidence confirming genocide and comparisons to the Holocaust are then utilized to de-legitimize accepted histories of genocide. Elements of the official truth such the reference definition of genocide are then mobilized to legitimize claims questioning genocide in order to advance an alternative version of events. Finally, arguments attacking the victims of genocide and claiming victor's

impunity are primarily used to put forth alternative discourse questioning genocide. Within the discourse questioning genocide, we have seen that there is an underlying resistance to official accounts of genocide. This is especially true with regard to the language used to describe genocide and the use of nationalistic hubris by those who question the Armenian genocide as strategies of resisting the label of genocide on the basis that it promotes prejudice against the Turkish community, a community that claims it is not capable of committing genocide.

The analysis of the websites and documents suggest that these alternative truths serve specific ideological purposes in either case of genocide and thus become instruments for the accomplishment of power. The websites questioning the Armenian genocide found on the Internet contain discourse that establishes the existence of a regime of truth denying genocide within Turkey. The discourse contained in websites questioning the Rwandan genocide suggest a version of events that has not been recognized by the truth-generating apparatuses and has been subjugated to the commonly accepted knowledge of the Rwandan genocide. As the findings show, the websites seek to bring this alternative discourse to light by giving it a “voice” it does not receive through traditional forms of media.

We have seen that the Internet provides the opportunity for voices and perspectives that may not be heard in mainstream media to be represented. This reminds us of an earlier discussion of the democratic potential of the Internet and its use as a method of resistance. We found that the Internet poses a challenge to the traditional media’s hold on the production of news discourse and the “truth”. It would be interesting for future researchers to further investigate the extent to which news production on the Internet poses a threat to Chomsky and Herman’s Propaganda Model (1988) and the implications of this for traditional media

sources as more newspapers and magazines make the move to online production and distribution.

This thesis has discussed the idea of denial discourse within alternative media on the Internet as resistance to accepted discourse on genocide. How about the other side of the coin? It would be interesting to study the “resistance within resistance”. That is, the reaction or rebuttal of genocide affirmers to the denial of genocide found within virtual communities including blogs and forums on the Internet. What methods do genocide affirmers use in countering this discourse (IE. posting comments, creating blogs or websites, engaging in forums)? What sort of dialogue do they enter into within Internet communities? More specifically, is there a specific or common discourse used by genocide affirmers when engaging those who question or deny genocide?

This thesis has identified and analyzed discourse questioning the Rwandan genocide thus contributing empirical evidence to the existing body of literature on the subject that has previously only been found in conference transcripts and news articles. However, there remains a need for continued research on genocide denial discourse, especially that of the Rwandan genocide as it is in its preliminary stages and may have the potential to proliferate and change in the years to come and as events unfold at the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda. It would also be interesting to investigate whether Turkey’s current regime of truth regarding the Armenian genocide will shift as it attempts to incorporate the changes it must make in order to enter the European Union. Will Turkey acknowledge the Armenian genocide? What impact will a shift in regime of truth have on the lived experiences of the Turkish community? The insight and findings provided in this thesis can provide context for further study of these cases of denial and for the study of other cases of genocide denial.

We began this thesis with a look into the emerging field of supranational criminology. The field of supranational criminology believes that an integrated and interdisciplinary approach must be taken toward the study of international crimes. By merging criminology with elements of history and media studies to explore the production of truth regarding genocide denial we have painted a multifaceted picture of this phenomenon that adds a unique dimension to the existing literature on this subject.

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APPENDIX A: *Criminal Code of Canada*

Section 319: Public Incitement of Hatred

- (1) Every one who, by communicating statements in a public place, incites hatred against any identifiable group where such incitement is likely to lead to a breach of the peace if guilty of
- (a) an indictable offence and is liable to imprisonment for a term not exceeding two years; or
 - (b) an offence punishable on summary conviction.
- (2) Every one who, by communicating statements, other than in private conversation, wilfully promotes hatred against an identifiable group is guilty of
- (a) an indictable offence and is liable to imprisonment for a term not exceeding two years; or
 - (b) an offence punishable on summary conviction.
- (3) No person shall be convicted of an offence under subsection (2)
- (a) if he establishes that the statements communicated were true;
 - (b) if, in good faith, he expressed or attempted to establish by argument an opinion on a religious subject;
 - (c) if the statements were relevant to any subject of public interest, the discussion of which was for the public benefit, and if on reasonable grounds he believed them to be true; or
 - (d) if, in good faith, he intended to point out, for the purpose of removal, matters producing or tending to produce feelings of hatred toward an identifiable group in Canada.
- (4) Where a person is convicted of an offence under section 318 or subsection (1) or (2) of this section, anything by means of or in relation to which the offence was committed, on such convictions, may, in addition to any other punishment imposed, be ordered by the presiding provincial court judge or judge to be forfeited to Her Majesty in right of the province in which that person is convicted, for disposal as the Attorney General may direct.
- (5) Subsections 199(6) and (7) apply with such modifications as the circumstances require to section 318 or subsection (1) or (2) of this section.
- (6) No proceeding for an offence under subsection (2) shall be instituted without the consent of the Attorney General.
- (7) In this section, "communicating" includes communicating by telephone, broadcasting or other audible or visible means; "identifiable group" has the same meaning as in section 318; "public place" includes any place to which the public have access as a right or by invitation, express or implied; "statements" includes words spoken or written or recorded electronically or electromagnetically or otherwise, and gestures, signs or other visible representations.

R.S., c.11 (1st Supp.), s.1.

APPENDIX B: *Criminal Code of Canada*

Section 181: Spreading False News

Every one who willfully publishes a statement, tale or news that he knows is false and that causes or is likely to cause injury or mischief to a public interest is guilty of an indictable offence and liable to imprisonment for a term not exceeding two years.

R.S., c. C-34, s. 177.

APPENDIX C: *Canadian Constitution Act, 1982*

Part I: *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*

Fundamental Freedoms

2. Everyone has the following fundamental freedoms:
 - a. freedom of conscience and religion;
 - b. freedom of thought, belief, opinion and expression, including freedom of the press and other media of communication;
 - c. freedom of peaceful assembly; and
 - d. freedom of association.

APPENDIX D: *Canadian Constitution Act, 1982*

Part I: *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*

Guarantees of Rights and Freedoms

1. The *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* guarantees the rights and freedoms set out in it subject only to such reasonable limits prescribed by law as can be demonstrably justified in a free and democratic society.

APPENDIX E: *Canadian Human Rights Act*

Section 13 of the *Canadian Human Rights Act* (CHRA) empowers the Commission to deal with complaints regarding the communication of hate messages by telephone or on the Internet:

13. (1) It is a discriminatory practice for a person or a group of persons acting in concert to communicate telephonically or to cause to be so communicated, repeatedly, in whole or in part by means of the facilities of a telecommunication undertaking within the legislative authority of Parliament, any matter that is likely to expose a person or persons to hatred or contempt by reason of the fact that person or those persons are identifiable on the basis of a prohibited ground of discrimination.

Interpretation

(2) For greater certainty, subsection (1) applies in respect of a matter that is communicated by means of a computer or a group of interconnected or related computers, including the Internet, or any similar means of communication, but does not apply in respect of a matter that is communicated in whole or in part by means of the facilities of a broadcasting undertaking.

Appendix F: *Turkish Criminal Code*

Article 301

To denigrate Turkishness, Republic, and Institutions and Organs of the State Article 301:

1. A person who publicly denigrates Turkishness, the Republic or the Grand National Assembly of Turkey, shall be punishable by imprisonment of between six months and three years.
2. A Person who publicly denigrates Government of the Republic of Turkey, the judicial institutions of the State, the military or security organizations shall be punishable by imprisonment of between six months and two years.
3. In cases where denigration of Turkishness is committed by a Turkish citizen in another country the punishment shall be increased by one third.
4. Expression of thought intended to criticize shall not constitute crime.

APPENDIX G: LIST OF WEBSITES

Websites with content questioning the Armenian genocide

Blogs

The Armenian Genocide Lie
www.liearmeniangenocide.blogspot.com

Armenian Allegation
<http://armeniangenocideallegation.blogspot.com/>

Armenian Genocide
www.armeniangenocide.com

Armenian Genocide Debate
www.armeniangenocidedebate.com

Personal websites

Tall Armenian Tale
www.tallarmentiantale.com

Forum website

Facebook group 'Armenian Genocide is a HUGE LIE'
<http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=2211373447>

Government website

Ministry of Foreign Affairs for the Republic of Turkey
www.mfa.gov.tr

Organizational websites

Middle East Forum
www.meforum.org

Foreign Policy Research Institute
<http://fpri.org>

Armenian Issues: Allegations and Facts
www.ermenisorunu.gen.tr

Mainstream news website

The Chicago Tribune

<http://archives.chicagotribune.com>

APPENDIX H: LIST OF DOCUMENTS

Documents questioning the Armenian genocide

A1: Did Talat Pasha Send Secret Telegrams Ordering Genocide?

<http://liarmeniangenocide.blogspot.com/2007/02/did-talat-pasha-send-secret-telegrams.html>

A2: Armenia Has No Tolerance to Discuss the Facts

<http://liarmeniangenocide.blogspot.com/2007/02/armenia-has-no-tolerance-to-discuss.html>

A3: Let the Historians Decide the So-Called Genocide

<http://armeniangenocideallegation.blogspot.com/2007/03/let-historians-decide-on-so-called.html>

A4: Open Letter to Honorable Representatives for H. Res. 106

<http://armeniangenocideallegation.blogspot.com/2007/10/open-letter-to-honorary-representatives.html>

A5: Press Release for the Alleged Genocide

<http://armeniangenocideallegation.blogspot.com/2006/11/press-release-for-alleged-genocide.html>

A6: Barbara Lerner: History Speaks On Why the Armenian Genocide Resolution Is Not Moral

<http://www.armenian--genocide.com/2007/10/barbara-lerner.html>

A7: The Rwandan Genocide and the Armenian “Genocide”

<http://www.tallarmeniantale.com/rwanda.htm>

A8: Abu Ghraib and the Armenian “Genocide”

<http://www.tallarmeniantale.com/abu-ghraib>

A9: Turkish Massacred In Cavusoglu Barnyard

<http://www.ermenisorunu.gen.tr/english/massacres/cavusoglu.html>

A10: Eye witness account: BEKIR YÖRÜK

<http://www.ermenisorunu.gen.tr/english/massacres/byoruk.html>

A11: April 24th Day of Justice

<http://www.armeniangenocidedebate.com/april-24-day-justice>

A12: Armenian Attacks On Facebook and Turks

<http://www.armeniangenocidedebate.com/armenian-attacks-facebook-and-turks>

A13: Turkey’s Position on Armenia’s Allegations

<http://www.mfa.gov.tr/armenian-allegations-concerning-the-1915-events.en.mfa>

A14: The Armenian Allegation of Genocide: the Issue and the Facts

<http://www.mfa.gov.tr/the-armenian-allegation-of-genocide-the-issue-and-the-facts.en.mfa>

A15: Revisiting the Armenian Genocide

<http://www.meforum.org/748/revisiting-the-armenian-genocide>

A16: Armenian Massacres: New Records Undercut Old Blame

<http://www.meforum.org/991/armenian-massacres-new-records-undercut-old-blame>

A17: Armenian Story Has Another Side

<http://archives.chicagotribune.com/2007/oct/16/opinion/chi-oped1016endoct16>

A18: Guenter Lewy's Letter to the TDSB

<http://www.facebook.com/topic.php?uid=2211373447&topic=4855>

A19: The Dangers of the Armenian Genocide Resolution

<http://fpri.org/enotes/200703.radu.armeniangenocide.html>

APPENDIX I: LIST OF WEBSITES

Websites with content questioning the Rwandan genocide

Blogs

Back To My Roots
<http://backtomyroots.wordpress.com>

Hungry for Truth, Peace and Justice
<http://hungryoftruth.blogspot.com>

Alternative news websites

“Scoop” Independent News
www.scoop.co.nz

The Taylor Report
www.taylor-report.com

Organizational websites

The Third World Traveler
www.thirdworldtraveler.com

World Socialist Website
www.wsws.org

Professional websites

The Rwanda Documents Project
www.rwandadocumentsproject.net

APPENDIX J: LIST OF DOCUMENTS

Documents questioning the Rwandan genocide

R1: More Missing Puzzle Pieces for Inquiring Minds or Possibly Trolls

<http://backtomyroots.wordpress.com/2009/04/22/more-missing-puzzle-for-inquiring-minds-or-possibly-trolls/>

R2: Message to Kagame: Stop Dancing Puppet We Can See Through Your Smoke and Mirrors

<http://backtomyroots.wordpress.com/2009/01/29/message-to-kagame-stop-dancing-puppet-we-can-see-through-your-smoke-and-mirrors/>

R3: Rwandese Genocide and Missing Links: the Real Facts About the Genocide

<http://backtomyroots.wordpress.com/2008/01/29/little-know-facts/>

R4: The Rwandan Genocide: the Bodies That Were Floating in the Kagera River Were the Victims of the RPA

<http://hungryoftruth.blogspot.com/2009/05/rwandan-genocide-bodies-that-were.html>

R5: Rwanda: No Conspiracy, No Genocide Planning ... No Genocide?

<http://hungryoftruth.blogspot.com/2009/01/rwanda-no-conspiracy-no-genocide.html>

R6: Comments to the Article "Rwanda: No Conspiracy, No Genocide Planning ... No Genocide?"

<http://hungryoftruth.blogspot.com/2009/03/comments-to-article-rwanda-no.html>

R7: Chris Black: The Dallaire Genocide Fax

<http://www.scoop.co.nz/stories/HL0512/S00081.htm>

R8: Paul Kagame, the Mastermind of the Genocide of Interior Tutsis in Rwanda

www.thirdworldtraveler.com/.../KagameGenocideTutsisRwanda.html

R9: Letters on Rwanda

<http://www.wsws.org/articles/2009/feb2009/rwle-f13.shtml>

APPENDIX K: EXCERPT FROM A1: “Did Talat Pasha Send Seret Telegrams Ordering Genocide?”

<http://liarmeniangenocide.blogspot.com/2007/02/did-talat-pasha-send-secret-telegrams.html>

It is useful to reiterate that the main elements in the chain of evidence constructed in proving that Andonian's "documents" were all patent forgeries:

1. To show that his forgeries were in fact "authentic Ottoman documents" Andonian relied on the signature of the Governor of Aleppo, Mustafa Abdiilhalik Bey, which he claimed was appended to several of the "documents" in question. By examining several actual specimens of Mustafa Abdülhalik Bey's signature as preserved on contemporary official documents, it is established that the alleged signatures appended to Andonian's "documents" were forgeries.

2. In one of his forged documents, Andonian dated the note and signature attributed to Mustafa Abdülhalik Bey. Again, by a comparison with authentic correspondence between the Governor (40) 13 July 1921; British Foreign Office Archives 371/6504/8519 (41) British Foreign Office Archives 371/6504/E8745

Aleppo and the Ministry of the Interior in Istanbul, on the date in question, it is proven that the Governor of Aleppo on that date was Bekir Sami Bey, not Mustafa Abdulhalik Bey.

3. Consistently, Andonian's forgeries attest to the fact that he was either totally unaware of, or carelessly neglected to account for, the differences between the Muslim Rumi and Christian calendars. The numerous errors he made as a result of this oversight are, in and of themselves, sufficient to prove the fabricated nature of his "documents". Among other things, the errors Andonian made in this respect served to destroy the system of reference numbers and dates that he concocted for his "documents".

4. By way of a detailed comparison of the entries made in the Ministry of the Interior's Registers of outgoing Ciphers, wherein are recorded the date and reference number of every ciphered communication sent out by the Ministry, with the dates and reference numbers placed by Andonian on his forgeries, it is proven that his so-called "ciphered, telegrams" bear no relationship whatsoever to the actual ciphers sent by the Ministry to Aleppo in the period in question.

5. Again, by comparing the Turkish "originals" of Andonian's " ciphered telegrams" with actual examples of contemporary Ottoman ciphered messages, it is shown that the number groupings he employed bear no relationship to the actual ciphers the Ottomans were using in that period. Thus, in his attempt to make his forgeries appear credible, he created a whole series of unusable, non-existent ciphers. Further, from the dates he affixed to his forgeries in this category, the Ottomans would have had to use the same ciphers over a six-month period which was impossible. By publishing a series of documents instructing officials to change the ciphers they were using, it is shown that, in fact, the Ottomans were changing their cipher codes on average once every two months during the war years.

6. By comparing the manner in which the common Islamic injunction, *Besmele*, was written on Andonian's two forged letters with numerous examples of the way in which it appears on authentic contemporary Ottoman documents, it is suggested that Andonian's clumsy forgery of this term may well have stemmed from the fact that non-Muslims, even those who knew Ottoman Turkish, did not employ this injunction.

7. A number of examples from Andonian's forgeries show that it is simply inconceivable that any Ottoman official could have used such sentence structures and make such grammatical errors. In the same vein, a host of expressions; allegedly uttered by prominent Ottoman officials are used, which no Ottoman Turk would ever have used. Andonian's intention in these instances was clear: he wanted nothing less than the Turks themselves to be seeming to confess to crimes which he had manufactured for them.

8. The forged documents, with two exceptions, were written on plain paper with none of the usual signs found on the official paper used by the Ottoman bureaucracy in this period. The fact that one of the forged Turkish originals was written on a double-lined paper, which the Ottomans did not even use for private correspondence, constitutes an even more serious error on Andonian's part. Even the two forgeries which appear at first glance to have been written on some kind of official Ottoman stationery are actually written on blank telegraph forms, which anyone wishing to send a telegram could pick up in any Ottoman post office.

9. At a time when the British were frantically searching the world's archives for anything to be used as "evidence" against the group of Ottoman officials whom they were holding for trial as being "responsible for the Armenian incidents", their failure to utilize Andonian's "documents" which were readily available in their English edition, strongly suggests that the British Government was fully aware of the nature of these forgeries.

10. Had documents of the nature of those concocted by Andonian ever actually existed, their confidential nature would have dictated that they be sent by courier for security reasons; rather than through the easily breachable public telegraph system. Likewise, had such documents really ever been written; it is inconceivable that they could have lain around in a file for three years, instead of being destroyed as soon as they had been read.

11. There are also numerous differences between the French and English editions of Andonian's book. Indeed, these variations are of such significance that it is absolutely impossible to ascribe them to printing errors, or errors in translation.

12. Finally, the fact that even some authors with close links to Armenian circles, who serve as spokesmen for Armenian causes, have indicated their own doubt as to the veracity of Andonian's "documents" should not be overlooked. In short, from start to finish the so-called "Talat Pasha Telegrams" are nothing more than crude forgeries, concocted by Andonian and his associates. Moreover the Ottoman archives contain a number of orders; whose authenticity can definitely be substantiated, issued on the same dates, in which Talat Pasha ordered investigations to be made to find and punish those responsible for the attacks which were being made on the deportation caravans. It is hardly likely that he would have been ordering massacres on one hand and investigations and punishments for such crimes on the

other.

A letter forged by Aram Andonian with the date, February 18, 1331 (March 2, 1916) opens with a "bismillah" (blessing), which would never have been written by a Moslem. The forger, Andonian, made his most fatal mistake with the date, however. He was obviously not well enough versed in the tricks of converting to the Rumi year of the Ottomans, where a difference of thirteen days between the Rumi and Gregorian calendars must be taken into account.

The date he put on the letter was off by a full year. Instead of 1330 (1915), he wrote 1331 (1916). The contents of the letter are supposed to be evidence of the long advance planning of the resettlement operation of 1915.(42) (42) Feigl, Erich. A Myth of Terror, 1991, Edition zeitgeschichten-Freilassing- Salzburg, p. 85

APPENDIX L: ANALYTICAL GRID

(See attached document)