

Rwandan Radio Broadcasts and Hutu/Tutsi Positioning

Abstract

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In cases of protracted social conflict, each protagonist group proclaims their cause to be just, their actions virtuous, and their sacrifices necessary. Over time, such declarations instill and solidify a system of normative positioning that orients one group through beliefs in ingroup virtues and outgroup vices. In this paper the authors explore the interrelation of macro and micro events within this process, combining a generalised telimorphic model of axiologies of difference with detailed discourse analysis of selected examples of hate media from Hutus extremists in Rwanda. The analysis is chronologically ordered to suggest the dynamics of media representations preceding the genocide. They suggest a transition from narrative to myth via ethnic generalisation and essentialism and a parallel movement from authority and justice ostensibly based in history, science and the law to a call for widespread grassroots vigilantism based on tribal and family loyalty. Essentialized axiological differences are conferred through the authority of the media themselves.