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Name

Austin Robertson

Title of Paper

Permission to Hate: The Link Between Prejudice-Motivated Crimes and Conflict Escalation

Class Year

Senior

Date Research Undertaken

Fall 2022

Citation Style Used

Chicago

Affiliated Course

Senior Independent Study: Gov 409

Faculty Name

Professor Andrew Levin

Student Major

Government and Anthropology

Narrative Questions

- 1. Describe how you came to choose your topic, specifically noting any pre-research that you did. What sources did you use in this pre-research? To what extent did you consult with librarians, faculty, or others? How did this pre-research lead you to your topic?**

Throughout my time at Connecticut College, my studies in both Government and Anthropology led me to the topic of hate crimes and conflict escalation. Growing up Jewish, in a predominantly Christian neighborhood in Vermont, hate crimes and bigotry were unfortunately always a part of my life. I knew that in college I wanted to understand more about how different societies and cultures perceive, react to, and interact with hate crimes. This research was an outlet for me to do just that. In classes such as Antisemitism, Nationalism and Ethnic Conflict, Power and Inequality, Human Rights and World Politics, I learned how crimes of hate and bigotry are discussed in academia. My Government Senior Seminar course with Professor Levin, International Conflict Resolution, left me with questions about how hate crimes interact with the cycle of conflict escalation. This interest inspired me to apply for a ConnSSHARP Grant for the summer of 2022, which I was thankful to receive. The goal was to understand how hate crimes are discussed around the globe and how hate crimes may contribute to a rise in conflict escalation in different nations. Before the summer, I spoke to Andrew Lopez in the library about how to conduct a research project that was this large in scale. Andrew and I were able to do some pre-research about what sources would be helpful, what databases would be most effective, and essentially how to read academic journals at a good pace so that I did not fall behind in the research. I communicated with Andrew Lopez about how to collect sources and not get bogged down by juggling multiple sources at once. Professor Levin and I decided that this summer would be a solid foundation for an Independent Study in the Fall of 2022. So, the whole summer was dedicated to researching the theoretical framework I would then use to apply to case studies during my independent research in the Fall.

- 2. Describe your process of finding information for your project. Note specifically the tools you used to undertake your research, as well as the specific search strategies you used within these tools. (Note: “Ebsco,” being an umbrella vendor, is not a specific enough response when identifying tools; listing the “library database” is also an unacceptably vague answer. Specific tools include JSTOR, America: History & Life, Web of Science, etc., along with OneSearch, the new library system.)**

I knew that this project would be a tall task. My meetings with Professor Levin and Andrew Lopez left me overwhelmed at times by just how much information I needed to review and understand. To relieve some of the stress, I relied heavily on OneSearch- our new library system. This allowed me to find sources efficiently and effectively. For example, OneSearch will show students if Conn has access to said sources and how to access them. If Conn does not have access, it provides us with direct links to our ILL. In OneSearch, similar to many other online databases, I could filter my searches to primary sources, newspapers, media releases, books, and journals. Filters also included dates of publication. These filters allowed me to gather sources from specific authors and specific time periods. Through JSTOR and many of the political science databases Conn has access to, I was able to gather a plethora of sources for this research. Secondly, the Interlibrary Loan system was a life-saver throughout this research. I cannot remember just how many sources I was able to acquire through these loans. Whenever Conn did not have access to a certain source, I was able to loan it from Wesleyan, Yale, or Trinity. Lastly, I utilized LexisNexis, and the Wayback Machine in order to gather information from sources that were more difficult to find. Wayback allowed me to access websites that have been altered or deleted in recent years. This was helpful because many of the sources related to German hate crimes have been lost throughout the years and Rwandan agencies have not updated some websites in decades.

3. Describe your process of evaluating the resources you found. How did you make decisions about which resources you would use, and which you wouldn't? What kinds of questions did you ask yourself about resources in order to determine whether they were worthy of inclusion?

Since there was so much information included in this research, it did become difficult at times to ensure that my sources were credible and effective. After discussing with Professors Levin, Patton, Stock, and Andrew Lopez, I was able to come up with a series of questions that I would ask myself before deciding on using a source. For example, I would check to see how many times the source was cited by fellow authors and journals. I also looked for common sources that a scholar cited (Barbara Perry was cited by many scholars in this field of study). If a source had a lot of information that was consistent with others, it is probably a credible source. Furthermore, I was also able to get a good grasp of a source's potential use by reading the introduction, methods, and conclusion sections. If these sections are not effective then I would move on to other sources. Evaluating sources became essential in writing my paper at the end of my research. When it was time for me to put all of my thoughts together, I had a hundred sources I either looked at or referenced in my early findings. I had to comb through them to check the validity of them all. Through rereading my notes and the articles, I could pick out works that were either unhelpful, unrelated, or not credible. This process certainly made my report stronger.