

Introduction. Understanding hate crime: research, policy and practice

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Criminal Justice Policy Review

Introduction - Understanding Hate Crime: Research, Policy and Practice

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INTRODUCTION

Understanding Hate Crime: Research, Policy & Practice

In 2013, a group of scholars from Europe and North America came together to form the International Network for Hate Studies. The key aims of the network included bridging gaps between academics and policy makers/practitioners in the field, and “internationalizing” our understanding of hate crime generally. In the spring of 2014, INHS held its inaugural conference at the University of Sussex in Brighton, UK. In this special edition of CJPR, we bring together expanded versions of 4 of the keynote speeches from that conference. In distinct ways, each speaks to the key themes noted above, as this brief introduction will illustrate.

The term ‘hate crime’ is now widely used amongst academics, policy makers, justice practitioners, and activists when referring to criminal offences that are at least partly motivated by some form of identity-based prejudice. There is now a substantial theoretical and empirical evidence base on hate crime (Perry 2009; Hall 2015). Though there remains a paucity of theoretical explication of the phenomenon (see e.g., Perry 2001; Iganski 2008; Walters 2011), a more extensive literature has developed on the harms it causes (Perry & Alvi 2012; Iganski & Lagou 2015) as well as how governments should respond to it. In particular, much has been written about the use of hate crime legislation to tackle hate-motivated offences (Iganski 1999; Schweppe 2012; Brax & Munthe 2015). Still in its infancy is research and practice on alternative criminal justice responses to combating hate crime (Walters 2014; Hall 2015: Part Four).

In tandem with much of this research and practice has been the development of a policy domain focused on addressing the root causes of hate-motivated crimes (e.g. College of Policing 2015; ODIHR 2009). Much of the policy work on combating hate crime has been influenced by academic research (Giannasi 2014), while in turn the ongoing work of policy makers and practitioners has provided a rich source of information for academic study (Hall 2014). Nonetheless, there has also been a tendency for researchers, policy makers and practitioners to work in silos, each

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developing their own understandings of hate crime; at times with little dialogue between or across sectors (Chakraborti & Garland 2014). Such a situation is liable to result in disparate understandings of the problem forming both within and across borders. Moreover, the lack of any formal partnerships between researchers and policymakers risks the development of ill-informed policies on hate crime, and in reverse to a scholarship that has little perceived relevance to policy or practice. For instance, Chakraborti (2014: 3) asserts that there has often been the perception that academic theorising on hate crime is “too complex, too ethereal and too detached from the everyday realities confronting those who deal with hate crime cases...” Academic research must therefore become more accessible to both policy makers and practitioners if costly and time consuming research is to have a chance of having any “real life” impact. In order to ensure that the knowledge bases currently being developed on hate crime are shared effectively, greater emphasis must be given to the development of multiple-sector partnerships.

Another area in which our knowledge of the patterns of hate crime has been underdeveloped has been at the level of the international. We have been myopic, if not blatantly ethnocentric in our study of hate crime. In 1998, two “international” anthologies on hate crime were published almost simultaneously. Kaplan and Bjorgo’s (1998) *Nation and Race* focused almost exclusively on European issues. Kelly and Maughan’s (1998) *Hate Crime: The Global Politics of Polarization* strayed a little further afield, to address hate crime in India, ethnic cleansing in Colombia, and Palestinian persecution in the Arab world alongside the standard European and American fare. Subsequent to these two anthologies, however, little else has been done to examine hate-motivated violence outside of the West. Emphasis has largely been placed on the US, the UK, Australia, and Western Europe.

In short, the scholarship on hate crime, per se, has been dominated by American and Western European perspectives, where both the academic and legislative frameworks are relatively well established. We know virtually nothing about racial or religious violence in Japan, or homophobic violence in Saudi Arabia, for example. There

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3 is some extant literature on the genocides of Rwanda, or the ethnic cleansing of the
4 Balkan states, but we have not mined these tragic conflicts for lessons about the
5 evolution of hate, or what the Anti-Defamation League might refer to as the pyramid of
6 hate. As the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) noted in 2012,
7 hate crimes “can escalate rapidly into broader social unrest, are often severely
8 underreported, and they can be exacerbated by or take place in a context of intolerant
9 discourse”. This is clear not only in Europe, North America, Australia and New Zealand,
10 but across the world in regions where the term is rarely used or recognized. The time
11 has come to widen our geographical lens. Following Akbar Ahmed’s advice (1995: 4) we
12 ought to “draw universal principles and locate global explanations” for other-directed
13 violence across the world.
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24 These two limitations – lack of synergy between academics and policy makers,
25 and a narrow geographical scope – were the inspiration for the launch of the
26 International Network for Hate Studies (INHS) in 2013. Led by academics, policy experts
27 and practitioners, the Network was established to provide a platform from which
28 researchers, policy makers and practitioners (and the public) can share knowledge
29 globally. The INHS has four key aims: sharing information; public policy engagement;
30 collaboration in research; and improved understanding of hate crime globally (see
31 [http://www.internationalhatestudies.com/about-us/aims-and-objectives-of-the-](http://www.internationalhatestudies.com/about-us/aims-and-objectives-of-the-network)
32 network). As we state on our website “[h]ate has no borders and, with the proliferation
33 of online sources and resources, its study needs a multi-disciplinary and international
34 focus as well as one which examines local and jurisdiction-specific causes and
35 responses.” As part of this mission the INHS held its inaugural conference, on May 8th
36 and 9th 2014, at the School of Law, Politics and Sociology, University of Sussex in the
37 United Kingdom with the theme *Understanding Hate Crime: Research, Policy & Practice*.
38 A number of different platforms were used throughout the two day conference to
39 facilitate creative engagement across the academic, policy, practitioner and activist
40 communities, with the aim of providing innovative insights and responses to hate
41 crimes. The conference was truly international, with a total of 110 delegates (including
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3 65 speakers) travelling from Africa, Europe, the United States, Canada, and Australia,
4 offering domestic, comparative and global analyses.
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7 This edition of Criminal Justice Policy Review is the first official output from the
8 collaborative work of the Network. The journal contains the full versions of four of our
9 plenary speakers whose papers centred on the topic of research, policy and practice.
10 Each author offers an original insight on the importance of maintaining strong
11 connections between research, policy and practice domains and how this might be
12 achieved in the longer term. There is also considerable attention to international efforts
13 to come to terms with hate crime, either through formal policy, or on the ground
14 programs for potential and actual victims and/or offenders. Collectively, the contributors
15 illustrate how research, policy and practice when combined offer the most effective
16 means of improving our understandings of hate crime and how ultimately it can be
17 effectively challenged at domestic and international levels.
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28 Joanna Perry's article provides a useful framework for understanding the
29 connections among three key sectors engaged in hate crime work: practitioners, scholars
30 and NGOs. Her equilateral "triangle" allows us to make sense of how each of these sets
31 of actors might ideally interact, bringing their respective insights and expertise to the
32 table. It also highlights the risks involved when the engagement across sectors is
33 weakened. The articles from Neil Chakraborti and Jon Garland, interestingly, take up
34 these same themes. Chakraborti sheds further light on the connections between
35 practitioners and scholars, in particular, exploring the long-lived disconnect between
36 hate crime scholars and hate crime practitioners. He reminds us that, "good practice
37 needs to be informed by good policy, which in turn needs to be informed by academic
38 knowledge." However, he argues that the relationship between the two sectors has
39 historically been hostile at worst, distrustful at best. Garland explores similar arguments,
40 but then also illustrates signs of "rapprochement" through case studies that highlight
41 the advantages to be derived from collaborative approaches among practitioners,
42 academics and community activists.
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4 While Chakraborti and Garland confine their discussions largely to the English
5 context, Joanna Perry and Barbara Perry (no relation!), in their respective articles,
6 emphasize the second priority of the INHS – the global dimensions of hate crime.
7 Joanna Perry speaks to the development and also lack of alignment of hate crime policy
8 across EU and Office for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) countries. Like
9 Garland, she nonetheless sees reason for optimism in the joint efforts of NGOs and
10 government bodies around enhanced reporting mechanisms for example. Taking a cue
11 from Joanna Perry’s global frame, Barbara Perry seeks to provide a broad introduction to
12 responses to hate crime found across the globe. While this survey includes consideration
13 of formal legislative and other state responses, it also draws attention to the efforts of
14 NGOs and other sorts of community based – often grassroots – groups. From social
15 media campaigns, to exit strategies directed at white supremacists, to victim services,
16 countless and diverse examples of anti-hate initiatives are identified.
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28 This Special Edition of Criminal Justice Policy Review thus seeks to both
29 explicate and further elaborate on both the goals of the INHS specifically, and
30 problematize and highlight future developments for the field of hate studies generally.
31 As a relatively young discipline, the domain of hate studies is unusual for a number of
32 reasons. It is by its nature interdisciplinary, and scholars typically seek to engage with
33 policy makers, practitioners and those most impacted by the exclusionary phenomenon
34 of hate. The Network embraces the unique qualities of the field, and along with its 2014
35 conference, has held a number of workshops which engage the academic and policy
36 domains. Its task in the future is to create a space in which all communities – local,
37 regional and global – can work together to both communicate and combat the harms of
38 hate.
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