

Von der Ahe Research Award
March 30, 2007

When I began writing my political philosophy research paper last semester, I was encountered with the many possible tactics for actually gathering my research. I originally considered the primary texts which were a part of the course, both Thomas Hobbes' *Leviathan* and John Locke's *Second Treatise of Government*, and then expanded beyond them to current texts. Newspapers, magazines, online journals or blogs, opinion articles, and books were all relevant and appropriate sources of research for this project since the objective was to make connections between the ideas of past philosophers and a current event. The Von der Ahe Library and its research tools allowed me access to all of the above through search engines and an extensive book collection. Similarly, a large portion of my research came from expanding upon the information found through the library and connecting my research to outside sources. Without the resources of the Von Der Ahe library that included informative details that led me to further, deeper levels of comprehension and information, I would have had neither the quantity of sources nor the quality.

To gather background information surrounding the current event of my choice, the Oaxacan crisis in Mexico, I used the LINUS library catalogue. Essentially, LINUS search engine led me to books that gave a historical background on Oaxaca and Mexican party politics. Books such as Chasteen's *Born In Blood and Fire* not only familiarized me with the essential details of past revolutions but also provided a narrative of the events leading up to the topic of research. By using the call-numbers recommended by the LINUS search engine I was also able to find other books with similar topics, such as Mexican civil wars and historical struggles for power between citizens and law-makers.

Since books found in the library were not able to carry information as current as the Oaxacan crisis, I searched for the bulk of my research using newspaper and article based engines like Lexis-Nexis. With a wealth of current a varied information at my fingertips, I expanded and delved deeply into the results of my Lexis-Nexis searches. Aside from simply giving me informative and useful articles about political movement in Oaxaca, often an article would lead me to a particular newspaper which viewed topics more socio-politically or from an angle I liked. Sometimes articles I found quoted books of interest and gave authors who specialized in fields like Mexican political conflict. I could then take these authors and find books like Gilbert Joseph's *Plutarco Elias Calles and the Mexican Revolution* not carried in our library but sold at a local retail store. Also, given the dates of the articles on Lexis-Nexis that addressed the Oaxacan crisis, I was also able to search for specific dates in which action occurred and then broaden the article search. Continuing to look for articles that gave insight as to why the people thought revolution was necessary, I searched for as many details as possible, including digging back to both revolutionary and counter-revolutionary parties mentioned in one article and using them to head an entirely new search. This sort of expansion upon facts served as my main form of research and Lexis-Nexis was my primary tool which yielded significant results for all the above strategies.

To support the details of specific action I also needed very basic and broad informative statistics like numbers regarding population and election results or literacy percentages. In the reference section of Lexis-Nexis called "World Almanac", nearly every statistic needed was either directly given (as in population of Oaxaca) or a website was referenced where I could find the information (like the percentage of children over age 15 who attended school in Oaxaca). Another valuable type of research that I decided to utilize to back up the base facts of the current

event was the opinion of not only citizens but leaders and movements involved. To find such opinions, I often traced the name of the newspaper which published articles and went to their site, which gave more expanded opinion articles on similar topics as addressed in the world news section. Also, many authors for magazines also found during my research at the library had particular interests and viewpoints on not only Oaxaca but revolutions in general therefore I could LINUS their name found through Lexis-Nexis and gather further opinionated and factual information. One example of this research technique which yielded imperative results was that of radio broadcaster Diego Cevallos, a revolutionary figure whose work I first found in *World History Archives* online and later traced his name back to the first radio revolt in Oaxaca, an extremely important piece for my paper. Therefore it was through the basic use and expansion upon the library research tools that I was able to become informed about and discover new viewpoints on the Oaxaca revolution of 2006.