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Evangelicalism and Peace and Conflict Studies: A Wheaton College Case Study

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Evangelicalism and Peace and Conflict Studies: A Wheaton College Case Study

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SIT Graduate Institute

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A capstone paper submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a Master of Arts in Peacebuilding and Conflict Transformation at SIT Graduate Institute in Brattleboro, Vermont, USA.

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Abstract

Evangelicalism and peace and conflict studies are both salient topics in addressing current religious and political dynamics in the United States. Amid the realities and myths surrounding these topics, there are many complementarities and tensions between evangelicalism and peace and conflict studies, both real and perceived. One of evangelicalism's most prominent academic institutions, Wheaton College, recently established a Peace and Conflict Studies Program, placing this program at the center of an unexpected relationship between peace and conflict studies and evangelicalism. This study examines the views of students in Wheaton's Peace and Conflict Studies Program to explore how they see the relationship between evangelicalism and peace and conflict studies, as their voices provide a unique insight into this relationship. The research includes an analysis of current literature on evangelicalism and peace and conflict studies as well as semi-structured interviews carried out with Wheaton peace and conflict studies students. Bringing these sources together, the research then explores how the literature findings and the interviews compare and what that could mean for the relationship between evangelicalism and peace and conflict studies moving forward.

Introduction

Overview

Evangelicalism; a word with many connotations and with a contentious history in the United States. While the meaning and associations of the word “evangelicalism” have evolved in the United States over time, today evangelicalism is often associated with politics, especially for those who are not evangelicals. After the 2016 election of Donald Trump, in which 80% of white evangelical voters cast a vote in support of his presidency, far-right candidate Roy Moore in Alabama received extensive evangelical support in 2017 (Weber, 2017), and evangelicals are widely assumed to be pro-life and anti-LGBTQ.

Evangelical college campuses have also made headlines in recent years. At Liberty University in 2015, college President Jerry Falwell, Jr. remarked to students that “I’ve always thought if more good people had concealed carry permits, then we could end those Muslims before they walked in” (Associated Press, 2015). Falwell later said that he was only referencing the shooters in San Bernardino, but his comments raised significant concerns about evangelicalism’s acceptance and promotion of Islamophobia in the United States. Similarly, Wheaton College in Wheaton, Illinois rocked evangelical academia with the controversy surrounding Dr. Larycia Hawkins, Wheaton’s first tenured black female professor, who wore a hijab to show solidarity with Muslim Americans in response to increased Islamophobia in the United States. She expressed her solidarity in a Facebook post in December 2015 with a photo of herself in a hijab, stating that Muslims and Christians “worship the same God.” She was quickly placed on administrative leave (Graham, 2015). After weeks of intense division on Wheaton’s campus and across the country as to whether she should be reinstated or removed from her position, Dr. Hawkins and Wheaton College “parted ways” in a behind-closed-doors agreement

(Dias, 2016). Wheaton's leadership asserted that the decision had nothing to do with her race, gender, marital status, or even her wearing of the hijab but was only related to the theology of her statement. Other Wheaton professors have pointed out, however, that when they as white men had made statements the college found problematic, they were not addressed with the severity of the response Larycia Hawkins received (Pashman, 2016).

Dr. Larycia Hawkins founded a new Peace and Conflict Studies Program at Wheaton College that was in its first year of existence when she was removed from her position. The college later endowed a scholarship to the program in her name (Gaytan, 2018), but many students, alumni and faculty found it to be a hollow, even hypocritical, gesture since she had not been allowed to remain in her teaching position. The situation surrounding Dr. Hawkins' removal was especially ironic and painful considering the relevance of the new peace and conflict studies program to Dr. Hawkins' actions, the college's handling of the situation and the college's attempts at reconciliation with the campus afterward (Graham, 2016).

In light of such events on evangelical campuses and in evangelicalism in general, this study explores their roots in more depth. In the context of the U.S.'s broader narrative of evangelicalism, a peace and conflict studies program at Wheaton seems out of place. As a Wheaton College alumna who went on to study peacebuilding and conflict transformation, I am interested in how evangelicalism and peace and conflict studies intersect and how current students at this intersection perceive their unique context. This is a study about the perspectives of peace and conflict studies students at Wheaton College and how they understand the complicated relationships between religion, race, culture, politics and faith.

Relevance

Besides my own personal connection¹ to evangelicalism in the United States, the current role of evangelicalism in the contemporary United States is worth examining. First, evangelicals represent a significant voting bloc in the United States. As Patterson and Lenerville write, “And since evangelicals make up a quarter or more of the American electorate, their views will continue to influence American foreign policy” (2011, p. 146-7; Worthen, 2014; Amstutz, 2014). That is not to say that evangelical views and votes are all homogenous, but there have been a number of noteworthy trends, including the earlier referenced 2016 election of Donald Trump, a candidate who seemed to embody the opposite of the values evangelicals espouse. In recent years, white evangelicals have been surveyed as being supportive of maintaining and supporting a large military, the “war on terror” and the policy of preemptive war (Patterson & Lenerville, 2011, p. 140). This support is especially worth noting in light of the size and potential influence of evangelicals in making these policies a reality in the United States.

Even so, evangelicalism is not a monolith, and one of the most significant divisions regarding political and social opinions and values exists on generational lines with younger, college-age evangelicals often including a wider range of issues in their social/political concerns than their older evangelical counterparts (Smidt, 2013). This division led me to focus on the views of students at an evangelical college. More specifically, I chose to focus on Wheaton College in Illinois because of my own experience as a student there, Wheaton’s revered position as the “Harvard of evangelicalism” and Wheaton’s addition of a peace and conflict studies program within the last few years. Wheaton has been called “a leader among contemporary American Christian colleges” (Schuman, 2010, p. 210), “is universally cited as one of the nation’s premier Christian liberal arts institutions” (Schuman, 2010, p. 146), and

¹ I attended Wheaton College for my undergraduate degree and have spent time in various evangelical settings throughout my childhood.

“evangelicalism’s flagship institution” (Worthen, 2017, p. 257). Because of this, Wheaton and its policies, decisions, and actions are subject to a high level of scrutiny by evangelicals and non-evangelicals around the country (Schuman, 2010), and many view it as an exemplar or representation of evangelicalism in academia.

By creating a peace and conflict studies certificate program, Wheaton has played a role in inserting peace and conflict topics into greater prominence among American evangelicals. Peace and conflict studies has the potential to influence and integrate itself into the fabric of an institution (Elias, 1990). When this institution is Wheaton, it has the potential to integrate into the fabric of evangelicalism as well.

This study, then, examines the views of peace and conflict studies students at Wheaton regarding the role of and relationship between evangelicalism and peace studies and see how this connection compares to the way peace and conflict studies generally presents evangelicalism. I hope to present a deeper and more accurate picture of one facet of evangelicalism through the views of these students. As a result, I hope evangelicalism can use this increased understanding to build partnerships in peace and conflict arenas and collaboratively build connections among evangelicals in the United States.

Central Question

Thus, this study explores Wheaton students’ views on the relationship between their area of study in peace and conflict and evangelicalism in the United States, especially with their unique perspective as students at an evangelical college. The central research question is:

How do students pursuing peace and conflict studies at Wheaton College understand the inherent complementarities and tensions between evangelicalism and the field of peace and

conflict studies in the United States? How do these perceptions compare to the way that evangelicalism is generally presented in peace and conflict studies literature?

Literature Review

There are inherent complementarities and tensions in the relationship between evangelicalism and peace and conflict studies in the United States. While in theory there are many values and topics through which evangelicalism and peace studies might intersect and collaborate, peace studies literature presents a varied, and sometimes contradictory, picture of American religion and evangelicalism and its role in peace and conflict. By consolidating the wide range of views and descriptions, a clearer picture will emerge of the way evangelicalism is understood and presented by peace and conflict studies literature. Additionally, there are several emerging themes common to both evangelicalism and peace studies. In furthering our understanding of the relationship between these two in the past and present we may be able to explore how they may interact and work together moving forward.

Definitions

One complication in analyzing and understanding the relationship between evangelicalism and peace and conflict studies is the variety of definitions used for evangelicalism, as various scholars, practitioners and the general population use their own differing definitions to understand and explain it. Examining these definitions is essential, however, if we are to understand the varied and often inconsistent picture painted of evangelicalism in the United States. Scholars have noted that often people think they know what evangelicalism is, but that many of these ideas are imprecise, one-dimensional and inconsistent (Ryden, 2011; Smidt 2013; Patterson & Lenerville 2011). Such inconsistency has often produced inaccurate data and conclusions due to differing or vague understandings of evangelicalism.

While different definitions create issues in understanding evangelicalism from a research perspective, such issues are understandable. The word *evangelicalism* entails a wide range of ideas when including its use by scholars, political leaders, religious leaders, non-evangelical Americans and self-identifying evangelical Americans themselves. These definitions have included such variations as a political-religious bloc, “a collectivity of individuals, a religious movement...a religious tradition,” (Smidt, 2013, p. 2) those who adhere to a set of core doctrinal beliefs, or a group of churches with a particular “‘style’ or practice of evangelization.” (Patterson & Lenerville, 2011, p. 134). The challenge is that each of these understandings of evangelicalism, while distinctive, does represent a facet of this complicated and loaded word. Smidt even suggests that “the religious category ‘evangelicals’ is basically a figment of one’s imagination” (2013, p. 1). If this is the case, though, what use is the word *evangelicalism*? Molly Worthen (2014) writes,

...if we continue to use the word *evangelical* at all, and we will- we must allow room for diversity and internal contradiction, for those who love the label and those who hate it. We must recognize that American evangelicalism owes more to its fractures and clashes, its anxieties and doubts, than to any political pronouncement or point of doctrine. (p. 264-265)

In integrating the spirit and wisdom of Worthen with the specificity required of research, I will define evangelicalism as a Protestant religious movement built on a set of four key theological beliefs outlined by the National Association of Evangelicals (NAE, 2015) and manifesting in a range of differing views and values beyond those four central beliefs. The four key theological beliefs are: The Bible as the highest authority for belief, salvation only through trust in Jesus,

Jesus' death as the only sacrifice for sin, and the importance of evangelizing non-Christians (NAE, 2015).

Defining peace and conflict studies is less debated, and while it also has much that it entails, it can be defined much more clearly. Peace and conflict studies is a formal academic discipline studied at the undergraduate, graduate and postgraduate levels. Harris (2002) describes it as a discipline with a “geopolitical focus...[that] focuses on the causes of war, and alternatives to war...” (pg. 18). A distinctive feature of peace and conflict studies that should be included in its definition is the interdisciplinary—and even transdisciplinary (Alger, 2007)—nature of the field. Since peace and conflict studies draws from so many different disciplines, peace and conflict studies must necessarily, then, include the “relevant knowledge emerging from a range of linked disciplines” (Alger, 2007, p. 300). Thus, peace and conflict studies includes content and knowledge of any discipline that assists in providing a more complete understanding of peace and conflict.

Peace and Conflict Studies and Religion

Peace and conflict studies has certainly addressed the topic of religion, as religion has been a salient element in many major conflicts throughout history. Peace and conflict studies literature recognizes this and acknowledges religion's existing and potential role in peace and conflict contexts. Regarding the United States, Butler (2017) writes,

Religious language also stood at the center of America's deepest political arguments about foreign policy and war from the American Revolution forward. God has fought on every side and supported and opposed every American intervention, including even World War II. The terrorist events of September 2001 inspired responses that were

unique to the moment yet embedded inside a long national history of religious support for and against American foreign policy and military intervention and action... (p. xii)

Christianity, and especially Protestantism, is the primary religion that Butler refers to and that has been a voice throughout the history of the United States on religion's place in peace and conflict.

Many scholars approach the topic of religion in peace and conflict contexts by noting the multitude of examples of religion being used as a motivating or supporting voice for violence and for intensifying or justifying conflict (Kosek, 2017; Carter & Smith, 2004; Bartoli, 2004; MacQueen, 2007; Alger, 2007). These same sources then proceed to counterbalance their examples with examples that show religion's equal potential as a force for peace (Kosek, 2017; Carter & Smith, 2004; MacQueen, 2007; Alger, 2007; Brown, 1973). Due to the prevalence of these assertions, one might infer that such is the standard position on the role and potential role of religion in peace and conflict studies. Is this, however, all there is to be gleaned about religion's place in peace and conflict? Dr. Graeme MacQueen does not think so, calling this conclusion "simplistic" (2007, p. 319). While it does seem to be true that religion is a strong force for both peace and violence, what does this mean on a deeper level?

Themes in Peace and Conflict Studies and Evangelicalism

In examining the history and current place of Christianity—evangelicalism in particular—in peace and conflict discussions in the United States, a few themes emerge. These themes describe how evangelicalism intersects with peace and conflict studies literature on a deeper, more complex level and what these themes suggest for evangelicalism's place in peace and conflict studies and work. These themes include the diverse and evolving nature of

evangelicalism, issues in evangelicalism such as racism and colonialism, and the key place of individualism in American evangelicalism.

First, as suggested earlier, when examined at a deeper level, evangelicalism is more diverse than is often understood and is constantly evolving. This is especially evident in the gap between older and younger generations of evangelicals. One common assumption about evangelicalism is that its members are mostly aligned with conservatives who are primarily concerned with preventing abortion and gay marriage (Ryden, 2011). While this is often the case, emerging voices in evangelicalism call for attention to and involvement in a wider array of social and political topics (Ryden, 2011; Smidt, 2013; Amstutz, 2014). The expansion of concerns among younger generations in evangelicalism has the potential to include peace and conflict topics as one of its emerging priorities. This is all the more reason, then, to explore the views of students in this younger generation studying peace and conflict studies at an evangelical college. What insights might their perspectives offer in terms of the relationship between evangelicalism and peace and conflict studies moving into the future?

Another theme that rises in the literature offering insights about this relationship is the presence of racism and colonialism that exist in both evangelicalism and peace and conflict studies. This is connected to the history of Christianity and violence in the United States. Andrea Bartoli writes,

The colonial adventure created the conditions for the emergence of the United States, which also has strong links with Christianity... Currently, it must be noted that the emergence of the United States as the world's only superpower is perceived by many as an obstacle to peacebuilding especially when the United States asserts itself as powerful defender of Judeo-Christian traditions. (2004, p. 152)

Christianity as a whole in the United States has yet to address historical evils carried out by Christians in America on a large scale. Though some denominations have made a conscious effort to address issues of racism and violence as they connect with Christianity, there remains much work for the Church to do. Unfortunately, a parallel issue exists in the field of peace and conflict studies. Like the roots of Christianity in the United States, “the current paradigm for Peace Studies is fundamentally marked by colonialism and race” (Azarmandi, 2018, p. 69). Again, while many Western peace and conflict studies scholars have intentionally worked to address issues of white supremacy and colonialism in their work, many have not, and Azarmandi (2018) argues that racism needs to be an essential framework and topic through which all peace and conflict studies endeavors must be carried out due to its past and present significance. Thus, both evangelicalism and peace and conflict studies in the United States need to address the major issues of racism and colonialism both independently and collaboratively. This relates to the earlier assertion that though religion has played a central role in violence, it also has the potential to aid peace and reconciliation. Racism and colonialism, though, are areas in which this has yet to become a widespread reality.

A third significant theme in evangelicalism as it relates to peace and conflict studies is the prevalence of individualism in American evangelicalism (Smidt, 2013) and how it relates to perspectives on society and politics, including peace and conflict topics. Evangelicals generally believe faith should influence every dimension of life including informing perspectives and actions on social and political topics (Ryden, 2011). This makes evangelicals’ faith and beliefs extremely powerful factors in shaping their opinions and actions. Individualism within evangelicalism, then, has significant implications for how this plays out.

In terms of faith and theological beliefs, evangelicals tend to emphasize individual morality or “souls” over structural or policy issues (Amstutz, 2014, p. 72). Many evangelicals believe that the best way to change large-scale issues in society is through individual transformation (Amstutz, 2014). This also leads to seeing blame and moral responsibility resting only on individuals and “[existing] independent of structures and institutions” (Smidt, 2013, p.133). This plays out in a couple of ways. First, as opposed to the Catholic Church with its long history of doctrine and tradition that inform political stances, the individualism of American evangelicalism has led to individuals forming political stances often influenced more by the surrounding U.S. culture than by a solid, informed foundation of faith and theology, as one might expect of evangelicals (Ryden, 2011). Similarly, issues in evangelicalism and the United States such as racism are seen only as problems of individuals with racist ideas rather than including structural and cultural dimensions of such issues. How does this impact evangelicalism’s engagement with the issues of structural and cultural violence in peace and conflict studies? Such an individualist perspective may block American evangelicals from engaging with conflict issues on a larger or more complex scale. Friesan (1986) writes, “To try to convert individuals or to treat the victims of a disaster without struggling to change the conditions which cause the disaster is to fail to fulfill Christian social responsibility” (p. 109). Due to an individualistic framework, evangelicals may see peace and conflict topics as primarily related to issues of direct violence rather than as also including structural and cultural issues.

While there have been some investigations of the connections between evangelicalism and peace and conflict studies, many of these investigations are tangential to other primary focuses, and the connections have not been given the depth and focus they require. The existing literature on evangelicalism in peace and conflict studies draws from a range of disciplines,

which shows the range of angles from which peace and conflict may be approached, but it does not give much specific information on their relationship. This research seeks to address this gap by clarifying the way the relationship between evangelicalism and peace and conflict studies is perceived by those who are intimately involved at the intersection of both: peace and conflict studies students at an evangelical institution. Due to the prominence of the study's focus institution, Wheaton College, in American evangelicalism, the results may provide insight into how evangelicalism and peace and conflict studies might connect moving forward.

Inquiry Methodology

Site and Participant Description and Sampling

The interviews for this study took place in the context of Wheaton College's Peace and Conflict Studies program. In recruiting participants, I used both purposive sampling, as the research focuses only on students in Wheaton's Peace and Conflict Studies program, as well as convenience sampling due to students self-selecting to participate in interviews with me. All participants are current students in Wheaton College's Peace and Conflict Studies program at the time of the research, ranging from freshmen to seniors.

Data Collection and Analysis

I used a single case study approach and conducted individual semi-structured interviews with student participants. I used an interview guide with a semi-structured approach ("Semi-structured Interviews," n.d.) so that I would be able to address any relevant directions or topics brought up by the interviewees that my questions did not address (See attached Interview Guide in Appendix A). I reached out to the chair of the program to see how he recommended I proceed with getting in touch with students in the program. He directed me to the department administrator who facilitated sending an informational email to all students in the program. After

receiving responses from students in the program, I interviewed each student who expressed interest in participating. To offset practical challenges of securing interviews, I made myself available to meet with students over the course of two weeks, providing more options for them, and was in close communication with the department administrator who provided extensive assistance in connecting me with as many students as possible. I was able to interview 6 out of 15 students, or 40% of the program. The interviews lasted about 30 minutes and took place at public locations selected by participants, either on Wheaton's campus or in nearby downtown Wheaton, IL. The interviews provided a rich exploration of these students' perspectives in their context within both the peace and conflict studies program specifically and within the broader evangelical context of Wheaton College.

Participation in the study was entirely voluntary for students, and to help participants feel safe in participating and free to express their genuine opinions, they are not individually identified in any way except as Wheaton College students studying peace and conflict studies. Interviews were recorded with permission and the informed consent of participants, and the recordings and transcriptions have been stored on password protected devices accessible only to me as the researcher. Both the recordings and transcriptions have been deleted upon the completion of the project. The final research paper will be shared with the students who participated in the interviews as well as with the staff and faculty in the Peace and Conflict Studies program at Wheaton College so that they will also be aware of how students perceive the program.

After speaking with students in interviews, I uploaded the interviews to the Dedoose² data analysis platform. Using Dedoose, I established codes to organize the data, to see what common themes emerged and to see how the students' views might be better understood. I assessed the frequency of code occurrence, how those codes addressed the research question and how various themes overlapped. I examined how the interview responses and common themes compare with the presentation of evangelicalism in the peace and conflict studies literature. Some of these comparisons addressed how the multifaceted nature of evangelicalism relates to engagement with peace and conflict topics, how racism and colonialism are addressed, and how the presence of individualism in American evangelicalism impacts peace and conflict studies, especially when dealing with structural and cultural topics.

Limitations and Delimitations

Limitations in this study include the number and nature of students who participated, since interviewees were self-selected. Further, there are inherent limitations in self-reporting, which is what made up the interviews and thus my data collection. Additionally, I, as the researcher, have biases around the topic due to my background at Wheaton and due to my current studies in peace and conflict, which I did my best to address by verifying findings with interview participants to ensure I represented their perspectives as accurately as possible. Perhaps most importantly, though, while Wheaton was selected in part for its prominence in evangelical academia, the findings regarding Wheaton's program cannot necessarily be generalized to other evangelical peace and conflict studies programs or to evangelicalism in the United States as a whole. The findings will, however, hopefully provide insight into the specific

² Dedoose is a comprehensive online platform that assists with qualitative and mixed methods research by providing data management, coding, excerpt organization and analysis tools.

context of Wheaton's Peace and Conflict Studies program, how that specific program may develop in the future and how it might continue to interact with evangelicalism more broadly.

Delimitations in the study include selecting a case study that addressed only the students in Wheaton College's Peace and Conflict Studies program so that I could focus on that program specifically. This was an intentional choice due in part to logistical considerations such as time and personal limitations and in part due to Wheaton's background and reputation. I sought to address Wheaton's context in depth and to let other related programs examine the findings from Wheaton and determine whether or how those findings relate to their context.

Positionality

As a former Wheaton College student, I have unique insight into the setting and experiences of the students I interviewed, but I also have my own background, impressions and emotional connections (both positive and negative) to the setting which may impact my reception or interpretation of the data. I sought to represent the views of the interviewees as accurately as possible so that I am not misrepresenting or misinterpreting their perspectives. I offered interviewees the opportunity to verify my analysis before finalizing it in my capstone to ensure they believe it is an accurate representation of their perspectives.

Additionally, as a white person researching evangelicalism in the United States, I encountered my limited perspective as I moved through carrying out the research. I came to realize that often my assumptions in defining or asking questions about evangelicalism approached it as *white* evangelicalism- thinking of that as the default in the back of my mind. I realized that I needed to differentiate between evangelicalism in general and "white evangelicalism" in particular. I succumbed to the view of whiteness as the "default," and shifting that framework is something I've been working to integrate into this project. I have sought to

integrate intentional acknowledgment of race throughout my analysis and interpretation of the research.

Results of Interviews

Complementarities Between Evangelicalism and Peace and Conflict Studies

The students brought up many complementarities between evangelicalism and peace and conflict studies. They noted that these complementarities were most deeply present in overlapping themes that are foundational to both evangelicalism and peace and conflict studies. Every student brought up a few or all of the themes of peace, justice, forgiveness, reconciliation and amity in peace and conflict studies and how those themes connect with evangelical faith. One student said, “So it’s really interesting just how much we’ll be talking about something in class and I’ll just pause and realize that’s basically the gospel in different words” (Interview A). Students shared how the entire story of the Bible is a story of peace and conflict and reconciliation between humans as well as between humans and God. Another student phrased it as:

...the way that I view evangelicalism and the story of God, and the story of Christ, and the story of like how the world was created... I see it as a story of peace, as a story of conflict, and a story of the resolution and forgiveness of that conflict and the strife that arises from people being people. ... I think you can talk about pretty much any individual Bible story and the entire arc of the Bible, Gods’ covenant with people, as an interaction of peace and an interaction of conflict. ...so I think ...it’s silly to suggest that evangelicalism is not connected to peace and conflict, but I also think that usually people don’t think about it that way. (Interview F)

Even beyond this, students shared how the nature of Jesus and of God is essentially encapsulated by the two core themes of peace and conflict studies, namely, mercy and justice. They saw this as a holistic picture of the nature of God and as an example to emulate through the manifestation of mercy and justice in Jesus' life. "[God is] so multi-faceted, and I think peace and conflict studies can be a good like representation of the holistic way in which we should approach the world" (Interview B). These students saw the nature of God and Christian doctrines as intimately connected with the focus of peace and conflict studies. The students spoke of not only the content of peace and conflict studies but also saw the *process* of peacebuilding as gospel-centered. This was the most consistent complementarity between evangelicalism and peace and conflict studies brought up in the interviews- that the core themes of evangelicalism and peace and conflict studies are foundationally similar.

Another complementarity raised by the students was motivation for past and present evangelicals' involvement in peacebuilding including studying peace and conflict topics or Christian inspiration for peacebuilding. They raised examples of exemplary peacebuilders such as Martin Luther King, Jr., Gandhi and Nelson Mandela, noting that these figures were either gospel-motivated, as in the case of MLK and Nelson Mandela, or gospel-influenced, as in the case of Gandhi. Students described what motivated their involvement in peace and conflict studies and what shaped the specifics of that approach as they went along. One student said, "Faith is what drives a lot of us," (Interview C) and pointed out that Jesus' life and teachings focused on justice seeking, peacebuilding, loving "the least of these"- those society considers the least important, those with the fewest resources, support or opportunities, those most looked-down on and discriminated against, and on how you can be of service to others.

Furthermore, students expressed how Christianity in its essence is a message and mandate of love, which when put into practice includes work for peace and justice. This was a noteworthy trend throughout the interviews: not only are there faith-based motivations for peacebuilding, there is actually a *mandate* for Christians to be involved in such work. Students used phrases such as being called to a “ministry of reconciliation by the Holy Spirit” (Interview E), described the “...mandate...of loving the Lord and loving our neighbor as our self like if we acknowledge that our neighbor is not limited to any one group” (Interview B) and referenced a “calling” and that they intended to be “obedient to that call” (Interview E). So, for many of these students, they saw involvement in peace and conflict studies as not only something that fit with their faith but also something that was *commanded* by their faith. Their involvement in peace and conflict studies and the discussion in their courses is tied to questions of how they can live out these mandates in their lives and explore what following Jesus’ example looks like in practice.

In a similar vein, students also noted the particular value of studying peace and conflict studies in an evangelical setting, or *as* evangelicals. A word that came up repeatedly throughout various interviews was “hope” (Interview B, C, E). Students described their faith as giving them perspective, sustenance, and comfort. They brought up the difficulty of engaging with peace and conflict topics and doing peace and conflict work. They expressed not knowing how they would maintain hope without “the hope that is in Jesus Christ” (Interview E), “an eternal view,” “moral backing for your work that sustains you when you get pushback” (Interview C), “promise of redemption” and “connect[ing] with the heart of God” (Interview B). All of these accounts spoke to the central role of faith in not only what led to and informed these students’ involvement in peace and conflict studies, but also the spiritual, mental, emotional presence of God that allowed them to continue in it.

Looking ahead, Wheaton peace and conflict studies students also shared the complementarities they saw in the potential relationship between evangelicalism and peace and conflict studies moving forward. The students held a wide range of perspectives on where these complementarities would land. Some students' perspectives were based on tangible areas that they saw for collaboration, while others were focused on hopes for this collaboration to exist on broader and deeper levels. Some existing collaborations they mentioned were evangelical conferences that focused on topics addressing injustice from a faith perspective and churches collaborating with nonprofits to support those nonprofits in their work.

Areas in which interviewees expressed broader visions of future collaboration between evangelicalism and peace and conflict studies were in emphasizing the biblical and evangelical themes that overlap with peace and conflict studies and how the church can further engage with those themes. They hoped that church leaders would talk and learn about peace and conflict topics more, train people to be peacemakers and that the Church could be a place that addresses conflict in its own congregations and communities in a healthy way and expands outward from there. They also felt that many evangelicals do not know about peace and conflict studies but that they are very excited to hear about it, so they felt there was extensive potential for peacebuilding efforts to emerge strongly from a gospel angle.

In particular, interviewees pointed out their experiences with other Wheaton students in the relationship between evangelicalism and peace and conflict studies. Similar to the broader evangelical community, interviewees experienced that, overall, fellow Wheaton students are unfamiliar with the peace and conflict program at Wheaton. Interview participants said, though, that other students were enthusiastic when they explained the program to them, and one interviewee said, "Wheaton students are hungry to talk about issues of injustice" (Interview B).

Another student said that this generation has a lot of potential to influence and engage with these issues. Another believed that as Wheaton students graduate from the peace and conflict studies program, they will share what they have learned. Consequently, the work and awareness of peace and conflict topics will expand in the broader evangelical community.

Thus, Wheaton peace and conflict studies students focused on complementarities mostly related to their faith identity and the theological themes that connect evangelicalism with peace and conflict studies. The core themes of these complementarities are not unique to evangelicalism but are present in Christianity as a whole, including Catholicism and other Protestant denominations. Themes such as mercy and justice are present in all Christian denominations, as well as in other faiths, but their presence in evangelicalism is an important opening for increased evangelical engagement in peace and conflict topics.

Tensions Between Evangelicalism and Peace and Conflict Studies

On the other hand, Wheaton peace and conflict studies students also shared their views on tensions between evangelicalism and peace and conflict studies. These tensions included differing evangelical interpretations of biblical texts, various cultural trends in evangelical responses to peace and conflict topics, harms caused by the Church and by evangelicals, and political tensions. Thus, the tensions between evangelicalism and peace and conflict studies focused more on the manifestation of peace and conflict topics in the life and actions of evangelicals rather than on the complementary values and themes at the root of evangelicalism and peace and conflict studies.

The first tension between evangelicalism and peace and conflict studies is a tension within evangelicalism arising from differing, and even opposing, interpretations of biblical texts. One student brought up the example of Christians who believe in just war compared with those

who believe in total pacifism, both based on their faith convictions. As a historical example, the Crusades that spanned centuries beginning in late 11th century were also based on a faith conviction and connect to what Interview C calls “weaponized Christianity”. This interview discussed “weaponized Christianity” especially in the context of conflict in the Balkans in the ‘90s but acknowledged its prevalence throughout the history of Christianity. A less extreme example resulting from these different interpretations is extensive arguing within evangelical circles about whose interpretation is right, putting the focus on who is “right” rather than on working for peace and conflict topics. This makes it difficult to engage evangelicals on peace and conflict topics in a unified way because of the range of beliefs, interpretations and values that exist within evangelicalism on these topics.

A broader, more varied tension between evangelicalism and peace and conflict studies that the students brought up exists in common trends in white evangelicalism in particular. One theme that emerged from the interviews was a general sense of evangelicals avoiding engagement in activities, discussions, and other contexts that were uncomfortable. They described evangelicals overall as supportive of peace and justice values but that this does not necessarily lead to action. One student cited MLK when he wrote: “...I have been gravely disappointed with the white moderate. ...who is more devoted to 'order' than to justice; who prefers a negative peace which is the absence of tension to a positive peace which is the presence of justice” (King, 1963). The student said,

I also think you get some of what Martin Luther King Jr. talks about in moderates are worse than those who are going against us because a lot of evangelicalism does sort of ignore these things. And like they agree with it but don't necessarily act on it, and so I think you also get a view of evangelicalism as the passive pacifist which are- it isn't

always- but... ‘oh, I think God calls us to not kill anybody so I’m just going to not care about what’s going on in these other countries,’ which is not what it is. So I think you have two sides. You have either evangelicalism can be your biggest ally or they can just be super frustrating because they’re not doing it. (Interview B)

This student tying white American evangelicalism to avoidance of tension was something that came up in many interviews. In practice, the students believed evangelicals as a whole are essentially evading peace and conflict topics by talking about the nice-sounding peace parts but not showing the same engagement with difficult topics and content, seeking the “absence of tension.” One student said, “But then we just talk very nicely, but we don’t actually do or live out the freedom of your salvation... They’re just- they are just proclaiming your [God’s] truth, but what about living your truth?” (Interview E). Similarly, another student said, “we tend to focus on [forgiveness] a lot. ...or on like the aspect of mercy...and we kind of shy away from harder topics” (Interview D). They described an avoidance of tense environments and hard conversations and that overall evangelicals would rather focus on the nice things and being nice to people but don’t always go into the tangibility and difficulty of what it looks like in practice to “love your enemies,” “care for orphans and widows,” and “seek justice.” According to the students, evangelicals like to talk about relevant spiritual themes but have not deeply developed or acted on what that truly looks like in everyday life.

...when the Lord calls us to make disciples it’s not- it’s not necessarily just like I said to preach a message of salvation but walk alongside them. Get into their mess with them. Approaching peace means conflict, and conflict is dirty and messy and painful and confusing and exhausting, and we’re not getting into that. We’d rather skip that part and go to the peace by just saying, ‘You’re free. But I’m not going to help you with the- with

the physical necessity that you have right now.’ Um, and I believe that professors like the peace and conflict professor -who’s great- has a good mindset. I don’t think that’s the majority mindset though. (Interview E)

The student pointed out that churches cannot just skip the messy, difficult parts to get to the peace—they must be fully engaged through the entire process of conflict transformation and establish a positive peace that includes justice, not just a negative peace that appears serene on the surface.

Further, interviewees raised a few examples of evangelical discomfort with difference in race and/or religion in their childhood or home church communities. One student described a home church’s opposition to the Black Lives Matter movement and how the church was not listening to those in the movement and saw the movement as problematic. The student described: “coming into Wheaton it was a shock to me to think like, wow, these issues are actually real and like worth considering” (Interview B). Another student described a home church community that expressed opposition to the surrounding Muslim community. The student described,

...with that proximity [to Muslim communities] came a lot of backlash from some people...in some of my circles... like, ‘They’re anti-Christian. We have to be...against them kind of, like not as people- ...Like...we can’t be friends with their beliefs. Like be nice to them, but...’” (Interview C)

Only a surface connection was allowed between this student’s evangelical community and the community’s Muslim neighbors. A degree of niceness or politeness was prescribed, but there was a limit to the extent and genuineness of connection that was allowed. Similar examples of racism and Islamophobia are present in many of today’s American evangelical churches and were factors in Wheaton College’s ousting of Dr. Hawkins.

Relatedly, another student wondered whether staying so exclusively in evangelical settings prevents many evangelicals from truly knowing and respecting other communities and contexts and being able to listen and engage. The student said,

The danger, though, could be that it'll be hard to put ourselves in the shoes of others, that we think that we're the right ones... that Western minds sort of, I'm gonna help them, without actually learning their culture and learning their context may- may be a danger if one just stays in the evangelical setting. Because you're in this bubble. And maybe like in a nonevangelical setting you have more different voices and it forces you, whether you like it or not, to hear other people and a different point of view, different contexts.

(Interview E)

This seems to be the case in both of the earlier students' examples of their home churches—that a “bubble” existed around their evangelical communities that prevented them from needing to listen to or address other groups' concerns, views and experiences.

Another student raised the issue of individualism in American evangelicalism—on a personal level and on an institutional level. Focus on the individual is cultivated in one way through the emphasis on one's personal relationship with Jesus. One student said, “It's not just about our personal relationship...we are not the main characters. When we become the main characters of the gospel, we are making the gospel smaller than it really is” (Interview E). The students pointed out that while individual faith is an important part of evangelicalism, it is far from complete, and another student said, “the problem that I see right now with evangelicalism is that we are falling into a Pharisaical [sic] way of living where we focus so much on the individual rules and the individual instructions that we miss the big picture” (Interview F). Thus, the students were concerned that individualistic focuses of evangelicalism led to a narrow and

limited view of reality or of what faith called them to focus on. They asserted that faith does, and needs to, include so much more than us as individuals.

These cultural trends in evangelicalism can be traced back to a connection with white supremacy in evangelicalism in the United States. Not all evangelicals are white, but most of them are, roughly 76% (Pew, 2019), and these cultural manifestations connect with white supremacy on a fundamental level. Matt Vega, a Wheaton College alumnus and current divinity student at the University of Chicago, recently posted on Facebook about the differences between white and black Christianity:

...White Christianity has always been dominant and powerful Christianity. It has fought long and hard to maintain its power and prestige while trying to claim the bold prophetic legacy as its own too. It has said, “this is a CHRISTIAN legacy, not a black or white one” while it refuses to take the risks that would divest itself of its power. White Christianity quibbles over metaphysical debates between theologians of its heritage and their contemporaries. It remains in the classroom, or in its white churches, secretly decries black and other theologies as ‘identitarian’ and insulates itself from harm. It gives money to charity to alleviate its conscience but it doesn’t divest itself of its own power by dismantling the systems that make for top-down giving. The unity white Christianity has always championed about itself and the ‘global south’ is one of hierarchy and economic dependence. The unity black Christianity has been about is solidarity through struggle, knowing Jesus is with them.

But the two *are* different. Don’t let anyone tell you otherwise. (Vega, 2019)

Matt Vega’s post summarizes much of what the interviewees hinted at in their experiences, though they might not even have been fully aware of the history and specifics that Matt points

out. Matt's differentiation, then, is at the core of this study and is an utterly essential framework for examining all the literature and interviews. A few phrases of Matt's to highlight on white Christianity that are especially connected to the results of the interviews as described by participants include: "dominant and powerful," "quibbles over metaphysical debates," "it remains in the classroom, or in its white churches...and insulates itself from harm," and "it gives to charity...but doesn't divest itself of its own power." Each of these phrases describe the evangelicalism that is also described by the interviewees. The interviews discussed American and Christian hegemony and weaponization, arguments on doctrine that remain only intellectual, the "bubble" nature of white evangelicalism, distance from discomfort, and a paternal sort of "help" rather than mutual learning and humbling itself.

Related to these issues, and perhaps resulting from them, students raised the tension of the harm the church at large has caused to many individuals and communities around the world as well as the harm evangelicals have caused in the U.S. in particular. This harm from evangelicals and the church has been physical as well as emotional and spiritual. One student referenced a few specific examples of the harm the church has caused the LGBTQ+ community and how the church has failed to engage with, get to know and support those who are experiencing homelessness. This student thought that even evangelicals are aware of these disconnects when looking at the relationship between these communities and American evangelicalism at large. Although many evangelicals may be aware of these broken relationships, most are extremely uncomfortable talking about it, as discussed above, leading to the issues remaining unaddressed and thus perpetuated. The student said,

I think at the same time because of the hurt that evangelicals have caused people and that evangelicalism...as a facet of the church has caused people...I think that without

acknowledging that pain and acknowledging that hurt and acknowledging that that was wrong to hurt them in that way, I don't think we're going to get anywhere with peace and conflict or with coming to actually a peace with the people that have been hurt by the church... I think it's really hard to see that as like an actual goal if you're not acknowledging your part in getting us to where we are now. And I think evangelicalism does not acknowledge its part in getting us to the broken place we're in now. (Interview F)

This student pointed out the importance of truth as a starting point for evangelicalism to move forward and to be able to connect in an authentic way with groups of people it has harmed individually and collectively.

A major issue, then, is the church not having widely acknowledged pain caused and harm done or admitted wrongdoing, much less committed to learning and acting differently in the future. In such a case, it will be extremely difficult for the church to be seen and trusted as a credible agent of peace in the United States. As the student in Interview F said,

...to not be able to reach or talk to that many people makes it really hard to...view yourself as an agency that as a group that is actually actively seeking peace and as an agent for peace and an agent for Christ.

Especially when this damage relates to racial harms and white evangelicalism habitually perpetuating white supremacy, it becomes difficult for the white church to be trusted or taken seriously in the present or the future when it has not addressed past harms. This feeling of betrayal by the church can be especially strong since it comes from an institution/community such as the church which is meant to be one of refuge and love. This is a major tension that led one interviewee to believe it will be impossible for peace and conflict and evangelicalism to

work together credibly and on any meaningful scale while these harms remain unaddressed. To be authentic and effective, though, Evangelicals cannot get to the “peace part” if they are unwilling to go through the acknowledgement and confession of having caused harm. The students shared that some courses at Wheaton were better than others at addressing this tension. One student expressed anger at the church and with American hegemony, wanting distance from this tension and not wanting Christian identity to be part of such injustice. The student said, “It makes me want to be really mad at the church and mad at, you know, the institutions that caused this” (Interview C). But acknowledging Christian identity, the student asked, with this awareness and as a Christian, how do I make sure I’m not perpetuating that? The student expressed a desire to hold that tension and to maintain both faith and concern for peace and conflict topics simultaneously.

Finally, an area in which the tensions between evangelicals and peace and conflict studies are perhaps most pronounced and most salient are when it comes to politics. This is also the area in which there are the biggest differences in belief between white evangelicals and evangelicals of other races. Janelle Wong, professor of American studies and Asian American studies writes,

The racial divides among evangelicals in the United States are strong and persistent across many issues. Black, Latino, and Asian American evangelicals were not only less likely to support Trump in 2016, they are much more progressive than white evangelicals on taxing the rich and providing federal funding to aid the poor. Non-white evangelicals diverge even more starkly from white evangelicals when it comes to immigration and race in the United States. White evangelicals are at least twice as likely as blacks, Latinos, or Asian Americans to believe “immigrants hurt the economy” or to oppose

Black Lives Matter. At the same time, I found that white evangelicals were reluctant to acknowledge or talk about race. (Wong, 2019)

An interview participant described the “sour” taste of evangelicalism at the moment.

Evangelicalism’s “sour” political dimensions are likely what those outside of evangelicalism think of when they hear the term “evangelicalism.” Politics is often how the earlier-mentioned tensions between evangelicalism and peace and conflict studies manifest in the United States. Evangelicals do not want to rock the boat politically, so they stay silent on issues that they believe may raise tension, which, in keeping with Janelle Wong’s research, includes discussions on race. One student said,

And they [evangelicals] don’t want to create a problem politically so they just stay silent for certain things and letting the government decide, and I believe they’re losing their- their voice. So either that or... I don’t know which is worse- when some pastors use...their spiritual authority to sway a community in saying like only this political party is the right one, which I think is such a danger. So when there’s like a misuse of spiritual authority... (Interview E)

The students described evangelicals as unwilling to step into others’ shoes to imagine the need and urgency for them to speak out and be involved. Again, this relates to an avoidance of difficult conversations and an unwillingness to sacrifice power and privilege. Furthermore, as the student mentioned, sometimes evangelical leaders will use their spiritual and religious authority to advocate for a certain political party, which currently is usually the Republican party.

Comparison of Lit and Students’ Views

Similarities

Overall, the results of the interviews confirmed the findings of the literature review. The interviews provided more specifics and a more personal view to those claims, but many of the themes and issues the students raised echoed the research findings present in the literature. In light of those similarities, I will highlight places where there was the most significant overlap and point out important experiential insights from student interviews that the literature review could not have captured. A few general assessments of evangelicalism and peace and conflict studies confirmed one another in terms of the interdisciplinary nature of peace and conflict studies, the wide variety of evangelical perspectives and the generation gap on social issues between older and younger evangelicals.

Of the general findings that overlapped, the literature pointed out the interdisciplinary nature of peace and conflict studies as an important element in its cohesiveness and integration of important learnings from many fields. Wheaton students also highlighted the interdisciplinary nature of the Wheaton Peace and Conflict Studies program. They shared that their peace and conflict studies introductory class was comprised of students from a wide variety of majors, even including ROTC (Reserve Officer Training Corps) students. Additionally, they shared how the peace and conflict studies professor regularly hosted guest lecturers from other departments to discuss peace and conflict studies from the perspective of those disciplines and the role other areas of study played in peace and conflict work. These additional fields expanded beyond international relations to include psychology, biblical and theological studies, and music, to name a few. Multiple students expressed how much they valued this aspect of the program and that they hoped it would continue to be interdisciplinary and to attract students from a wide variety of majors. Another area in which the literature and the interviews overlap is in describing the wide range of perspectives, values and beliefs present in American evangelicalism politically,

theologically and generationally. The literature cited a wider range of perspectives in evangelicalism than common knowledge of the definition often includes, and this range of views was echoed by interviewees who had encountered these views in their backgrounds, in their coursework and among their fellow evangelical students.

Further, individualism is another topic that was highlighted by both the literature review and participants in the interviews. This individualism was highlighted primarily in reference to the role of faith in shaping the students' and other evangelicals' views. On an individual level, faith deeply shapes the views and actions of many evangelicals, according to both the literature review and the interviews. The interviews also pointed out how a mindset of individualism narrowed the focus of evangelicalism, limiting its concern for a broader range of issues and shaping the gospel narrative. Thus, in the variety of ways it plays out, individualism does shape the views of many evangelicals, and this in turn influences evangelical priorities and actions.

Another similarity between the literature review and interview responses is the assessment that evangelicalism has not adequately addressed the harm it has caused towards those within the church and outside of it in its words, actions and inactions. The literature review pointed out that a framework that actively addresses racism and colonialism in the history of the American church is essential if the church seeks to change its legacy in these areas. Similarly, the interviewees pointed out that the church will have little credibility and be little trusted in these fundamental areas of race and colonization while they remain unaddressed and while the church has not repented of past and present wrongs.

Differences

While no contradictions arose between the literature review and student interviews, there were differences in the focus of the literature compared with the focus of the students' opinions.

The interview content contained the authenticity of personal experience and added a tangible, human element to the topics addressed. Obviously, this is related to the nature of a literature review versus an interview regarding an individual's experience and perspective. Even so, the personal nature of the interviews revealed an important dimension of peace and conflict in evangelicalism that the literature review could not access. It gives authentic insight into the perspectives of individuals and provides a window into how a few evangelicals are thinking about and approaching peace and conflict topics. This is significant because it provides insight into what is impacting and motivating young evangelicals in peace and conflict studies on a more personal than academic level. While the overviews and trends are important, personal experiences are also important to show what the relationship between evangelicalism and peace and conflict studies looks like at its most intimate, basic level.

A few emphases from interviewees stand out. Many interviewees pointed out the particular value of studying peace and conflict studies in an evangelical setting and the hope that they would not be able to have without an evangelical worldview to offer them strength and perspective. They described a more "complete peace" that could be reached or imagined with God in mind. They expressed that the field of peace and conflict studies needs the hope that can be found in Jesus. As a result, studying peace and conflict studies for these students became a very spiritual experience, as it led them to prayer and connecting with and seeking to express the nature of God in their work. This contrasts to the nature of the analysis in the literature review as it focused less on the spiritual nature of evangelicals in peace and conflict studies and primarily addressed cultural, religious, theological and political points. All of these points are essential to address but do not express the complete picture of what peace and conflict studies means to evangelicals when they do not include the spiritual dimension.

Secondly, interviewees pointed out the limited perspectives they encountered from studying peace and conflict studies in an evangelical setting. While this might seem obvious, I found it noteworthy that multiple participants raised this as a limitation of their peace and conflict studies experience and expressed wishes that they could have heard from and interacted with a wider variety of perspectives than they did in Wheaton's program. This seems a bit ironic considering the counter emphasis on the wide variety of evangelical perspectives, but many participants said that most people at Wheaton essentially have the same foundational views and that many Wheaton students came from similar backgrounds (Interviews B, C, D, E). They described their setting a "bubble" in which they are not extensively hearing from or learning from those outside of evangelicalism in their classes or in their community.

Finally, and perhaps most significantly, the personal perspectives of participants in the interviews provide insight into the potential for future collaboration between evangelicals and peace and conflict studies, especially at Wheaton. To realistically establish a foundation and approach for sustainable evangelical involvement in peace and conflict studies, it is essential to examine the experiences and perspectives of evangelicals themselves- especially the next generation of evangelicals and especially those who value and are invested in the field of peace and conflict studies. Additionally, as 'insiders' to evangelicalism, these students have credibility and connections in the American evangelical community and have the potential to make the most impactful investment in engaging evangelicals for peacebuilding and in including evangelicals in peace and conflict studies. If peacebuilders are serious about working with and reaching evangelicals, it is essential to be able to connect with them from where they are to engage them effectively in peace and conflict work.

Recommendations

In examining the views of Wheaton College peace and conflict studies students on the relationship between evangelicalism and peace and conflict studies, the students brought up recommendations not only for strengthening the relationship between evangelicalism and peace and conflict studies, but also for developing the program at Wheaton. The students had ideas and suggestions for improving the connection between evangelicalism and peace and conflict studies in the program, on Wheaton's campus and in evangelicalism in the United States more broadly.

First, while recognizing that the Wheaton Peace and Conflict Studies program is brand new, moving forward the students wanted to have more specific peace and conflict studies classes that dealt with specific peace and conflict studies content. They felt that many of the certificate's supplementary classes were peripherally related to peace and conflict studies and certainly informed their study but that they did not offer direct peace and conflict studies content. The students wanted additional courses that addressed peace and conflict studies with more depth and specificity.

Additionally, the students wanted to build upon the interdisciplinary foundation of the Wheaton Peace and Conflict Studies program and use this to expand the program departmentally and among the student body. One suggestion was to develop peace and conflict studies bridge courses in various majors to spread awareness of the program and to address peace and conflict topics from the perspective of those departments. This could help bridge the disciplines and show the relevance of peace and conflict studies to an even wider range of disciplines.

Expanding this idea of interdisciplinary connections beyond Wheaton's campus, students wanted to create active partnerships not only across departments at Wheaton, but also with evangelical groups more broadly and from outside Christian circles. They wondered how such

partnerships might be used to train evangelicals in peacemaking. To do this, however, the students pointed out that evangelicalism needs to become more specific and tangible about what working for justice and building peace looks like in reality. They said that this needs to be discussed and shared by pastors by not only focusing on topics such as forgiveness and mercy but diving deeply into challenging topics and learning what justice looks like in action. The students believed that evangelicals care about peace and conflict topics but that they needed to study and understand it more systematically and effectively put it into practice.

Conclusion

Evangelicalism in the United States is complicated. It has a challenging past and present, yet it holds the tools for a potential future that is engaged in actively and effectively working for peace and justice. The students in Wheaton College's Peace and Conflict Studies Program saw many of these tensions and complementarities and provided insight into the ways Wheaton's program can grow and how evangelicals and peace and conflict studies can connect more authentically. While evangelicalism may have a "sour" taste in the United States today, and with reason, there is hope from these students that evangelicalism still has something powerful to offer peace and conflict studies and the world and that they are the next generation who will take us there.

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Appendix A:

Interview Guide

RQ: *How do students pursuing peace and conflict studies at Wheaton College understand the inherent complementarities and tensions between evangelicalism and the field of peace and conflict studies in the United States? How do these perceptions compare to the way that evangelicalism is generally presented in the peace and conflict studies literature?*

Introductory

- What led you to study peace and conflict studies at Wheaton?
- What has your experience in the program been like so far?

Evangelicalism and Peace and Conflict Studies

- How does the evangelical setting of Wheaton relate to the content or approach of your studies in peace and conflict? (*Whether that is theologically, religiously, and/or culturally?*)
- Are there any unique advantages or unique challenges in studying peace and conflict in an evangelical setting?
- How do you experience and/or observe the relationship between evangelicalism and the field of peace and conflict studies?
- Where do you see the strongest complementarities between evangelicalism and peace and conflict studies?
- Where do you see the strongest tensions between evangelicalism and peace and conflict studies?
- How do you think evangelicalism addresses peace and conflict topics?
- How do you think peace and conflict studies presents evangelicalism?

Potential Additional Questions

- What type of relationship do you anticipate peace and conflict studies and evangelicalism having in the upcoming future?
- What is this program's relationship with the broader Wheaton College community? What about with evangelicalism as a whole?

Appendix B:

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Project Name: Evangelicalism and Peace and Conflict Studies: A Wheaton College Study

Researcher: Sophia Bouwsma

My name is Sophia Bouwsma. I am a Wheaton alumna and a current MA Candidate in Peacebuilding and Conflict Transformation at SIT Graduate Institute. I am completing research for my final capstone project, and I would like to invite you to participate in a study I am conducting for this project. Your participation is voluntary. Please read the information below and ask questions about anything you do not understand before deciding whether to participate. If you decide to participate, you will be asked to sign this form and you will be given a copy of this form.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of the study is to explore perspectives of students in Wheaton College's Peace and Conflict Studies Program regarding the relationship between evangelicalism and the field of peace and conflict studies. Evangelicalism has a complicated history with peace and conflict topics and, as students studying peace and conflict at an evangelical institution, I am interested in how you perceive this relationship. Further, I would like to explore how your perspectives relate to the way evangelicalism is portrayed in the field of peace and conflict studies and compare the similarities and differences. I hope this study can provide a more accurate picture of evangelicalism and peace and conflict studies and that it can help prompt a more productive discussion of this relationship as well as inspire a vision for future collaboration.

STUDY PROCEDURES

Your participation will consist of one in person interview and will require approximately 30-45 minutes of your time. With your permission, I will audio recording the interview. You can still participate in this research study if you do not wish to be audio recorded.

POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS

I do not anticipate any risks from participating, but you have the right not to answer any questions or to discontinue participation at any time.

POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO PARTICIPANTS AND/OR TO SOCIETY

The potential benefit is a chance to reflect on your place and experience at the intersection of evangelicalism and peace and conflict studies as well as to share your key voice in providing a more accurate and insightful picture of this intersection.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Data will be collected and stored on my personal devices such as phone and computer, which are password protected. Data may also be saved on Google drive, which is password protected. Data will be stored until the end of the project in May 2019 at which point it will be deleted. Any identifiable information obtained in connection with this study will remain confidential. The results of the research will be included in a capstone presentation and a capstone paper, which will be publicly available online. Other than your status as a Wheaton College student studying peace and conflict, no identifiable information will be used if you do not permit it below.

PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL

Your participation is voluntary. Your refusal to participate will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. You may withdraw your consent at any time and discontinue participation without penalty. You are not waiving any legal claims, rights or remedies because of your participation in this research study.

“I have read the above and I understand its contents and I agree to participate in the study. I acknowledge that I am 18 years of age or older.”

Participant’s signature: _____ Date: _____

Researcher’s signature: _____ Date: _____

Initial one of the following to indicate your choice:

(initial) I agree...

_____ to be audio recorded

_____ to be quoted directly in report of research findings

I do not agree to...

_____ to be audio recorded

_____ to be quoted directly in report of research findings

RESEARCHER’S CONTACT INFORMATION

If you have any questions or want to get more information about this study, please contact me at sophia.bouwsma@gmail.com, or my advisor at bruce.dayton@sit.edu

RIGHTS OF RESEARCH PARTICIPANT – IRB CONTACT INFORMATION

In an endeavor to uphold the ethical standards of all SIT proposals, this study has been reviewed and approved by an SIT Study Abroad Local Review Board or SIT Institutional Review Board. If you have questions, concerns, or complaints about your rights as a research participant or the

research in general and are unable to contact the researcher please contact the Institutional Review Board at:

School for International Training Institutional Review Board
1 Kipling Road, PO Box 676 Brattleboro, VT 05302-0676 USA irb@sit.edu

802-258-3132