

**Peacebuilding, gender and migration: an interview with  
Dr Adriana Salcedo and Dr Uzma Rashid**

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Interview by Teresa Bernardi and Heidi Martins

*Costa Rica's United Nations mandated University for Peace is WEMov's first stakeholder. The institution is represented by Adriana Salcedo and Uzma Rashid. Dr Adriana Salcedo is Assistant Professor in the Department for Peace and Conflict Studies and Coordinator of the MA in International Peace Studies. Dr Uzma Rashid currently serves as Associate Professor in the Department of Peace and Conflict Studies and Coordinator of the MA in Gender and Peacebuilding at the University for Peace.*



University for Peace



**Teresa Bernardi:** Good evening Adriana and Uzma. Welcome and thank you for accepting our invitation. I would like to remind everyone that the University for Peace is the first stakeholder of Women on the Move Cost Action. Dr Adriana Salcedo is Assistant Professor in the Department of Peace and Conflict Studies and Coordinator of the MA in International Peace Studies. Dr Uzma Rashid is Associate Professor in the Department of Peace and Conflict Studies and she currently serves as Coordinator of the MA in Gender and Peacebuilding at the University for Peace. I'll now give the floor to Heidi for the first questions and I will then come back for the second part of the interview. Thank you.

**Heidi Martins:** Thank you Teresa, and thank you Uzma and Adriana for accepting our invitation. Let's start. The University for Peace is a known worldwide as a global academic institution involved in processes of peacebuilding and peacekeeping. Could you please tell us more about the history of this unique university and its main objectives?

**Adriana Salcedo:** Thank you. Maybe I can start a little bit the delimiting the history and then Uzma, please free to step in. Well, as you mentioned, the University for Peace was born under a UN mandate, so it was adopted in December 1980, by the General Assembly and the UN Resolution 35/55 was the one that created the university, and it was based on the recognition that we were in the academic field and in the policy field focusing a lot on war

studies and security studies and why not have this shift in our academia and in our policy making towards peace? So, yes, we do need to understand about violence and conflict but also, we need to focus, our main goal is to achieve sustainable peace in the longer run. So, that's, I guess, the main rationale behind the creation of the university. Of course, there was a convergence of political factors, political leaders, that strengthened this dream. Actually, the former Costa Rican President, Rodrigo Carazo, at that time, was the one who pushed forward for this project at the UN. Maybe Uzma, you can tell us more about why Costa Rica.

**Uzma Rashid:** Yes. So, thank you for starting with the history. Basically, UPeace is based in Costa Rica, which itself, I think, warrants some analysis of "why Costa Rica", "why is it based in Costa Rica"? I think that also is – along with the other decisions that were made for the university – that was also a very strategic decision, because if you look at the context of Costa Rica, it is known to be an emblem of peace in many ways, you know. It abolished the death penalty in 1982 and then it also abolished its army in 1948. So, you know, it's already a context which has been working towards promoting peace. It is already seen as a place that also hosts a lot of migrant communities. So, this region, in the world, it's known for that, so it provides a perfect landscape, in a way, for a global institute such as UPeace which has the objectives of furthering peace, of promoting global peace, security and wellbeing. So, the location of Costa Rica also aligns with the objectives of UPeace. So, in a way, I think, the location of the university complements its objectives, which is another interesting piece of its history.

**Heidi:** Thank you. And what about the background and expectations of its students? Could you please tell us a bit more about that?

**Adriana:** Ok, so we have been teaching students on peace related issues for the last four decades. So, it's actually our fortieth anniversary since the creation of the university and we have evolved in different disciplines related to peace. Right now, we have at least four different main programs. For example, there is the department of Environment, Development and Peace, which connects the peaceful resolution of conflicts environmental issues. Right now, for example, key issues in that department are environmental justice, climate change, livelihoods that have been affected for the several global crises that we have had in terms of environment. In the second department that we have – Peace and Conflict Studies – which is the department we are in, Uzma and I. We have four Masters which provide a specific focus, under this umbrella of peace and conflict studies. So, we have international peace studies, which is mainly an understanding of the

international level of the main conflicts and the main sources of conflicts behind those international struggles. We also go, what I call, “up and down the ladder”, with my students: what happens at the macro level always has an impact on the micro level, on the interpersonal level. So, we are always going up and down that ladder, from the macro to the meso to the micro and back and forth. So, in the international peace studies we also teach a little bit of skills for conflict transformation. Then, we have a program right now, on Peace Education, which is widely known because it has been training teachers and educators on teaching peace in its different aspects. So, Peace Education is one of them; the other one is Media and Peace, that was born of the recognition of how media, discourses and narratives play a super important role in contributing to conflict but also contributing to peace. So, we need to understand more the dynamics there. And, we have the program in Gender and Peace Building, which is the one Uzma coordinates, so I’m going to ask her to explain that program.

**Uzma:** I also just want to mention that Adriana, in her humility, is not highlighting the fact she is, currently, also the Chair of the Department of Peace and Conflict Studies, so she’s not just a coordinator of the International Peace Studies program. Just for the record.

**Adriana:** We are a team!

**Uzma:** Yes, but there’s a team leader. [Laughing] I’m coordinating the Gender and Peace Building program. Mainly we look at this crucial factor of gender that we talk about, that Women on the Move project also focuses on – the mobility of women and that’s one of the issues that we focus on, but multiple other issues that women and persons of other marginalized genders face in different areas of life and that are detrimental to their well-being, detrimental to their livelihoods, the opportunities, the life chances they have. So, understanding how to do a gendered analysis of phenomena, how to mainstream gender in organizations, in different systems and how to further the agenda of peacebuilding and peacekeeping, keeping the interests of marginalized communities in mind, communities that are marginalized on the basis of their gender and that includes women and the LGBTQIA+ community, but also, in many contexts men are also specifically marginalized by virtually being men and that’s often ignored as well. So, in our program, we try to have a holistic view of gender as a category to problematize that category and to move away from the traditional understanding of gender, but all, of course, like Adriana was saying, to further the cause of peace while keep thinking issues of gender in mind.

**Heidi:** Thank you.

**Uzma:** I don't know if Adriana mentioned the student body comprises students from a lot of different countries. We, at least, have representation of 120 countries in all. Of course, not every year, but we have students coming from many different contexts, so there is a lot of diversity in the student body, which is not just diverse in terms of where they are coming from, but of course also their gender identities, their religious identities, racial identities, ethnic identities, their socio-political views. So, there is this convergence of people coming with a lot of different perspectives, so that also makes the UPeace experience very enriching and fulfilling.

**Heidi:** Today, I watched videos on Youtube about studying at UPeace and it was amazing, with students from everywhere... They were also showing the travelling to the university, the little trip through coffee fields. [Laughing]

**Adriana:** Yes, Costa Rica is famous for its coffee [Laughing]. I would like to add an idea that came to my mind that our programs, in our department at least, share that common goal of providing critical understanding and analysis of the root causes of conflict and violence at these levels: interpersonal, local, national and global, regional, etc. And, while focusing on various dimensions and one of those dimensions is intersectionality that we mainstream in all our programs. So, that's one of our key distinctive features, I guess, that we have found that students liked very much.

**Heidi:** That's really interesting that combination of micro, meso, macro as well as global, local, transnational and then the intersectionality taking all these dimensions together.

Thank you very much, let's continue now with your work as professors and researchers. Could you tell us when and how your experience at the university for Peace started?

**Adriana:** Uzma, would you like to start, or should I go?

**Uzma:** Go ahead.

**Adriana:** So, mine is fairly recent. It's only been two years since I arrived. I was teaching in the US academia, in US institutions, but coming to UPeace as a visiting faculty since 2017 so my engagement with UPeace started probably four or five years ago. And, when I visited UPeace, I liked what I saw. Very different from North American contexts. I like the diversity of the students, I liked the intense program, because our Master programs run in eleven months. So, we work in a format of modules, basically, so each course is taught in a module, is not that weekly class, like we are probably more

accustomed to in global North institutions. It's actually three hours a day for three weeks [Laughing]. So, you can imagine, the amount of material that you have to absorb; you can imagine the amount of discussions that you need to produce; you can imagine the amount of resources as a teacher, as a professor, that you have to bring in to the table. I guess to ask students to take advantages of that opportunity of intense learning in the best way possible and make the best out of it. So, it's quite intense. Our curriculum is every three weeks, you switch to another course, but I think that is also very valuable because you are focusing... and we work a lot with visiting professors. So, we have resident faculty but also visiting professors which allows us to bring the best specialists in a key area, for example. So right now, we have very good, well known peacekeeping operations specialist teaching and professor teaching peacekeeping operations in different regions around the world. The same for each one of the programs. Like Uzma brings specialists in gender and in particular aspects of it, let's say gender and human security or different aspects. The same for peace education and for media and peace. So, I think that is very valuable. What else can I say?

**Uzma:** How did your experience start?

**Adriana:** Yes, I came as visiting professor then I came as resident faculty and I found valuable that the university brings that flexibility to professors. Even though we are a UN affiliated institution or UN mandated institution, we do have the academic flexibility to apply a critical view on the UN paradigm, which is something that I value very much. I like that although we are not a big institution, I see that as a strength because working in big universities, you may access to more resources, but you are also trapped in the bureaucracy the system. So I like it here, I think it flows better in that sense.

**Heidi:** Thank you.

**Uzma:** I think my story is different from Adriana's, of course, in the sense that I wasn't familiar with the University for Peace and what exactly it was doing, academics wise, what was happening inside the university. I became familiar with the University for Peace through my informal research on Costa Rica during my PhD studies. So, I was doing my PhD in the US and I just visited, I just did this two-weeks' solo backpacking trip in Costa Rica and I went through Costa Rica, just different places, just having fun and I thought to myself, you know, this might be a space I probably want to be in at some point in my life for a longer period of time. So, I did my PhD, I graduated, and I went back to Pakistan and I was teaching there for about two to three years, I think almost 3 years. So that was a considerable period of time I taught there. I started looking for other opportunities to change it up a little and that's when I

remembered, what about Costa Rica? Let me look it up and the University for Peace is one of the few places here where the medium of instruction is English as well. My Spanish wasn't very strong, so I wanted some place for work which would support me in that regard as well but also Costa Rica, because people here were so warm, the way of life, I think is slow paced but it's also very nurturing and I really like that. I think that Adriana also prefers, when she was comparing the context of Costa Rica to the US, and the bureaucracy and the fast pace etc. So, I really appreciated that, and I just looked up the University for Peace then, and there was a vacancy in the Gender and Peacebuilding program. So, I applied and I got here. I joined in 2018 and it's been almost three years. It will be three years in June or July, I think. And, it has been an enriching experience in the sense that it provides the opportunity to engage with a diverse student body and faculty as well, to engage critically on different issues and to have open and honest conversations with. So, that is why, primarily, I joined UPeace and it's been that experience for me. It's really being open and engaging in my experience.

**Heidi:** Thank you. What was your background and what are your current research interests and your methodology? We already talked a bit here and there, but just to summarize, if you could please talk a bit about that.

**Adriana:** You can start Uzma, no problem. If you want.

**Uzma:** No, go ahead. Go ahead.

**Adriana:** So, my background... I started as an anthropologist, then I moved to become a conflictologist and I consider myself a migrantologist [Laughing], if that sort of things exists! But I work on the intersection of the three things, basically. The intersection of gender dynamics, violent conflicts and migration, or human mobility. Putting it that way, in a broader sense. So, let's start with my background then. I did my studies in Ecuador. I am originally from Ecuador. My Bachelor's and one of my Master's degrees was in Ecuador, the other one was in the US, and I did my PhD also in the US in conflict analysis, resolution and peace studies at, what is called today, the Carter School of Peace and Conflicts Studies, at the George Mason University, Virginia. So, the research that I did in order to complete my dissertation was related again to migration topics and I research identity dynamics, the borderlands between Colombia and Ecuador. At that time, in 2011, we were receiving in Ecuador large influxes of Colombian refugees and migrants because of the conflict that was happening in Colombia at that time. Basically, that's how my interests in migration dynamics started to converge with my interests in conflict analysis resolution and peace studies. Before that, I was working and researching in Ecuador, also in environmental conflict resolution, so basically conflict

resolution and disputes, again with identity issues. I was working with indigenous communities in the Ecuadorian Amazon and there are conflicts, disputes and grievances with extractive industries in the Ecuadorian state, so oil extraction, timber, bad things that happen even now in the Amazon, unfortunately. Then, to achieve a hands-on, more practical approach, I got a job in Galapagos Island working on setting up a collaborative mechanism for conflict resolution, for conflict transformation, for the management of the marine reserve. When we hear of Galapagos, we think of that ideal pristine place. Yes, it is, lucky for us humanity it's still there, but with a lot of threats like more development, more tourist industry, fisheries, lots of conflicts surrounding in that archipelago itself. So, my engagement there taught me that we need to work more towards peace, towards more understanding to take care of the resources, the few resources that still exist on the planet and that's when I decided to engage more on developing that branch on conflict analysis and conflict resolution and peacebuilding. Then I moved to the US and started researching and completed a PhD there, for several years. On and off of the US, I think around fifteen years. The last fifteen years, I guess, of my life. Also, when I graduated from George Mason I started teaching there, in different also... like I was an adjunct professor at the American university, and also in Boston University. Then, I started looking globally and I found UPeace in a way.

Regarding my research interests, as I mentioned to you, I work in the convergence of gender, migration and conflict and right now, I'm very much interested in looking and continuing in the line of research that I started with my dissertation on how state policies and laws shape our identities as people, especially as... you know, a refugee can be labelled as refugee but the next day that same person can be labelled as a migrant and that can be done through a law, through a policy, and the vulnerabilities that are embedded in those "labels". So, how, basically, law and policies are shaped and continue to reshape our identities. And, of course, gender and ethnicity play a critical role on that. Also, I'm engaged in a collaborative mapping of voices of migrants. We call it Polyphony Mapping of Migrant Voices in the Americas. It's a project that is carried out throughout the Americas to map out the voices and the history of women migrants. In this particular case it's only for women and in different contexts of migration. Some of them, for example, may be stuck in the border between Nicaragua and Costa Rica because of Covid, so we started collecting those stories and mapping them out in a digital site that is going to be inaugurated soon, hopefully. We've been delayed because of the pandemic. I think that the final question was the methodologies. My anthropologist soul tells me that the only way to search... [Laughing] that's my bias... is by engaging with people. So that's what I do, that's what I like. Because of the migration datasets and conflict datasets, we need to understand quantitative methodologies and I do use them in my research, however my heart lies in

qualitative methodologies and within qualitative methodologies I particularly like two, so its ethnography, but engaged ethnography, so it's not the traditional ethnographer that goes to observe, but it's actually a much more engaged co-creation project and action-research. I like that engagement with people and co-creating and allowing those voices to emerge and to fill gaps in my research. I'm very conscious of my positionality usually as external intervener in context that are not mine. That I may have the best of the intentions, may have the best of the knowledge but it's not me who's in that position. I think that's very valuable to bring that approach of learning and co-creation. So that's what I use in my research. And reflection. I mean, reflection on teaching and reflecting on research and reflecting on practice. I think that's one of the most powerful tools that we have as teachers and researchers.

**Heidi:** Thank you, it's music to my ears. So now, Uzma, if you want to share your background, methodologies and interests.

**Uzma:** Adriana is such a difficult lead to follow [Laughing].

**Adriana:** I gave you the chance! [Laughing]

**Uzma:** I should have taken it.

**Adriana:** Are you saying that I'm all over the place? [Laughing] I think I was, but feel free to edit!

**Uzma:** You have a rich background, that's what I'm saying [Laughing]. So, my background is basically a *mélange* of intersections of various discipline from the very get go. Initially, my parents, like stereotypically Pakistani parents, wanted me to become a medical doctor, but I wasn't into it and then I started my Bachelor's in English from the University of Karachi, which is a public sector university in Pakistan and then I did my Master's in English literature and then a second Master's in Applied Linguistics as well. During that time too, I was still interested in identity related issues, so even during my Master's in English literature, my final thesis was about the novel *1984*, George Orwell's *1984*, and the quest for identity in that novel, the struggles that the protagonist of that novel – Winston Smith – faced. And in my Master's in Applied Linguistics, my research was about the gender identities in language classrooms. So, at that time, I was focused on language and literature related issues, but I was also doing multiple things on the side.

I was working as a copywriter in an advertising agency; I was working in editing; I was also working as an external examiner for Cambridge and the Australian education office in Pakistan; and I did some translation work for the BBC. So, I was basically hustling through life, I think, at that point, working for



event management etc. etc., whatever was coming my way. I wanted to explore it all and try all the different fields before making my mind on what it was that I wanted to do in life. That's such a pressure I think, on individuals. But I realized, during my second Master's in applied linguistics, that I really value teaching. I think just partly based on the professors that I had during that time, I realized that a classroom was a kind of microcosm where you could bring about a lot of change that is needed. We've talked about how we can change people's mindsets and I thought it was a great opportunity in classrooms, to actually have conversations with people and change their mindsets and that is something I thought could be done in engaging ways as well. Generally, people think that teaching is a boring profession but I realized that there were innovative teaching methodologies and you could do it in a different way as well, so I specialized in language teaching then.

Then, I got a Fulbright scholarship – a fully funded scholarship for a PhD in the US and I did my PhD from a program that is called Language, Literacy and Culture at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County. That's where all my interested in gender, race, religion, ethnicity, classes, etc. intersected and came together. There, my research was about American Muslim women and how their gendered religious identities are constructed in the context of Islamic schools in the US. So, there was a lot of racial diversity, the politics of diversity that existed within the Muslim community and also outside of it. How do they deal with racial diversity within the Muslim community for example? How do black Muslim women operate within the Muslim community? What are their struggles? What is the multiplicity of the challenges that that they face? And what is the politics of diversity outside the community? When they come to what is considered a “secular” university – like the University of Maryland, Baltimore County – or any other, how do they operate? What are the kinds of safe spaces that they created for themselves and why is there a need for a safe space as well? So, things of that nature were part of my research. And even before that, I had been engaged in a lot of research in Pakistan which was about, primarily, the umbrella term would probably be inequalities and looking at how people were marginalized in different ways. At that time, I was looking at linguistic inequalities, for example, looking at linguistic landscapes. How in the public domain as well as in the private domain, how is language a tool for furthering inequalities or perpetuating inequalities. So that is something I was already interested in and that was enhanced during my PhD. After the PhD, I was trying to figure out if I wanted to... because it was an interdisciplinary program that I did my PhD from, there are always pros and cons of doing it from an interdisciplinary program because even now, even though we've advanced in our conversations on: “we should be focused on intersectionality and intersectionality is the right lens, etc.,” there is still this issue of: “so, where exactly do you go?” After a PhD from an interdisciplinary

program, what kind of job will you be doing and what department will you be based in? Because we hardly have any interdisciplinary programs, right? So, when I went back to Pakistan, that was a crucial decision I had to make. So, at that point, I situated myself at the Department of Sociology at a university in Lahore, Pakistan. It's called the University of Management and Technology. So, I was working there as assistant professors and Chair of the sociology department for almost three years, and was the Associate Dean for Research as well; research is something that has been a constant, I think. Even in changing these disciplines it has been a constant in my life, because I was engaged in research before and even afterwards so one of the reasons I was the Associate Dean for research was to establish and promote a research culture at the university.

So, that was an interesting time and, like I mentioned earlier as well, it was very enriching because I was teaching subjects which were all my interests in the sense of subjects about the Sociology of Religion, the Sociology of Gender, even research methods in the study of religion. I was teaching those kinds of subjects that involve having socio-culturally and religiously sensitive conversations which are difficult to have but they're important to have and that was an exhilarating sort of experience in the sense that you get to learn a lot about the sensitivities of the phenomena and how to have a conversation around a topic which is generally considered taboo or sensitive in nature. So, after that I joined the University for Peace and even now my interests revolve more and more around religious identities. I don't think that earlier in my academic and professional career I was as interested in religion as a phenomenon, but now even more so my work intersects with gender and religion even more. How are religious identities shaped... because I think that has become more and more a polarizing issue in the world and I'm interested in exploring it. So, this is currently one of my research interests. How can we use religion as a tool for furthering peace? How do we use it for or towards harmony? So, even in my time in Lahore, in Pakistan, I was trying to rally students to engage in inter-faith conversations, for example, taking them to churches, or gurdwaras and temples, etc. So, I was trying to get engaged in that work and I think that's where my current trajectory is. I'm also working on issues of gender, race, intersections with religion and, like Adriana was sharing, our focus at the University for Peace in general, but in our work as well, is very intersectional in nature, looking at how power operates, and power does not discriminate, power does not operate in one category alone, it's operating in multitudes, it's operating across different dimensions. Looking at how it operates, looking at it through its intersections and presenting or doing an intersectional analysis of phenomena, that's what I'm interested in, even now. And methodology-wise, I think I kind of align with Adriana there [Laughing].

My PhD research was also qualitative in nature. I've engaged in quantitative research as well before, but from the beginning I was also interested in some innovative research methodologies. For example, one of the research projects that I did was about the linguistic landscapes of Karachi and it was more a visual project, taking pictures of the use of language, then analyzing those pictures. So, even now, I'm interested in how innovative methodologies such as using art, creating art, using beads for example, to create art and to share the experiences related to a particular phenomenon; how you can work with communities to create those experiences, to create that kind of data. I think quantitative research has... again – I think I'm just repeating what Adriana said – has a lot of value and a lot of worth because all the methodologies, depending on the research problem, you have to look at different methodologies and how to collect data that is comprehensive in nature, that would answer your research question, that would answer or address your research problem. So, I'm not opposed to any, but most of my work has been within qualitative research but also, I think I'm moving more and more towards queering research methodologies as well. I'm moving more towards problematizing these notions of “this is qualitative research, and this is quantitative research” and these are clear categories, and there is no boundary blurring. I don't think I believe in that. I think there is some quantitateness to qualitative research as well and some qualitateness to quantitative research, and I know that research has across the world recognized that too, I think it can be recognized more and more openly and these categories need to be problematized a little. So, I think that's where I am in terms of methodologies.

**Heidi:** Thank you, this is so interesting. I would have another question: which courses do you teach, and do you have a specific method for teaching?

**Adriana:** So, I guess our department is transdisciplinary again, so we combine different things. Sometimes I teach in the gender program, sometimes I teach in the international peace studies program and that reflects in the diversity of courses and topics that I address. So, for example, I teach international peace studies which is basically an introductory course to conflict theories, conflict methodologies, and peacebuilding strategies and methodologies. I also teach, for example, in the gender program. I've been teaching for four or five years in the gender and people on the move course, which is actually the one that connected me to the COST Action because I was based on Washington and a common friend with Marie [Ruiz] connected us because I mentioned to her like: I'm teaching this, I'm going to Costa Rica. And she said: “oh! That's so interesting. I have a friend who's just launching this project and is working in this project” and that's how we got connected.

So, gender and people on the move and international peace studies. I am teaching also comparative peace processes, so how to analyze through different variables inclusion, legitimacy, gender, dynamics, youth engagement etc. So, using these different variables to compare different peace processes that have happened around the world. So, that's another course. Let me see... I have taught human rights education, which is a peace education course that I really enjoyed a lot. It's not only about embracing the human rights paradigm, but it's actually seeing how people deal with that, the UN discourse on human rights and their all agenda, that is pushed forward by the UN agencies on this. So, how people engage, embrace it or not, I guess human rights in everyday life. That's another course. I'm forgetting one.

In the Spanish program I'm teaching again conflict and peacebuilding in Latin America and Spain, so bringing all the historical connections that we have with Spain, introducing a little bit of postcolonial theories into the discussion of the current Latin American realities and of course, one of the sessions is dedicated to migration in Latin America, because it is quite a new phenomenon in the magnitude that is happening right now, with Colombians, with Venezuelans displaced and also you see that all the region is a transit region towards the US for people in other regions of the world that use the region to get to the US. This year I'll be teaching identity politics and inclusion, so again going back to the identity field which is fascinating, and it provides a lot of interesting lenses to approach everyday life again, which is something I'm interested in. I'm forgetting one! [Laughing] Let me think about it. Go ahead Uzma, please.

**Heidi:** Before moving on, do you have a specific method, a specific way of teaching?

**Adriana:** The way we run courses here is the seminar type, so we combine... because we have three hours every day for three weeks, so we need to be very creative in our teaching methodologies and in our pedagogies, so we combine lecture, we combine classroom discussions, it's more like a seminar type. Of course, we bring all the visual resources, we bring guest speakers into the classrooms, we do a lot of groupwork and group facilitation, depending of course on the subject you're teaching, you have more or less flexibility on doing that. But, I think, it's a combination of pedagogies that allows us to deliver the message and also there is, I guess, we bring a lot of creativity also, into the assignments. It's not only about a research paper, that... Yes, research is an important component in our courses, but we also try to provide more tangible products or more tangible tools for students to apply after UPeace. Why? Because mainly of our students, if we see where they end up professionally, they're going to be working in conflict areas and for that they need to know how to create manuals, how to create toolkits, how to engage

with facilitation on the ground, how to provide mediation training or curriculum development or how to run workshops, things that are more... They have an academic and conceptual background, but they also need to engage with this more practical side of what is supposed to be a peacebuilder on the ground. So that's the kind of the flexibility that we apply in the teaching methodology but also in the expectations in terms of assignments. We do have research, but we do also advance skills and reflexive practices.

**Heidi:** Thank you. So, Uzma, maybe, what about your teaching?

**Uzma:** We are involved in teaching in different programs at the same time so it's kind of transdisciplinary in nature in that sense. I teach one course which is... we're also trying to mainstream gender in all our programs in the department, so we have a course right from the beginning, we teach gender and peacebuilding, that I teach when students join the programs, before they branch out to their specialization subject: if they are international peace studies students or peace education students, etc. They will be taking those specialized subjects later. But, first we just combine them in one class, we have a gender and peacebuilding course. So, that's something that I teach. I also teach another subject which is gender specific, which is about gender in everyday lives. Very practical in the sense that we look at real life issues related to gender. That's ordinary life combining theoretical lenses to understand those issues and those problems. How to resolve them, where do we stand on them? For example, the issue of abortion or the issue of climate change even or gender inequality in sports, sex work, etc. So, just things of that nature, different issues that we focus on. There's another course I teach on religions, cultures and peacebuilding. So, again, bringing my interests in relation with what happens there. What else do I teach?

There's one thing that I'm extremely passionate about about is research methods, and that's one course that also students from all programs in the department take and that's something I teach as well. So, over there too there's an opportunity of just combining all my interests and talking about all of those through the lenses of research methods. And I'm teaching a course on gender and sexuality and issues of diversity, equity and inclusion because a lot of times we just stop at the focus of diversity and we don't talk about how we even manage this diversity. How do we... not even manage, but how are we inclusive of this diversity and how are we equitable and just towards this diversity. So, that's the course that I focus on. What else? You were asking about the courses we're currently teaching right now, right? So, that's for the courses.

As far as the teaching methodologies goes, we've agreed in the department on the teaching methodology that we follow in our different courses, very similar style, very... you know, it's not lecture based. Yes, the professor is

guiding the discussion, but then, as a discussion it is very engaging, we try to make it engaging for the students and not have it as a one-way discussion. And it is very hands-on in the sense that we try to have case-studies or examples from real life and have students who work on them or try to understand them. In the gender and peacebuilding course, for example, I have many cases from different contexts related to peacebuilding. It could be migration related, any context where displacement is happening, etc. and then I ask students to apply a gendered lens to it. How do you mainstream gender in those specific examples, you know. So, applying those tools they're learning in class, that is one of the constants in our teaching methodologies. Anything else that I'm missing.

**Heidi:** If you remember, we are still here. Thank you for this first part. I will now give the floor to Teresa.

**Adriana:** Before that Heidi, sorry, I just remembered that I didn't talk about the gender and people on the move class, and this is actually what connects us [Laughing]. So, if I may I just want to say that this class is about how gender shapes every step in the migration process and the other side too, so how migration also shapes gender relationships. So, the topics on this class dealt with the whole universe of that, the interconnection.

**Heidi:** So, we end up this first part with a very important note about gender and migration, right.

**Adriana:** I knew I was missing something! [Laughing]

**Heidi:** Thank you, so now I give the floor to Teresa.

**Teresa:** Thank you very much. Now I would like to attend your classes!

**Adriana:** Please come. Please come.

**Teresa:** It has been really interesting and inspiring to know about your experiences and methodologies. I think that especially for us as early career scholars. Now that we are building our career and we are writing our first works, it's very, very useful to know about you. Well, let's now talk about the COST Action. Your participation in the COST Action on Women on the Move could be an opportunity to connect with other scholars interested in the same issues, even from different perspectives. How did you hear about this Action and why did you decide to join?

**Adriana:** Yes, as I mentioned before, it was through a common friend that connected basically me with Marie and then we started several exchanges. I think we clicked. I liked the project and the flexibility and openness that Marie brought into it. I was actually very excited to connect and learn more about migration dynamics that are happening in Europe and the whole set of migration scholars working on those dynamics was very intriguing for me in particular. I guess, I have read several publications on the topic by European scholars, but for me it was interesting trying to connect those readings on, for example, the “crisis” in the Mediterranean with similar experiences that we face here in the America. So, for me, it was something that was really intriguing. And, I have to thank Marie for her invitation because she was always very welcoming and bringing things into the conversation.

**Teresa:** Thanks. Uzma?

**Uzma:** I heard about COST Action from Adriana. [Laughing] So, she connected me to Marie and I’m so grateful for that because, again, in my experience as well, Marie has been so gracious, so kind and so warm, just extending herself so much and even over emails; Marie is just so warm and I’m grateful for connecting with her. So, that’s how I got to know about COST Action. But, for me, the appeal of COST Action... one of the things they focus on, the focus on gender and that’s something that I’ve always been interested in, working on gender and inequalities and how gender impacts different phenomena, and it offers such an extensive and diverse network of professionals, I think, who maybe, even situated in different fields. There are multiple other professionals who are coming from diverse disciplines so it is such an amazing network to be a part of in terms of even engaging with that kind of diversity at a professional level in working towards our own professional enrichment, as well as in coming together for a common cause, engaging in writing projects, the research projects which are related to the human mobility but also specifically target issues related to gender and mobility and also, I think that one of the things that I really liked initially and still like about this COST Action was the focus not just on women’s challenges, but also the opportunities that are there in working with women. They may be struggling but at the same time women and persons of diverse sexual orientations and gender identities have their agency. How do we focus on people’s agency and work with them towards their betterment? I think that’s a unique opportunity and I really appreciate it.

**Teresa:** Speaking about the main objectives of the Action, we would like to reflect with you on the importance of gender and female mobility in migration studies. In your opinion, how may gender perspectives challenge

historiographical stereotypes and macro-narratives about mobility and migration?

**Adriana:** I guess migration studies was gender insensitive for a long time, for decades. First they started turning the role of women visible in migration, probably in the 80s, but before that it was rare to find any gender consideration besides the variable: male/female, and it was very binary in that sense. Early feminists in academic discussions were turning the role of women visible, at the beginning. Luckily, it has evolved since then. However, there is still a long way to go in this regard and migration scholars have incorporated more the role, expectations and representations of women in migration. They have done that for a while, in migration studies now. I am more critical of that view since, in that sense, also it kind of essentialized women's contribution into migration. Now they account for 'women and children', for example. That's a category that goes together without paying enough attention to the particularities of specific subjects: women, children, LGBTQIA+, elderly, etc., so it comes all in a bag: 'women and children'.

**Uzma:** Infantilizing women.

**Adriana:** So, from including 'women and children', again, as a category into the migration studies, they have contributed to, again, not taking into account queer migrants and queer perspectives into this, which is super important to bring into the discussion. And I guess that's probably because of the methodologies that are being used, the departing point that they have. I don't know exactly how to explain it, but for me it's very important to just turn everybody, every subject that migrates, no matter the gender, the ethnicity, the age, the level of ability or disability that the person has, visible in policy making, in academia, in intervention, in particular interventions. So, I think that is important and that's what brought me to study the convergence of gender and migration from different transdisciplinary lenses. Do you want me to speak now about the question on advocacy, because is quite connected to this or should I hold on onto that?

**Teresa:** Yes, please feel free to do so.

**Adriana:** So, the moment we started introducing and thinking migration from a feminist perspective, I think we can't detach from the advocacy point of view from a platform that involves questioning power, privileges and systems of oppression that have been embedded in the production of knowledge as well as in the policy arena and in practice. So, in that sense, I guess, bringing a feminist perspective into migration studies is critical to question those power



arrangements in place. So, not only from the decision of who migrates and the decision of who manages the remittances that a migrant sent.

I lost track of what I was saying. Maybe, Uzma, if you want go ahead. [Sorry! this was the bird chirping on my window that distracted me!]

**Uzma:** Ok. Just to add to what Adriana is saying, of course, gender and migration as so inextricably linked. Gender is a factor in every other phenomenon as well. So, gender and mobility, of course, if you look at mobility is crucial that you look at it holistically, considering all the factors that impact people who migrate and therefore including different ethnicities, people belonging to different racial identities or coming from different age groups, different ability levels, etc., etc. So, I think to fully understand the phenomena we have to look at gender, but like what Adriana was saying, it is so often ignored, even in the sustainable development goals, goal number five is gender equality, but there is still a lot that needs to be done to reach this goal. There are gender inequalities at every step of the way, so even when we talk about a queering mobility, we know that in many contexts, we don't even have sex disaggregated data of the LGBTQIA+ community when it comes to mobility, even when it comes to asylum seekers. We know how difficult it is for somebody identifying as queer, or somebody identifying with the LGBTQIA+ community, how difficult it is for them to prove even their identity; how their existence is criminalized. So, we know all of these difficulties exist and yet we're far from understanding this fully. We need to explore these more to know more about how this process operates differently for men, for women and for persons of diverse sexual orientations and gender identities, why do they migrate, how does the phenomena function differently for them in terms of their experiences of mobility? What kind of unique challenges do they face based on their gender identity and what kind of support can be provided to, for example, LGBTQIA+ asylum seekers, or how can they be facilitated in using their gender as resource or their agency as a resource in processes of mobility instead of being challenged because of it.

**Adriana:** If I can add one more idea. It's also... As you know and are probably familiar with... Migration studies focus a lot on securitization of borders, and I think that's the departure point in several in the production of several publications and currents of thoughts within migration studies. I think, the moment we introduce a feminist perspective we decenter that, the security paradigm, and start focusing on the people, and the right of migration and understanding migration more as a basic right that the people have instead of necessarily linking it through the sovereignty principle that states have of regulating who's in and who's out of their territory. So, that question is actually very important because it's a different point of departure, assuming that migration is a human right, in that sense. And that also connects us with

advocacy and how we see academia. I like to define myself, as I always tell my students, as a hybrid professor, so I'm not like a hundred per cent academic, I am a practitioner too. A scholar but a practitioner too. In that sense, I said I have a foot in academia, but I also have a foot on the ground and on advocacy issues, which are quite important for me and for who I am as a researcher and as a professional. What is the purpose of social research? And the way I see it, the moment I introduce feminist approaches to the study of migration is basically to strengthen the capacity of the people that I encounter on the ground and strengthen of my interlocutors. I don't like to call them research subjects. I think that's not... It's very hierarchical, it's very detaching. I like to speak to them as interlocutors and speak with them as interlocutors, valid interlocutors that are engaging in this project of co-creation. And, in that sense, if I can contribute in any form to strengthening their capabilities, that's what I am here for. That's basically my departure point. So, I do see a connection, a very close connection between who we are as researchers, what do we do as feminist researchers, what is our role in engaging our work, our academic work, with the realities of the people on the ground, by strengthening in any capacity their social agency.

**Uzma:** Responding to the advocacy and activism point, because I was just thinking about that too. I think I'm at the point where I don't even believe that these are clear dichotomies or polar opposites. I think advocacy and activism and academia have been made to be these false dichotomies. And, even here, I feel that we need to be queering these categories of academia and activism because there's so much of activism that happens right inside our classrooms and that's basically why I even started with the academia, joining the academia because I think that so much of change, so much of activism, so much of advocacy happens in the classrooms. So many of the mindsets of people change within those settings, and those are the people who go on and engage with other people outside the classrooms. I think, even for example, when we're talking about Muslim women and how they perform their feminisms, even if we talk about that, there's so many myths that are shattered inside the classrooms, there's so many concepts that are cleared out and that's what soon states them in what we considered the field outside the academia. So, I think these boundaries have always blurred and we need to see those two together.

**Teresa:** Thank you. These were our last questions. Is there anything that you would like to add?

**Uzma:** I just wanted to mention to we're also working on some edited volumes and keeping in line our discussion on gender and migration, one of the volumes that Adriana and I will be coediting is on intersectionality and violence

in migration. So, it takes into account the multiple and complex issues that are there when it comes to human mobility and that includes gender, sexuality, ethnicity, legal status, race, religion, age, ability, etc. and how they're embodied by migrants and refugees and how, in the context of migration, do they function, how do the different forms of violence that emerge? It will be a collection of case-studies where intersectionality and violence converge in context of human mobility. So, that's something that's coming out and I'm also working to edit a volume on research methods in gender and migration, because I think, as passionate as I am about research methods, there is still a dearth of work that amplifies perspectives from research that seeks to uplift the voices of persons of diverse sexualities and gender identities in the context of migration. So, focusing on qualitative, quantitative and mixed method studies, this volume will be sharing case-studies on unique issues that surfaced during research with women and the LGBTQIA+ migrants. The call for chapters will be sent out shortly. This is something I want to share, and I hope scholars and practitioners working in the field would be interested in contributing to these volumes.

**Heidi and Teresa:** Thank you very much. This was fascinating, and we are grateful for the time you gave us tonight.