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DPCR ALUMNI NEWSLETTER

CELEBRATING 50 YEARS OF PEACE RESEARCH



Photo: David Naylor



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Words from the chair

Dear Alumni,

In one of his letters from 1675, Isaac Newton wrote these prominent words: *"If I have seen further, it is by standing on the shoulders of giants."* Originally dated back to the 12th century, this expression has long been associated with the ravishing world of scientific discoveries. It indeed tells a lot about how a certain body of scientific knowledge emerges and flourishes.

The field of peace and conflict research is nothing but a living proof of this process. Our history made peace researchable, and I am just a humble witness as a proud member of the vanguard of this field: the Department of Peace and Conflict Research at Uppsala University.

50 years passed since the DPCR was established. For an academic institution, we are still on our teenager days. We are excitingly looking for new ways to address crucial issues in a troubled world.

The DPCR Alumni Association works for nothing but strengthening the bridge between the past and today. The alumni are not only people who took 7.5 credit course at some point in their lives, but also anyone who worked and walked the aisles of our department, shaping the identity of this institution.

The global pandemic has certainly affected our professional and personal lives. At the Association, we had to cancel some of our in-person events. Despite physical distancing, we managed to maintain social contact with our members online.

2022 has witnessed slightly better pandemic conditions and we had the pleasure to organize our in-person events. The alumni came together in Stockholm for the Alumni Mingle on 23 March. We organized the Alumni Talks event in Uppsala on the interplay between humanitarian action and peace research with our distinguished alumni Julia Wittig and Henrique Garbino on 23 May. In the meantime, our mentorship program continued.

Throughout the year, we have recruited new members to the Association and stayed connected with our previous members through various online and in-person meetings. This annual newsletter is another effort to maintain and strengthen the ties between the Association and the alumni.

If you have any questions, comments, or suggestions for the Association, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Best regards,
Mert Can Yilmaz

About the Association

The DPCR Alumni Association aims to strengthen the link between former and current students and staff, professionally and socially. It also seeks to deepen the connection between alumni and the Department. In doing so, we arrange lectures, social gatherings and other events open to all members. If you have ideas for future activities, please let us know!



Mert Can Yilmaz

President of the DPCR Alumni Association (2021-2022)
Research Assistant at the Uppsala Conflict Data Program
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Sign-up: Join the Association by signing up for free in the UU Alumni Network. You can access the network via pcr.uu.se/alumni or contact us at dpcr@alumni.uu.se.

Social media: [Facebook](#) | [LinkedIn](#)

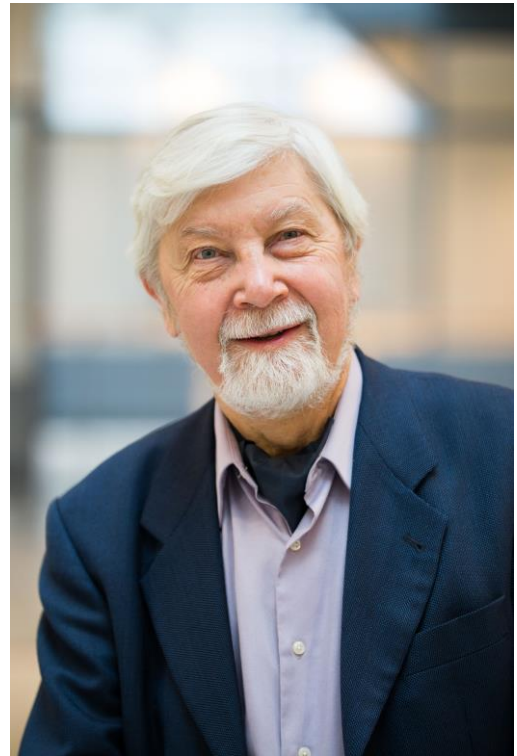
Celebrating 50 years of peace and conflict research

Juan Diego Duque Salazar and Kristina Petrova

In 2021, the DPCR celebrated 50 years of its foundation where professors, students and alumni came together to participate in an extensive and stimulating reflection on the progress and achievements that the Department has made during the last half of a century.

As part of the celebration, the Department launched its first and unique podcast *Researching Peace*, where prominent international scholars, practitioners and alumni were interviewed to discuss cutting-edge developments in the field.

The interviews prepared our community for the then-upcoming Anniversary Symposium on 14 October 2021. The symposium reunited scholars and practitioners to discuss the DPCR influence worldwide. We had the honorary presence of Victoria, Crown Princess of Sweden, who is also a DPCR alumna. Anders Hagfeldt, the Vice-Chancellor of Uppsala University, kicked off the event, followed by key addresses of, our beloved founder, Peter Wallenstein, who recounted the initial efforts and struggles for establishing a new department, which specifically aimed to focus on making peace “researchable” in a politicized world during the Cold War. Then, Jan Eliasson, former Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations, presented his experiences on how the DPCR had illuminated his work as a mediator and provided critical insights into peace negotiation efforts in civil conflicts such as the one in Darfur.



Peter Wallenstein

Founder of the DPCR

Senior Professor of Peace and Conflict Research

The symposium had two panels, the first one on the academic achievements and frontiers of the field, where recognized scholars such as Gudrun Østby from Peace Research Institute Oslo, Erica Chenoweth from Harvard University, and Christian Davenport from the University of Michigan debated issues related to political contentions, impacts of armed conflict on children's and women's health, and massive social mobilizations during a period when democracy is weakening around the world. Afterwards, practitioners such as Margot Wallström, Beatrice Fihn and Jamie LeSueur shared some thoughts on how peace research has been relevant for civil society organizations, humanitarian work, and the United Nations. The discussion presented fruitful reflections on the capacities of academic research to move forward political debates on topics related to humanitarian assistance, nuclear weapons, and conflict-related sexual violence.

Jamie LeSueur, who is the Head of Emergency Operations at the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), a DPCR alumni (2015) and the Alumnus of the Year (2020) awarded by Uppsala University, participated in the panel and our own "Researching Peace" podcast shedding light on how our alumni are currently leading and attending to the most urgent conflict-affected situations in the world.

Later in the Spring the Department also hosted a belated dinner party, due to then-still in place COVID-19 restrictions, for all our precious bachelor's, master's, and PhD students, former and current DPCR staff, and alumni to celebrate the 50th anniversary of one of the oldest and most recognized peace research institutions in the world.



Photos: pcr.uu.se/about-us/dpcr50/



Photo: Mikael Wallerstedt

Alumni General Meeting 2022

A new alumni board for 2022/2023 was elected at the Annual General Meeting on 8 June. The new board consists of Mert Can Yilmaz (President), Juan Diego Duque Salazar (Vice-President), Jenniina Kotajoki (Secretary), Maxine Leis (Treasurer) and Karolina Schützer (Department Liaison).

The DPCR Alumni Association was founded in June 2013 with the aim of strengthening and fostering contacts and networks between former and current student of the Department of Peace and Conflict Research. Membership is open for anyone who has

- a) obtained credits in at least one course taught at the Department,
- b) worked, taught, or carried out research at the Department,
- c) been recommended for membership by the Board of the Association.

Join the Association by signing up for free in the UU Alumni Network. You can access the network via pcr.uu.se/alumni or contact us at dpcr@alumni.uu.se.

DPCR Alumni Talks 2022:

Humanitarian action and peace research

The DPCR Alumni Association held its sixth Alumni Talks on 23 May. The Alumni Talks are held annually, each year with a different theme. This year, we welcomed two of our distinguished alumni, Julia Wittig and Henrique Garbino, who talked about the connection between humanitarian action and peace research. The panel was moderated by Corinne Bara.

Julia Wittig has long been working in the field of humanitarian action and armed violence reduction in North and Sub-Saharan Africa and Latin America. Wittig is currently working at the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN OCHA) as the Humanitarian Affairs Officer & Anticipatory Action Lead at the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF). She is leading the design of an innovative humanitarian financing approach for CERF to mitigate climate-induced humanitarian crises.

Henrique Garbino served in the Brazilian Army for more than a decade as a combat engineer officer, and he worked as a deputy operations officer of the Brazilian Engineering Company in the United Nations Stabilisation Mission in Haiti. He was recently in Ukraine for a six-week rapid deployment mission as a Weapon Contamination Delegate and Explosive Ordnance Disposal Specialist for the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). Garbino is currently an associate specialist at the Brazilian Research Network on Peace Operations and a doctoral candidate at the Swedish Defence University.



Julia Wittig

Humanitarian Affairs Officer at the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs



Henrique Garbino

Associate Specialist at the Brazilian Research Network on Peace Operations

Alumni Interview: Mathilda Lindgren

Gudlaug Olafsdottir

Mathilda Lindgren defended her PhD dissertation on mediation styles at the DPCR in 2016. She is currently employing filmmaking as a medium for education and activism, with recent experience in the implementation and evaluation of a program teaching a holistic approach to leadership.

Already as a child Mathilda knew that she wanted to work with world peace, proclaiming to her parents at age five upon seeing Butros Butros Ghali on the television that “that is my future profession!” As time went by, this interest remained, leading her to complete a magister-degree in Peace and Conflict Studies in Uppsala, later working as a research assistant in a number of research projects relating to non-violent movements and post-conflict governance in Africa. After having gained three months field experience as an international observer via the EAPPI program in Israel/Palestine she applied, and was accepted, to the doctoral program at the department.

During her doctoral studies Mathilda seized the opportunity to interview and field questionnaires among mediators from a variety of organizations with diverse experiences in mediating peace. Compiling these, she demonstrated how the difference in mediation styles relate to both the mediator’s individual characteristics and world views, as well as the context the mediation takes place in, particularly the intensity of the conflict behaviors. Through her dissertation work she notes that she developed her strategic capacity, critical thinking and skills in systematic overview and comparison. These skills can be aptly applied across a range of professions. Up to the end of her doctoral studies, she had focused on international perspectives and relations, armed conflict, mediation and peace processes. Following the successful defense of her dissertation she set out to learn a different perspective. Going from macro to micro, she sought to understand leadership styles from the other end of the spectrum. She teamed up with leadership educator, developer, and analyst Annika Sundbom Åström to document and evaluate a program that puts the individual’s emotions at center stage in leadership and the creation of realities at *Human Dignity: A Center for Leadership*.

“In the end, it all involves people”, she says, advocating for connecting the two above mentioned perspectives.

The report resulting from this collaboration can be downloaded through these links in [English](#) and [Swedish](#).

Today Mathilda continues to advocate for a holistic perspective on peace, using film as a primary medium. Again, returning to an interest that has been with her since childhood, she is currently involved in making two documentaries relating to social issues as a result of her education in filmmaking at The Red Cross College. She is a freelancer, involved in a number of creative and educational projects, and gives talks where she draws upon her insights and experience from peace research. She aspires to continue working in the nexus of peace-related issues and culture, holding the belief that the more people can imagine and relate to a certain outcome – such as peace – the more attainable this will become. By using film and culture in other forms one can provide examples of peace that make it more possible to recreate.

“My overall motivation is to mobilize humanity for more community and freedom to be our unique selves together, she notes and suggests that using film and culture to this end can be a powerful tool.”

I must say that I am convinced of the power that culture can have in the pursuit of peace and look forward to seeing more of Mathilda’s work.

Alumni Interview: Marcus Tan de Bibiana

Marcellina Priadi

Meet Marcus Tan de Bibiana, a Canadian DPCR alumnus from 2017, with over ten years of experience in humanitarian, development, academic and artistic sectors. He has worked in multiple countries with most time spent in Somalia, Sudan, Kenya and Afghanistan. Recently, Marcus held the role as Deputy Country Director for Committed to Good (CTG) in Somalia, facilitating the operations of humanitarian and development organizations.

Think of a river; its calm yet powerful water moving gracefully between the banks of an empty forest, an urban metropolis, a rural desert town. The river runs deep, evolving and adapting to support life in each context with a powerful gush or a gentle splash depending on what is needed. Now let me introduce you to Marcus; this river embodied.

When I first interviewed Marcus in Spring 2021, he was video chatting with me from Mogadishu, Somalia where he had recently transitioned from programming to operations in his newest position as Deputy Country Director for CTG. By the time we catch up again one year later, Marcus has moved back to Toronto, Canada, and has been taking some important time with his family and to reset himself. Despite his impressive CV, Marcus' journey has had its fair share of unexpected twists and turns.

After graduating in 2017, Marcus remotely conducted a peacebuilding and political participation final project evaluation with Saferworld Sudan and South Sudan, from which he gained insight into the reflections of youth amidst a restrictively governed environment for NGOs to operate in peacebuilding. Building on his experiences of photojournalism, Marcus moved on to the intersection of peacebuilding and photography as a social justice and photography mentor for Jayu Canada. One of his favorite roles to date, Marcus supported the peer learning of youth artists and photographers developing projects around social issues around lived issues including governance in indigenous communities and COVID-19 isolation.



Marcus Tan de Bibiana

Deputy Country Director for Committed to Good in Somalia

Photo: Ebti Nabag



Marcus and his colleagues in Somalia

Like a river's sudden turn in 2018, Marcus returned to Afghanistan as a proposal writer in livelihoods and migration for Relief International. This gave him the opportunity to explore Kabul's beauty until being unexpectedly re-stationed in UAE due to operational risk.

He subsequently moved on to Bangladesh to work on a countering violent extremism proposal before moving on to the Philippines, where he encountered a challenging work experience in the private sector. Nonetheless, Marcus used the opportunity to reconnect with family and cultural ties in Manila before relocating to Canada in 2019 and working in higher education as well as on a Somalia-focused resilience assignment with the UN Office for Project Services.

Taking up the position of Deputy Country Director in the thick of 2020's COVID-19 rise, which was also Marcus' first dedicated management post, he tells me, "It was not always my job to provide the answers but to work with the team's assets – knowledge, networks, instincts, and experienced lessons to provide OUR solutions [emphasis Marcus' own]." From the role, he has discovered his preference for using a horizontal peer mentorship approach to lead and manage teams and maintaining team morale by accepting accountability for shortcomings whilst ensuring credit goes to his team colleagues. Now, after spending so much time focusing on supporting the wellness of others, Marcus is prioritizing his own wellness and has resumed his interests in Asian energetic healing and meditation. This doesn't mean that Marcus has stopped working though; the river has just been moving at a slower pace. For example, Marcus has been continuing to teach and convene his courses on nonprofit management and participatory development using decolonial, asset-based and compassionate lenses for early graduate education for Humber College in Canada, whilst looking for new pastures to water.

In terms of challenges, Marcus has also struggled with contract-employment and job instability like many others in this field. Staying grounded has also been another challenge for Marcus due to his frequent relocating. Now he tries to actively stay present in every moment. A further challenge has been imposter syndrome making Marcus believe that he would never get a job with NGOs. “It doesn’t happen overnight. After three internships - two being paid - this became two years of experience and all deliverable-based work.” To mitigate imposter syndrome Marcus advises, “Don’t compare, comparison is the thief of joy. It means you feel two extremes – either pride or envy. Be humble, and wise enough to ask for help when you don’t know something.

Reflecting on his time at DPCR, Marcus’ main takeaways are the opportunities to learn or apply research to practical, real-world examples. He recalls a guest lecture with Bjorn Holmberg that made his eyes open by demonstrating how attitudes, behavior and structures as defined by stake holders, could help identify decision options through conflict actors’ lived experiences. A second example was a course paper that gave Marcus the opportunity to reconnect with Sudan, where he had previously worked, and evaluate the burgeoning nonviolent resistance there using primary sources when empirical studies on human rights were limited. Although few people outside of the country may have known about this movement in 2016, now it is world renowned following the overthrow of President Omar al-Bashir in 2019.

When considering advice for alumni seeking to follow their career goals, Marcus strongly recommends LinkedIn, which he regularly shares on and uses to create his own opportunities. “Use it constantly, it’s your garden that needs to be kept watered... Put yourself out there. Look for people in positions you find interesting and follow them.” Even with high career ambitions, Marcus also emphasizes “your personal life can support a career, but your career can also support your personal life”. Ultimately, he endorses being a life-long learner. “Don’t worry about the best or right way of doing things...with each different thing you do, you’ll learn what’s for you or not. There is no perfect career path, each is perfect in their own way – it’s up to you to make the most of it.”

And with that, the river continues downstream.

Interview with Nina von Uexkull on the ‘petroleum, prices and protests’

Kristina Petrova

Nina von Uexkull is an Associate Professor at the Department of Peace and Conflict Research and the Director of the Uppsala Rotary Peace Center. She currently leads the project ‘Petroleum, prices and protests: The impact of climate change mitigation on social unrest’.

- o *To start off, please give us a brief introduction - what is the project about and what made you excited to pursue the topic?*

The emission of greenhouse gases needs to decrease rapidly to prevent dangerous climate change. This requires a massive transformation of the energy systems modern societies’ economies rely on. However, subsidies to fossil fuels are still widespread which is not at all in line with climate goals. A recent study reported these subsidies to be larger than 6 percent of global GDP in 2015! So, it is clear that this transition will create not only winners but also losers and the urgency of the transition makes it particularly important to study. In this project, we want to contribute to understanding how far and under what circumstances protests do emerge in response to climate change mitigation policies. I think providing evidence on this question will be important for policymakers to understand how social acceptance to climate policies can be increased, but also, perhaps, to correct some misconceptions on whether introducing climate taxes or dropping fossil fuel subsidies is really met with widespread resistance among the population. There is still much we do not know: In research on climate change and social unrest and armed conflict a lot of focus has been on implications of climate change and natural hazards; and I think this is really important to also consider how policies in line with the Paris Agreement – which will keep global temperature to well below 2 degrees – will shape protests and conflicts.

- o *How about the research team? Who is involved?*

The core research team consists of Espen Geelmuyden Rød, Isak Svensson and me. I am very excited about this new collaboration: While Espen and Isak are experts on protest and mobilization, I have worked on climate change and security for many years. So, we complement each other’s expertise very well and learn a lot from each other. One of the reasons for why DPCR is a great place – such a broad range of expertise under the same roof!

- o *What do you hope to achieve by the time the project ends?*

By 2025, the end of the project, I hope we will have a fair understanding of fuel-related climate policies and their link to protests. And I also hope we will know more about the success of fossil fuel subsidy reforms in the face of protests.

- o *Research on the type, structure and possible impacts of climate mitigating policy approaches seems to have an immediate relevance for policy circles. How do you envision insights from the project to support policy efforts related to mitigation action?*

I very much hope that we can contribute to providing some evidence on the strength of links between climate change mitigation policies such as subsidy cuts to protests that can provide important background information to policy makers. Core questions we want to answer are: Why do protests emerge, when do they become violent and disruptive and last but not least how can protester-government interactions allow for climate-friendly reforms? Another aspect we have started to look into is the change in demands for metals and minerals for producing and storing renewable energy. Also, I think as conflict researchers, we can provide insights into the link between fossil fuel production, such as oil and gas, and conflict that is well-studied and often referred to as “the resource curse”, but also often missing from the debate on climate change. We are just writing a short commentary on that topic.

- o *In light of the latest IPCC report and call for urgent climate action, in what direction do you think research on climate policies should be extended to in the future to provide insights for a more peaceful world?*

I think there are many avenues to explore: climate change policies is a huge and multifaceted topic. In this project, we had to start somewhere and chose to focus on fossil fuel related policies and protest. Yet, much more needs to be done! For example, one important aspect relates to interstate relationships and geopolitics: we see how dependency on Russian fossil fuels shapes the European Union’s responses to the Russian invasion of Ukraine. It is conceivable that a low emission energy system that to large degree relies on energy sources such as wind, water and solar power which are more decentralized and diverse in resource requirements would lessen dependence on major fossil fuel producing countries such as Russia and hence have major influence on trade flows and income to governments that are currently waging war or engage in repression.



Nina von Uexkull

Associate Professor at the Department
of Peace and Conflict Research

News from the DPCR

There are always a lot of things happening at the Department and below you can find some examples. You can find more news on <https://pcr.uu.se/news/>.

Three new doctors in peace research

On 10 June, **David Randahl** successfully defended his dissertation *Who knows what tomorrow will bring?*.

On 13 May 2022, **Stefan Döring** successfully defended his dissertation *Cooperation and Conflict amid Water Scarcity*.

On 18 March 2022, **Karin Johansson** successfully defended her dissertation *Raising the Costs or Lowering the Bar: International Influences on Conflict-Related Sexual Violence*.

ITP Alumni Meeting in Nairobi

The fourth International Training (ITP) alumni meeting has been successfully completed in Nairobi, Kenya. The meeting was jointly organized with the Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation in Uppsala and in collaboration with the Life and Peace Institute (LPI) in Nairobi.

New Rj program at the DPCR: Societies at Risk

Riksbankens Jubileumsfond decided to fund the *Societies at Risk*, directed by Håvard Hegre. In addition to Håvard, the project will involve Ashok Swain, Paola Vesco, Magnus Öberg, Nina von Uexkull, and Jonathan Hall from the department, as well as Johan von Schreeb and Anneli Eriksson from Karolinska Institute, Debarati Guha-Sapir from Centre for Research on the Epidemiology of Disasters, Tilman Brück from International Security and Development Center, Hannes Mueller from Autonomous University of Barcelona, Michael Colaresi from University of Pittsburgh, Staffan Lindberg from University of Gothenburg, and Christopher Rauh from Cambridge University.

First Annual Conference of the AMC

Nuclear weapons are now on top of the agenda again in a way not seen for decades. The need to learn about the preconditions for nuclear disarmament in a broad sense is thus even more evident. Issues range from risk reduction, arms control, and non-proliferation in the immediate term to achieving security communities and disarmament in the long term and concern many different disciplines and fields of inquiry. In this context, Uppsala University's **Alva Myrdal Centre for Nuclear Disarmament (AMC)** will host its first Annual Conference in Uppsala, Sweden, with the possibility to join some of the sessions online. The conference opening remarks will take place on October 19 with the official inauguration of the Centre in the University Aula. The conference itself is then scheduled to begin on October 20 and 21. The event aims to serve as a platform to discuss research and ideas on nuclear disarmament, and to share insights from various academic disciplines and practical experience.

The three-day conference will be a hybrid event featuring opening and closing plenary sessions as well as interactive thematic sessions to present current research. In addition to scientific panels there will be activities aimed at facilitating exchanges between academics, practitioners, civil society, and the interested public. One ambition is to take stock of the state of the art, and a series of sessions will therefore be presentations and discussions on this theme. For more information, [click here](#).

Class notes 2022

2011

Adan Suazo

After leading work to strengthen New Zealand's national drinking water regulations, I am now developing the scope for recommendations to reform the country's local governance system.

2014

Benjamin

Graduated from my PhD in Summer 2020. Since February 2021 employed at the German Federal Ministry of Defence working on arms control, military confidence-building, the OSCE and the control of Small Arms and Light Weapons.

2016

Johannes Wander

Currently, working at GIZ with the African Union Commission on digital transformation in Africa, mostly digital policy regulation. I'm based in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, since 01/2021. Hit me up when you are in town :) @jowander

2017

Renze Terpstra

Freelance data science consultant. Still rocking that methods knowledge.

2018

Jenniina Kotajoki

PhD Candidate at DPCR working on UN interventions and non-state armed groups. I will be in New York next semester, let me know if you are around and want to grab a coffee! @jkotajoki

2019

Anna Marie Obermeier

I'm a Research Assistant at PRIO working on several projects related to conflict prediction, the UN Security Council, and gender. @akobermeier

Juan Diego Duque

Doing a PhD at DPCR on election violence and gender. @juandi122

2021

Jakob Schabus

A few months ago, I started working in Stockholm for the International Policy Team at SIWI with a focus on water and climate change.

Other affiliations

Ilmari Käihkö

Associate Professor at Swedish Defence University, researching the Russo-Ukrainian War (2014-), non-military warfare, conflict ethnography and conscription in divided societies. @kaihko



Photo: David Naylor