

OPRC Annual Review

Report Period: August 2021-July 2022

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2021–2022 was an important year for the Open Psychology Research Centre (OPRC). Having launched the Centre, we set about forming an advisory board to act as 'critical friends' of the OPRC. We consulted our colleagues, and approached people from whom we knew we would learn. All of our first-choices expressed great enthusiasm for the project! We got to know each other better at a two-day event held in June 2022. More on our CAB members below.

No less exciting was the appointment of two Post-Doctoral Researchers, Dr Nihan Albayrak-Aydemir and Dr Marta Prandelli who have joined the core ORPC team. With deep interests in open psychological research that makes a real difference to social



justice issues, both have thrown themselves into developing our new Collaboration Lab. On this and more, check out our report below!



Professor Peter Hegarty & Professor Paul Stenner

Open Psychology Research Centre (OPRC) Co-Directors





Overview

The academic year 2021-2022 continued to be affected by the COVID pandemic with restrictions of face-to-face meetings, data collection, and conferences. Nonetheless, following the online launch of OPRC in the Summer of 2021 we moved forward in six ways:

First, we consolidated the Open Psychology Research Centre's (OPRC) structures, personnel, and ways of working. OPRC membership extends to the entire Open University School of Psychology & Counselling, but the personnel directly involved in running OPRC are shown in the section below, organised into our three main structures. We appointed two postdoctoral researchers who have begun to develop the Collaboration Lab (ColLab). ColLab aims to draw our undergraduate and PhD students closer to the School's research culture.



- Second, we used our funding and know-how to support research projects within the School of Psychology & Counselling The colleagues we supported returned external grant capture of several millions in 2021-2022.
- Third, we have continued to oversee the organisation of research events by our three main research strands: Culture and Social Psychology, Forensic Cognition, and Psychology of Health and Wellbeing.
- Fourth, to engage our undergraduate students in School research we began a series of OPRC 'Talks to students'.
- Fifth, we promoted our early career researchers by supporting their travel to international conferences as COVID restrictions eased and allowed it.
- Finally, we ended the year with the first face-to-face meeting of the Centre Management Board and members of our new international Centre Advisory Board. This meeting at The Open University (OU) campus in Milton Keynes which continues to inform our future directions.



OPRC Core Team



Professor Peter Hegarty

OPRC Co-Director



Professor Paul Stenner
OPRC Co-Director



Dr Ekaterina KandelakiOPRC Manager
(Research)



Sue Cocklin

OPRC Assistant
(Research)



Aydemir

Post-Doctoral Research

Associate (PDRA)

Dr Nihan Albayrak-



Dr Marta Prandelli
Post-Doctoral Research
Associate (PDRA)



Centre Management Board (CMB)



Dr Eleni AndreouliDirector of Research



Dr Simon ClarkePostgraduate Convener
(PGC)



Professor John Dixon
CuSP Strand Co-Lead



Dr Sandra ObradovićCuSP Strand Co-Lead



Dr Lara Frumkin
FCRG Strand Co-Lead



Dr Ailsa Strathie
FCRG Strand Co-Lead



Dr David KaposiPHeW Strand Co-Lead



Langdridge
PHeW Strand Co-Lead

Professor Darren



Centre Advisory Board (CAB)



Professor Vicki Bruce

Professor Emerita of Psychology - Newcastle University



Professor Michelle Fine

A Distinguished Professor of Critical Psychology, Women's Studies,
American Studies and Urban Education - Graduate Centre, City
University of New York (CUNY); Co-founding faculty member - The
Public Science Project, The Graduate Center, CUNY; Visiting Professor University of South Africa



Professor Brandon Hamber

John Hume & Thomas P. O'Neill Chair in Peace - Ulster University



Dr Celestin Okoroji

LSE Fellow - London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE)
Head of Research - Black Thrive



Professor Esther D. Rothblum

Professor Emerita of Women's Studies - San Diego State University Visiting Distinguished Scholar - UCLA School of Law-Williams Institute



Professor Helen Spandler

Professor of Mental Health Studies - University of Central Lancashire (UCLan), School of Social Work, Care and Community Editor - Asylum, the radical mental health magazine



Professor Thomas Teo

Professor of Psychology in the Historical, Theoretical, and Critical Studies of Psychology Program - York University, Toronto (Canada)





Summary of the Strands' Annual Report

The three research strands in the School of Psychology & Counselling are supported by the OPRC and coordinated via its Centre Management Board:



Led by Dr Sandra Obradovic and Professor John Dixon



Led by Dr Lara Frumkin and Dr Ailsa Strathie



Led by Dr David Kaposi and Professor Darren Langdridge

Each strand organizes a range of research-related activities. These vary from monthly work in progress seminars through invited talks to larger research events like symposia, workshops, and conferences. The strands also support occasions for PhD students and early career researchers to present and discuss their work. The strand leads compile a report on their activities each year. Here we summarise some highlights:

For example, a highlight from the Culture and Social Psychology (CuSP) calendar of events was a two-day meeting held in May 2021 on culture and social psychology. This event gave CuSP the opportunity of hosting members of the Culture and Psychology Network (CuPsyNet). Following an introduction from Professor Paul Stenner, day one centred on discussion sessions following four guest lectures. First Professor Brady Wagoner reported his findings from a German study of 'antivaccination' arguments. Second, Dr Karen Hagan introduced a School-based anti-



bullying intervention informed by her work. Third, Professors Tania Zittoun and Paul Stenner discussed the psychological function of art during troubled times. Fourth, Dr Johanna Motzkau introduced her new work on the psychology of listening.



On day two PhD students gave presentations about their work. Emma Price gave a keynote lecture on the datafication of the citizen; Shannon O'Rourke gave talk on LGBQ individuals on their pathways to leadership; Edoardo Zulato talked about how caregivers and professionals make sense of patients in the 'vegetative state'; Tijana Nikitovic discussed the embodied nature experience; Ruth O'Collier-Large presented her plans for working with non-speaking autistic people; Klara Jurstakova outlined the social psychology of Czechoslovakia's velvet revolution; and Marketa Machkova shared ideas about acting dialogically.







In June 2022, the Forensic Cognition Group (FCRG) strand leads held a planning meeting at The OU Edinburgh office with Dame Professor Vicki Bruce, a member of the OPRC's Advisory Board. The discussion centred on the group's current research

initiatives, as well as the formulation of plans and strategies for the forthcoming year. This discussion was followed by an informal gathering with Professor Bruce and some FCRG members.







Founded in 1948, the Mulberry
Bush is a charity with strong
therapeutic community heritage
that builds on how it informs

practice and services, enhancing the links between practice, teaching, and research. The main theme of the event was to discuss ideas that can help staff to look after traumatised children. On June 8th, 2022, PHeW organised an online Reflective Practice Research Launch Event in collaboration with practitioners from the Mulberry. See report: 'Stewards of a Process': Towards an Understanding of the Reflective Culture at The Mulberry Bush.



Funding Successes During the Reporting Period

In 2021-2022, researchers in the School of Psychology & Counselling were also successful in generating over £1.5 million in new research income. We highlight some notable successes below.

Dr Kesi Mahendran successfully secured a grant from European Union's Horizon-Europe, the EU's largest Research and Innovation programme. Her funded project 'OppAttune:

Horizon Europe THE NEXT EU RESEARCH & INNOVATION PROGRAMME (2021 – 2027)





Countering Oppositional Political Extremism through Attuned Dialogue: Track, Attune, Limit' involves a multi-disciplinary consortium of 17 partner institutions from different countries. The three-year project will employ OPRC expertise within the School of Psychology & Counselling from Dr Eleni Andreouli, Dr Sandra Obradović and Dr Evangelos Ntontis, as well as artificial intelligence specialists Dr Despoina Filiou and lawyers Professor Simon Lee and Professor Edward Abbott-Halpin from Faculty of Business and Law (FBL) and will begin in April 2023.





Prof. Lisa Lazard (PI) and Professor Rose Capdevila (Co-I) from the School of Psychology & Counselling were awarded an European Union grant for their project titled: 'Gender





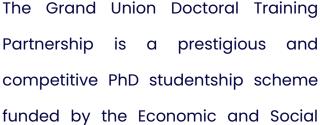
A team meeting of diverse employees in a room and online, via a conference video call on a tv screen - Insta photos (c) iStock

Equitable Interactions Online (GEiO):
Supporting Gender Equity In Workbased Videoconferencing'. The GEiO
project investigates the role of
gender in online work meetings
across four nations (Germany,
Iceland, Spain, and the UK). Research
on how gender becomes relevant to

videoconferencing at work remains in its infancy. A key aim of this project is to build new transnational evidence on the currently unexplored ways in which digital videoconferencing innovations maintain or can be used to resist gender inequity at work. Lisa and Rose will be working with international corporations in each of the partner countries.

See more on this on CuSP research page.





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is



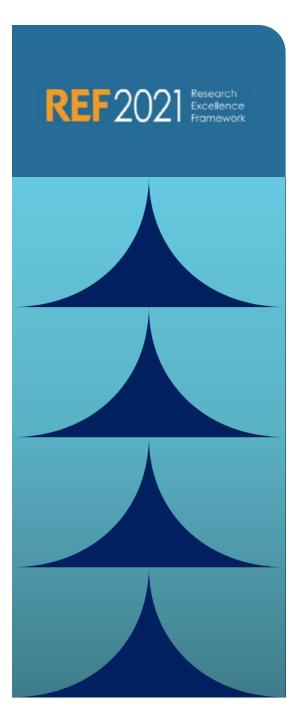
currently the only source of PhD funding offered in the School of Psychology & Counselling. Psychology and Counselling continued to attract several strong applications for this scheme in spite of a downturn in applications overall, likely due to the COVID-19 pandemic. In the 2021-2022 round, the Psychology Pathway were successful in gaining one studentship. Nina Fellows' award-winning proposal was titled 'The cultural emergence and social construction of self-harm in the 1990s'. She will be supervised by Dr David Jones, Dr Laura Mc Grath and Dr Simon Clarke, and will join the two GUDPT students who joined the School in 2020-2021.

For more on GUDPT students, please see blog posts by Deepti Ramaswamy and Maria Cochrane:

- In conversation with Deepti Ramaswamy, a new PhD student in the School of Psychology & Counselling at the Open University – OU Psychology & Counselling (wordpress.com)
- In conversation with Maria Cochrane, a new PhD student in the School of Psychology & Counselling at The Open University – OU Psychology & Counselling (wordpress.com)



Results of the Evaluation of Psychology Research by REF



The Research Excellence Framework (REF) is the UKs way of evaluating the quality of research. The research of most OPRC members was submitted for evaluation under the unit A4 header of 'Psychology, Psychiatry and Neuroscience'.

Given the focus in the School and OPRC on real-world research, it was particularly gratifying that two of our three impact case studies were ranked as world-leading (4*) and the third as "internationally excellent (3*). Overall, 58% of our research was rated in the two highest categories as either "world leading" or as "internationally excellent." This result placed the School among the top 20 nationwide for research impact. The REF 2021 results are available online. The results of REF 2021 inform the context of our ongoing work in OPRC.



Our goal is to advance psychological knowledge and improve society through cutting-edge research. Our research drives our teaching in the School of Psychology & Counselling, ensuring our curriculum stays at the cutting-edge of the discipline. Our return to REF UoA4 marks the start of a new chapter as we continue to strive for excellence by growing the field of open psychology.

Please visit The OU Open Research Online (ORO) for publications.

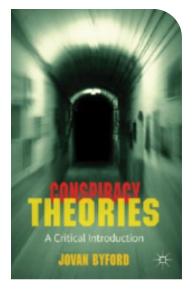
Synergies Between Teaching, Research and Practice

One OPRC objective is to facilitate 'synergies' between research and teaching. Universities should be places where teaching and research intersect. That way students can learn from researchers who are actively involved in producing new knowledge and researchers can learn from students, whose perspectives are often fresh and contemporary.

In support of this synergy, OPRC organised a series of talks for students, and this will continue over the coming years. The first two of the series were held in Spring 2022. Two academics from the OPRC (Professor Jovan Byford and Dr Gemma Briggs) gave short live online talks about their research, followed by a Q&A session in which the undergraduate student audience could ask questions and offer comments. These



talks were Chaired by the OPRC Co-Directors Professor Peter Hegarty and Professor Paul Stenner.



Jovan Byford, a Professor of Psychology and History in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, delivered the first talk in the series of OPRC talks for students.

Link to talk: 'Covid-19 Pandemic and the Psychology of Conspiracy Theories'

View Related blog: 'What has the Covid-19 pandemic taught us about the psychology of conspiracy theories?'

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The second lecture was presented by Dr Gemma Briggs, Senior Lecturer in Psychology in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences (now Head of Discipline & Professor of Applied Cognitive Psychology).



Link to the talk: 'Distraction and focus: why is phone use by drivers a problem?'



OPRC Supported Events

The Open Psychology Research Centre supported a diverse array of events throughout 2021-2022. See some of the highlights below.

Psychology in the arts, arts in Psychology



Under the coordination of Professor Paul Stenner, Co-Director of the OPRC, scholars from the fields of Psychology and Arts at The OU came together to delve into the intersections of these disciplines.

Simply Bayesian Workshop

Organised by Dr Sarah Laurence in May 2022, the introductory workshop looked at Bayesian analysis- an alternative to null hypothesis significance testing (p-values) which increasingly appears in results sections in journals



Integrating insights from social, health, and political psychology

The two-day event, organized by Dr Sandra Obradovic and Dr. Evangelos Ntontis in

Society and Wellbeing

collaboration with the members of the PHeW research group, brought together



prominent scholars to present and discuss their latest research on the social and political aspects of wellbeing. The event provided a valuable platform for interdisciplinary dialogue, fostering the integration of research from the fields of social, health, and political psychology.

Psychological Questions in the Analysis of Big Data

Co-organised by Professor Peter Hegarty (FASS) and Professor Harith Alani, this was a research networking event of the Knowledge Media Institute



(KMi) and the School of Psychology & Counselling (Psych) taking place in July 2022. This event featured four panels of engaging talks by members of both groups, followed by stimulating discussion with the idea to capture concepts, questions and ideas for further discussion.

SPSSI Conference in Puerto Rico



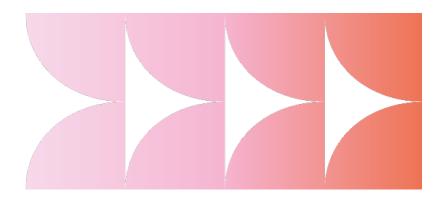




Dr Nihan Albayrak-Aydemir, Dr Laura McGrath, Dr. Evangelos Ntontis and Dr Sandra Obradovic were funded by OPRC to present their work at the Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues (SPSSI) conference in San Juan, Puerto Rico in June, 2022. They organised a symposium titled: 'Overcoming

distance: complexities in facilitating Community connection and support.' SPSSI publishes the Journal of Social Issues, which provides a forum for work which has real-world impact, particularly in relation to social policy. One hot topic of debate very relevant to OPRC was the recent development of a framework for a 'Public Psychology' better able to address the many intransigent social and public health crises that characterise societies across the globe today.

More on this can be found in a blog on Wordpress.





Report on the First Annual Meeting of the CAB

A founding goal of the OPRC was to construct the Centre Advisory Board (hereafter *CAB*) "composed of 6-8 diverse members who may advise, advocate for, and scrutinize the actions of the Centre and its Co-Directors." (OPRC Objectives Document, Feb 26th, 2020). Accordingly, during the 2021-2022, the OPRC Co-Directors sought input from strand leads and the OPRC PDRAs on candidates for this CAB. They successfully recruited the seven CAB members, four of whom are located in the UK and three in North America. Their details are now listed above on page 5 of this report.



In June 2022 we invited the CAB members to Milton Keynes for two days. Professor Michelle Fine, Professor Brandon Hamber, Dr Celestin Okoroji, and Professor Helen Spandler attended on both days in person. Professor Esther Rothblum and Professor Thomas Teo participated virtually (via MS Teams) on the second day. Professor Vicki Bruce was not available to attend first annual advisory the board meeting. The joint meeting of the and Advisory **Board** the Centre



Management Board occurred on the first day. It was followed by a series of meetings between CAB members and key stakeholders in the School's research culture including Director of Research (Dr Eleni Andreouli) Head of School (Dr Jean McAvoy) post-graduate research students and early career researchers.

On the second day, after a visit to Bletchley Park Museum, CAB members participated in a round-table discussion on the advantages and disadvantages of openness in psychology. Following a Welcome Introduction from FASS Associate Dean for Research Professor Rose Capdevila.

A centrepiece of the discussion was a presentation by the OPRC's two PDRAs, Dr Marta Prandelli and Dr Nihan Albayrak–Aydemir. Since joining the OPRC, they had reviewed the literature on the benefits and shortcomings of traditional participant pools, and the demographics of OU students on our psychology modules. They presented their aspirations for the OPRC Collaboration Laboratory (ColLab) to become a space where researchers and participants might come together to contribute to the production and acquisition of scientific knowledge. The ColLab would be inclusive of OU psychology students who are representative of the adult population in terms of age, ethnicity, UK nationality and disability.

A closing summary was given by the School Director of Research, Eleni Andreouli. The CAB provided extensive verbal and written feedback which will shape the future direction of the OPRC (see 'next steps' below). The hospitality that they received from Eka Kandelaki and Sue Cocklin (especially in a context of unexpected campus flooding!) was particularly appreciated.



Centre Advisory Board and OPRC Co-Directors at Bletchley Park Museum, June 29th, 2022. From left to right, Paul Stenner (OU), Helen Spandler (University of Central Lancashire), Brandon Hamber (Ulster University), Michelle Fine (City University of New York), Peter Hegarty (OU), Celestin Okoroji (London School of Economics/Black Thrive).

For more on the event, please see: Opening Psychology... What? Why? How? Who? When?

Next Step Plans

Our next steps are informed by feedback during and following the CAB event. Here we highlight three in particular:

- First, our advisors commented positively on the plans for developing the ColLab as new and potentially progressive version of old-style participant pools. This will be a priority during 2022-2023.
- Second, the CAB applauded the concept of Open Psychology and the orientation towards social justice in the research mission. They challenged us to differentiate open psychology from critical psychology by more explicitly



giving away the power to social justice groups to (co-) determine psychological research questions. They urged us to see "open" psychology as something that allows those groups forward motion and vision of the future ('open' in the sense of 'creating fertile space for development'). They also noted the danger of the concept of "openness" being too open for clear strategic action and being open to reverting to less imaginative forms of psychology.

Third, considerable attention was given to the importance of further
developing the PhD research culture within the School of Psychology &
Counselling. This will be prioritised, and efforts made to secure funding for
new PhD students. This will also allow us to take steps to address the second
issue by structuring these efforts around a distinctive conception of open
psychological research.

OPRC Media

Some Media Highlights from the OPRC Website

The dissemination of research and practices conducted by our academics within the School of Psychology & Counselling at The OU has been facilitated through the promotion and sharing on the OPRC website. This serves to increase the visibility of



the work being conducted and contributes to the enhancement of the wide audience's knowledge of the research, teaching and practices being undertaken within the School.



OPRC actively promoted events organised by the academics in the School of Psychology & Counselling through its website. In year 2021-2022 around 20 events were promoted ranging from inaugural

lectures and online or hybrid events held at both national and international levels, to book launches and roundtable discussions featuring both academics from The OU as well as invited guests, including international speakers.

OPRC also supported in disseminating information pertaining to the outstanding contributions made by the academics in the School. Notably, work by Dr Johanna Motzkau on cultures of listening; Dr Lee Curley and Dr James Munro's, review covering courtroom bias; A new course on video and phone counselling by Dr Andreas Vossler and Professor Naomi Moller; A film produced by Dr Kesi Mahendran exploring the persuasive power of political narratives; A study on children's mental health through familial online relationships by Professor Rose Capdevila and Prof. Lisa Lazard; A survey about the digital divide by Dr Lara Frumkin; research by Prof. Catriona Havard on the fallibilities of facial recognition; Experience on the edge? A new book based around the work of Professor Paul Stenner; A new OpenLearn course Applying to study for a PhD in Psychology by Professor Stephanie Taylor; and a prestigious FASS Research Impact win for Dr Gemma Briggs;



The OPRC website was launched in April 2020. By the conclusion of that academic year, it had amassed a total of 2,883 users and 9,685 pageviews. In the following academic year 2021–2022, the website saw a significant increase in usage, with the number of users rising to 4,584 and pageviews increasing to 10,371, representing a growth of approximately 2,000 users and an increase of over 10,000 pageviews.

Blogs in WordPress

The past year has seen OPRC continue to provide valuable support to academics in their efforts to share their research with a wider audience. Our efforts to promote and facilitate the use of blogging platforms such as WordPress have been particularly successful, with many scholars taking advantage of the opportunities these platforms offer to publicize their work and engage with a broad community of readers.



The WordPress platform featured insightful blog posts about the presentations given by esteemed academics and keynote speakers, including Professor Ann Phoenix, Prof Helen Spandler, and Professor

Laurence Alison, at the OPRC launch event. The "In Dialogue with..." series provided additional reflections on these talks. In addition, OPRC warmly welcomed new members to the School of Psychology & Counselling, including academic Dr Evangelos Ntontis, PhD students Maria Cochrane, Ruth Collier-Large, and Wendy



Ingram, research associates Dr Marta Prandelli and Dr Nihan Albayrak-Aydemir, and the new Psychology Technical Lead, Jade Peters.

Other highlights in WordPress included:

- A new article 'The Sarah Everard murder: the problem with the government's plan to make women 'feel' safer' by Prof. Lisa Lazard and the Intersectional
 Violence Research Group, published in The Conversation
- 'OU Experts Ask: What's in a face? Prof. Catriona Havard of OPRC discusses her research expertise in face recognition'
- "Discover the new Social and Cultural Psychology of Professor Paul Stenner in a new book 'Experience on the Edge: Theorising Liminality'"
- A keynote talk: 'Child language brokering as a family care practice: Reframing the 'parentified child' debate' by Professor Sarah Crafter given in Wales in association with BPS
- 'COVID 19 pandemic and the digital divide' by Dr Ben Evans and Dr Lara Frumkin
- 'Dr Evangelos Ntontis discusses Trump and the Storming of the Capitol'
- 'What stories make worlds, what worlds make stories Book review' by Dr Kesi
 Mahendran, Sue Nieland, Anthony English and Nicola Magnusson
- 'What does it take to investigate a murder? Forensic Psychology online' by Dr
 Zoe Walkington and Professor Graham Pike
- 'The NICE Guideline for Depression in Adults: What is all the brouhaha about?' By
 Professor Naomi Moller and Dr Felicitas Rost
- 'Dr Lee John Curley and Dr James Munro of The OU, Co-author The Article
 Published in The Conversation'



- 'What has the Covid-19 pandemic taught us about the psychology of conspiracy theories?' by Professor Jovan Byford
- 'Want to know what a PhD in Psychology is all about?' by Professor Stephanie
 Taylor
- 'Students! Psychology terms explained!' by Dr Camilla Elphick
- 'Dr Lee Curley with BBC Radio Scotland about Jurors in Scotland'
- 'Cultures of Listening: a new article' by Dr Johanna Motzkau
- 'Moving Worlds programme for Refugee Week 2022' by Dr Nelli Stavropoulou
- 'Intergenerational play at a distance: Using technology to support
 grandparent-grandchild relationships' by Professor Rose Capdevila and Prof.
 Lisa Lazard
- The dialogue between citizens and their governments that's what I care about', Dr Kesi Mahendran with The Psychologist
- 'New Book-'Putting Psychology in its Place: Critical historical perspective" by Professors Graham Richards and Paul Stenner

During the launch year (2020–21), we had intensified out blogging and Twitter activity, generating 118 blogs with a total of 30,704 views and 17,263 visitors. During 2021–2022 we continued more modestly, producing 94 blog posts resulting in 20,349 views and 11,577 visitors. An analysis of Twitter data in the launch year (2020–21) showed 379.2 impressions, 726 retweets and 1524 likes. During 2021–2022 our Twitter impressions reached 348.4, 775 retweets and likes increased to 1999.



Stay in touch









Contact Centre Co-Directors: Paul Stenner; Peter. Hegarty