

**Psychology's Feminist Voices Oral History Project
Interview with Rose Capdevila**

*Interviewed by Lois Donnelly over Zoom™
January 12, 2022*

When citing this interview, please use the following citation:

Capdevila, R. (2022, January 12). Interview by L. Donnelly [Video Recording]. Psychology's Feminist Voices Oral History and Online Archive Project.

This interview was collected for the The History of POWES and Feminist Psychology in the UK Project,
which was funded by the British Psychological Society.

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Alexandra Rutherford, PhD
Project Director, Psychology's Feminist Voices alex@yorku.ca

Psychology's Feminist Voices Oral History Project

Interview with Rose Capdevila

Interviewed by Lois Donnelly

Conducted over the Zoom online platform

January 12, 2022

- Lois: I'm Lois Donnelly interviewing Professor Rose Capdevila on 12 January 2022 on Zoom, and we're discussing her life and career in the context of feminism and its history within psychology. So first of all, I suppose, could you tell me a bit about yourself, so maybe a bit about, you know, your career trajectory and kind of the topics of your work and that kind of thing.
- Rose: Sure, well, okay, this might be a little bit...not quite sure what to focus on. Okay, so I started, in academia, I started in a mix of different things. So I actually was accepted to university in engineering and then I switched to physics, and then I switched to philosophy and then, anyway, I ended up getting a degree in politics and psychology from the University of Toronto, and then I went to Spain to study Hispanic studies at the University of Barcelona for a few years, and I ended up working there for a while, and then I started working in business, and then I came to do a PhD in the UK, at the University of Reading, with Rex Stainton Rogers, and I did that, went into political psychology. My PhD was on women's involvement in single issue movements, so not gender-related politics, but grassroots politics, which is what I was most interested in at the time. So I spoke to women involved in the Irish Republican movement, women involved in environmentalist protests, and women from the Countryside Alliance, and women in Oxfam. So it was just...I tried to get an interesting mix of different women. And there was a consistent theme through them, really interestingly, there was a consistent discourse around mothering, whether my participants were parents or weren't parents, or wanted to be parents and weren't, often used mothering discourses to explain their choices, their decisions, or how they positioned themselves. So there was a real drawing on that kind of discourse, which I maybe should have been expecting, but I wasn't. So I was really caught out by that, and that kind of made me interested in those mothering discourses.
- Lois: Yeah.
- Rose: So when I finished my PhD at the University of Reading, I got a job at Northampton, and while I was there, I started doing some research around advice, parenting advice. By that time, I'd had two children, and with some colleagues, Sally Johnson and Jane Callaghan, we started talking about the way advice was given to mothers, and kind of the diversity, the complexity, the nuance, the changeability. So we started looking into that, and eventually did some research around mothering and choice, primarily with Sally Johnson, around the MMR vaccine. So we moved kind of...so that mothering stream kind of went there, kind of into health psychology. And in 2009, I moved to the Open University, which is where I'm currently and I have been since then. And my research kind of was drawing still on kind of political activism, still kind of on mothering bits and pieces, and then in about 2012/2013, the whole kind of selfies thing was happening, and that really caught my attention, and also that of my colleague, Lisa Lazard, who I do a lot of research with. So we started doing work on that around gender discourse and social media. So most of my work since then has been focused on that, on gender and social media in digital spaces, around mothering, around young women,

around how families use social media. And then, of course, I have my kind of parallel, which has been around kind of POWES [Psychology of Women and Equalities Section of the British Psychological Society], around activism and around kind of the history of feminist psychology, and of psychology, which is something I've always been interested in kind of where ideas come from and how they develop.

Lois: Yeah, oh, that's really interesting, yes, such, like, an interesting flow of slightly different things. So what, like, first attracted you to psychology then, you know, like how did that come about? :

Rose: That's really interesting. So I wasn't all that attracted to psychology, to be honest, at first. I mean, I kind of did, as an undergraduate, my main subject was politics, political theory, and I also did, as part of that I did psychology and history and philosophy, kind of as backing it up, because it's a four year degree in Canada. But what I wanted to do my PhD, and I wanted to do women and social movements, I wanted to do women in politics, definitely. And I was looking around for where to do it and I came across Rex Stainton Rogers, whose work I had seen and who I'd run into kind of through the Autonomous University of Barcelona, where I knew some people, and he just seemed like a great supervisor for my work, but he was actually in social psychology at the University of Reading, so he was in the psychology department, so that's why I went to the psychology department to do my PhD. In talking to him about kind of my aspirations for my research, he said, "Oh yeah, you could absolutely do that in psychology," which I'd always conceived of as a politics topic, yeah?

[00:05:56]

Lois: Yeah.

Rose: And that was great, and then once I was in psychology, I really loved – and I still do, and I tell my students this all the time, I love the way psychology is relevant to everything, yeah? Just everything that you're studying, psychology can have some kind of intervention or is relevant in some kind of way. So it really is the study of everything.

Lois: Yeah, that's a really interesting point, so I'd agree, yeah. So it was more kind of the person than the topic that led you to psychology, rather than...

Rose: Yeah, yeah, but I was happy when I found myself there.

Lois: That's really interesting. And so in the same vein of those kind of things developing then, how did kind of your...you were saying you were really kind of interested in women in politics, how did your kind of feminist identity develop, or, like, how did feminism come into that?

Rose: Yeah, so that came to me later in life than I think probably it should have. I think I was very...yeah, I think I was very much embedded in kind of neoliberal egalitarian discourse for a large part of my life, you know, even though it was a very left wing one and very communitarian one, it still followed that kind of individual achievement narrative. And so, I was aware of sexism, no question about that, I wasn't really involved in feminist politics per se, I was involved in politics. And I think this is a history for a lot of people in a lot of cultural contexts, back when I was living in Spain, or in Catalonia. So I think really, I thought very much of feminism as a political position, which, you know, was there, but my politics were more kind of left-wing politics, rather than gendered or identity politics, I guess, in a sense. But when I came to the UK and I was studying, and obviously I was studying a topic that was very gender-related, which, you know, as it was on gender. Obviously I started reading the literature and then what I fell in love with was feminist theory, you know, and I know there are lots of feminist theories, but what I love about that kind of work, you know, people like Donna Haraway and Judith Butler, Valerie Walkerdine, you know, I loved the way it conceptualised the similarities and differences. I know that sounds really basic, but still, I loved that way of thinking about how things belong and don't belong. So yeah, so that, I became very interested in thinking about things like that. And then I became involved in POWES, to be fair, one of the first conferences I ever went to was the end of my first year of my PhD, I'm not quite sure how...I think Erica Burman told me about it actually, who was someone I had met but hadn't actually, you know, knew very much about her work at that point yet.

Lois: Yeah.

Rose: So I went to the POWES conferences, all by myself, and it was just...it was a really interesting, you know, I was befriended by lovely Geraldine Moane, who kind of took pity on me and let me join her groups. And I just started hearing really, really interesting discussions and debates, and the way things were being considered and thought about. And again, that real notion of sameness and difference and boundaries that my research was about, that I've always cared about, how things are of us and not of us, which obviously social psychology is, you know, very much what it does. So I found that really interesting, and that's where I met, you know, lots of people that are in POWES and have been since. I mean, that first year, you know, they had talks from, well, Paula Nixon and Jane Usher and Celia Kitzinger and Sue Wilkinson and Erica Burman did a talk, so it was just, like, "Oh my god," you know, when you get that research where, as somebody was saying at POWES, "It's like being in a room with your reading list," and it was very much that feeling of being in a room with your reading list, you know, all these people that you want to read and there they are sitting beside you, and, "Oh my god," what do you say?

[00:10:27]

Lois: Yeah, oh, that's good for me to hear that you could feel like that, because it's kind of the same for us in a way as well. But yeah, so how did you come across Erica Burman then, like, how did you cross paths with her then the first time?

Rose: Oh, that was a complicated history about...so my partner was a social psychologist at the time, so he had been doing work with Ian and Erica, Ian Parker and Erica Burman, and also with Rex Stainton Rogers, and Wendy Stainton Rogers, and the Beryl Curt group, which I was first... So early on in my career as a PhD student, I engaged with the Beryl Curt group, which was a group of academics at...mostly at Reading, but Reading and the OU, led by Rex Stainton Rogers and Wendy Stainton Rogers and they included people like Paul Stenner, Steve Brown, Carol Owens, there's more people that are now...Marcia Worrell, Lindsay O'Dell, and so those were the kind of people that I first started working with, and they had been doing books; they did a fantastic book called *Textuality and Tectonics*, which is probably out of print, but it's a lovely kind of consideration of how discourse works and text works in the everyday. So and then...so they'd done different kinds of work, so I got involved with that group and we had regular meetings, and that was great, that was such an inspiration, you know, I used to sit, afraid of what I could say in those meetings, I was just terrified, where everyone spoke clever... And so that was... But really, unfortunately, my PhD supervisor, Rex, passed away just as I had started writing up my PhD, and so, in those days, you only had one supervisor, so it was a bit of, you know, and Reading, to their credit, said, you know, "Just find yourself someone to kind of supervise the rest of your PhD," and Erica Burman very kindly agreed. I mean, at the time, I had no idea what it was to take on somebody's PhD thesis that late in the process, but Erica did it, and it was wonderful, I mean, she was...I was really lucky, I had two exceptional supervisors, which is probably why I believe in mentorship so much, you know, but really, supervisors who really pushed me and didn't push me to be like them, but pushed me to think about things and move forward and consider things in different kinds of ways. And then Erica first, when I'd been reading around feminism, Erica obviously had, you know, quite a pedigree in feminist thought, so she was able to direct me a little bit more in a more targeted way towards the kind of work that related more specifically to kind of the work that I was doing, and that was great. And anyway, Erica was wonderful, after I finished my PhD, you know, she included me in symposiums and invited me to talk at her university, and she's always been supportive. I mean, she wrote a reference for me, you know, last year, so...yeah.

Lois: As a friend.

Rose: Yeah, yeah, so it's a good community, I think the POWES community has really, really made a big difference to the way my career has gone, and I think to the way psychology has gone in the UK. I think it's been a force for good in lots of ways.

Lois: Yeah, can you kind of unpack that a little bit and kind of tell me a bit more about how you think POWES has kind of influenced the field maybe, or the area?

Rose: Well, I think there are some interesting things. So I think there was an interesting... I think it was, like, the 20th anniversary or certainly some anniversary like that, when Jan Burns came to speak, who was one of the founding members, and Jan was reflecting on how all these women who had kind of been the founding members of POWES, and it was like everyone was saying, you know, "You're throwing away your career," you know, "You're never going to do anything in psychology," who at that point, were all professors, you know, so had clearly become very successful, you know, they're... So they really brought that feminist work to the forefront, I think also, not only kind of feminist POWES kind of contingency, but very importantly the POWES contingency, you know, kind of really pushed for a rethinking of methods and a reconsideration of methods, and kind of the use of qualitative methods and creative methods, and I think they brought that to the universities they were working at. I think they brought it to their practice, and I think they brought it to the BPS [British Psychological Society], you know. The qualitative methods section, you know, is the biggest section in the BPS. It went from nothing, I from pretty much not existing, it was established and it became the biggest section almost immediately, because there's so many people interested in those approaches, and I think that's one of the important impacts that POWES has had, but you know, I think POWES has pushed on other agendas, like sexuality. I know that the Lesbian and Gay Section, which became the Sexualities Section, I think is changing name now again, you know, a lot of POWES members were involved in the formation of that, like they were in the Qualitative Section, so I think there's been a real push in that sense in thinking forward.

[00:15:50]

Lois: Yeah, so influenced kind of a range of things really, not just feminism in psychology.

Rose: Yeah, and the conceptualisation of others, which I think is an important thing for feminists.

Lois: Yeah, that's really interesting. So after that first kind of... that first conference you went to, what was your involvement in POWES after that?

Rose: Well, it was... you've probably heard this story before, but at this conference was a bit of a... it was really lovely for me, but there was an event that clearly brought many things to a head that had been happening in that space as a feminist space. And Erica Burman has written a chapter for it actually in a book that I edited with Alex Rutherford and Ingrid Palmay and Vindhya Undurti on international feminisms, and in that book, Erica writes about British feminism in psychology and she speaks of this, well, she actually presents the topic she gave at that conference and kind of contextualises it within what we're doing today. There was a bit, at the time, I had no idea what was going on, I mean, there was a whole group of us there watching, and then suddenly everyone was arguing onstage, and it was all, like, "Oh my god," and everyone was being quite mean to each other, and a bunch of us were just sitting there and a few people kind of put their hand up and went, "Excuse me, I understand that there's something going on here, but I think there has to be some recognition that most of us out here have no idea what's going on." And it was, interestingly – and maybe this piqued my interest as well, the discussion was around the telling of the history of feminist psychology, which I think... which is probably why since then I've had this kind of interest in trying to tell a story that can be shared, that has a shared kind of narrative. But from that, there were a number of us at that meeting who spoke afterwards, and were kind of, like, "This is not the space we want, we want a space where people behave with kindness, with respect, and not a place where people are here to yell at you and you're frightened. It's a place of comfort, a place where we can come to."

Lois: Yeah.

Rose: And so we started, we joined the committee after that, so Karen Cicilitira was one of those people, and she joined the committee, and then I joined the committee and she kind of suggested to me I might want to join; they were a person short or something, it was halfway through the term, so I joined, and lots of other people joined, and there was a concerted effort for a few years to make it a... what we now call a safe space, then we called it a space then. We would call it a space where people could come and feel comfortable, and it was mostly dominated by PhD, we were all PhD students at the time, and you know, it had been founded by the PhD students, so there was, you know, a kind of resonance around there. You know, we'd go to the conferences and we'd get together... and there was a real focus on being supportive in the way you engaged with people's

presentations, and a real kind of welcoming of people's engagements with feminism that might not be the same as yours, but you know, kind of listening to what they have to say and kind of going, "Okay, how about this, have you thought about this?" rather than, "Why aren't you saying this?" which has been... And when somebody tries to, because every now and then somebody will try to do, "Why aren't you doing this?" at POWES, someone who doesn't know, you know, is new or whatever, there's always the whole kind of group, collective thing that kind of goes, "Oh, but let's say this nicely," which I think is a really important thing. I think creating POWES as a safe space was a really, really important move in kind of the history of the organisation, and the real encouragement of early career people, because we were all early career people at the time, you know, we were either PhD students or shortly...or very early on. So I think there was a real wanting to make that space, you know, and really supporting stuff like the POWES student prize and, you know... So yeah, so there was a concerted effort to make it that kind of space. At the same time, I think it's really important that we don't... Sometimes when we do this, like, POWES as, you know, a feminist pen-mate, or POWES as a feminist summer camp kind of idea, because it has that feeling of camaraderie, and kind of homeyness that we know it has, it's also really important to remember that it is a critical academic space and it very much is a critical...and people are critical in their thinking and their approaches to academia.

[00:20:41]

- Lois: Yeah, definitely. And so, in talking about kind of, yeah, that focus on early career people, do you think that it still has that kind of focus and are kind of early career people still engaging with POWES in the same way?
- Rose: I think...okay, I don't think it's in the same way, but I do think it still happens. So I think it's not in the same way, partly the environment has changed. So when I was a PhD student, everyone was getting jobs before they finished their PhD, like, they'd be writing up and everyone had lectureships, and so it was a particular moment, you know. So I think there were more and more universities every day, all the old polytechnics had been turned into universities, psychology was and is growing, so there were lots of jobs out there and a lot of people were walking into lectureships, you know.
- Lois: Yeah.
- Rose: And also there was no real pressure to publish while you were doing your PhD, like, really not any, so you know, it was a different experience then. But you immediately had a job, so you could go to your job and go to POWES and immediately you were much closer to the experience. So, you know, you were bringing your colleagues and people you worked with, like, you were doing your third year of a PhD and then there was someone in their first year, by the time you got a job, they were in their third year, you'd go, "Come on, come along," you know.
- Lois: Yeah.
- Rose: Also the PhD period, most people took four years to do their PhD, and/or, you know, five, so it wasn't unheard of. So I think it was a more relaxed academia at the time, and I think now we try really hard but not as successfully as I would like to encourage early career people. Having said that, I was chair of POWES in 2020-2021...
- Lois: Yeah.
- Rose: And because of Covid, we had only our online conference in 2021, and you know, there were a number of early career PhD students who contacted me afterwards to say, "Oh, I found that a really encouraging space, you know, thank you," me as chair, not me being responsible, sorry, I didn't want to take credit for that, just they made contact, and you know, have become involved, so a few of them have become involved in the committee and are really enthusiastic about coming back. So I think we want to encourage more and more of that, definitely.

So yeah, so we had much cheaper rates for students, we always have bursaries for students, we also run now writing retreats we've been doing for the last few years, we often have bursaries for students to do that. So we do very much have an agenda and kind of a focus on supporting people,



early career people, they don't have to be young people, they just have to be early career people. But also, you know, we need to focus on, because there's many more mid-career feminists out there than there were as well, and also, I'm someone who has always had a lot of interest in people's kind of life narratives and their histories, so I always, you know, I'm always suggesting we invite founding members back to speak at conferences, or we get them involved in some kind of element of the section.

[00:24:48]

Lois: Yeah, again, kind of bringing the history back, I suppose, into POWES again.

Rose: Yeah, and bring back people who have been away for a while, and I think we have a real inclusive mentality, right, at POWES, and I think that's shared, very much shared kind of viewpoint of it, but... And that's been throughout the years.

Lois: Yeah. And so were you part of the committee since the beginning then, you know, since you started, have you always been involved?

Rose: No, so I joined the committee in 1996, yeah, something like that, and I was on it for a while, and then I was off it when I was a student, and then I was off it for, like, a minute and a half, and then I went back on it. So at first I was treasurer because I could do and liked doing maths, and so, "You can be treasurer," so I was treasurer, and then I left briefly, I think, during my pregnancy and then I went back, and then I was on it until about 2010, and then I left again until about 2018, and then I joined again, but I've always gone to the conferences, I've always been a member of the section. I went back in 2018, yeah, and then so the next year I became Chair Elect, and then Chair and now I'm Past Chair this year.

Lois: Yeah, and so how do you think that kind of involvement with POWES has been kind of important to you and your work or impacted you and your work in any way?

Rose: Well, it's been my academic home, there's no question about that. I do have other kind of groups of academics that, you know, I work with in different kind of contexts, but POWES has always been my academic home, and I think I have a real sense of that's where I go when I have a new idea paper, you know, that's where I go when I have some new data, and that's whose opinion I want to hear, that's the people I kind of connect with, you know, there's a shared vision. I remember Brexit was in June, do you remember the Brexit referendum was in June...

Lois: Yeah.

Rose: Of course you remember it... The Brexit referendum in June and I just remember it felt like just a cloud had come over everything, and there was just a kind of...and there were racist attacks all over the place and not just racist, ethnocentric attacks, yeah, they were throwing rocks at, like, Canadian restaurants, like, my friend who's Australian was getting abused on the bus, being told to go home, you know. But it was much, much worse, you know, so lots of my friends who are people of colour were getting abused in car parks outside Tesco or something, you know, that was not part of their normal experience. It really...I don't think it's too controversial to say that it really seemed to kind of open up the doors for some really what I consider objectionable behaviour, in terms of, again, of othering, that concept, that notion of othering. So that was awful, it was awful, and that whole time was awful, and I remember going to the pub with some friends that night and we were just going, "Oh, this is awful," and then I went to POWES, which was about a month later, and I remember for the first time just arriving there, seeing people and just feeling that cloud lift, like, literally that cloud that I'd been feeling around the whole kind of Brexit and the doom, just completely lift, because I was with all these people who I really felt of mind with, you know, of being kind of on the same page with, but also people that I felt were the kind of people who get things done, you know, who work with things, who will move...they won't just sit in their kitchen and have their ideas, they'll kind of do something about it, small or large, but you know, out there in the world doing stuff to make the world better, naïve as that may sound.

[00:29:05]

- Lois: No, that's lovely, that's a lovely kind of sentiment. Yeah, and I suppose that kind of brings us into kind of activism and all that sort of thing, and are you involved with or have you been involved with feminist activism? And is POWES involved with that sort of thing as well?
- Rose: Well, I think POWES members are involved with activism. There's always been an aspiration in POWES to be more involved as an organisation, and we've had various attempts to involve ourselves with different things. But I think it's more of the members do that. To be fair, as POWES as a section has been curtailed from kind of activist engagement historically, because of the position that the BPS took in relation to getting involved in politics. However, this may be jumping to conclusions, but I suspect the dire nature of our current political situation has meant the BPS have slightly changed their policy on that, and they're kind of...they're kind of...they're clearly more willing to involve. So from my perspective, it started out with the BPS engaging with the whole issue around austerity and mental health services, and then, you know, other campaigns that it's become involved with, one after the other, their current campaign is around class, and the previous one was From Poverty to Flourishing, they had one around, you know, children in schools, you know, I can't remember what it's called, Time to Play, you know, it's, like, what do the schools do, you know, giving children any time to play, you know, they're all about producing something. So you know, these are very, very kind of political kind of statements, judgements in the sense of the political. But as you know as you were involved, you know, POWES did that statement on violence against women and girls, on the suggested government policy on violence against women and girls, which was problematic and worrying in many ways. So POWES did get involved in that, did make a statement on that, and did it through the BPS, I mean, the BPS completely supported that.
- Lois: Yeah.
- Rose: So obviously engagement is becoming much more. So historically, POWES hasn't acted...but it's more and more it's getting involved in that kind of thing, and certainly the members have always done so, and always there's been an aspiration.
- Lois: Yeah, so it's more of a shift because of the institution it's within, I suppose.
- Rose: And the environment, that's become much... Sometimes I think I'm just getting old and I just think the environment is more desperate and government was better when I was..., "When I was a girl..."you know, but it does feel like, you know, that things are not going for the better at the moment in terms of the wider political context. Generally, like, in terms of management, but in terms of feminism, and you know, there are many battles yet to fight, but things have gotten better, they definitely have gotten better, they've gotten better in academia.
- Lois: Yeah.
- Rose: In terms of being taken seriously, both as feminists, but as women and just academia being a little bit better at understanding the position of people who come from different backgrounds to the traditional kind of academic background, we've gotten better, you know, there's the big push towards decolonising the curriculum at the moment, it's been better around class, or it's trying to get better around class, and an acknowledgement of how that plays out. But also, you know, in the broader world, and certainly sexuality has, you know, 1970s, you know, wasn't it, that homosexuality was in the DSM as a mental illness, and now, you know, we have emerging... And that, I would say, spearheaded by one of the founders of POWES, Sue Wilkinson and Celia Kitinger, who got married in Canada, came to the UK and fought to have their marriage recognised. They lost that particular battle, but I think the fight was won, I think that contributed to kind of the understanding and acceptance of, well, relationships, you know, people of different genders and sexes. I want to say gay marriage, because marriage is just, you know, the marriage isn't gay, but...
- [00:34:03]
- Lois: I know what you mean. Yeah, and so, with those kind of changes as well, have you seen a change, do you think, in kind of feminism and psychology as a field?

Rose: Well, I was on the editorial board of *Feminism and Psychology* for 20 years. I joined just after I, well, when I was pregnant with my child, my eldest daughter, and I remember I was quite pregnant, and I said to Sue Wilkinson, who was the editor at the time, she said, "Well, the meeting is on such a such a day," and I said, "Oh well, my baby will be five weeks old by then, I should be fine to come," and she said, I don't know what she thought, she was, like, "Oh, dear lord," she said to me, "How about we just leave it and at the time, you can just decide," and at five weeks, I was barely getting out of the house, you know, so that was good. So I went to the next meeting after that, when I joined *Feminism and Psychology*, which I think has been a monumental influence in critical feminism, in academia more broadly, I think it really picked up something and brought together a kind of way of engaging with feminism that was broader than just, you know, "Can women have more promotions?" you know, "Can we get more women in the boardroom?" I'm not saying that those things aren't important, they're absolutely crucial, but more kind of criticising and engaging with the underpinning kind of systems that maintain those kinds of inequities. And I think F&P has really pushed qualitative work, creative work not as much as it could, but also things, you know, there's a special issue on decolonisation, there was...in earlier years, there were issues on sexualisation, sexuality, there was, you know, and also there have been special issues on postgraduate work to kind of encourage that. So I think F&P is very much a part of the community, not just a journal.

Lois: Yeah.

Rose: I was having this conversation the other day with someone about...there's a lot of journals out there now, you know, like, I remember Mick Bilyk coming to speak to us a few years ago and saying, you know, "When I started my career, I could literally read every single journal in social psychology that came out, and I could keep on top of what was going on in social psychology," there is no way you could even, you can't do that now, there are so many journals and so many articles, and so many, you know, online/offline, you know, and so you can't really do that. But I think *Feminism and Psychology* is more than a journal, you know, it curates community and in a sense it kind of encourages community, I mean, not curates, but you now, tries to provide a space that otherwise would not be there. I don't think it duplicates existing space, or you know, an existing journal in any kind of way, and I think it's tried really hard over the years to internationalise as well, which has been a challenge, academia is so Anglocentric, you know. So we've tried really hard to reach out to people from other contexts, which is also how I got involved with the project on international feminisms, the book on international feminisms in psychology, that was...Alex Rutherford originally approached me about, which I still think is a great book, it's 2011. But you know, it's an edited book, but you know, it has lots of different... We always want it to be more international than it is, but I think it's more international than most books, and it was focused on that, and I thought kind of bringing those things together was important.

Lois: Yeah, absolutely. How do you think about kind of how...I suppose, whether POWES can be international in that same way, and whether it can be, and...yeah?

Rose: Well, I think POWES is international, interestingly, I think there is something...is it inherent about Britain? There's something international about Britain maybe, I don't know, but certainly POWES is acknowledged in, and far beyond what you would expect given its size, you know. And I think we do, I think we always attract international delegates. The POWES prize almost all, I mean, often we've had quite a few international winners of the POWES prize, the POWES F&P prize for postgraduate work, but even the undergraduate one. We build communities, I mean, usually...not always, but often the chairs will have an agenda, you know, some kind of thing that they would like to do as their...during their term as chair, and in mine was the history project that we're involved in. But a few chairs, and Bridgette Rickett most recently, really wanted to reach out to other organisations and kind of build networks with those, and I think that's something we've always wanted to do, and reached out to do. So we do, you know, try to build those, and they do exist. I mean, academia is probably more international than most kinds of, you know, areas you would be in, so I think we...I think POWES has a profile internationally and so does, you know, bring people from different countries.

[00:40:07]

Lois: Yeah, yeah.

Rose: But it could do more, but that's not really its thing.

Lois: Yeah, it kind of works on it, yeah.

Rose: Yeah.

Lois: Yeah, so how do you think POWES has kind of developed over the years then, and kind of does it have more space to develop? Where do you think it could kind of be heading to?

Rose: I think, well, POWES...my thing is I love POWES, so its shortcomings for me are things that need attention, rather than reasons, you know. So I think it does have...I think POWES is not as inclusive as it would like to be, it...academia is classist, it's an elitist system, so historically it's been classist, and I think we do try to tend very much to those kind of class-related issues, and I think we're not bad at that, to be honest. The representation of other ethnic groups, and particularly women and people of colour is not what it should be. It reflects what's in the discipline and it reflects what's in academia, but that's not good enough, yeah? And I think everyone in POWES thinks that's not good enough, yeah. We do have a Spotlight prize of the student prizes, you know, that kind of spotlights sometimes, you know, different areas of otherness or difference. And so we've had, you know, ones on racism and ethnicity, and that's so we've tried to encourage that kind of engagement, but it's not great on that. It works hard towards disability, it's a trans-inclusive space, definitely, but I think it needs to do more around including different constituencies that are under-represented in academia. It should be a space where people who are under-represented in other places in academia can come and feel comfortable, I would hope that would be the aspiration, I think, for me, and I think others.

Lois: Yeah, definitely, that's really interesting. And so in terms of kind of other organisations, are you part of any other feminist organisations?

Rose: Academic ones, yes. So I'm a member of the Association of Women in Psychology, which is the kind of US, it's 52/53 years old now. And that's actually not specifically academic, there are loads of psychologists in that group that are practitioners, so that's quite nice. I was a member of Division 35, which is the Society of Psychology of Women of the American Psychological Association, and I co-chaired one of their taskforces briefly, with Rhoda Unger, who was one of my mentors, and a fantastic foundational feminist psychologist. I wrote her...I was very, very honoured to be asked to write her obituary for American Psychologist last year, because I just thought her work was exceptional.

Lois: Yeah.

Rose: And reading her work was, yeah, it just made me really think about stuff differently, like, early on in my career, which I thought was really foundational.

Lois: Yeah. And so how do those kind of other organisations differ from POWES then, do you think?

Rose: Well, Division 35 is much more of...I went to one of their committee meetings, and it's like a board meeting, like, there were so many people there and they were doing accounts, like, properly, not like we do at POWES where we, you know, there's some summary of where we are financially, it was, like, proper accounts and they were investing and they had portfolios and things like that. It was very much more managerial and more business-y, it was more like a business meeting. Because I worked in business for a while when I was in Barcelona, it was much more of that kind of structure. It's also a much more traditional organisation conceptually, I think, I mean, some people might disagree with that, but I think they tend to use, for example, a lot more quantitative methods, so they've been reaching out to qualitative methods, and they rely much more on kind of a literal feminism, not the kind of critical, radical feminism that POWES relies on.

[00:44:56]

Lois: Yeah, that's an interesting kind of difference.



- Rose: Yeah, I think it's reflected in their journal compared to ours, so I think the Psychology of Women Quarterly is, you know, more of a mainstream journal, but I think they don't feel like that conceptually, comparatively to other APA journals, I think compared to kind of feminist journals, it is a bit more like that. I mean, we've got POWER in POWES, what used to be the POWSR now is POWER, which, after the name change. So yeah, and I think which does a different kind of job. And of course, we all know F&P is not the POWES journal, but we do know that it was founded by the same people who founded POWES, so it had to be independent. So it does, in a sense, the spirit of those two organisations are quite resonant.
- Lois: Yeah, that's interesting. So yeah, earlier you kind of touched on that mentorship and stuff like that. So who were kind of your key mentors then throughout?
- Rose: Oh, Rex Stainton Rogers, for sure, even though he kind of wasn't really a feminist. But my mentors as in people I knew who supported me, definitely Erica Burman, yeah, definitely, without a doubt. I'm trying to think, there's many more people who've supported me in different kinds of ways, in doing... You know, Susan Condor, who I met very, very early on, you know, was helpful in just kind of providing advice in different ways. She didn't really mentor, but it was very early on, so it was, you know. Rhoda Unger, definitely. You know, Mary Crawford was someone I did a couple of, you know, when I first joined, F&P did a couple of publishing workshops with her, I watched her do publishing workshops, and she was just amazing. I remember her saying to me, you know, "I've only had... I think I've published 100 articles and I've never had one accepted without revisions," you know. But Rhoda introduced me during, because we co-chaired this taskforce for Division 35, around political psychology, political feminist psychology, because Rhoda and I did a special issues about feminism in psychology in 2006, and she'd got this taskforce on political psychology in Division 35, and the other people in the group were fantastic, you know, I'd never met... So people like Eileen Zurbruggen, who I'm currently working with on a book on Power and Gender in Psychology, Aaronette White who sadly passed away, Alyssa Zucker, I'm thinking more of Alicia Prado, like, some American feminists who've come from a very... So that opened up things in very different kind of ways, Lauren Duncan, that's the other one. So that was kind of an opening up of that kind of American, US-based kind of thing, and that's how I met Alex Rutherford, who's Canadian, but kind of I met her through that. So that was really interesting. So Rhoda Unger really opened up a part of the world to me, and Erica Burman, as I was saying, so when she took on, you know, supervision of my PhD, I also became involved in the Discourse Unit, which is a group, you know, that was started by Erica Burman and Ian Parker when they were at Manchester Metropolitan University, which was a fantastic kind of bringing together of people really from lots of different places in the world, it was a very, very international group. So that was really interesting. They're more maybe psychoanalytically informed than my own work would be, so that, yeah, so that was really important. Sue Wilkinson was very supportive of me early in my career, and she let me join F&P, which was very kind of her, and I learnt so much from her.
- Lois: Yeah.
- Rose: So yeah, I don't know, you know what, I could do on forever, but I won't do that right now. But I would like to, I hate picking names, because there's always more names, isn't there, always more people that you remember, "Oh, I should have mentioned that." Wendy Stainton Rogers, I mean, I mentioned Rex so many times, but you know, his wife, Wendy, who was at the OU has always been so supportive, and you know, I still...she just wrote the first book with Maddy Pownall, of a book series that I co-edit, Feminist Companions to Psychology, and Wendy and Maddy, again, you know, Wendy is retired now and Maddy is very early career, you know, worked together to write this book, A Feminist Companion to Social Psychology, so you know, I've been in contact with Wendy recently as well, and she's been, you know, she's been an important kind of constant person kind of in academia, who has this slightly different kind of perspective, and working to my own. So it's been great, you know, she's been great.
- [00:52:56]
- Lois: Yeah, so it's the important of, like, those different kind of spheres, I suppose.
- Rose: Yeah.

Lois: So how, like, do you play any role as a mentor yourself then, I mean, yeah, what's your...?

Rose: I try to. One tries. One of my biggest points of pride is that all my PhD students still talk to me.

Lois: That's really good.

Rose: And they're still willing to hang out with me and that gives me great, great pride. And I've always liked working across, like, this project that we're doing about the history of POWES and feminist psychology in the UK, you know, working with Katherine, you know, and working with yourself, you know, and kind of who are in different stages of their career, I really like working like that, I think it's really, really nice, and that kind of, you know, working through the system. So I think that's really nice and I do kind of attempt to replicate that in different contexts, and very...I very, very much believe in collaborative working, I think that's really important – and just on a very serious note, I think it's really important for feminism, and I think it's a massive contribution that feminism has made, and a real push around kind of understanding that, because the promotion systems in the UK, in academia, are very much a lone hero narrative cases, you know, "I did this, I did that," and I did nothing, you know, I've done nothing on my own in my entire life, and I don't want to. I think that's a difficult narrative to hold onto and be honest with yourself, but that may just be my own experience, but certainly, I think the strength of what we do as feminists, not all feminists, but certainly the kind of the way we work in POWES, you know, it's really about that collaborative working, it's about working together to build things, about doing things and being, you now, accountable to each other and to ourselves for the things that we do, and I think that's a much better kind of approach... But we do have to push the institutions to acknowledge that kind of work and that kind of approach, rather than this kind of historic kind of notion that seems to be embedded in a lot of university processes.

Lois: Absolutely. And how have you, like, dealt with that, out of curiosity, dealt with that kind of tension between, like, collaborative-ness and, yeah, that kind of promotion, the institutional outlook?

Rose: I've been lucky. And we all tell this story, "I've been lucky, that's why..." No, I have been lucky, I mean, I've been lucky because there are people around me who are able to help me tell a story where my leadership is collaborative, that's what my leadership is, it isn't about bossing people, which comes much more naturally to me, but I try to repress at every opportunity. But it's about building groups that do things, not, you know...and building networks of people who can get things done the way that you want to get them done, to me, that's where leadership can be (inaudible 00:56:20). So that narrative is the one that I feel needs to be told. I think...but I think those kinds of individual concerns that people have, about people's career and the respect they get, is something we also have to work on, and I know it's kind of a...and liberal feminism does this much better than kind of critical feminism does, but I think we need to do that as well, and one of the things we've been talking about at POWES, is having promotion workshops, you know, that take from finding a job to getting promoted to senior lecturer, to getting promoted, you now... So those kind of things, because we know that there are differential practices there, and part of it is about changing the systems, but in the meantime, that kind of mentorship can really help to kind of set up more examples, set more ways... Mentorship is dangerous in some ways as well, because mentorship is great because you support people, you have experience of taking a path in a way, you know... One of the metaphor Steph Taylor has used is, you know, you walk up a mountain and you look down and you can see that there is a straighter path, you know, and you can help people get up that path. But what can happen is that you can reinscribe that path, and you can...it can be quite normative, mentoring, it can serve to ingrain that kind of status quo, so we have to be very, very careful as feminists that we're not doing that, that while we're mentoring, while we're encouraging people to grow, we're encouraging them to pursue things and supporting them to pursue things, not just by fitting in but also by, you know, kind of opening up opportunities. And I think that's a slightly more delicate... So I think there's that play with things, and you know, we've got the Marcia Worrell mentorship award in POWES now, that started last year in memory of our beloved, I think I can fairly say, colleague, Marcia Worrell, who passed away early in Covid. And I think that mentorship award has to be focused on that, on people who facilitate openness and access for people who otherwise wouldn't have it. And I think that's a good thing for POWES to be doing.

[00:58:52]

- Lois: Yeah, that's really worthwhile. Yeah. So I suppose, in terms of POWES then, do you want to talk a bit about kind of your interest in the history of psychology and feminist psychology and then why you think POWES is important in that?
- Rose: Well, I think history is important, not just because I'm old, I thought it was important when I was young too. It was one of my minors at university. But I think there's something about the story of POWES, and the kind of acknowledging where things come from. I mean, everybody's going to tell the same story about history, isn't it, acknowledging where you come from, being aware, it's not just a 'never again' kind of scenario, but really about, oh, there's that terrible saying, isn't there, "Those who forget history are doomed to repeat it." Yeah, so I think also acknowledging people's work that have been forgotten, who haven't gotten any kind of attention. So you know, at POWES, there's also always someone in charge of awards, who kind of looks for particular awards and you know, thinks...you know, builds cases and then people who have done good feminist psychology, we nominate them, we support them through the process, so we do that kind of work as well. So yes, I think telling that history is really important. So the history of, I guess, feminist solidarity and sisterhood kind of thing, I think is really important to POWES, because of that moment where things kind of crashed, yeah, and there is that moment of, that transformative moment, you know, as in kind of development psychology, where things change, and things change in a way going forward, and I think it's really important...I don't want to go back there, and I think most people don't want to go back there. Some people want to go back there, but most people, I think, don't, I think most people who've come and providing that space, and...yeah. So I think going forward, we need to understand how those processes take place, because we have, things have gotten better in lots of ways, and we also have to make sure that those gains aren't lost in ways... You know, what was it, two/three years ago, Hungary decided they would just close all the gender studies departments, closed all the gender studies departments in the country, not to go on about what was going on in Turkey, you know, there's academics being arrested, academics being fired, so I think knowing that history helps you to understand, going forward, what you want to achieve and what the values are that you want to hold onto.
- Lois: Yeah, absolutely.
- Rose: Not a very original answer.
- Lois: No, that was lovely, beautiful. I suppose to kind of finish off then, what advice would you give now to kind of feminists and feminist psychologists entering into the field now?
- Rose: Run for your life... No, I'm kidding. No, I think, well, academia is not what it used to be, you know, all the institutions have become more monetised, more economically orientated, so it's important to maybe acknowledge that context, and acknowledge the pressures on early career people that weren't there. They have been there, but they weren't there in the more recent past, and I think that's acknowledging that. I think finding your space, building your corner of the world, using POWES as a step, it (inaudible 01:03:04). But you know, finding kind of your people, building your people, building your space, you know, one of the things we did at the OU early on is we were finding we weren't getting space to do our work, so a group of us, Meg John Barker, Liza Lazard, Helen Bowes-Catton and Jean McAvoy, all POWES people, just kind of went, "Well, what do we...?" and we just went, "We're going away..." we came together, we found a space, we went away for a few days without an agenda, which for me was, you know, very, very stressful because I like to have an agenda and a bit of order and planning, but there was none. And just kind of thinking about things and what we wanted to do with them and how we could find the space to do our research and do the kind of work we wanted to do, and that was great, finding those kind of connections. So for early career people, I would say find that, find the people you can work with, find the people who share your values, and create those kinds of communities. You can do that online now as well, right, so online, there's a lot of, well, there's the POWES Facebook group, obviously, where people go and chat, but you know, there's also Twitter, there's Women in Academia social network, there's lots of those spaces that cut across time, I mean, feminist psychologists used to be completely isolated in departments, critical psychologists used to be completely isolated. Now you at least have the means of communicating, like we're doing right now, you know, we meet regularly, we meet regularly on Zoom.



Lois: Yeah.

Rose: We're in three completely different places, we're at three different stages, you know, but it allows us to create that. You know, I feel very grateful to have found you and Katherine, you know, and to have built up that kind of working relationship, I think it's great and I feel very fortunate to have been able to do that, and I think, so, yeah, find your people as much as you can.

Lois: Yeah, I think that's really good advice. Brilliant, so yeah, I think, is there anything else that I haven't mentioned that you'd like to cover about yourself or feminist psychology?

Rose: No, I just think there's so many great people, so many great people and things kind of going on around POWES, that it allows people just to take a step from, you know, it allows a place for people to come back to, that I think it provides a really excellent service in that sense, you know, to feminist work and to kind of bring that together. And I think just feminists, and I mean that as, you know, the theoretical conceptualisation of sameness and difference in a constitution of otherness, is absolutely critical to making the world a better place, which is, again, might be naïve, but I think what I and most of the people in POWES are committed to.