



## Directors' Umbrella Report

### 1. General Introduction

The original idea for the series emerged from the turbulence witnessed across the world following PCCA's fundamental decision to engage not only with atrocities of the past, but also with those unfolding in the present. In that context, the series arose from the troubling reality that there was, regrettably, no shortage of contemporary material to work with, given the abundance of atrocities currently being witnessed globally. The renewed surge in antisemitism, the unprecedented intensity of global migration, and a rising trend of Islamophobia were among the dynamics that stood out most prominently. However, in order to avoid conflating too many dynamics and thereby diluting them — and, as a consequence, limiting the depth with which each could be explored — the decision was taken to keep these themes distinct. Rather than organising one longer Group Relations Conference, three separate experiential online events were therefore designed.

At the same time, the initiative marked a methodological innovation in the field of group relations: to our knowledge, it was the first time that three distinct Group Relations Conferences were conceived and organised as a coherent series, held together by one overarching theme — namely, othering and the hatred of diversity. As such, the series represented both a timely response to current global conditions and an important development in the design of group relations methodology. It was therefore of utmost importance to attend carefully to the balance between, on the one hand, offering a sufficiently consistent experience for members who chose to attend one, two, or all three conferences in the series, and, on the other, ensuring that each conference retained its own autonomy in decision-making and its own capacity for containment. Great emphasis was also placed on ensuring that the series as a whole would generate in-depth learning and insight into the umbrella theme of othering and the hatred of diversity. Accordingly, the learning from each individual conference was reflected upon in relation to that overarching theme.

### 2. Sponsors & Supporters

Our traditional sponsoring organizations generously supported us in this project: DPG – Deutsche Psychoanalytische Gesellschaft, DPV – Deutsche Psychoanalytische Vereinigung, and IPS – Israel Psychoanalytic Society, for which we thank them. This much appreciated financial support enabled us to lower the fee and to give generous bursaries so that the fee would not be a barrier to participation.

The sponsoring and supporting organizations allowed us to use their logos and actively promoted the conference to their members: IPA – International Psychoanalytic Association, APA – American Psychoanalytic Association, EPF – European Psychoanalytical Federation, TIHR – Tavistock Institute of Human Relations, OPUS – An Organisation for Promoting Understanding of Society, OFEK – The Israeli Association for the Study of Group and Organizational Processes, Il Nodo Group – The Organizational and Community Training and Development. We thank them as well. A number of additional institutions and societies, including AKRI and the Dialogue Society, were also willing to support the series by lending their names and logos.



### 3. Marketing & Series Recruitment

We used our usual PCCA marketing and recruitment channels, i.e. the PCCA mailing list and social media (LinkedIn and Facebook) together with personal invitations via conference staff and their networks. We also asked sponsoring and supporting organizations to share the information in their communities and networks.

We had a webpage for the series, including a section for each conference, hosted on our main PCCA website, and flyers for both the whole series and each individual conference. This allowed us to combine communications for drawing attention to the whole series on the one hand, and to each individual conference in order of their scheduled timing on the other hand. With that, we could focus marketing efforts onto the conference that was about to take place at any given time. Social media posts followed the same strategy.

Altogether 63 people registered and paid to participate: 12 for all three conferences, 13 for two conferences and 38 for one conference, meaning that the first conference “Antisemitism and Otherness” counted 29 paid members (2 ppl withdrew last minute, 1 no show) so in the end 26, the second conference “The Double Absence, Despair, Displacement, and Hope in Migration” counted 38 paid members – 37 actual people, and the third conference “Islamophobia in an Upside-Down World” counted 29 paid members – not all of them came – 25 actual members.

### 4. Budget, Fee Structure and Bursaries

For the series, there was a per conference fee, a bundled two-conference fee and a bundled three-conference fee, with early bird and full price rates for each, and an additional discount available for students and those from Eastern Europe or ‘developing countries.’

	<i>Early Bird</i>	<i>Full Price</i>
One Conference	€395	€495
Two Conferences	€640	€790
Three Conferences	€885	€1185
Discount	€70	Student, Eastern Europe, Developing Country

Overall, 12 bursaries were given: 5 for applicants who registered for all three conferences, 1 for an applicant who registered for two conferences and 6 for applicants who registered for one conference.



## 5. Technology

We used Zoom in all three conferences with one zoom link to help staff and participants to hopefully move easily in space. We entered the main entrance room and from there we could go to the designated rooms for each session. We used google drive to share documents with staff and members and padlets as notice boards

In these online settings, differently than in an in-person territory, it emerged that space does not become the limiting boundary but time is the factor that shapes the dynamic.

## 6. Content and Collective Themes related to the online Series

*(please refer to each individual conference report for more detail)*

The titles of the three conferences were challenging. “Antisemitism” and “Islamophobia” were direct and uncompromising, leaving little room for avoidance. “Migration,” appeared more nuanced—broader in scope and perhaps less immediately threatening. This difference was reflected in attendance, with the “Migration” conference attracting a larger audience.

The broader global context also shifted significantly between the time the conferences were conceived by the PCCA Board in late 2024 and when they were held. Among other events, Donald Trump’s election, the ongoing situation in Gaza, and the war with Iran in June 2025 contributed to an increasingly charged atmosphere.

Addressing Antisemitism and Islamophobia proved particularly challenging, as both became highly sensitive and emotionally charged issues. Israel’s involvement in what was happening contributed to a sharp rise in antisemitism, while Islamophobia—its counterpart in many ways—also intensified across the Western world and beyond. In both cases, long-standing and unresolved fears and prejudices resurfaced.

In the “Migration” conference, with its more explicit framing title, overt expression of conflict and aggression within the group dynamics emerged, which in turn made these tensions more accessible for exploration.

As has been observed in post-Holocaust work involving Germans and Israelis/Jews, the conferences highlighted how difficult it is to address current traumas when they are immediate, raw, and experienced at a deeply physical level—especially in the absence of the “Other,” the perceived enemy or target of hostility.

Across all three conferences, some common themes emerged. Racism in its various forms was a central organizing factor throughout the Series. Issues of inclusion and exclusion, alongside a fundamental search for belonging and “home,” were pervasive in the group dynamics. The process of “Othering,” as well as the broader theme of a “hatred of diversity”—reflected in the title of the Series itself—proved to be powerful motivators for engagement among participants.

In this context, the title of the in-person conference, Splitting Image: Seeing the Other in the Self, effectively captures the essence of these themes, complementing the online Conferences and rounding off the Series.



Partners in Confronting  
Collective Atrocities e.V.

PCCA Conference Series  
**OTHERING** and Hatred of **DIVERSITY**



### 7. Series Acknowledgements

We are deeply grateful for the considerable support we received in the implementation, organisation, and delivery of this innovative PCCA Group Relations series. In addition to all sponsors and supporters acknowledged above, we would particularly like to thank the PCCA Board for its authorisation and for the trust it placed in our capacity to deliver such an important milestone for PCCA as an organisation. We also wish to express our sincere appreciation to all members of the three directorates, as well as to all staff involved across the series, for contributing to such a profound and invaluable learning experience.