

A BRIEF HISTORY OF EQUIP

(Association of European Qualitative Researchers in Psychology)



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The idea that led to the creation of a European association of qualitative researchers within the field of psychology arose out of the recognition of a need for creating bridges across researchers working in Europe engaged in different qualitative research approaches, using diverse methodologies and theoretical frameworks. Underlying this idea was the statement of giving voice to and strengthening the visibility of qualitative research in psychology rooted in multiple socio-historical and cultural backgrounds.



The actual “birthplace” of the current association can be considered Lausanne, Switzerland, as Marie Santiago-Delefosse and Maria del Rio Carral (University of Lausanne, Switzerland) with Marco Gemigniani (from University of Loyola, in Spain) decided to further explore this idea. The

rough structure and objectives for a European association in psychology focused on qualitative methods, was designed in the spring of 2017 over a coffee with Marco Gemigniani and Maria del Rio Carral in the cafeteria of the Lausanne University (photo).

An International Exploratory Workshop entitled “Creating bridges between European Researchers across Qualitative Research in Psychology” was implemented (del Rio Carral & Santiago-Delefosse, 2017), funded by the Swiss National Scientific Foundation (SNF) and the Institute of psychology at the University of Lausanne, aimed at mapping research practices among qualitative researchers in psychology at individual, organisational, and national levels within Europe. This workshop enabled to assess the need to establish a specifically European association.

In France, years before, Marie Santiago-Delefosse had already postulated the need to create specifically an association of qualitative researchers in psychology that was mainly European. However, in the French-speaking academic psychology, qualitative methods had little place in the struggle between clinical psychology, mainly psychoanalytic, and experimental-cognitive psychology, with exceptions in social psychology like Serge Moscovici and Denise Jodelet.

Over the past decades, efforts were undertaken by Marie Santiago-Delefosse, to built links with ISCHP (International Society for Critical Health Psychology), SQIP (Society for Qualitative Inquiry in Psychology); the Division 5 (Qualitative and Quantitative Methods) of APA (American Psychological Association), as well as with RiFreq (*Association Internationale de Langue Française pour la Recherche Qualitative*), a French-speaking association on qualitative research, not specific to psychology.

In various other European countries, such as Germany or France (e.g. *Méthodes qualitatives en psychologie* (Santiago-Delefosse & Rouan, 2001; *Handbuch Qualitative Forschung in der Psychologie* (Mey & Mruck, 2010), *Centre for Qualitative Psychology* (<http://www.qualitativepsychology.com>)), there have been local attempts to establish a network of qualitative researches in psychology in the past. But generally, researchers from different countries in Europe seemed to have little knowledge of what was being done in other regions. Overall, qualitative research in psychology was mostly dominated by Anglo-Saxon scholars.

The workshop in 2017 in Lausanne was an unprecedented space to gather junior and senior researchers from different theoretical, methodological and sociocultural backgrounds across Europe. This workshop took place in Lausanne between 11th and 12th September 2017. It gathered 16 academics, juniors and seniors, men and women belonging to 8 countries (Belgium, Denmark, France, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Spain, Switzerland, UK) (Participants funded by the SNF, outside Switzerland: Themis Apostolidis, Angelo Benozzo, Carolin Demuth, Jan De Mol, Nollaig Frost, Marco Gemignani, Brendan Gough, Nikos Kalampalikis, Abigail Locke, Eleftheria Tseliou, with a first contact with Sarah Riley; and other participants, from Switzerland: Vanlisa Bourqui, Maria del Rio Carral, Fabienne Fasseur, Amaelle Gavin, Mauranne Laurent, Pauline Roux, Marie Santiago-Delefosse, Angélick Schweizer, Claudia Véron, Sébastien Miserez)



During this meeting, it became clear that we know little about the activities of qualitative researchers in psychology in other European countries, particularly in often under-

represented countries, like Eastern and Southern Europe and that we wanted to create a platform that allows for scholarly exchange between these researchers. Ultimately, the aim should also be to strengthen the field of qualitative research in psychology by making this work more visible internationally and connecting researchers across nationalities and language-barriers. Another aim that was defined at the workshop was to build bridges and allow for discussions between researchers working within various traditions of qualitative methods as sometimes qualitative researchers tend to stay in their specific methodological communities.



PHOTOS “the group of future co-

**founders at work in Lausanne
autumn 2017 Workshop”**



What followed was the further need to explore research practices and needs through a questionnaire, and a call for papers for a Special Issue entitled ‘Mapping qualitative research in psychology across Europe: Contemporary trends’ in the journal *Qualitative Research in Psychology* (del Rio Carral & Tseliou, 2019). These two projects revealed that there is quite a lively community of qualitative researchers in psychology across Europe. Also, after the first exploratory workshop in Lausanne, two more meetings with the same participants followed to consolidate the idea of an association:

From 4th to 5th June 2018, a second workshop was held in Aalborg (Denmark), co-organized by Carolin Demuth (Aalborg University) and Maria del Rio Carral (University of Lausanne) (a big ‘thank you’ to Carlsberg Foundation who provided funding for this workshop). During this workshop, we examined the results of our questionnaire. These

results showed the strong demand from academics, especially juniors, for a European association for qualitative research in psychology. The survey indicated feelings of isolation and the need for a place of information, training and exchange. We discussed the need to reach out to researchers in Southern and Eastern European countries and to provide a platform of scholarly exchange across national borders and methodological approaches. At the end of this workshop, we unanimously decided on the creation of the association, the name, the twitter account and website, and the objectives of the association.

Our project became a concrete entity at this point, entitled: European Association for Qualitative Researchers in Psychology (EQuIP)

We elected, the first president, Maria del Rio Carral, and the first board (Marie Santiago-Delefosse Honorary president, Carolin Demuth, vice-president, Nikos Kalampalikis, treasurer, Jan de Mol, secretary) with a mission to write the statutes and carry out the administrative formalities. Nikos Kalampalikis, took care of most of these formalities, with the help of feedback from the group. Finally, we also decided on launching a first conference of the association, and discussed the procedures and opportunities. Our first conference will be held in 2020 in Greece, and Eleftheria Tseliou was commissioned to examine the feasibility.



PHOTOS “the group of co-founders at work in Aalborg spring 2018 Workshop”

In December 2018, the association was officially registered in France.

Finally, a third workshop was co-organized in Leeds from 11th to 12th March 2019 by Brendan Gough (University of Leeds, kindly funding this event) and Maria del Rio Carral (University of Lausanne). This third meeting allowed us to continue the collaborative work involved in starting the association and decide on the final logo and website structure. We were also able to review the current organisation of the 1st conference of the association, its scientific committee and its preliminary program. Eleftheria Tseliou as a main organizer with Carolin Demuth and Eugenie Georgaca as co-organisers had been working together since September 2018 to plan our first conference. It will be held in Thessaloniki (Greece) from 18th to 20th June 2020 (<http://www.equip2020.gr/>).



**PHOTOS “the group of founders at work in Leeds spring 2019 Workshop”
“logo of our 1st conference in Greece 2020”**

It is thanks to the perseverance of all the founding members, gathered in Lausanne in 2017, that EQuIP has finally been able to formally exist. After having dreamed of it, it has become real, and I appreciate all the more the honor of being appointed Honorary President, because I know the difficulties and the pitfalls encountered.

It should be noted that our efforts until now have highlighted lessons that may be of interest for the future: a) the need to persist, when working in an academic environment implies that new ideas take time to be developed and welcomed; b) the need to take into account the differences in culture within the same discipline depending on the country/sociocultural and historical background; c) finally, the importance of dialogue and exchanges between countries, but also between juniors and seniors within the same discipline.

Marie Santiago-Delefosse, Honorary President, June 2019