



Q R C A *INSPIRATION AND RESOURCES  
FOR QUALITATIVE RESEARCH*

# VIEWS

SUMMER 2013  
VOLUME 11 • NUMBER 4

## BEEFING UP OUR ROLE as QUALITATIVE RESEARCHERS



Applying Behavioral Economics  
Theory to Uncover the Truth:  
**WHY YOU CAN'T  
SIMPLY ASK "WHY?"**

**A 360° VIEW  
OF THE CONSUMER:**  
How Digital Observation Is  
Improving Consultative Research

**SPECIAL REPORT INSIDE!**

**TERROR IN BOSTON:**  
The Qualitative Response

# FACT OR PERCEPTION?

## Qual Differences in the Big Three Western European Countries

By Véronique Gaboriau

Polykali ▪ Paris, France ▪ [vgaboriau@gmail.com](mailto:vgaboriau@gmail.com)

Ilka Kuhagen

IKM ▪ Munich, Germany ▪ [ilka.kuhagen@ikmarketing.de](mailto:ilka.kuhagen@ikmarketing.de)

Julia Spink

Lumina Business Solutions Limited ▪ Bakewell, U.K. ▪ [julia@lumina-solns.com](mailto:julia@lumina-solns.com)

**A**ny international researcher who is closely involved with qualitative research around the globe notices cultural differences among both market research methods and respondents' behaviors. We all have anecdotes concerning surprises in Asia, Africa or some other exotic locale, but in Western Europe we

tend to believe that we are quite similar to our immediate neighbors. Recently, when having dinner in Paris with U.S. colleague Pat Sabena after a few focus groups, she mentioned the differences she has observed among Germany, U.K. and France. It seemed quite important to find out if, and to what extent, an Amer-

ican researcher's perceptions reflect our own realities as European natives of the three "best enemies" in Europe.

At first, we insisted that there are few major differences, and we used good arguments to refute each perception. Later in the process of our discussion, we became aware that our frequent





**USA: +1 732.970.9446**  
**UK: +44 (0)20 7487 9290**  
**info@InteractiveVideo.com**  
**www.InteractiveVideo.com**

**MOBILAB™**  
 Usability & Eye Tracking

**Usability Lab with Technician • Eye Tracking Lab with Technician**  
**Ethnographic Videography • Highlights Video • Video Streaming**  
**Remote Usability Research Support**

**USA**

**ATLANTA**

Delve  
 Fieldwork Atlanta  
 Focus Pointe Global  
 Murray Hill Center South  
 Plaza Research  
 Schlesinger Associates  
 Superior Research

**BALTIMORE**

AIM  
 Baltimore Research  
 (Towson, MD)

**BOSTON**

Copley Focus  
 Fieldwork Boston  
 (Waltham)  
 Focus Pointe Global  
 Performance Plus  
 Performance Plus  
 (Framingham)  
 Schlesinger Associates

**CHICAGO**

AIM (Schaumburg)  
 Adler Weiner (Downtown)  
 Adler Weiner (Lincolnwood)  
 Delve (Oak Brook)  
 Fieldwork Chicago  
 (Downtown)  
 Fieldwork Chicago  
 (North)  
 Fieldwork Chicago  
 (O'Hare)  
 Fieldwork Chicago  
 (Schaumburg)  
 Focus Pointe Global  
 Focuscope (Downtown)  
 Focuscope (Oak Brook)  
 Focuscope (Oak Park)  
 Murray Hill Center  
 Plaza Research  
 Schlesinger Associates  
 (Downtown)  
 Schlesinger Associates  
 (O'Hare)  
 Smith Research  
 (Deerfield)

Smith Research  
 (Downtown)  
 Smith Research  
 (Oakbrook)  
 The Energy Annex  
 (Downtown)

**CONNECTICUT**

MarketView (Danbury)  
 New England Marketing  
 Research (Norwalk)  
 Performance Plus  
 (Entfield)  
 Razor Focus (Stamford)

**DENVER**

Fieldwork Denver  
 Plaza Research

**FLORIDA**

Concepts in Focus  
 (Jacksonville)  
 L&E Research (Tampa)  
 MARS Research  
 (Ft. Lauderdale)  
 National Opinion  
 Research (Miami)  
 Plaza Research  
 (Ft. Lauderdale)  
 Plaza Research (Tampa)  
 Schlesinger Associates  
 (Orlando)  
 Superior Research  
 (Tampa)  
 WAC  
 (Ft. Lauderdale, Miami)

**LAS VEGAS**

Plaza Research

**LOS ANGELES**

AIM (Los Angeles,  
 Costa Mesa, Long Beach)  
 Adept Consumer Testing  
 (Beverly Hills, Encino)  
 Adler Weiner  
 (Los Angeles, Irvine)  
 Advanced Marketing  
 Perspectives  
 Fieldwork LA (Irvine)  
 Focus & Testing  
 Focus Pointe Global

House of Marketing  
 Research (Pasadena)  
 Meczka Marketing  
 Research  
 Murray Hill Center  
 Plaza Research  
 Q-Insights  
 Schlesinger Associates

**MINNESOTA**

Ascendancy Research  
 (Minneapolis)  
 Delve (Minneapolis)  
 Fieldwork Minneapolis  
 (Edina)

Focus Market Research  
 (Minneapolis)  
 Focus Market Research  
 (Edina)

FRS Research Group  
 (St. Paul)

**MISSOURI**

Delve (Kansas City)  
 Delve (St. Louis)  
 Hatch Research  
 (St. Louis)  
 Peters Marketing  
 Research (St. Louis)

**NEW YORK**

Fieldwork New York  
 (Westchester)  
 Focus Pointe Global  
 Focus Suites  
 Innovative Concepts  
 (Long Island)  
 JRA (White Plains, NY)  
 MarketView (Tarrytown)  
 Murray Hill Center  
 New York Consumer Ctr  
 Schlesinger Associates  
 The Focus Room  
 The Focus Room  
 (Westchester)

**NEW JERSEY/  
 NEW YORK  
 (Metro Area)**

AIM (Hackensack)  
 AIM (Morristown)

Fieldwork East  
 (Ft Lee, NJ)  
 Focus Crossroads  
 (East Rutherford, NJ)  
 Focus Pointe Global  
 (Teaneck, NJ)  
 Focus World Int'l  
 (Holmdel, NJ)  
 Meadowlands Consumer  
 Center (Secaucus, NJ)  
 Plaza Research  
 (Paramus, NJ)  
 Schlesinger Associates  
 (Iselin, NJ)

**NORTH CAROLINA**

L&E Research (Raleigh)

**OHIO**

AIM (Cincinnati)  
 AIM (Columbus)  
 Delve (Columbus)  
 Opinions, Ltd.  
 (Cleveland)  
 QFact Marketing  
 Research (Cincinnati)

**OREGON**

Gilmore Research  
 (Portland)

**PHILADELPHIA  
 (Metro Area)**

Plaza Research  
 (Marlton, NJ)  
 JRA (Montgomeryville, PA)  
 JRA (Mount Laurel, NJ)

**PHILADELPHIA**

Delve  
 Focus Pointe Global  
 (Center City, Bala Cynwyd)  
 Focus Suites (Bala Cynwyd)  
 JRA  
 Schlesinger Associates  
 (Center City, Bala Cynwyd)

**PHOENIX**

Delve (Tempe)  
 Fieldwork Phoenix  
 (Scottsdale)

Fieldwork Phoenix  
 (South Mountain)  
 Focus Market Research  
 (Scottsdale)  
 Plaza Research  
 Schlesinger Associates

**RHODE ISLAND**

Performance Plus  
 (Providence)

**SAN DIEGO**

Plaza Research  
 Taylor Research

**SAN FRANCISCO**

Fieldwork San Francisco  
 Focus Pointe Global  
 Plaza Research  
 Schlesinger Associates

**SEATTLE**

Fieldwork Seattle  
 (Downtown)  
 Fieldwork Seattle  
 (Kirkland)  
 Gilmore Research  
 (Downtown)

**TEXAS**

Austin Market Research  
 (Austin)  
 Delve (Dallas)  
 Fieldwork Dallas  
 Focus Pointe Global  
 (Dallas)  
 Murray Hill Center  
 (Dallas)  
 Plaza Research (Dallas)  
 Plaza Research (Houston)  
 Schlesinger Associates  
 (Dallas)  
 Schlesinger Associates  
 (Houston)  
 Think Group Austin  
 (Austin)

**VIRGINIA**

Alan Newman Research  
 (Richmond)

**WASHINGTON, D.C.  
 (Metro Area)**

OMR (Greenbelt, MD)  
 OMR (Washington, DC)  
 Shugoll Research  
 (Alexandria, VA)  
 Shugoll Research  
 (Bethesda, MD)  
 Shugoll Research  
 (Fairfax, VA)

**WISCONSIN**

Delve (Appleton)  
 JRA (Milwaukee)

**UNITED KINGDOM**

Aspect in the City  
 (Manchester)  
 Aspect Viewing Facilities  
 (South Manchester)  
 Field Facts Worldwide/  
 Focus Pointe (London)  
 London Focus (London)  
 Shoreditch Studios  
 (London)  
 The Research House  
 (London)  
 The Research House  
 (Wimbledon)

**CANADA**

Consumer Vision  
 (Toronto)  
 Research House  
 (Toronto)

**FRANCE**

ConsuMed Research  
 (Paris)  
 Passerelles (Paris)

**GERMANY**

Schmiedl Marktforschung  
 (Berlin)  
 Schmiedl Marktforschung  
 (Frankfurt)  
 Schmiedl Marktforschung  
 (Munich)

**RESEARCH TECHNOLOGY SUPPORT ANYWHERE, ANYTIME**



French qualitative researchers were originally psychologists, psychoanalysts or social anthropologists rooted in the surrealist culture. This has had a dramatic influence on the way methodologies are designed.

cooperation in projects together has made the differences seem perhaps more minor than they really are. Here are our thoughts reflecting our respective cultures and how we face the challenges of qualitative research in our own lands.

### Do We Each Have Different Requirements and Uses of Time?

It is true that market research sessions are often longer in France and Germany than in the U.K., usually 30 minutes longer for a regular focus group or 25% more discussion time. Some reasons are due to language: the German and French languages use more words and longer words and sentences (a given in structure) that require more time.

Even more interesting, both German and French respondents need a longer warm-up than the English: the Germans because they are more reserved and need to be reassured about privacy issues, and the French because they are individualistic and need to be trained in group exercises and discipline. Although quite different reasons in nature, both lead to more time for introductions. As Julia points out, "With their more philosophical approach, the French take longer to discuss subjects more in depth and in the abstract, whereas the Germans and Brits arrive ready to work. When I first started doing pan-European qual research, we joked about how in Italy and France we would have to spend three or four hours discussing the meaning of life in order to get to whether a package should be red or blue."

As a matter of fact, French researchers use a lot of projective techniques, and they spend time understanding the

respondents' individual personalities and social and cultural values (beyond the controlled social image they want to give to others during a group), in order to make sure analysis goes beyond the rational answers.

In contrast, German consumers come ready to perform the job of being a respondent. They want to know what is needed and to get on with their task. More time is needed, however, to set the scene, reassure everyone about privacy and create group interaction.

French focus groups often last three-and-a-half to four hours. It is always difficult to convince international partners that French respondents do not get bored, and most of the time, they actually have fun if the method combines different tools and exercises, both visual and verbal. While the German standard for focus group length is two hours, creative groups can last up to four hours if the fun factor is highlighted and respondents remain engaged.

In the U.K., qualitative researchers tend to go for two hours to fit in two groups in one evening for budgetary reasons. A longer group means more than one evening of facility costs, which gets expensive. As Julia explains, "If it weren't for this factor, I do think we would tend to have two-and-a-half-hour groups or even make the groups three hours or more, but that would be more time than we really require in many projects. In true exploratory projects, it is accepted up front that a much longer time per session will be required, and the budget is set to allow for that."

Increasingly, a compromise in all countries is to add on some extensive pre- and post-group assignments to

stretch and enhance the data gathered in a specific project, while spending face-to-face time most efficiently.

### Do We Have Different National Methodologies?

Methodological differences in each country have their origins in the culture and academic background of its qualitative researchers.

French qualitative researchers were originally psychologists, psychoanalysts or social anthropologists rooted in the surrealist culture. This has had a dramatic influence on the way methodologies are designed. Projective techniques were prioritized, and non-directive guides were the norm until the late '80s. The goal was to investigate the why and how of decision-making to gather an in-depth understanding of behavior and the reasons that govern it. The data are used to create patterns and are analyzed according to interpretive techniques.

As a result, qualitative research in France was mostly exploratory. As Véronique recalls, "My first project as a qualitative researcher was to moderate interviews based on the only question 'You and Coffee' for the brand Nescafe. We spent hours observing people in their homes and then had creative sessions where they did a lot of visual exercises. My second project, for Guerlain, was 'Me and Perfume.' We rarely had a precise discussion guide, but we had a very good briefing by the client, who explained what he wanted to learn. What a surprise for me later on in my career when I was required to ask respondents to raise their hands if they approved a particular design. I had always been taught that numbers have



# Listening & Engaging



Experience a research environment that's focused on your results. Our team listens – proactively creating the atmosphere you need to engage with participants. From the welcome at the door to the recording and video streaming, you know you're going to be taken care of at L&E.

Fresh qualified recruits.  
Friendly proactive staff.  
A partner who keeps you informed.



RALEIGH, NC TAMPA, FL

877-344-1574

[www.leresearch.com](http://www.leresearch.com) [bidrequest@leresearch.com](mailto:bidrequest@leresearch.com)





no place in qualitative research. Furthermore, it is so difficult to ask the French to raise hands once they have left school! While I do this if required by a foreign colleague or client, I am never totally at ease or comfortable with the results since I still firmly believe that the quantity of preference is less important than the underlying reasons.”

Many German qualitative researchers are trained as psychologists, but their approach is more behavioral than emotional and more related to consumption. The discussion guides are more precise and allow less opportunity for improvisation. Furthermore, it is more difficult to get German respondents to be really creative, but that can be achieved if they are carefully screened beforehand and trained with icebreakers early in the interviewing format.

While behavioural economics is reshaping the dialogue with U.K. consumers these days (e.g., exploring the bounds of rationality of economic agents by integrating psychology with neo-classical economic theory), interviewing respondents has always been more informal and cozy in England. Despite British reserve, qualitative research used to be conducted in the recruiter’s home, so consumers are quite comfortable being interviewed. The English can cope with open-ended projectives and very creative methods, but they are not overly shy about answering and discussing straightforward questions, even on rather personal subjects.

### What Are the Differences in Reporting Qualitative Findings?

In France, huge importance is dedicated to the analysis and the report, which is extremely detailed and often very lengthy. As the methodologies often include a long exploratory part that helps differentiate respondents’ profiles, the report takes time and pages to explain all this. The French used to consider the group or the individual interview as the tip of an iceberg, which requires much professional analysis to be meaningful. The length of reports, thanks to slideshow applications and the integration of images and videos, make them much more lively and even fun than they used to be in the past. In-depth analysis and well-written, illustrated reports take time, and French clients know they will have to wait more than a few days after fieldwork ends for their report. The presentation often takes a few hours; it is usually attended by marketing and R&D teams and, sometimes, by advertising or packaging agencies. Often, the presentation is followed by a creative session to help teams own the results and make decisions.

While German reports used to seem quite academic, Ilka says this has changed, for her at least: “My personal experience is to make short and precise summaries. It still takes a lot of time to walk through all the findings and condense them into actionable results. The amount of work that goes into a short condensed report can be longer than the

time needed for a long, detailed one. But I have seen German and British clients still asking for long and detailed reports in Word.”

In the U.K., Julia observes, “U.K. reports tend to be long and, for many years, not in word-processed format. There is a continual evolution towards more pictorial reports, but many clients still want the level of detail that requires words, too. Personally, I would prefer a very visual reporting style, but that works only if you can present to everyone who will be using the data, so that they are clear on what your images mean. It’s very rare, however, to get my international clients all in one place at a time, so I have to include enough levels of detail to enable the report to stand alone. We are rarely allowed enough time to become as graphic as I would prefer because this takes so much extra time to find the right images and work out how best to use them.”

### How about Privacy Laws?

A persistent point of difference is the attitude towards privacy laws. Even though privacy laws are strict in each country and we all adhere to ESOMAR standards, the importance of these standards is apparently quite different for respondents. Germans take it very seriously and really care about privacy. The British rarely mention issues of privacy at all. The French are often paradoxical: they do not care about privacy in most cases, and only half listen to the

Germans take privacy laws very seriously, while the British rarely mention issues of privacy at all. The French are often paradoxical: they do not care about privacy in most cases, and only half of respondents listen to the privacy portion of the introduction to a focus group.



# Refine Your Research Experience

Spacious Focus Group Suites, Observing & Client Lounges, CLT Facilities, Green Friendly and More!



bwtech@UMBC North  
5520 Research Park Drive, Suite 200  
Baltimore, MD 21228  
410-332-0400  
[www.observationbaltimore.com](http://www.observationbaltimore.com)



# App-ealing

As the industry's first directory resource to offer mobile apps, QUALocator®'s Mobile platform gives you on-the-go convenience, right from your smartphone, with all the same search-and-compare capabilities of our Online version.

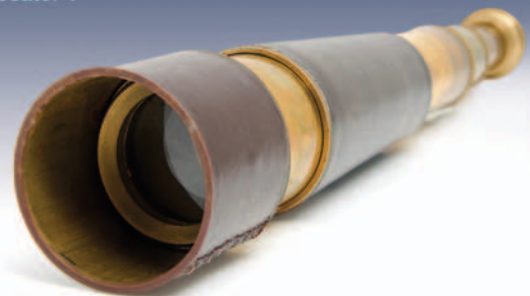
Available through the iTunes store, iPhone and iPad apps are ready for download now.

Maximize your time and make your day even more productive with the power of the QUALocator®.



Available on the  
App Store

**QUALocator®**  
[www.QUALocator.com](http://www.QUALocator.com)





privacy portion of the introduction to a focus group.

Although all European video-streaming is required to blur the faces of respondents, Véronique tells an anecdote that illustrates this French paradox:

“Last year, one of my clients came with a journalist and a cameraman who were working on a documentary about the food industry. We warned the respondents that their faces would not be blurred in this video, and we asked them

to sign a document including this waiver. One of the women was very reluctant and asked at first for a guarantee that her face would not be shown on video. At the end of the session, the reporter asked the respondents who wanted to be interviewed and filmed, and she was the first to say yes!”

### And What about the Food?

Respondents and clients have always been treated to more culinary effort in France than in the U.K. or Germany. Cuisine for clients in Germany and the U.K., however, has improved considerably, and many facilities in these countries now offer excellent food.

In Germany and the U.K., respondents are fed so they have something in their stomach, including some energy from nuts and sweets to nibble. Feeding the respondents well seems to be the French mentality about “the guest,” at least partially in the belief that respondents will give much more of themselves when they have been satiated with fine food. Nevertheless, they are no longer given wine!

### Our Conclusions about the Three “Best Enemies” of Western Europe

After much discussion back and forth, we decided that some cultural differences among us have faded or even disappeared. As international research has become more prevalent, we are adapting our methodologies to context, but we are also learning from each other to the benefit of all. As independent researchers, we also meet (thanks to our professional associations) and exchange views about our practice, our methods, our clients and our respondents.

Nowadays, the trendy prefix is “co,” as in cooperation and collaboration. There is scarcely a day without an article about “radical collaboration” in serious financial papers. To us researchers, though, collaboration and cooperation seem familiar, since we have worked for years to build the best informal multicultural teams. Without any secret agenda, we observe that we are helping to modify and improve research rules in our respective countries for better service to our clients. Apparently, we are working hard for a Europe of qualitative research, even in the absence of a politically united Europe! 📧



**market research dallas**

**SHHHH ..**

**MARKET RESEARCH'S  
BEST KEPT SECRET .....**

**3 SEPARATE ROOMS WITH SPACIOUS CLIENT FACILITIES**

**LOCAL, STATE AND NATIONAL PROJECT SCOPE**

**MULTICULTURAL PROJECT CAPABILITIES**

**IN-HOUSE RECRUITING**



**PHONE: 972.239.5382 • TOLL FREE: 866.830.5382**

- [www.marketresearchdallas.com](http://www.marketresearchdallas.com)**
- EMAIL: [mail@marketresearchdallas.com](mailto:mail@marketresearchdallas.com)**