

## Augusto Palmonari

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We are very sad to announce that Augusto Palmonari, one of the founders of the *European Journal of Psychology of Education* and former member of its editorial board, has passed away.

Together with Michel Gilly and Anne-Nelly Perret-Clermont, Augusto Palmonari was one of the three organizers of the "Social representations and research in education" conference that took place in Aix-en-Provence on December 1–3, 1981, with the support of the European Laboratory of Social Psychology, and in particular of Serge Moscovici and Willem Doise. This was the meeting during which the *European Journal of Psychology of Education* was first imagined.

Augusto Palmonari's contributions to the first years of EJPE were decisive, in alignment with his concern to offer opportunities to researchers, and especially young researchers, all over Europe, East and West, to meet and cooperate.

To honor his memory, we have asked Paola Richard-De Paolis, a former student of his with a brilliant career on the frontiers between fundamental research and professional or social action (a frontier dear to Augusto), to write a memorial. We thank her for having accepted.

Aleksander Baucal, Felice Carugati and Anne-Nelly Perret-Clermont.

### IN MEMORIAM

Professor Augusto Palmonari passed away on October 20, 2016 at the age of 81.

Born on December 25, 1935 in Imola – an Italian city close to Bologna and on the border between Emilia and Romagna – he was the oldest of three children in his family. He showed profound interest in scientific studies, finished medical school as physician, and then further specialized in neuropsychiatry. His interest in psychology, and especially in social psychology, developed at the Institute of Psychology, in the Faculty of Medicine at the University of Bologna, encouraged by Professor Renzo Canestrari, who was director of the institute for several decades.

In the early 1960s, the very first signs of the upcoming antipsychiatry movement in Trieste and Ferrara spurred the young psychiatrist into action, especially regarding the strong influence institutions had on the psychomotor development of children in their care. He paid particular attention to the devastating effects of diagnoses and the totalitarian logic present in institutions for children and adolescents. Augusto Palmonari and his team of young researchers published one of the first studies on participants from an Institute for Young Orphan Girls in

1965 in “Psichiatria generale e dell’età evolutiva” (“General and Developmental Psychiatry”). Other deinstitutionalization studies under the name of “Gruppi appartamento” (“Apartment groups”) followed in various cities in Emilia-Romagna. The main aim of these studies was to follow closely children who leave the institution and move to apartments to live in groups of 6–8 pre-adolescents under the care of 2–3 adults. They studied their regression and social reintegration as well as the process of integration into surrounding neighborhoods. These innovative experiments were supported by rigorous scientific observation and the desire of local political administrations to respond to the needs of these children who were deeply marked by institutional life and the categorizations which it entailed and, which heavily affected their self-esteem. The results of these observations and the reflections they stimulated were reported in a book originally published in 1975 “Il possibile esperimento” (“The possible experiment”) and later translated into French in 1981 under the title “Tenter le possible” (“Try the possible”) by Peter Lang Editions (AbeBooks.fr - ISBN: 9783261048431).

Because of these multiple experiences and due to Augusto Palmonari’s personal influence on the direction of the IRESS – Istituto Regionale di Servizio Sociale (Regional Institute of Social Services) – important lines of research opened to the Social Psychology research team in Bologna, specifically addressing social services for children, identity construction in adolescents, career counseling, psychiatric services and the effects of the antipsychiatry movement, the territorial organization of new services, psychologists’ roles within these services, and the social representations triggered by their arrival on the *care* market in the early 1980s.

These are only a few of the themes that developed in Italian psychology as a result of Augusto Palmonari’s openness and his numerous publications in Il Mulino Editions, his investment in the *Giornale Italiano di Psicologia (Italian Journal of Psychology)*, and through his activities in the EAESP – European Association of Experimental Social Psychology.

Augusto Palmonari knew how to promote the construction of numerous bridges between western and eastern European social psychology even before the fall of the Berlin Wall. He also knew how to maintain scientific dialog between theoretical divisions separating northern and southern Europe. From the mid-1970s onward, his long-standing relationships with Henri Tajfel, Serge Moscovici, Willem Doise, and many other internationally-renowned European social psychologists resulted in intense and fruitful collaborations, research conventions and publications, and marked the career paths of four generations of students who became professors and researchers.

As an invited professor in various European universities and very often at the Maison des Sciences de l’Homme in Paris, as honorary doctorate from the University of Geneva in 2010, Augusto Palmonari always played an important role with his intelligence, his intuition, his intellectual curiosity, his scientific culture, as well as his great modesty and he became a close partner with the greatest thinkers of the human sciences. We pay homage to him and we recognize in him the generous and sensitive “maître”, the humanist forerunner committed to the cause of the well-being of those who are the most fragile.

The leadership roles that Augusto Palmonari held throughout his 60-years career made him an indispensable figure that anchored Social Psychology in the history of European thought.

Paola RICHARD-DE PAOLIS, PhD

Augusto Palmonari’s student and research collaborator between 1971 and 1980,

Willem Doise’s research collaborator between 1980 and 1988,

Former Director 1988-2016 of the EESP, Lausanne, HES-SO.

(U.A.S Social Work and Health, Western Switzerland),