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## Editorial: The ongoing internationalization of the Journal of Family Research

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### Abstract

**Objective:** To share notes and empirical developments of the internationalization of the Journal of Family Research.

**Background:** The Journal of Family Research underwent several transformations over the last couple of years, most notably, it shifted its focus toward the international research community.

**Method:** We describe the internationalization of authorship and of the countries under study using data extracted from JFR's published articles between 2015 and 2023.

**Results:** Both the authorship and the countries under study have internationalized over the observation period.

**Conclusion:** The internationalization of the Journal of Family Research is proceeding successfully.

**Key words:** publication policy; transformation; open access; open science; accompanying research; journal evaluation



The Journal of Family Research was established in 1989 as a scientific journal. Originally titled “Zeitschrift für Familienforschung,” it published 14 volumes of family research, primarily focused on Germany and exclusively written in German. The first steps toward internationalization began in 2003 when a new editorial team introduced a bilingual concept. This resulted in a bilingual title, “Zeitschrift für Familienforschung | Journal of Family Research,” and allowed for articles to be published in either English or German. This bilingual phase continued for another 16 volumes. Starting in 2019, the Journal of Family Research discontinued the publication of research articles in the German language entirely. As part of a major relaunch in 2020, the Journal of Family Research eventually dropped its German title and actively shifted its focus toward the international research community.

The effort to internationalize the Journal of Family Research since 2020 is evident through three empirical developments we will briefly outline here. First, the shift in publication language logically stemmed from the policy change in 2019, which mandated exclusive publication in English. To put this into context, only 25 percent of the 65 research articles published between 2015 and 2018 were written in English. English serves as the dominant language in the realm of science, thereby expanding the accessibility of research to a significantly larger international audience compared to German. As we reflect on the journal’s origins as a solely German-speaking platform, we have maintained the tradition of including German titles, abstracts, and key words for all articles. This, at the very least, aims to improve the discoverability of our articles within relevant databases and catalogs.

Second, it appears to be more than a mere educated guess that the transition to the English language for publication has attracted a significantly wider community of researchers who are now considering submitting their work to the Journal of Family Research. This phenomenon is clearly evident in the internationalization of authors of published manuscripts since 2015 (excluding all manuscripts not subject to peer review, such as editorials). When considering all authors, including multiple authors per manuscript, it is noteworthy that 74 percent of all authors between 2015 and 2019 were affiliated with Germany, and, more broadly, 84 percent hailed from German-speaking countries, encompassing Germany, Austria, and Switzerland. However, since 2020, the proportion of authors from Germany has declined to 47 percent, and the figure for authors from German-speaking countries now stands at 52 percent. Notably, the number of distinct countries from which the authors originate has doubled over these two periods.

Third, examining the countries under study in the Journal of Family Research, we observed a clear trend towards increased diversity in target countries. Among the 81 peer-reviewed articles between 2015 and 2019, 80 were empirical studies, with 67 focused on a single country and 13 on international comparative research (along with one review article). Notably, Germany dominated the single-country studies, accounting for 90 percent. In the subsequent period from 2020 to 2023, there were a total of 119 articles, comprising 98 single-country studies and 19 multi-country studies (plus two review articles). However, the focus on Germany in single-country studies decreased to 49 percent, representing a twofold reduction. This shift, coupled with the inclusion of internationally comparative studies, underscores a significant increase in the variety of countries under investigation. It also signifies the successful internationalization of the Journal of Family Research, as the initial emphasis on Germany has been surpassed.

The Journal of Family Research’s transformation into an international outlet for family research from 2020 onwards further included discontinuing the printed version, i.e., opting for online-only publication, and parting ways with its commercial publisher. Since then, the Journal of Family Research has operated as a diamond open-access journal, publishing scientific manuscripts on family issues from sociological, demographical, and population perspectives without any costs for authors or readers. This is made possible through basic funding from the Bavarian State Ministry of Families, Labor, and Social Affairs within the annual working program of the State Institute for Family Research at the University of Bamberg. The journal is published “open access” in collaboration with the University of Bamberg Press, a nonprofit publishing service provided by the University of Bamberg for the dissemination and archival of academic publications. As a nonprofit publication, the Journal of Family Research relies on the voluntary contributions of its editors, reviewers, and authors. This approach positions it as a journal led by scholars and guided by the intellectual vision of the international research community.

## Information in German

### Deutscher Titel

Editorial: Die Internationalisierung des Journal of Family Research

### Zusammenfassung

**Fragestellung:** Es werden einige Anmerkungen und empirische Befunde zur Internationalisierung des Journal of Family Research geteilt.

**Hintergrund:** Das Konzept des Journal of Family Research wurde in den letzten Jahren stark überarbeitet. Der Fokus auf die internationale Fachöffentlichkeit war dabei eine der zentralen Entwicklungen.

**Methode:** Die Internationalisierung der Autorinnen und Autoren sowie der analysierten Länder wird anhand deskriptiver Daten aufgezeigt. Die Daten wurden aus den publizierten Artikeln der Jahre 2015 bis 2023 extrahiert.

**Ergebnisse:** Sowohl die Autorinnen- und Autorenschaft also auch die untersuchten Länder sind im Beobachtungsfenster deutlich internationaler geworden.

**Schlussfolgerung:** Die Internationalisierung des Journal of Family Research schreitet erfolgreich fort.

**Schlagwörter:** Publikationskonzept, Transformation; open access; open science; Begleitforschung; Evaluation

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