

Social psychological research: the comparison of four journals

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Social Psychological Research: The Comparison of Four Journals



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Social Psychological Research: The Comparison of Four Journals

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Every scientific field can be described by its typical research focus or paradigm. These research paradigms or research matrices reflect what is viewed as “normal science” in the respective field. This study aimed to find out what defines the research matrix of the typical Anglo-American social psychology journal versus the typical German social psychology journal and why the “*German Journal of Social Psychology*”, that was founded in the 1970ies in order to enhance application orientation and theoretical integration in social psychological research, had to resign its publication in German and reappeared in English. Two hundred and three research articles of 4 different journals, published in either English or German, were rated according to differences in their research paradigms. Structural differences in the profiles of these journals showed that the journals published in English take a rather empirical and quantitative approach towards research while the German journals seem to show a stronger theoretical orientation and a more qualitative research approach. Patterns of the unsuccessful German journal suggest a lack of consistency and individuality compared to the other journals.

Keywords: Research matrix, research paradigm, social psychological research, Kuhn, Zeitschrift für Sozialpsychologie

Introduction

Recent research has empirically shown that different scientific fields have different implicitly accepted norms as to how basic research should generally be conducted (see for example the comments about social psychology by Kruglanski, 2001, 2004, 2006; and the reader by Lange, 2006). The fact that different disciplines operate according to different disciplinary matrices – or more traditionally paradigms - has been well-discussed in theory (Kuhn 1974, 1978, see also Hacking, 2002). Those matrices consist of principles or implicit guidelines researchers of the respective domains tend to follow. Research matrices can generally be defined as methodological aspects and research perspectives scientists use, such as empirical research, theoretical research, quantitative research, theory development, practical application, developing complex models, etc. (Lange, 2006). For example, sociologists tend to work more theoretically than psychologists, biologists and physicists. Physics stresses the development of models more than other disciplines. Psychological research tends to focus more on quantitative methods while sociology tends to emphasise a qualitative approach (Witte & Strohmeier, in press).

Where does social psychology fit in among these domains? Traditionally, social psychology has tried to make the connection between the fields of psychology and sociology, while focusing on the individual (Wilson & Schafer, 1978; Witte, 1996). Should social psychology therefore be expected to fall in between the sociological and the psychological research matrices (House, 1977)? If that were the case, social psychological research should value a qualitative as well as a quantitative research approach. It should also stress a theoretical orientation (Rijsman & Stroebe, 1989). Observing the development of social psychology, it can be assumed that this combination was originally the background of the discipline, but that it adapted to the psychological research matrix over time (Farr, 1996).

There was a movement in Germany and other parts of Europe in the 1970s which demanded a change in social psychology (Holzkamp, 1970; 1977; Isreal & Tajfel, 1972). A new generation of researchers in social psychology

brought attention to the need for a framework for research results, integrating the knowledge of the field into larger and more complex theories. They also stated that social psychology should not be a purely empirical discipline. Instead, the discipline should focus more on the application of its theoretically postulated principles. Out of the need for theoretical integration and orientation towards knowledge application, the German “*Journal of Social Psychology*” (*Zeitschrift für Sozialpsychologie*, “ZfSP”) was founded. Over the past few years, the ZfSP struggled to survive and finally it had to end its publication of the version in German. In 2008, it reappeared in English. Does the ZfSP reflect the decline of the idea to form a more application-oriented and theoretically-integrated social psychology (Doll, Schütz, Six & Witte, 1994)?

Recently, the lack of theoretical integration of research results has been discussed (Kruglanski, 2001, 2004, 2006; Witte, 2008), but the need to publish results quickly seems to lead to the tendency of significance testing against a random model (null hypothesis) rather than to the development of complex models or theoretical frameworks in psychology in general. This phenomenon seems to be most salient in the U.S. and accordingly, it should be reflected in American research journals which are regarded as the most prestigious within the field of social psychology.

Therefore, we were interested not only in finding out in how far the psychological matrix also applies to social psychology in general, but also whether there is a difference between American and German social psychological research as it appears published in representative journals (see also Zajonc, 1989 about different styles of explanation). One aim of this study was to find out whether the German “*Journal of Social Psychology*” (ZfSP) still reflected the ideas it was founded for and what caused its decline. According to the cultural and historical differences between Germany and the United States as discussed above, it seems likely that there is a difference in quantitative orientation between the German and the American journals, the American journals being more oriented towards quantitative testing. Furthermore, it can be assumed that the ZfSP would reflect a more theoretical and application-oriented approach to research. For the following study, four journals were

picked that can be considered representative of the main cultural aspects as discussed above.

The Journal of Personality and Social Psychology (JPSP) is very influential in the international research community and represents the American approach to social psychological research. *The European Journal of Social Psychology (EJSP)* reflects a diverse cultural background and thus should be influenced by different research values. However, the journal is published in English and takes an international stance. Consequently, it was of interest to find out how this would be reflected in the EJSP research matrix in comparison with the JPSP and the German journals. An additional two journals in German language were chosen to be investigated. The ZfSP, founded during the movement in the 1970ies, and the “*Cologne Journal of Sociology and Social Psychology*” (“KZfSS”, “*Kölner Zeitschrift für Soziologie und Sozialpsychologie*”) as the successful German counterpart to the ZfSP. This study aimed to assess whether the ZfSP had held on to the principles it was founded upon and whether these principles caused differences between the ZfSP and the English journals but also between the ZfSP and the KZfSS. Another question posed was why the KZfSS is still successful in contrast to the ZfSP, perhaps because of its integration into sociology.

Method

To be able to assess different aspects or foci of social psychological research, an instrument was needed that could capture a wide variety of research foci presented by a broad range of research articles. Also, the instrument needed to reflect methodological matrices as exhaustively as possible. For this purpose, a rating scale for research articles was developed in spring 2008. Previously, a literature review was conducted to determine how research can generally be described in order to develop a scale which could assess the broadest view possible on research foci. Initially, a wide range of scientific literature concerning theory of science, philosophy of science, and methodology of science was reviewed. Adjectives that were used to describe or

classify scientific methods were then extracted from the literature. Secondly, the extracted adjectives were clustered by equivalent meaning, thus categories were built that summarised adjectives with similar meanings. In the last step, the categories were named after the general concept they represented and, if necessary, provided with a description of the category.

It turned out that the so developed categories could be divided into two different item lists. Items in the first list focused on concrete aspects of research, the *“how” question* (e.g. empirical research, theoretical research, testing causal relationships, qualitative research, quantitative research and single case studies). Items in the second list focused on higher goals of research, *the “why” question* (e.g. developing/testing theories, developing/testing models, and developing/testing practical application.).

All in all, 10 distinct categories suitable to describe psychological research were identified and were expressed in the following questions: “How much did the research focus on: 1. empirical research, 2. theoretical research, 3. quantitative research, 4. testing causal relationships, 5. single case studies, 6. qualitative research, 7. testing existing theories, 8. developing new theories, 9. practical application and 10. developing complex models?”.

In the process of turning the categories into items for a rating scale, every category was operationalized as a question that could be rated on a 5-point scale. Each point of the scale was specified verbally. For example: The category *developing theories* was translated into the question “Did the authors work on developing a new theory?”

Rating scale:

1. There were no abstract assumptions derived from the data
2. The discussion included suggestions for further development of a theory
3. Inductive reasoning from the general conclusions in the data exceed the observed results only marginally, low abstraction-level
4. The authors present inductive or deductive reasons for further abstraction of their assumptions. The intention to draw universally valid conclusions is visible in the design of the study

5. In addition to 4, high level of abstraction and wealth of information. The authors try to meet highest criteria for universal validity and work with more than one method.

Eight categories were turned into questions with such a rating scale. However, two categories (*empirical research* and *theoretical research*) were operationalized differently, and they were not rated on a 5-point scale. The category *empirical research* was assessed by the aspects: a) number of studies presented in the article and b) number and type of sample used in these studies. The category *theoretical research* was assessed by the questions: a) relative length of methodological section, b) relative length of theoretical section and c) number of studies cited in the theoretical section.

Also the four categories *quantitative research*, *testing causal relationships*, *single case studies* (coded inversely) and *qualitative research* (coded inversely) were later combined and treated as one scale (QQ-scale) in the data analysis, because they were highly correlated (Cronbach's $\alpha = .78$). This is the result of "normal science" in social psychology in the manner described by Kuhn (1978) in social psychology.

With the so developed rating scale, 203 articles from the four journals mentioned in the theoretical section were rated. Impact factors for 2007 were: JPSP: 4.51, EJSP: 1.57, KZfSS: .61, ZfSP: .40. These impact factors are also indicators of normal science's centrality during a period in social psychology. Obviously, the ZfSP is the least influential journal which could no longer survive from the perspective of the concept of normal science. For each of the journals, all articles of the year 2007 were used for the ratings. For the German journals (KZfSS and ZfSP), additional articles from 2006 were rated to reach a comparable sample size. All articles were accessed from the internet via the university library. Overall, articles were rated by three trained raters. Before rating the sample used in this study, 12 articles from a variety of backgrounds were pre-rated and ratings were discussed to assure the rating scales' face validity. Each article was rated by two raters independently. Inter-rater reliability was high across raters ($r = .973 - r = .991$).

Results

To assess the structural differences between the journals' articles concerning the 10 research categories, all variables within each journal were correlated. The resulting correlation matrices were then correlated across journals. This is an alternative to factor analyses which avoids the problems of extraction, rotation and comparison of the similarity between the rotated factors.

The results show underlying correlation patterns reflecting structural differences and similarities between journals (see Table 1). In line with the theoretical assumptions discussed above, KZfSS and ZfSP, both published in German language and sharing the same cultural background, show the highest correlation ($r = .66$), followed by JPSP and EJSP, published in English and having the highest impact factors of the four journals, though not the same cultural background ($r = .63$). Correlations between the American JPSP and the German journals are relatively low, $r = .34$ for KZfSS and $r = .32$ for ZfSP. The correlation between the European Journal EJSP and the German KZfSS, sharing a similar cultural background but being published in different languages, was $r = .47$. However, the European EJSP and the German ZfSP, only show a correlation of $r = .37$ which is almost as low as the correlation between the American JPSP and the German journals.

Table 1: Correlation between the Correlational Matrices across Journals

| | EJSP | JPSP | KZfSS | ZfSP |
|-------|------|------|-------|------|
| EJSP | 1 | | | |
| JPSP | .63 | 1 | | |
| KZfSS | .47 | .34 | 1 | |
| ZfSP | .37 | .32 | .66 | 1 |

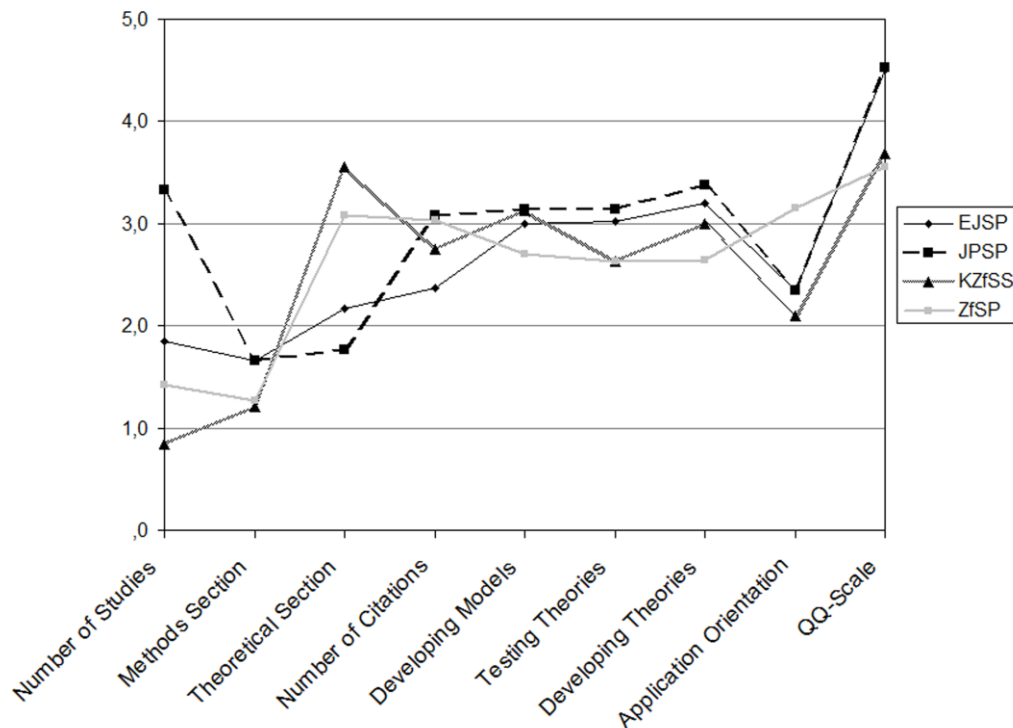
To further clarify the different research patterns, differences of the mean ratings represented by the four journals, were analyzed conducting analyses of variance for the 10 categories of social psychological research. One-way ANOVAS showed that the four journals differed significantly in the following aspects: Average number of studies per article ($N = 203$, $df = 3$, $F = 46.5$, $p <$

.001), relative length of theoretical section ($N = 203$, $df = 3$, $F = 23.29$, $p < .001$), relative length of methodological section ($N = 203$, $df = 3$, $F = 4.74$, $p < .01$), number of citations ($N = 203$, $df = 3$, $F = 3.28$, $p = .02$), testing theories ($N = 203$, $df = 3$, $F = 4.57$, $p < .01$) development of theories ($N = 203$, $df = 3$, $F = 5.76$, $p = .001$), practical orientation ($N = 203$, $df = 3$, $F = 6.1$, $p = .001$) and qualitative vs. quantitative orientation of studies ($N = 203$, $df = 3$, $F = 30.37$, $p < .001$). To further assess how much the journals differed from each other in each aspect, individual t-tests were performed for all variables. They revealed the following results:

Number of Studies

On average, articles in JPSP contained the highest number of studies per article. JPSP ($M = 3.33$) articles comprised significantly more studies per article than did EJSP ($M = 1.85$), which contained the second highest number of studies per article ($t = 7.46$, $p < .001$). ZfSP, in third place ($M = 1.42$), differed significantly from EJSP ($t = -2.04$, $p < .05$). KZfSS ($M = .84$) contained the least number of studies per article, significantly less than ZfSP ($t = -2.72$, $p = .01$). In congruence with the theoretical assumptions laid out in the theoretical section, it can be concluded that JPSP emphasises an empirical approach to research, publishing articles that contain an average of 3 studies per article. In comparison, KZfSS takes a more theoretical position, not even quite reaching an average of one study per article, indicating some articles published there are purely theoretical. EJSP and ZfSP lie in between the other two journals (see Fig. 1).

Figure 1: Profiles of all Journals



Theory Section

JPSP differs from the other journals in that its articles have the shortest theoretical section relative to article length. In second place follows EJSP ($M_{JPSP} = .18$, $M_{EJSP} = .22$, $t = -3.85$, $p < .001$). ZfSP has a mean theoretical section of $M_{ZfSP} = .31$ and differs significantly from the EJSP ($t = 2.50$, $p = .02$). KZfSS has a mean theoretical section of $M_{KZfSS} = .35$ which is the longest theoretical section compared with all other journals, although the difference between KZfSS and the mean for ZfSP did not reach significance. Again, JPSP and KZfSS are the two journals that differ the most from each other in respect to their theoretical elaboration of research findings, with KZfSS emphasising theoretical orientation ($t = -5.49$, $p < .001$).

Developing and testing theories

Results obtained in this category show that ZfSP focuses significantly less on theory development than JPSP ($t = -3.19$, $p < .01$) and EJSP ($t = -2.41$, $p = .02$). Also, KZfSS shows significantly less focus on theory development than JPSP ($t = 2.08$, $p < .05$). Furthermore, JPSP emphasizes testing of existing

theories significantly more than KZfSS ($t = 2.38, p < .05$) and ZfSP ($t = 2.60, p < .05$). Neither the differences between JPSP and EJSP nor between KZfSS and ZfSP reached significance.

Methods section

The journals published in English show a significant difference in length of their methods sections compared to the German journals in that their methods sections are significantly longer. For example, EJSP has a significantly longer methods section than KZfSS ($t = 2.33, p < .05$) and ZfSP ($t = 2.23, p < .05$). Neither JPSP and EJSP nor KZfSS and ZfSP differ significantly from each other in length of methods section.

Application

ZfSP was the only journal that had a significantly greater orientation towards application than all other journals (the closest was JPSP; $t = 3.23, p < .01$).

QQ scale

The difference between the German journals and the journals in English language became most apparent in this category. On a scale from 1-5, the mean quantitative orientation of research articles was: $M_{JPSP} = 4.53$, $M_{EJSP} = 4.51$, $M_{KZfSS} = 3.68$, $M_{ZfSP} = 3.55$. Neither the English journals JPSP and EJSP nor the German journals KZfSS and ZfSP differed significantly from each other. However, the English journals differed significantly from the German journals, with the English journals scoring higher in the quantitative direction (EJSP vs. KZfSS: $t = 4.29, p < .001$, EJSP vs. ZfSP: $t = 5.35, p < .001$, JPSP vs. KZfSS: $t = 4.46, p < .001$, JPSP vs. ZfSP: $t = 5.54, p < .001$).

Sample type

In a next step the sample types typically studied in the articles were analyzed per journal. While JPSP and EJSP typically published studies using student samples ($P_{JPSP} = 88\%$, $P_{EJSP} = 93\%$), KZfSS published mainly studies

investigating non-student samples (46%) or representative samples of the German population (32%). Of the studies published in ZfSP, 38% were student samples, 32% were nonstudent samples. A χ^2 test showed a significantly uneven distribution of sample types across journals ($\chi^2 = 192.71$, $df = 6$, $p < .001$). Thus it can be concluded that the journals oriented towards Anglo-American research standards publish articles with a quantitative research approach more so than the German journals do, and they also use significantly more student samples than do the German journals (see Arnett, 2008).

Table 2: Sample Types of the Four Journals

| Sample type: | EJSP | JPSP | KZfSS | ZfSP |
|----------------|------|------|-------|------|
| Student | 112 | 225 | 1 | 14 |
| Population | 4 | 7 | 13 | 12 |
| Representative | 3 | 8 | 9 | 2 |
| Total | 121 | 257 | 28 | 37 |

To further investigate what defines the “typical” kind of research published in JPSP, EJSP, KZfSS or ZfSP, the research patterns of the prototypical articles of each journal were assessed. For the purpose of filtering out articles which could be considered typical of the respective journals, the dataset for each journal was transposed so that each article now formed a variable. Then a factor analysis was conducted for each journal individually. All articles that loaded $a \geq .70$ on the general factor were defined as prototypical of a journal.

The factor analysis for EJSP showed a clear one-factor solution with 72% of all cases loading ($a \geq .70$) on the first factor. The factor analysis for JPSP also revealed a one-factor solution with 58% of all cases loading ($a \geq .70$) on the first factor, and no cases loading $a \geq .70$ on the second factor. The factor analysis for KZfSS showed that 41% of all articles loaded ($a \geq .70$) on the first factor and 34% on the second. Ultimately, a two-factor solution for the KZfSS was chosen. The factor analysis for ZfSP showed that 53% of all articles fulfilled the criterion for the first factor, 23% for the second. Although this result is not as clear as the others, the screeplot supports a one-factor solution. For all further

analyses only those articles that were representative or prototypical of the respective journal were used. Following the two-factor solution for the KZfSS, this journal was divided into two prototypes “KZfSS1” and “KZfSS2” for further analyses.

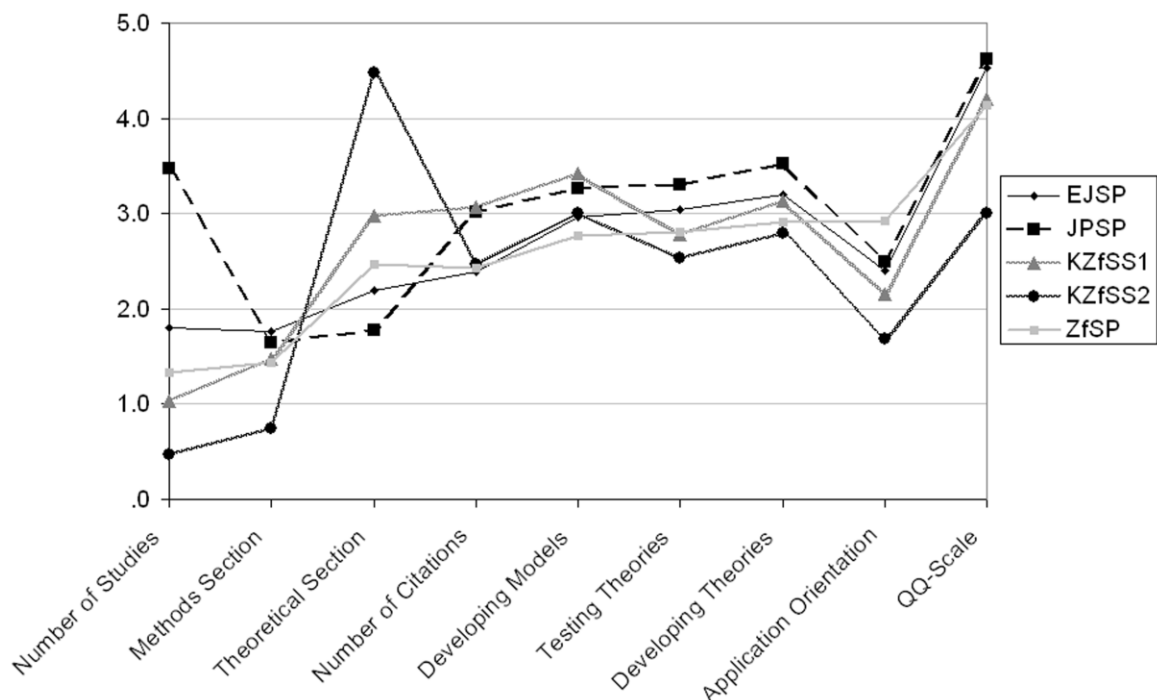
Correlations between the correlation matrices of the journal prototypes revealed patterns of structural similarities and differences (see above). Generally, the prototypes showed high typicality of the journal they represented (EJSP: $r = .87$, JPSP: $r = .75$, KZfSS2: $r = .86$) except for the KZfSS1 and ZfSP prototypes. The correlation between the ZfSP prototype and ZfSP journal was $r = .45$, the correlation between the KZfSS1 prototype and the whole KZfSS journal was $r = .17$. Compared to this result, correlations between the KZfSS1 prototype and JPSP were much higher ($r = .40$) and so were correlations between the ZfSP prototype and JPSP ($r = .55$). The KZfSS2 prototype showed a moderate correlation with ZfSP ($r = .47$). The ZfSP prototype showed moderate correlations with all other journals ($r = .32 - r = .55$).

All prototypes showed similarly high correlations with the JPSP prototype (EJSP: $r = .45$, KZfSS1: $r = .39$, ZfSP: $r = .51$) except for the KZfSS2 prototype ($r = .18$). The EJSP prototype was structurally most similar to the JPSP prototype ($r = .45$), correlations with all other prototypes were below $r = .20$. The lowest correlation was found between the two different prototypes of KZfSS ($r = .09$). Interestingly, it seems that approximately 40% of all articles in the German KZfSS are structurally similar to the English JPSP, and that approximately 30% of the articles in the German KZfSS represent a completely different research matrix that does not show substantial structural similarity with any of the other prototypes. Its highest correlation was found with the ZfSP prototype ($r = .21$). The ZfSP prototype showed a substantial similarity to the JPSP prototype ($r = .51$) this correlation was even higher than the correlation of the ZfSP prototype with the ZfSP journal itself ($r = .45$). Thus, it seems that the EJSP prototype, the ZfSP prototype and the KZfSS1 prototype are structurally close to the JPSP prototype. These results were expected for EJSP but not for ZfSP. However, the ZfSP prototype showing moderate structural similarity to all journals even to the ZfSP itself, could be interpreted as an indicator of inhomogeneity within the

journal. In contrast to ZfSP, KZfSS is represented by two prototypes, of which the KZfSS2 prototype shows a much higher typicality of the KZfSS journal and also seems to represent a completely individual research matrix.

In order to establish profiles that reflected the “typical” JPSP, EJSP, KZfSS1, KZfSS2 and ZfSP (Figure 2), one-way ANOVAs for all important variables were run. ANOVAs showed differences between the journal prototypes in the following aspects: Number of studies per article ($N = 131$, $df = 4$, $F = 42.73$, $p < .001$, $d = 2.33$), relative length of theoretical section ($N = 131$, $df = 4$, $F = 18.38$, $p < .001$, $d = 1.53$), relative length of methodological section ($N = 131$, $df = 4$, $F = 4.96$, $p = .001$, $d = 0.79$), development of theories ($N = 131$, $df = 4$, $F = 2.93$, $p < .05$, $d = 0.61$), testing theories ($N = 131$, $df = 4$, $F = 2.71$, $p < .05$, $d = 0.59$), application orientation ($N = 131$, $df = 4$, $F = 2.58$, $p < .05$, $d = 0.57$) and qualitative vs. quantitative orientation of studies ($N = 131$, $df = 4$, $F = 27.31$, $p < .001$, $d = 1.86$).

Figure 2: Profiles of all Prototypes



Overall, the profile of the different journals that was created from the prototypical articles (see figure 2) looks very similar to the profile of these

journals of the non-prototypical articles (see figure 1). However, there were a few interesting changes concerning the two KZfSS prototypes. KZfSS2 had the lowest mean number of studies per article ($M = .47$) and it significantly differed from KZfSS1 ($M = 1.03$, $t = -3.48$, $p < .01$), which had the second lowest mean number of studies per article of all journals. KZfSS2 also had the longest mean relative theoretical section ($M = .45$), however the difference between it and KZfSS1 did not reach significance ($M = .30$, $t = -1.89$, $p = .09$). The KZfSS2 showed significantly more qualitatively oriented articles than did the KZfSS1 ($t = -2.86$, $p < .05$).

Discussion

The questions addressed in this study were concerned with what defines the research matrix of the typical Anglo-American social psychology journal versus the typical German social psychology journal, as well as what differentiates the successful German and English journals from the unsuccessful ZfSP. Furthermore, it was assessed whether the ZfSP matrix still reflects the values that were originally intended by its founders.

General differences in the profiles of the individual journals show that the American JPSP takes a very empirical approach towards research. Articles in the JPSP contain an average of three studies per article mainly investigating student samples. The theory section is rather short and the overall approach focuses on quantitative research. This could be interpreted as a concentration on quantitative data in social psychological research.

The KZfSS seems to reflect two different approaches or research matrices. One is comparable to the “American” research pattern shown by the JPSP. Approximately 40% of the articles published in KZfSS reflect a quantitative research approach with little theoretical integration. Yet about 30% of the articles typical of KZfSS are represented by the second prototype, and they show a strong theoretical orientation and a more qualitative research approach. The fact that the mean number of studies per article does not even reach $M = 1$ indicates that some articles are purely theoretical. Theoretical integration is generally pronounced in these articles more than in all other journals. This shows that KZfSS is influenced by the sociological research

matrix more than the other journals studied. The successful integration of psychological and sociological research matrices could be the reason why KZfSS is still successful in comparison with ZfSP. Furthermore, the KZfSS investigates mainly (~78%) non-student samples or representative samples, instead of focusing mainly on student samples, which sets it apart from the journals published in English, as well as the ZfSP.

The article patterns in ZfSP still reflect the ideas this journal was originally based on. The ZfSP is significantly more application-oriented than all other journals. However, theoretical elaboration does not reach the KZfSS standard. All in all, what sets ZfSP apart from the other journals is a lack of homogeneity which became apparent in the factor analysis, as well as a lack of individuality reflected in the prototypes-profile. These may be possible reasons for its decline.

Lastly, EJSP seems to emphasise an American approach despite its European background. This journal does not differ in many aspects from JPSP and can also be judged as data-driven. Publishing in English seems to have a greater influence on the type of articles published than the cultural background of the journal. Generally, European-based research in social psychology seems to lack the diversity we expected. Currently, the conformity process appears to have eliminated minority influences. In the introduction of an EJSP's special issue more than 20 years ago, the editors hoped for a development of "two voices" to resolve what has been called the "crisis of social psychology" (Rijsman & Stroebe, 1989). There could be a competition between the American and the European social psychology with different disciplinary matrices. After one generation, which lasts about 20 years, the competition has a winner (JPSP) and a loser (ZfSP). Perhaps we need a more balanced social psychology with different voices (Krueger & Funder, 2003) and not an elimination of the minority. The general effects of such a research matrix are not so overwhelming with an average effect size of $r = .21$ over a wide range of studies in social psychology in the last hundred years (Richard, Bond & Stokes-Zoota, 2003).

It can be concluded that there is still a need for theoretical integration and especially for application orientation in social psychological research. However, the results for JPSP and EJSP suggest that purely quantitative studies with samples of undergraduate psychology students will more likely lead to success on part of the researcher. In order to be successful, the new generation of researchers will need to produce a large number of articles that are based on quantitative designs (Wintre, North & Sugar, 2001). Yet without theoretical integration, there will be a large amount of single effects which cannot be practically implemented and thus have little meaning when it comes to the application of social psychological findings - just that was the content of the very last article in the ZfSP (Scholl, 2007). If researchers in social psychology are still striving to apply acquired knowledge to “real-world problems”, there will be a need to generate the possibility for researchers to work on larger theories to integrate research results in a sensible way. The results for KZfSS suggest that at least in Germany there is still an interest in articles that make a connection between the fields of sociology and psychology. This represents to some extent the two voices of social psychology found in the American and European tradition discussed 20 years ago (Rijsman & Stroebe, 1989), but based on the crisis discussion in the beginning ‘70s when the ZfSP was founded in 1970. However, this discussion of a crisis is much older and goes at least back to Bühler (1927) and Lewin (1927). These similarities of the discussions have been pronounced by Miriam Lewin (1977), Kurt Lewin’s daughter. The elimination of the ZfSP could be a Pyrrhic victory of normal science in social psychology. Strategic paradigm enrichment with different voices might be a better future than the conformity to specific disciplinary matrix patterns (Witte, 1996). The extinction out of a single journal is only a symptom of such a conformity process in normal science (Kuhn, 1978).

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