

Critical quantitative and qualitative analysis of a leading journal in the human rights field: the *Human rights quarterly* in the period 2006-2010.

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Introduction.

After the Second World War, attention to human rights was increasing in a lot of countries as well as in international organisations, which culminated in the adoption by the General Assembly of the United Nations (UN) of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (in 1948), the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (in 1966) and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (in 1966).¹ This “international bill of human rights” (and sometimes part of it) is ratified by a large number of countries around the world. Hence, a human rights discourse developed after the Second World War, in which ‘a number of implicit and explicit principles, norms, rules and decision-making procedures’ were formulated ‘that contributed to the convergence of expectations of actors’ engaged in human rights issues.² According to Krasner’s definition of regime, an international human rights regime thus increasingly took shape.

Concomitant to this development was the establishment of scholarly journals that deal with human rights issues. In these journals, the human rights discourse was and still is further developed, thereby socially constructing the field of human rights. Given the importance of human rights for humans worldwide, it is important to analyse how the discourse and field of human rights is developed in major scholarly human rights journals that publish research on human rights. An important human rights journal is the *Human rights quarterly (HRQ)*. The institute that edits this journal even claims that the *HRQ* is ‘recognised as the leading academic journal in the human rights field’.³ Therefore, in this paper, 20 issues of the *HRQ* will be analysed in a quantitative as well as qualitative manner. These issues cover the volumes 28 to 32, that is the years 2006 to 2010, of this journal. In this analysis, first some general information about the *HRQ* will be given.

¹ *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, <http://www.un.org/en/documents/udhr/index.shtml>. Accessed on the 7th of April 2011.

The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, http://treaties.un.org/pages/ViewDetails.aspx?src=TREATY&mtmsg_no=IV-4&chapter=4&lang=en. Accessed on the 7th of April 2011.

The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, http://treaties.un.org/pages/ViewDetails.aspx?src=TREATY&mtmsg_no=IV-3&chapter=4&lang=en. Accessed on the 7th of April 2011.

² P.M.E. Volten, A.G. Harryvan and J. van der Harst, ‘Inleiding’, in: ed., A.G. Harryvan, J. van der Harst en P.M.E. Volten, *Internationale organisatie. Samenwerking en regimevorming in de internationale betrekkingen* (Assen, 2004) 5.

³ *Urban Morgan Institute for Human Rights, promoting human rights around the globe*, <http://www.law.uc.edu/institutes-centers/urban-morgan-institute>. Accessed on the 7th of April 2011.

Secondly, the editorial board and the editorial process will be analysed. Furthermore, the journal's reputation, its structure and the background of the authors will be analysed in a rather quantitative way. However, a qualitative assessment of the content of the journal will follow in order to, finally, give some concluding remarks about the *HRQ* and its influence on the human rights discourse and field.

1. General information on the journal.

The *HRQ* claims to be 'a comparative and international journal of the social sciences, humanities and law'.⁴ It aims to offer 'scholars in the fields of law, philosophy, and the social sciences an interdisciplinary forum in which to present comparative and international research on public policy within the scope of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.'⁵ It thus focuses on research on public policy with regard to human rights and its public is hence made up of mainly social science scholars and public policy makers who are engaged in researching or developing/implementing human rights policies. The asserted interdisciplinary focus of the journal fits the field of human rights well, as this field is by its very nature interdisciplinary; human rights of course have to do with international law, but also with politics, (the course of) history, philosophy/ethics, anthropology and other social sciences. Also, the asserted comparative and international outlook of the journal are warranted, given that human rights are – at least according to the Universal Declaration on Human Rights – universal, but in practice they nevertheless are implemented to very different degrees worldwide, which also justifies the need for a forum to discuss public policy within the scope of the Universal Declaration on Human Rights. The claims and aims, which never changed over the years, of the journal are hence promising.⁶

The *HRQ* was first published in January 1979 (and was called *Universal human rights* at that time). Since January 1979, one issue of the journal has been published every season. The size of the *HRQ* has increased over the years. The first issues of the journal consisted of around 100 pages per issue. However, the number of pages steadily

⁴ *HRQ*, page 1 of every volume.

⁵ Ibidem.

⁶ 'From the editor', *Universal human rights*, vol. 1, issue 1 (1979) 1-2.

increased, so that an issue now consists of 250 to 300 pages.⁷ This increase in size might reflect the development that, during the last decennia, most of the world's important powers increasingly explicitly expressed their general support of human rights, but that, concomitant to this support, debates about how to understand and implement human rights became more and more fierce, hence the need to reflect on human rights issues in a more extensive scholarly journal. The subscription rates for the *HRQ* are currently \$190,- for institutions, \$50,- for individuals and \$45,- for students per year. This pricing seems reasonable, given the large size of the journal, and is moreover low when compared to other important human rights journals, which are mostly more expensive (e.g. the *International journal of human rights*, the *Journal of human rights* and the *Human rights law review*).⁸ According to Carla Hubbard from the Johns Hopkins University Press, 'there are approximately 1200 subscribers' to the journal, of which 'a little over 600' are from the United States of America (USA) and 'the rest are foreign'.⁹ It is moreover claimed that the audience of the journal is 'represented on every part of the globe', but it seems difficult to check this claim.¹⁰

The journal has always been published by the Johns Hopkins University Press, which claims to be 'America's oldest university press' and 'a leader and innovator in scholarly publishing since 1878'.¹¹ Although the journal is published by the press of the Johns Hopkins University, it is currently also linked to another American university, namely the

⁷ *Journal record of the HRQ*, <http://pao.chadwyck.co.uk/journals/displayItemFromId.do?QueryType=journals&QueryIndex=browse&BackTo=FindJournals&ItemID=e089&journalID=e089#listItem67>. Accessed on the 7th of April 2011.

⁸ The *Harvard human rights journal* is, however, cheaper than the *HRQ*.

HRQ, current pricing, http://www.press.jhu.edu/journals/human_rights_quarterly/pricing.html. Accessed on the 7th of April 2011.

Journal of human rights, current pricing, <http://www.tandf.co.uk/journals/journal.asp?issn=1475-4835&linktype=rates>. Accessed on the 13th of May 2011.

International journal of human rights, current pricing, <http://www.tandf.co.uk/journals/journal.asp?issn=1364-2987&linktype=rates>. Accessed on the 13th of May 2011.

Human rights law review, current pricing,

http://www.oxfordjournals.org/our_journals/hrlr/access_purchase/price_list.html. Accessed on the 13th of May 2011.

Harvard human rights journal, current pricing, <http://www.law.harvard.edu/current/orgs/journals/journal-rates.html>. Accessed on the 13th of May 2011.

⁹ Personal e-mail contact with Carla Hubbard from the Journals Customer Service Dept of the Johns Hopkins University Press on the 14th of March 2011.

¹⁰ *Urban Morgan Institute for Human Rights, the HRQ*, <http://www.law.uc.edu/institutes-centers/urban-morgan-institute/human-rights-quarterly>. Accessed on the 7th of April 2011.

¹¹ *Johns Hopkins University Press*, <http://www.press.jhu.edu/>. Accessed on the 7th of April 2011.

University of Cincinnati. The public or state college of law of this university hosts the Urban Morgan Institute for Human Rights. This institute currently edits the *HRQ*.¹² The institute was established in 1979 and is a non-governmental law school program in international human rights.¹³ Although this institute was established in the year in which the first issue of the journal was published, it did not edit the *HRQ* from the beginning onwards. Instead, it was the division of behavioural and social sciences of the University of Maryland in the USA that hosted and edited the journal in the first two years of its existence. The journal was then called *Universal human rights*. However, this name was changed to *HRQ* as of the first issue of 1981.¹⁴ Moreover, in 1982, the journal moved to the Urban Morgan Institute for Human Rights. It is difficult to find out what the reasons were for this move to another university and why the name of the journal was changed. Nevertheless, the changes did not imply any large substantive alterations in the journal itself; its aims and structure remained the same. Still, one might argue that because the word ‘universal’ was removed from the title, the journal is now more explicitly open to debating the question whether human rights are universal. Hence, as the journal is no longer called ‘*universal human rights*’, it does no longer take an explicit stand in the universalism debate. Given that stands in a debate are always (implicitly) based on an ideology, the current title of the journal thus seems to warrant the claim that the ‘*HRQ* is tied to no particular ideology’.¹⁵ However, after having provided this general information on the journal, we will now delve deeper into the (making of) the content of the journal to see if this claim is indeed warranted.

2. *The editorial board and editorial process of the HRQ.*

Since 1982, i.e. the year in which the journal moved to the Urban Morgan Institute of Human Rights, the editor-in-chief of the *HRQ* has been the American Bert Lockwood.

¹² *Urban Morgan Institute for Human Rights, the HRQ*, <http://www.law.uc.edu/institutes-centers/urban-morgan-institute/human-rights-quarterly>. Accessed on the 7th of April 2011.

Urban Morgan Institute for Human Rights, promoting human rights around the globe, <http://www.law.uc.edu/institutes-centers/urban-morgan-institute>. Accessed on the 7th of April 2011.

¹³ *Ibidem*.

¹⁴ ‘From the editor’, *Universal human rights*, vol. 1, issue 1 (1979) 1-2.

Journal record of the HRQ, <http://pao.chadwyck.co.uk/journals/displayItemFromId.do?QueryType=journals&QueryIndex=browse&BackTo=FindJournals&ItemID=e089&journalID=e089#listItem67>. Accessed on the 7th of April 2011.

¹⁵ *HRQ*, page 1 of every volume.

Since 1980, Lockwood has also been a distinguished service professor of law at the college of law of the University of Cincinnati as well as the chair of the Urban Morgan Institute for Human Rights.¹⁶ He thus has important positions, both with regard to the journal as well as to the hosting institute of the journal. Next to the editor-in-chief, the staff of the *HRQ* exists of 1) a program manager, 2) a managing editor, 3) a senior articles editor with portfolio, 4) an assignments editor, 5) two book review editors, 6) 10 to 12 senior article reviewers, 7) 20 to 25 articles editors and 8) around 50 cite checkers. Positions 1 to 4 are mostly occupied by alumni or staff of the college of law of the University of Cincinnati and also regularly by people who first served in the positions 5 to 8. The positions 5 to 8 are all occupied by current students from the college of law of the University of Cincinnati. These people are hence mostly younger than the people that occupy the positions 1 to 4.¹⁷ Given that the amount of the positions 5 to 8 clearly outnumbers the amount of the positions 1 to 4, one can argue that the *HRQ* is edited by college of law students. The journal is indeed described as a ‘student journal’ on the website of the Urban Morgan Institute.¹⁸

On this website, it is also explained that first year students of the college of law can become cite checkers ‘to ensure the accuracy of the sources cited in the proposed articles’.¹⁹ These cite checkers can ‘apply to serve in (article/review red.) editorial positions during their second and third years’.²⁰ According to Maribeth Mincey, one of the current book review editors of the journal, these editorial positions in practice imply that the students who serve in these positions ‘are only responsible for text editing and occasionally substantive editing in terms [of] notifying the author if there are gaps or

¹⁶ *CV of Bert B. Lockwood*, <http://www.law.uc.edu/sites/default/files/lockwood.pdf>. Accessed on the 7th of April 2011.

¹⁷ *HRQ editorial staff*, <http://www.law.uc.edu/institutes-centers/urban-morgan-institute/human-rights-quarterly-editorial-staff>. Accessed on the 7th of April 2011.
HRQ, promoting human rights around the globe, <http://www.law.uc.edu/institutes-centers/urban-morgan-institute>. Accessed on the 7th of April 2011.
Students, UC college of law, HRQ, <http://www.law.uc.edu/current-students/student-orgs/human-rights-quarterly>. Accessed on the 7th of April 2011.

Lists of the people in the board published in the issues of the journal from 2006 to 2010, in combination with googling the names of these people to get information about their positions and backgrounds.

¹⁸ *UC college of law, fast facts*, <http://www.law.uc.edu/about-us/fast-facts>. Accessed on the 7th of April 2011.

¹⁹ *HRQ editorial staff*, <http://www.law.uc.edu/institutes-centers/urban-morgan-institute/human-rights-quarterly-editorial-staff>. Accessed on the 7th of April 2011.

²⁰ *Ibidem*.

other oddities in the articles’.²¹ Nancy Ent, the current program manager of the *HRQ*, confirms that ‘The actual editing of the articles is done by the editorial staff which (...) are full time law students’.²² Ent adds that ‘There is a separate editorial board which serves to assist the editor in chief in reviewing manuscripts submitted for consideration for publication’.²³ Hence, Mincey is right to assert that students who serve in editorial positions ‘have very little influence over the articles and book reviews chosen for publication’; they only edit articles once the decision is made to publish a manuscript.²⁴

With regard to the decision-making process concerning the publishing of manuscripts, Mincey contends that ‘Bert (Lockwood red.) chooses a variety of peer reviewers for each issue’. She thinks ‘this selection is simply based upon people who would be knowledgeable in the topics of the various articles’, but given that ‘the student editors have absolutely nothing to do with the [peer reviewing] process’, she cannot ‘be more specific about who reviews the articles’ and she ‘really couldn’t say what overall criteria [Lockwood] uses to select [the reviewers]’. Nevertheless, Lockwood thus ‘sends out articles that are submitted to various scholars in the field who review the articles at the peer level and make recommendations to Bert about whether they should be published. Bert then decides what articles and in what issues the articles will be published’.²⁵ It is not clear whether this peer reviewing is double blind, but Nancy Ent does explain that Lockwood is only able to ‘accept about one out of every ten manuscripts that are submitted’, so that the rejection rate is 90%.²⁶ Still, although the editor-in-chief Lockwood is thus responsible for choosing all articles and book and movie reviews to be published in the journal, he, according to Maribeth Mincey, mostly does consult experts from the editorial board and from the human rights field before he makes his decisions. This is confirmed by Nancy Ent, who writes about the peer reviewing process that ‘Either the editor-in-chief decides (about whether or not to publish a manuscript, red.) or manuscripts are submitted to outside reviewers for their evaluation.

²¹ Personal e-mail contact with Maribeth Mincey (book review editor of the *HRQ*) on the 5th of April 2011.

²² Personal e-mail contact with Nancy Ent (program manager of the *HRQ*) on the 12th of April 2011.

²³ *Ibidem*.

²⁴ Personal e-mail contact with Maribeth Mincey (book review editor of the *HRQ*) on the 5th of April 2011.

²⁵ *Ibidem*.

²⁶ Personal e-mail contact with Nancy Ent (program manager of the *HRQ*) on the 12th of April 2011.

The ultimate decisions is made by the editor in chief.²⁷ Although one might argue that the peer review and editorial processes of the *HRQ* represent the common practice regarding these processes of most boards of scholarly journals, it is striking in the case of the *HRQ* that the role of the students in these processes is very limited on a substantive level, whereas the journal claims to be a student journal. It is hence to be questioned whether the *HRQ* is really a students' journal; it seems to be Bert Lockwood's journal. Moreover, given that Lockwood already for 29 years makes the final decisions about the content of the journal, it might be time for either a stroke of fresh editorial air or to allow for a more substantive role for the students in the editorial staff, in order to fulfill the claim that the journal is a students' journal.

With regard to the background of the editors, one can conclude that the law discipline is overrepresented, given that both Lockwood, as well as all students in the board, are engaged in law studies. This commonness in the background of the editors might imply a restraint on the asserted interdisciplinary outlook of the journal. However, Nancy Ent asserts that the 'separate editorial board which serves to assist the editor in chief in reviewing manuscripts (...) has no (...) discipline limitations', so that these people might compensate a bit for the overrepresentation of the law discipline in the board of the *HRQ*.²⁸ Regarding the gender representation in the board, one can conclude that at least the last five years – and to the extent that one can derive the sex from the first name of the persons in the board –, males and females seem to be rather equally represented in the board. Furthermore, one can tell by looking at the names of the people in the board that the large majority of them are American or at least Western. This is confirmed by Mincey, who argues that 'most students are from the US[A]', but adds that 'many of us have different ethnic backgrounds and quite a few have parents that are recent immigrants'.²⁹ Moreover, Ent contents that the 'separate editorial board which serves to assist the editor in chief in reviewing manuscripts (...) has no geographic (...) limitations'.³⁰

²⁷ Personal e-mail contact with Nancy Ent (program manager of the *HRQ*) on the 12th of April 2011.

²⁸ *Ibidem*.

²⁹ Personal e-mail contact with Maribeth Mincey (book review editor of the *HRQ*) on the 5th of April 2011.

³⁰ Personal e-mail contact with Nancy Ent (program manager of the *HRQ*) on the 12th of April 2011.

Nonetheless, one might argue that the background of the students in the board and also the general culture at the college of law (which is difficult to grasp from the websites and from my contact with Maribeth Mincey and Nancy Ent) at the University of Cincinnati do not matter that much to the content of the *HRQ*. This is because given that the students in the editorial board of the journal have very little influence on the content of the *HRQ*, it is very plausible, as Mincey also asserts, that ‘the culture at the law school plays almost no role in what articles [are] chosen [for the journal] other than that the Urban Morgan Center emphasises human rights’.³¹ One might add here that given Lockwood’s power to make the final decisions about the content of the journal, it is very likely that the background and ideology of Lockwood do influence the journal. One can derive from Lockwood’s impressive CV that he is a very erudite scholar who knows a lot about different aspects of international (human rights) law. However, one cannot derive from the titles of his work listed in his CV what his (political) ideology is, what his stand is in important human rights debates or what he believes to be important (human rights) issues, which in all likelihood influences his decision-making regarding the content of the journal.³² It is hence almost impossible to investigate in the context of this paper *how* Lockwood’s ideology and ideas influence the *HRQ*, but one can conclude that there is a rather big chance that his ideology *does* influence the journal. Therefore, one can conclude from this section about the editorial process of the *HRQ* that the claim that the ‘*HRQ* is tied to no particular ideology’ is unwarranted, as this journal is closely tied to (the ideology and the final decisions of) one person, namely the editor-in-chief Lockwood.³³

3. *The reputation of the HRQ.*

It is also claimed that the *HRQ* is ‘recognised as the leading academic journal in the human rights field’.³⁴ Some other well-known journals that are published in the human rights field are the *Journal of human rights*, the *International journal of human rights*, the

³¹ Personal e-mail contact with Maribeth Mincey (book review editor of the *HRQ*) on the 5th of April 2011.

³² *CV of Bert B. Lockwood*, <http://www.law.uc.edu/sites/default/files/lockwood.pdf>. Accessed on the 8th of April 2011.

³³ *HRQ*, page 1 of every volume.

³⁴ *Urban Morgan Institute for Human Rights, promoting human rights around the globe*, <http://www.law.uc.edu/institutes-centers/urban-morgan-institute>. Accessed on the 8th of April 2011.

Harvard human rights journal, the *Human rights law review*, the *Journal of human rights practice*, the *Netherlands quarterly of human rights*, the *Yale human rights & development journal*, the *Muslim world journal of human rights*, the *African human rights journal*, the *South African journal on human rights* and the *Asia-Pacific on human rights and the law*.³⁵ In order to assess whether the *HRQ* is the leading academic journal in the human rights field, it is useful to compare the impact factors, which are indicators of the importance that is assigned to a journal, of these listed human rights journals. Unfortunately, however, no impact factor has been calculated for most of the journals listed above. Still, it has been calculated that the impact factor of the *HRQ* was 0,779 in 2009, whereas the impact factor of the *Netherlands quarterly of human rights* was 0,250 in 2009, the impact factor of the *South African journal on human rights* was 0,692 in 2009 and the impact factor of the *Muslim world journal of human rights* was 0,036 in 2009.³⁶ Hence, the *HRQ* seems to be the leader among at least these four human rights journals. In the *Journal citation report* of the *HRQ* of 2009, one can find that this journal was cited 624 times and that 57 of these cites were self cites. This means that 9% of the 624 cites were self cites and that the impact factor without self cites was 0,485.³⁷ The *Netherlands quarterly of human rights* was cited 46 times in 2009, of which 17% (= 8 cites) were self-cites. The impact factor without self cites of this journal was 0,179.³⁸ The *South African journal on human rights* was cited 226 times in 2009, of which 57% (= 129 cites) were self cites. The impact factor without self cites of this journal was 0,103.³⁹ The

³⁵ *Center for human rights (from the University of Iowa), human rights journals/reviews*, <http://international.uiowa.edu/centers/human-rights/resources/online/journals.asp>. Accessed on the 8th of April 2011.

³⁶ *Impact factor of the HRQ*, <http://admin-apps.isiknowledge.com/JCR/JCR?RQ=RECORD&rank=1&journal=HUM+RIGHTS+QUART>. Accessed on the 8th of April 2011.

Impact factor of the of the Netherlands quarterly of human rights, <http://admin-apps.isiknowledge.com/JCR/JCR?RQ=RECORD&journal=NETH+Q+HUM+RIGHTS>. Accessed on the 8th of April 2011.

Impact factor of the of the South African journal on human rights, <http://admin-apps.isiknowledge.com/JCR/JCR?RQ=RECORD&rank=1&journal=S+AFR+J+HUM+RIGHTS>. Accessed on the 13th of May 2011.

Impact factor of the Muslim world journal of human rights, <http://www.scimagojr.com/journalsearch.php?q=4400151416&tip=sid&clean=0>. Accessed on the 8th of April 2011.

³⁷ *Impact factor of the HRQ*, <http://admin-apps.isiknowledge.com/JCR/JCR?RQ=RECORD&rank=1&journal=HUM+RIGHTS+QUART>. Accessed on the 8th of April 2011.

³⁸ *Impact factor of the of the Netherlands quarterly of human rights*, <http://admin-apps.isiknowledge.com/JCR/JCR?RQ=RECORD&journal=NETH+Q+HUM+RIGHTS>. Accessed on the 8th of April 2011.

³⁹ *Impact factor of the of the South African journal on human rights*, <http://admin-apps.isiknowledge.com/JCR/JCR?RQ=RECORD&rank=1&journal=S+AFR+J+HUM+RIGHTS>. Accessed on the 13th of May 2011.

Muslim world journal of human rights was only cited six times in 2009, but none of these cites were self cites, so that its impact factor without self cites still remains 0,036.⁴⁰ However, with or without self cites, the impact factor of the *HRQ* remains the highest of these journals.

Nevertheless, over the years 2005 to 2009, the number of cites and the impact factors of the *HRQ* changed somewhat as shown in the bar charts 1 and 2.⁴¹

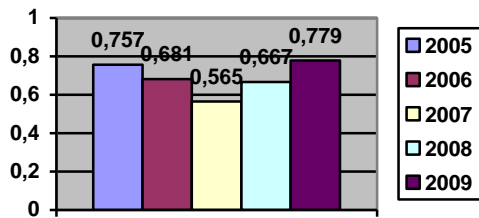


Chart 1. Impact factor of the Human rights quarterly

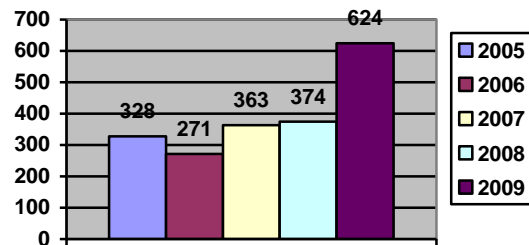


Chart 2. Total cites of the Human rights quarterly

These charts show that the *HRQs* impact is increasing again since 2007, whereas the number of cites moreover sharply increased in 2009.

Next to its impact factor and number of cites, another indicator of the reputation of the *HRQ* is its place in important rankings. The journal got an A ranking in the Australian ERA-project ranking of 2010, whereas none of the other human rights journals listed above are present in this ranking.⁴² This seems to support the claim that the *HRQ* is ‘the leading academic journal in the human rights field’.⁴³ Moreover, Nancy Ent asserts that ‘of the 424 journals online as part of Project Muse (a big online database of peer-reviewed humanities and social sciences journals, red.), *HRQ* ranks number 2 in terms of the downloads of articles per year’.⁴⁴ Nevertheless, it is striking that the journal is neither present in the top 10 ranking of international relations journals of Thompson Reuters of 2009 nor in the top 10 ranking of law journals of Thompson Reuters of 2008 (2009 is

⁴⁰ *Impact factor of the Muslim world journal of human rights*, <http://www.scimagojr.com/journalsearch.php?q=4400151416&tip=sid&clean=0>. Accessed on the 8th of April 2011.

⁴¹ *Impact factor and cites of the HRQ*, <http://admin-apps.isiknowledge.com/JCR/JCR?RQ=RECORD&rank=1&journal=HUM+RIGHTS+QUART>. Accessed on the 8th of April 2011.

⁴² *2010 finalised journals in an ANZ field of research. 1606: political science*, <http://lamp.infosys.deakin.edu.au/era/?page=jfordet10&selfor=1606>. Accessed on the 8th of April 2011.

⁴³ *Urban Morgan Institute for Human Rights, promoting human rights around the globe*, <http://www.law.uc.edu/institutes-centers/urban-morgan-institute>. Accessed on the 8th of April 2011.

⁴⁴ Personal e-mail contact with Nancy Ent (program manager of the *HRQ*) on the 12th of April 2011.

What is project MUSE, <http://muse.jhu.edu/about/muse/index.html>. Accessed on the 12th of April 2011.

unavailable).⁴⁵ Furthermore, the *HRQ* occupies only place 3294 in the ranking of journals concerned with ‘social issues’ by Red Jaspers (this ranking only covers the years 2005 and before).⁴⁶ It is, moreover, not present in the rankings by Red Jaspers of law journals nor in its ranking of international relations journals.⁴⁷ However, the other journals concerned with human rights that were listed above are not present in these rankings by Thompson Reuters and Red Jaspers either. Hence, in sum, the claim that the *HRQ* is ‘recognised as the leading academic journal in the human rights field’ is warranted.⁴⁸ This means that the content of the journal is of great importance to the development of the scholarly human rights discourse and field, as this discourse and field are to a significant extent developed in leading academic journals.

4. *The structure of the journal.*

Having elaborated on the reputation of the journal, this paper will now turn to the analysis of the journal’s structure, in order to allow the reader to get a quantitative overview of the journal’s content, before delving into its content in a qualitative manner.

As explained above, the journal is published four times a year. Each issue contains six to ten, but most of the time eight articles. Hence, per year in between 31 to 34 articles are published in the *HRQ*. Moreover, almost every issue contains one to nine book reviews, so that per year 10 to 29 book reviews are published in the journal. In addition, since 2008 movie reviews are published in the *HRQ*.⁴⁹ Hence, in the volumes 30 to 32 (2008-2010) in total 11 movie reviews are published; 2 to 6 movie reviews per issue. This is quite striking, as most scholarly journals do not publish movie reviews.

⁴⁵ *Science watch, journals ranked by impact: international relations*, http://sciencewatch.com/dr/sci/09/sep13-09_1/. Accessed on the 8th of April 2011.

Science watch, journals ranked by impact: law, http://sciencewatch.com/dr/sci/08/sep28-08_2/. Accessed on the 8th of April 2011.

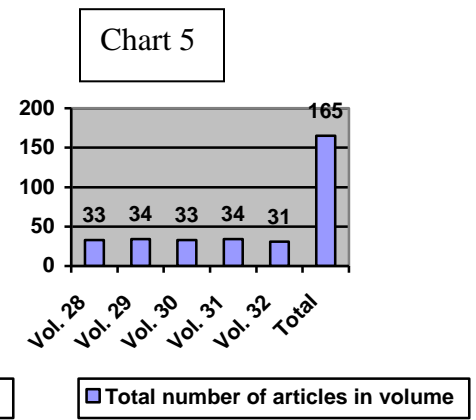
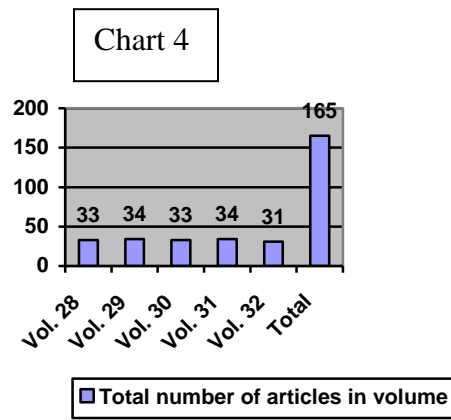
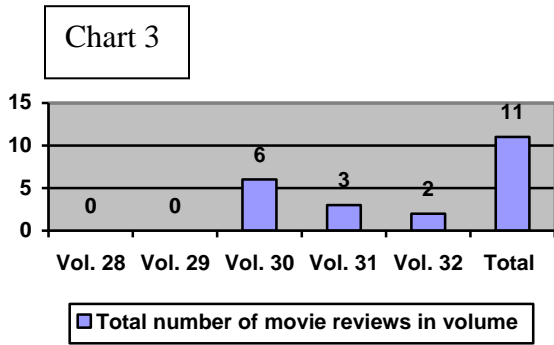
⁴⁶ *Ranking of journals concerned with social issues by Red Jasper*, <http://www.journal-ranking.com/ranking/listCommonRanking.html?selfCitationWeight=1&externalCitationWeight=1&citingStartYear=1901&journalListId=435>. Accessed on the 8th of April 2011.

⁴⁷ *Ranking of law journals by Red Jasper*, <http://www.journal-ranking.com/ranking/listCommonRanking.html?selfCitationWeight=1&externalCitationWeight=1&citingStartYear=1901&journalListId=351>. Accessed on the 8th of April 2011.

Ranking of international relations journals by Red Jasper, <http://www.journal-ranking.com/ranking/listCommonRanking.html?selfCitationWeight=1&externalCitationWeight=1&citingStartYear=1901&journalListId=350>. Accessed on the 8th of April 2011.

⁴⁸ *Urban Morgan Institute for Human Rights, promoting human rights around the globe*, <http://www.law.uc.edu/institutes-centers/urban-morgan-institute>. Accessed on the 8th of April 2011.

⁴⁹ ‘Index to volume 1-30’, *Human rights quarterly*, vol. 30, issue 4 (2008) 1208.



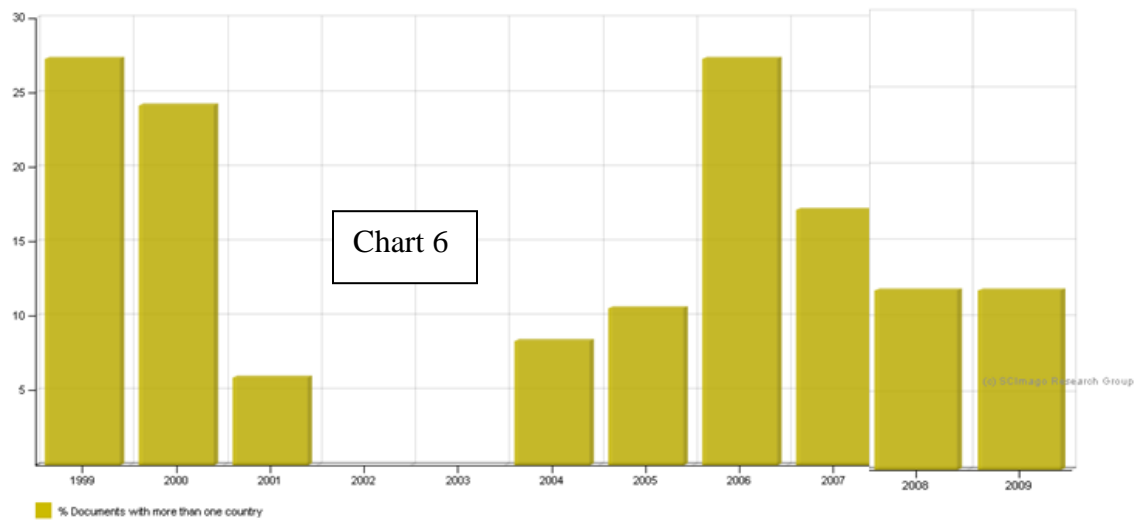
From bar charts 3 to 5, one can deduce that the ‘average *HRQ* issue’ exists of $(165:20=8,25\approx)$ 8 articles, $(99:20=4,95\approx)$ 5 book reviews and $(11:20=0,55\approx)$ 1 movie review. Moreover, as the ‘average *HRQ* issue’ consists of 250 to 300 pages and the average book or movie review occupies on average approximately five pages (as one can see in appendix 2), this means that 30 pages, i.e. around 10%, of an issue is occupied with reviews. Hence, approximately 90% of an issue is filled with articles as well as lists of the contributors (noting their current occupations and main areas of interest), ‘special texts’ (like poems, essays or interviews), obituaries of important human rights scholars and calls for papers for conferences.

With regard to the length of the articles, some guidelines are listed on the website of the publisher of the journal. These guidelines include that all manuscripts should ‘average between 5000 and 10000 words in length’.⁵⁰ In practice, this implies that most articles occupy 20 to 30 pages, so that one article most of the time occupies roughly 10% of an issue. However, some articles occupy far more than 20 to 30 pages and hence exceed the 10000 word limit. These large articles are frequently written by more than one author.⁵¹ In most cases, however, authors that co-write an article come from the same country, as one can see in bar chart 6, which was created by the *SCImago journal & country rank* research group.⁵² The chart shows how many articles (documents) have been produced by researchers from several countries in the period 1999-2009. One can

⁵⁰ *HRQ, author guidelines*, http://www.press.jhu.edu/journals/human_rights_quarterly/guidelines.html. Accessed on the 8th of April 2011.

⁵¹ The information in this section is derived from appendix 2: schematic overview of the content of the *HRQ* 2006-2010, which can be found in the attachments to my email.

⁵² *HRQ, SCImago journal & country rank*, <http://www.scimagojr.com/journalsearch.php?q=24762&tip=sid>. Accessed on the 11th of April 2011.



see that the international collaboration between authors varied quite a lot over the years, but on average has been quite low; only 13% of the articles have been produced by researchers from more than one country. Hence, the international outlook of the journal seems rather low when one considers this chart, although the journal claims to be ‘a[n] (...) international journal’.⁵³ However, with regard to this claim, it is to be noted, first, that it remains unclear whether ‘international’ refers to the topics discussed or to the (distribution of the) geographical background of the authors. Second, if ‘international’ refers to the latter, one cannot conclude something about the international outlook of the journal by looking at this chart alone, which does not tell, amongst others, where the different authors come from. Therefore, this claim will be further assessed in the next section.

5. *The background of the authors.*

As noted above, this section will (further) analyse whether the claim that the *HRQ* is ‘a[n] (...) international journal of the social sciences, humanities and law’ is justified when one looks at the (distribution of the) geographical background of the authors.⁵⁴ Moreover, the gender of the authors will be analysed. Furthermore, given that the journal intends to offer ‘scholars in the fields of law, philosophy, and the social sciences an interdisciplinary forum’, the occupations of the authors will be analysed as well.⁵⁵

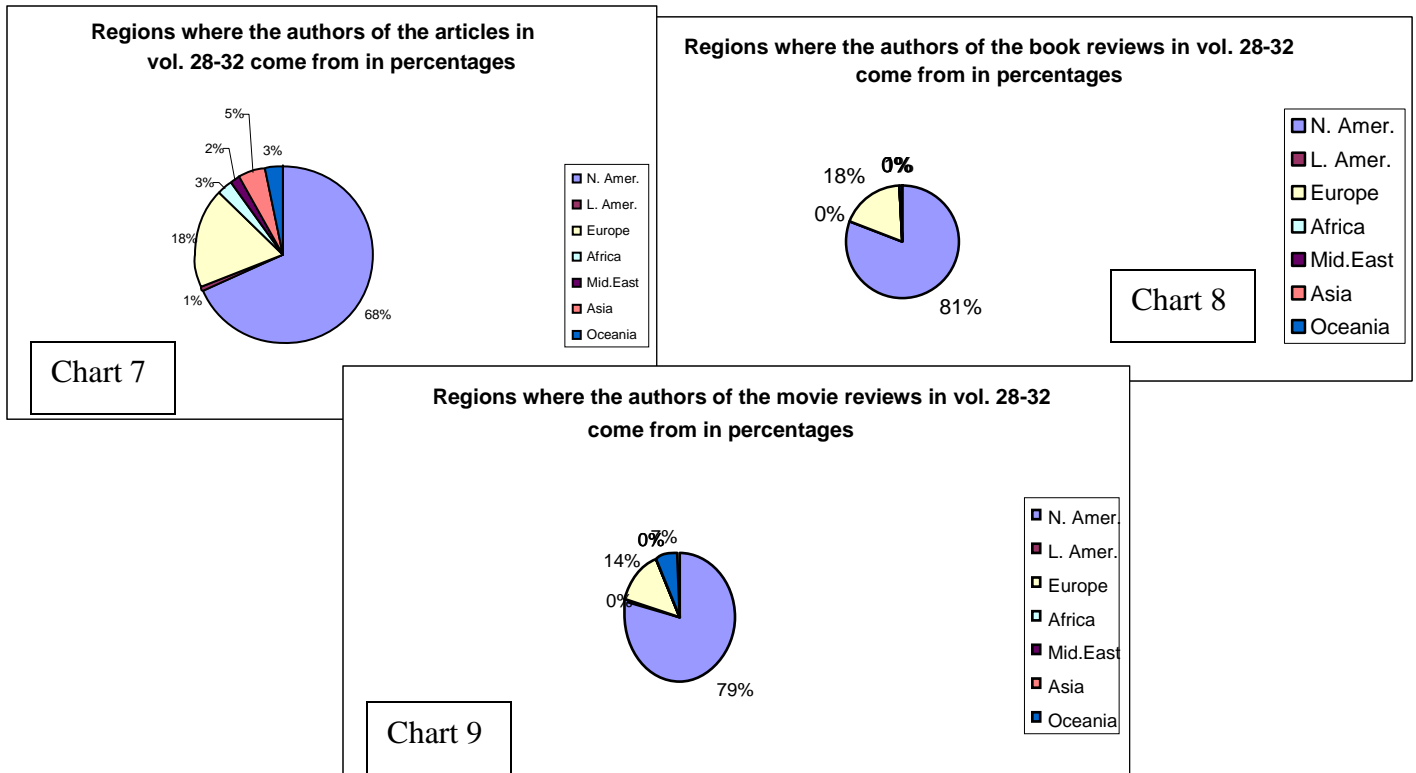
Pie charts 7 to 9 show the regions where the authors who get their documents published in the *HRQ* come from; that is, where they reside now, not what their homeland is. The regions were chosen on the basis of the region division used by the UN

⁵³ *HRQ*, page 1 of every volume.

⁵⁴ *Ibidem*.

⁵⁵ *Ibidem*.

statistics division.⁵⁶ However, contrary to the UN, I chose to distinguish between Asia and the Middle East (including Turkey), because I thought it might be interesting to see the differences between the so-called Near and Far East. As one can see in the charts, more authors come from Asia than from the Middle East. These charts also show that the claim that the *HRQ* is an ‘international journal’ is unwarranted if the claim implies that the geographical background of the authors is international.⁵⁷



The charts 7 to 9 demonstrate that in the period 2006-2010 the large majority of the authors of articles (68%) as well as of book (81%) and movie (79%) reviews comes from North America. The majority of these authors who come from North America currently occupy a position in the USA and hence reside in the USA (although their homelands might be outside the USA). A minority resides in Canada. In sum, 86% of the authors who get their articles published in the *HRQ* come from the West (Europe or North America). Therefore, although it is true that the authors of the journal ‘are represented on

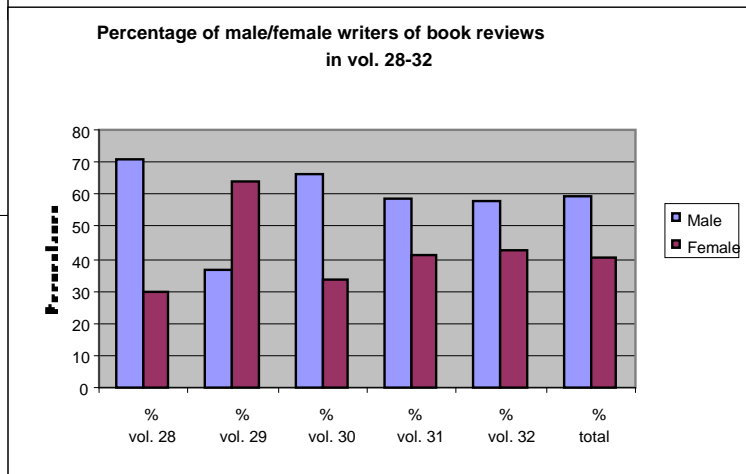
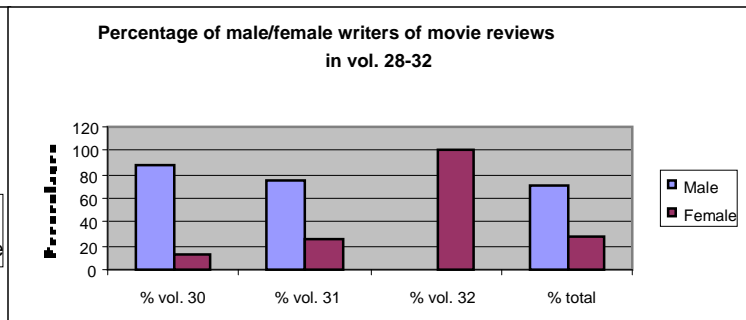
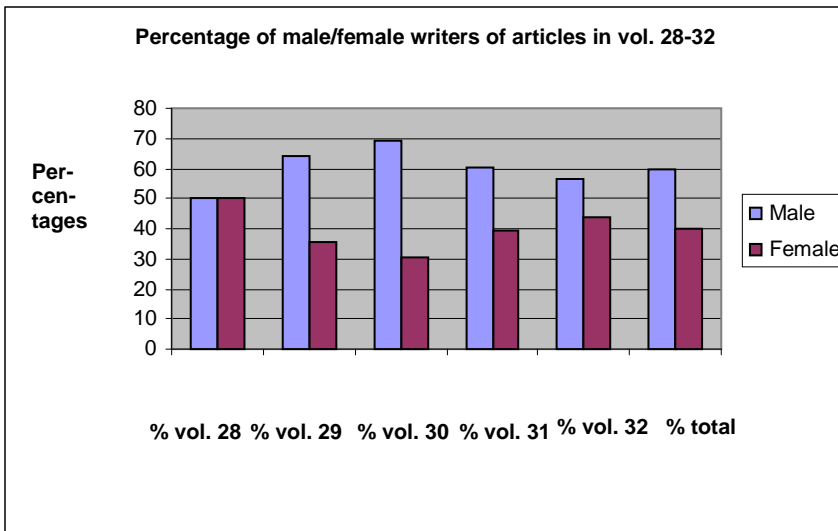
⁵⁶ *United Nations statistics division, Composition of macro geographical (continental) regions, geographical sub-regions, and selected economic and other groupings.*

<http://unstats.un.org/unsd/methods/m49/m49regin.htm>. Accessed on the 14th of May 2011.

⁵⁷ *HRQ*, page 1 of every volume.

every part of the globe’, these different parts of the globe are not equally represented by the authors.⁵⁸ The *HRQ* is hence not an international, but an American or at least Western journal, at least when one looks at the regions where the authors come from. Hence, it is to be questioned whether Maribeth Mincey, who argues that ‘in terms of articles published in the *HRQ*, a significant number of the authors are from outside the US [and Canada red.] and Europe’ is right, given that only 14% of the articles are written by non-Western authors. Her claim that the journal ‘publishes a number of articles from authors who have acquired English as a second language’ might nevertheless be true, given that I only looked at where the authors reside now, i.e. not what their homelands are.⁵⁹

Although the different regions in the world are thus not at all fairly represented by the authors who get their documents published in the *HRQ*, males and females are nevertheless more fairly represented in this journal. As one can see in bar charts 10 to 12, that cover the period 2006-2010, 40% of the authors of articles, 42% of the authors of book reviews and 29% of the authors of movie reviews are female. Also, one can see that

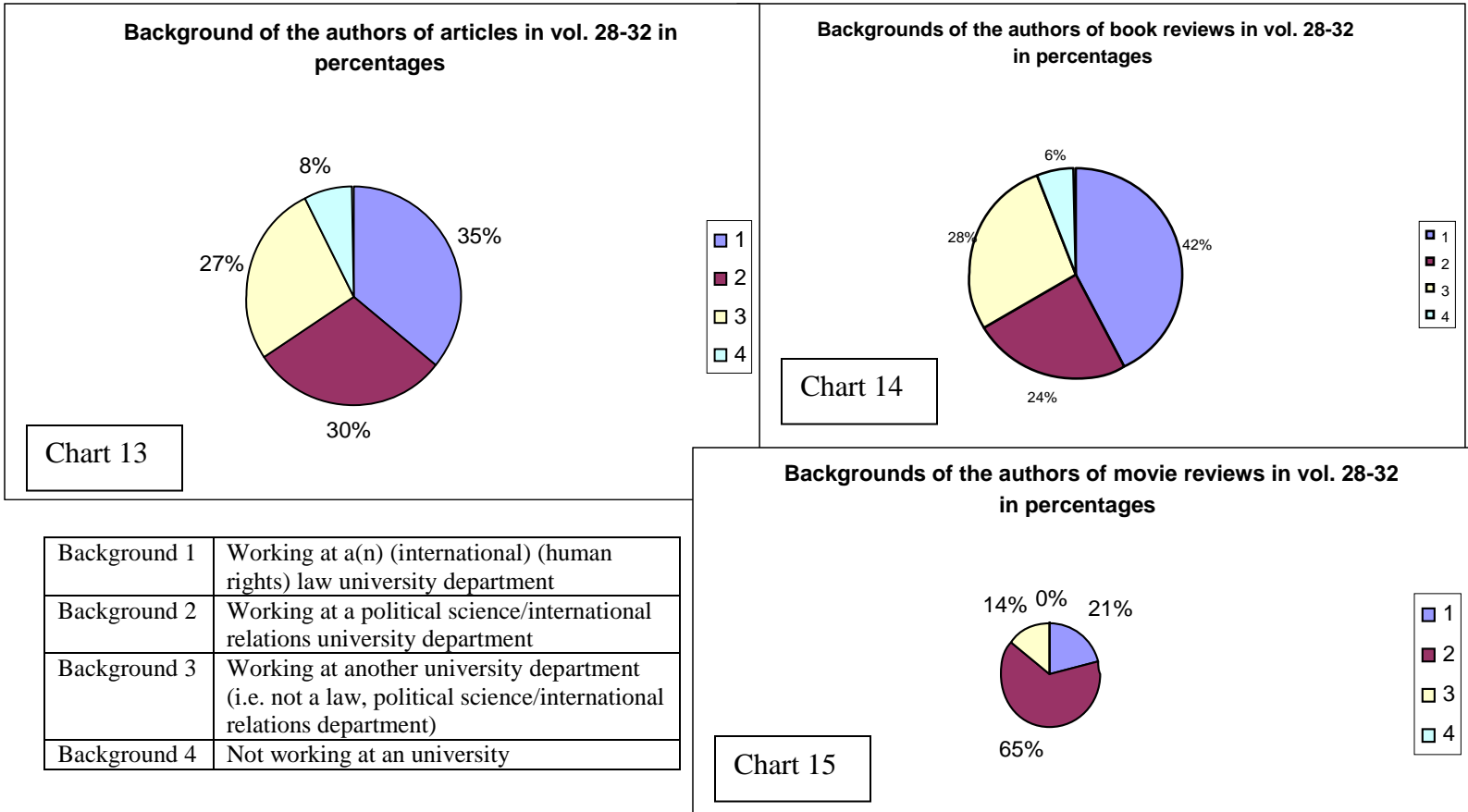


Charts 10 (articles), 11 (book reviews) and 12 (movie reviews).

⁵⁸ *Urban Morgan Institute for Human Rights, the HRQ*, <http://www.law.uc.edu/institutes-centers/urban-morgan-institute/human-rights-quarterly>. Accessed on the 11th of April 2011.

⁵⁹ Personal e-mail contact with Maribeth Mincey (book review editor of the *HRQ*) on the 5th of April 2011.

the male-female ratio in 2006 was 50%-50%, whereas later on males are somewhat overrepresented among the authors of articles published in the *HRQ*. Hence, although males and females are not equally represented in the *HRQ*, the journal does fairly well with regard to gender equality, especially when compared with other A-ranked scientific journals, which are far more male-dominated than the *HRQ*.⁶⁰



Pie charts 13 to 15 show the occupations of the authors of articles, book and movie reviews. In order to be able to compile these charts, I composed lists of the jobs of authors. When composing these lists in order to make the pie charts, I assumed that the first job that was noted in the texts in the *HRQ* regarding the positions or CVs of the author(s) of the document was the main job of the author. I noted only this first job on my list, so that the pie charts are hence based on the first (i.e. main) job of the authors. Pie chart 13 shows that in the period 2006-2010 most of the authors of articles have a

⁶⁰ This conclusion is based on a comparison of graphs and charts that demonstrate gender representation in other A-ranked scientific journals, which were compiled by my fellow students and which they presented during the course in the context of which I analysed the *HRQ*.

background in (international) (human rights) law (35%), followed by authors who have a background in political science/international relations (30%). However, another big group of authors (27%) works at other university departments, namely mainly geography, economy, criminology, history, philosophy/ethics, sociology or anthropology departments. It is to be noted here that most of these authors who work at an university are either professor or associate professor. Sometimes work of a PhD student or even a master student is published as well.⁶¹ Moreover, some research of people who do not work at an university is also published (8%). These people work for example for (intergovernmental) international organisations, for research institutes or for non-governmental human rights organisations.

The authors of book reviews also have mainly (international) (human rights) law backgrounds (chart 14), whereas the authors of movie reviews mostly have backgrounds in political science and international relations (chart 15). However, quite a large group of authors also occupy positions at other university departments. The charts 13-15 therefore show that the authors of the articles and book and movie reviews indeed occupy positions in different disciplines. This might compensate for the overrepresentation of people from the law discipline in the editorial board of the journal, so that the chance that the journal offers an interdisciplinary forum increases. Whether the journal really offers such a forum of course also depends on the issues covered in the journal and their links to certain disciplines, which will be analysed later in this paper. One might add here that, although the journal seems interdisciplinary in scope, it is striking that the journal does not publish many documents written by scholarly people who do not work at an university. Hence, the journal might miss the (different) experiences and reflections of these people who are not university co-workers. This might imply that the important influence that the journal has on the development of the human rights discourse and field is a biased one, in the sense that the viewpoints of scholarly people who work in the human rights (public policy) field, but not at an university, are underrepresented. Moreover, given that the journal intends to publish research on public policy with regard to human rights, it may be valuable to include more research of scholars who do not work

⁶¹ The information in this section is derived from appendix 2: schematic overview of the content of the *HRQ* 2006-2010, which can be found in the attachments to my email.

at an university, but who nevertheless research and develop/implement human rights policies.

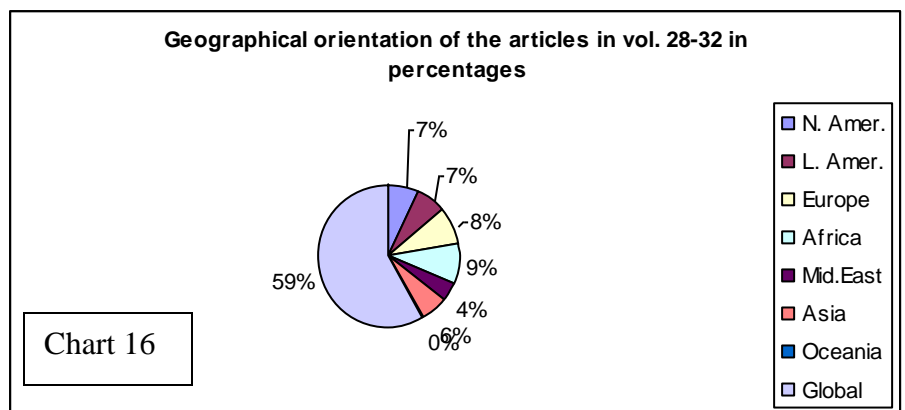
Still, in all, it is to be concluded from this section that the different regions in the world are not at all fairly represented by the authors who get their documents published in the *HRQ* and that the West (mainly North America) is greatly overrepresented. However, the journal does relatively well with regard to gender equality, although male authors still dominate the journal. Moreover, the backgrounds of the authors who work at an university are indeed interdisciplinary. Therefore, the *HRQ* is in sum a journal that is filled with documents written by a stock of university co-workers from different disciplines of which a small majority is male and a large majority is Western.

6. The content of the journal.

After this quantitative overview of the journal’s content and the background of its authors, we will now delve into the content of the *HRQ* in a more qualitative manner on the basis of some statistics about the regions and topics covered in the articles and movie reviews published in the *HRQ*.

With regard to the regions on which the articles focus, one can see in pie chart 16 that most articles focus on the world at large and hence are thematic in nature, i.e. they are not case studies that focus on a certain country or region. Nonetheless, one can also see that the case studies on North and Latin America, Europe and Africa occupy seven, eight or nine percent of the articles, whereas less case studies are published on the Middle East, Asia and notably Oceania. Hence, the focus of the articles published in the *HRQ* is on the world at large and, if an article is a case study of a country, on countries in the Americas, Europe and Africa.

Given that most articles are thematic in their nature, it is interesting to look at the themes on which these articles focus. When I read the articles in the five



volumes under scrutiny, I recognised seven rather broad themes and four more specific issues that return in (almost) every volume of the *HRQ*. I hence distinguished 11 themes (and ‘other/rest’) with regard to the issues covered by the articles published in the *HRQ*.

The themes that I distinguished are as follows:

1 = reflection on (theoretical/philosophical foundations of) (international) human rights (law) (regimes/cultures) in general,

2 = focus on connections between human rights and other issues,

3 = focus on tensions with regard to human rights,

4 = focus on policies with regard to human rights,

5 = focus on (human rights) courts/tribunals,

6 = case study of the human rights of certain groups of people,

7 = case study of (an aspect of) the human rights situation in a certain country,

8 = transitional justice,

9 = slavery/human trafficking,

10 = mainstreaming of policies,

11 = methodology of human rights research,

12 = rest.

Themes of the articles in vol. 28-32 in percentages

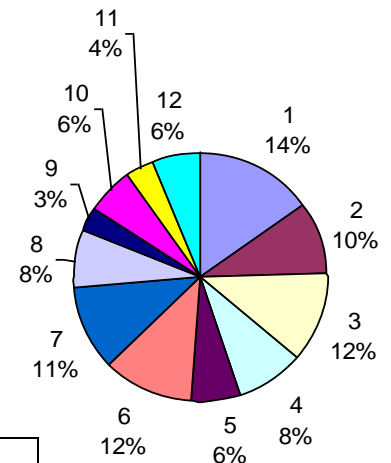
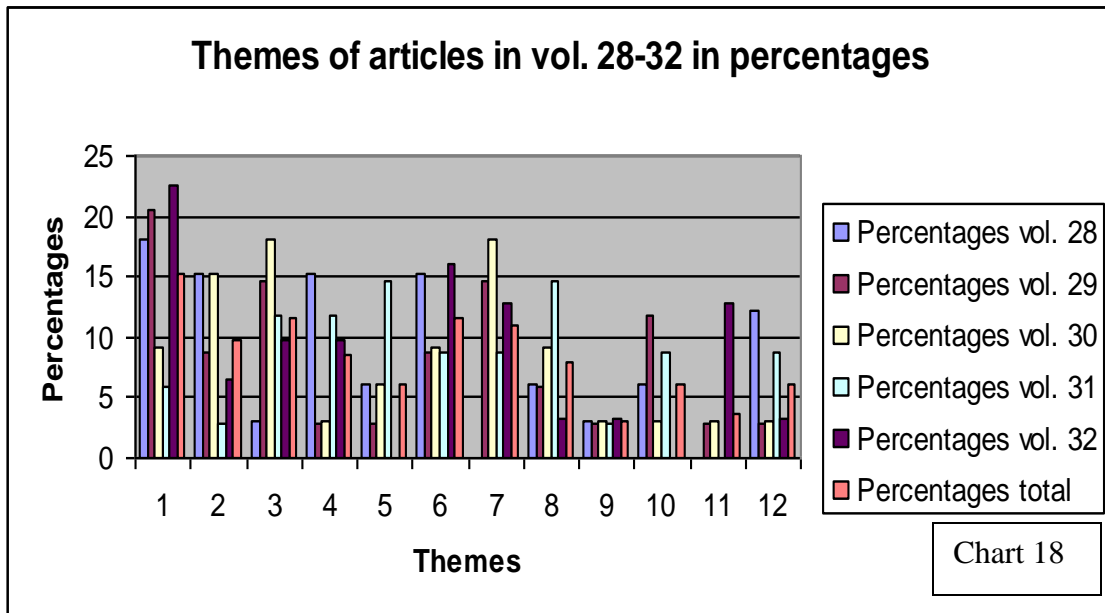


Chart 17

Pie chart 17 and bar chart 18 show the coverage of these themes in the articles published in the period 2006-2010. The method I used in order to assign a certain article to a certain theme was to read the abstract, the introduction and the conclusion of the article and then to weigh what the most important theme of the article was. With regard to this weighing, I first asked whether the article was thematic in nature or a case study. When it was thematic, I then asked whether the article fitted best in one of the broader (1 to 5) or more specific themes (8 to 11). When it was a case study, I asked whether it was a case study of the human rights of a certain group of people (6) or a case study of (an aspect of) the human rights situation in a certain country (7). On the basis of this assessment I then finally decided to which theme I would assign the article. Although I tried to be as systematic as possible in my assessment, my final decisions were of course rather arbitrary as I did not read all the articles completely and my decisions were, moreover, subjective; some articles could be assigned to more themes (e.g. a case study

of women rights in Senegal), but I had to make a subjective choice in order to assign them to one theme. I hence never put an article in more than one theme. Keeping in mind these pitfalls of my assessment method,



bar chart 18 nevertheless shows that the coverage of most themes fluctuate somewhat over the years. It thus seems impossible to distinguish trends regarding the coverage of themes.

Nevertheless, one can also derive from this bar chart that theme one, i.e. articles that reflect on (theoretical/philosophical foundations of) (international) human rights (law) (regimes/cultures) in general, remains very important throughout the period 2006-2010; 14% of the articles published in this period focus on this – however quite broad – theme. Articles that I counted among this theme focus, for example, on a certain right (e.g. the right to self-determination) in international law, on the global culture of human rights (e.g. an article that focuses on the origins and prospects of the bill of rights) or on the theoretical/philosophical foundations of human rights.

Secondly, 10% of the articles published in the period 2006-2010 focus on the connections between human rights and other issues. These articles thus focus on the links between e.g. conflict/violence, peace, democracy, poverty/the Millennium Development Goals/develop cooperation, globalisation, geography, the trade system/economics and human rights. This theme hence clearly demonstrates that (at least a significant part of) the articles published in the *HRQ* reflect the interdisciplinary nature of the human rights field. Furthermore, the articles that I counted among theme two further construct this interdisciplinary character of the field of human rights by allowing their authors to cross

the boundaries that divide their (non-human rights) discipline and the (interdisciplinary) human rights field. Moreover, authors from different disciplines who submitted articles that fit in this second theme sometimes explicitly debate with each other in the journal. For example, in issue 3 of the year 2008, a philosopher and a researcher of international studies debate about the defense of human rights in war. Nonetheless, such debates are rare in the issues under investigation and the debating authors all come from the USA, so that such debates might be interdisciplinary, but they are not international, which might restrain the extent of the differences in views presented in these debates.

The third theme that I distinguished is also quite large; it occupies 12% of the articles. These articles focus on tensions with regard to human rights. These ‘tensions’ refer to very relevant heated debates, that potentially have important societal consequences, about, for example, the questions whether human rights are (culturally) relative or universal, if human rights are indivisible or divisible and hence whether you can adopt and implement them selectively, if there is a divide between economic, social and cultural rights vs. political and civil rights, if the human rights culture implies double standards, how to handle competing (cultural) views on (especially economic, social and cultural) human rights or non-Western perspectives on human rights and, finally, issues of state sovereignty.

These issues and questions touch upon fundamental debates in the human rights discourse and they hence are strongly debated in the *HRQ*. Sometimes writers explicitly reply to each other, but more often they give their own opinion on an issue without referring to an earlier article. Still, the reader can derive from the views expressed in the articles that the issues at hand are not settled at all. It is therefore especially with regard to this theme that the journal really serves as a forum for debates where authors with contrasting views express themselves or respond to each other in either the same or consecutive issues. Nancy Ent thus rightly asserts that ‘it is not unusual for us to have articles that are submitted subsequent to the publication of an article in the Quarterly which engage in challenging some of the views presented in the first article. It has been our practice to then permit the first author to respond to the critical article’.⁶²

⁶² Personal e-mail contact with Nancy Ent (program manager of the *HRQ*) on the 12th of April 2011.

The debate that gets most attention in the journal is about universalism vs. (cultural) relativism of human rights. The author that contributed most to this debate is Jack Donnelly (a professor at the graduate school of international studies at the university of Denver) who defends the “relative universality” of human rights. He thus defends a golden mean between the extremes of complete universality or relativity of human rights. Other authors, however, do not support this golden mean, so that an interesting debate develops. Donnelly also occupies an important role in the debate on the Western position with regard to economic, social and cultural rights, so that he is the author who (co-)published most articles in the period 2006-2010.

Given that the *HRQ* is the most important scholarly human rights journal, the journal arguably influences the construction of the human rights discourse and field by disseminating particular, like Donnelly’s, or new views on human rights issues (e.g. in the field of transitional justice, as we will see later on). This is because such views probably influence or reflect the ideas of social science scholars and public policy makers who work in the human rights field and (co-)develop the concomitant human rights discourse further. The content of the *HRQ* can therefore influence the content of (research on) public human rights policy (proposals) and hence can have, indirectly, practical implications for the lives of people around the world. Given this potential influence of the *HRQ*, it is very justified that the *HRQ* publishes debates on human rights issues. The publication of debates shows that the issues at hand are not settled and that different viewpoints on human rights issues (co-)exist. Moreover, this publication also allows space to further the settlement of contentious human rights issues, so that it answers to a societal as well as a scholarly need. Arguably, it would hence be good if the board of *HRQ* would assign more space in the journal to explicit debates between opponents on a certain (fundamental) human rights topic in order to further debates and ultimately achieve consensus or compromises with regard to contentious human rights issues that have practical (policy) implications.

Turning now to the fourth theme, which covers articles that focus on (the monitoring/implementation/enforcement of) policies (of the state or of (non-) governmental organisations at the state as well as the international level) with regard to human rights, I find it remarkable that I, after the scrutinising of the journals, believed

that I had to distinguish theme four as one of the themes. This is because I, given the aims and claims of the *HRQ*, expected all articles to focus explicitly on ‘public policy within the scope of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights’.⁶³ Nevertheless, it turns out that many articles published in the journal do not explicitly focus on public policy. Still, it is true that most articles one way or the other touch upon issues that have to do with public policy and that, moreover, 8% of all the articles published in the period 2006-2010 explicitly focuses on policies with regard to human rights.

In pie chart 17, one can also see that 6% of the articles published in this period focuses on (human rights) courts or tribunals, like the International Criminal Court, the Inter-American court on human rights, the European court of human rights or the International Criminal Tribunal for former Yugoslavia (theme 5). These articles mostly focus on the merits and shortcomings of the courts or tribunals by scrutinising their jurisprudence, structures and processes. Some of these articles also propose alterations and improvements of the courts, which shows that the *HRQ* does not only publish articles that are theoretical or philosophical in scope, but also articles that are rather normative and prescriptive and more practical in scope.

However, the articles that I assigned to theme five are almost always written by lawyers or professors of (international) law, so that these articles are not very interdisciplinary. Articles that I counted among theme six are nevertheless more interdisciplinary, both with regard to their content as well as their writers. These articles, which cover 12% of all the articles, are case studies of the human rights of certain groups of people. Hence, quite a large number of articles published in the period 2006-2010 focuses on the human rights of specific groups of people, like women, children, minorities (e.g. the Roma or Dalits), indigenous peoples, immigrants, the dead, drug addicts or workers. Theme seven, which contains 11% of all the articles, also covers case studies, namely case studies of (an aspect of) the human rights situation in a certain country. In chart 16, which was discussed above, one can see that the regions on which these case studies focus are mainly the Americas, Europe and Africa.

Theme eight covers articles which do not focus on a certain country, but on a certain concept or phenomenon, namely transitional justice. Transitional justice refers to

⁶³ *HRQ*, page 1 of every volume.

'justice adapted to societies transforming themselves after a period of pervasive human rights abuse'.⁶⁴ 8% of the articles published in the period 2006-2010 focuses on transitional justice, which is quite a lot for such a specific theme. Hence, one can conclude that transitional justice is a hot topic in the human rights field, which is warranted given that pervasive human rights violations were and still are widespread, so that situations of transitional justice were, are and will be numerous. Therefore, it is important that relatively much space in the *HRQ* is occupied by articles that discuss the pro's and con's of different variations and implementations of the concept of transitional justice and that develop new ideas regarding transitional justice.⁶⁵ These innovative articles test and expand the conceptual boundaries that existed thus far in the human rights discourse with regard to transitional justice, so that the journal arguably makes an useful contribution to the evolving transitional justice field. The journal thus, for example in the field of transitional justice, fulfils a scholarly need.

Theme nine, containing articles that focus on slavery/human trafficking, covers only 3% of the articles. Nevertheless, as it is a recurrent specific theme in the journal that gets precisely 3% of the attention five years in a row, I decided that the issue of slavery/human trafficking warranted its own theme. Arguably, its coverage shows that the *HRQ* is aware that it is important to regularly give attention to (research on) persistent worldwide human rights violations of great magnitude that are nevertheless incalculable as they usually take place in the illegal spheres and across borders. The journal thus seems to be aware of the importance to cover especially human rights problems that are pressing, but nevertheless tend to be ignored, because of the difficulties in researching and solving them. The *HRQ* therefore has the important function of raising attention for human rights problems that are not well known and understood, so that people tend to forget about these violations more easily.

⁶⁴ *The international center for transitional justice, what is transitional justice*, <http://ictj.org/en/tj/>. Accessed on the 12th of April 2011.

⁶⁵ Good examples of innovative research on transitional justice are the articles by: Bickford Louis, 'Unofficial truth projects', *Human Rights Quarterly*, vol. 29, no. 4 (2007) pp. 994-1035. Bronwyn Anne Leebwas, 'The irreconcilable goals of transitional justice', *Human Rights Quarterly*, vol. 30, no. 1 (2008) pp. 95-118. David Mendeloff, 'Trauma and vengeance: assessing the psychological and emotional effects of post-conflict justice', *Human Rights Quarterly*, vol. 31, no. 3 (2009) pp. 592-623. Fionnuala Ní Aoláin, 'Women, security, and the patriarchy of internationalized transitional justice', *Human Rights Quarterly*, vol. 31, no. 4 (2009) pp. 1055-1085.

One article (in issue 3 of the year 2006) about the theme of slavery/human trafficking provides a history of slavery. This is one of the few articles published in the *HRQ* which (also) focuses on the period before the Second World War. Hence, the large majority of articles published in this journal focuses on the period after the second World War. This is logical, as the developments on which the journal focuses – namely the (universal) human rights discourse and regime, resulting in public policy within the scope of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights – took (and still take) place in this era.

Topic ten, which covers 6% of the articles published in the period 2006-2010, focuses on the ((gender/indigenous) human rights) mainstreaming of (e.g. human rights/transitional justice/peacekeeping) policies. I distinguished this theme, as I found it remarkable that relatively much special attention is given to the specific, quite practical question how (certain) human rights can become an integral dimension of policies. It shows that the journal does not only focus on human rights theory, but also on (how to implement) human rights in (public policy) practice. It hence does not only further construct the human rights field and discourse on a theoretical/philosophical level, but also on a more practical level. Topic eleven is also quite practical in nature, as it focuses on the methodology of human rights research. This theme for example includes the debate on how one can measure progress in the achievements of human rights. This theme occupies 4% of the articles published in the period 2006-2010, which shows that the *HRQ* offers not only theoretical and philosophical, but also practical guidance with regard to the undertaking of human rights (public policy) research. The last theme (rest) covers the 6% of articles that did not suit the other themes.

However, as noted above, the *HRQ* not only publishes articles, but also reviews of books about human rights and of human rights films and documentaries. The latter deserve some attention as it is remarkable that the *HRQ*, contrary to many other A-ranked scholarly journals, publishes movie reviews next to book reviews. In these movie reviews, not only documentaries as well as movies (fiction) that touch upon human rights issues are evaluated, but also some more fundamental questions about the power of images and film are discussed. Hence, besides reviewing movies or documentaries that are screened during human rights film festivals or in the worldwide cinemas, the writers of movie reviews also ask, for example, what the power of images is to awaken a commitment to

human rights or a sense of injustice without dulling our senses or what the potential of film is for promoting human rights and instigating social change. Therefore, the movie reviews published in the journal are not journalistic in nature, but take an academic approach to films as they try to answer questions that pertain to film studies, like what film means and how it effects people.

Arguably, images and films are the central media in today's world through which people, and especially the future generation, learn about and understand human rights. Hence, it is important to discuss the questions mentioned above and to investigate what ideas about human rights are being disseminated by documentaries and movies about human rights, what this means and how they influence the public. Moreover, such documentaries and movies can have political influence, as they expose or complicate human rights issues. Hence, the fact that the *HRQ* now publishes movie reviews of human rights films and documentaries in addition to books about human rights issues shows that the journal adapts itself to a changing world in which image and film are becoming more and more important. It moreover illustrates that human rights scholars and well as activists increasingly become aware of the (potential) influence of images and movies.

In sum, one can conclude that the content of the *HRQ* covers a wide range of human rights (policies) issues and arguably the most important issues. It includes case studies as well as more thematic articles, which are mostly reflective, theoretical or philosophical in nature, but are also sometimes explicitly normative or prescriptive. Moreover, a significant part of the articles is more practical in nature. Furthermore, the content of the journal is rather interdisciplinary and quite international. The *HRQ* also includes book as well as movie reviews. The latter illustrates that the journal keeps track of important developments, like the increasing importance of image and film, in the human rights field and the world at large. All in all, the *HRQ*, which is the major academic human rights journal worldwide, further constructs the field and discourse of human rights in a multidimensional manner by giving theoretical, philosophical and practical guidance for human rights policies and research, although it can enhance its lead by allowing more space for explicit debates about contentious human rights issues.

General conclusions.

From this quantitative as well as qualitative assessment of the issues of the *HRQ* in the period 2006-2010, one can conclude that this journal covers important debates and issues that are central in the human rights discourse and regime, thereby furthering research on human rights issues and the construction of a true interdisciplinary human rights field. The journal indeed offers an interdisciplinary forum for debates about (research on) human rights, thereby allowing authors to cross the borders of their (non-human rights) disciplines. Still, it would be valuable if this forum function would be enhanced by publishing more explicit fierce debates, so that the *HRQ* better answers to the scholarly as well as societal need to fight out contentious human rights (public policy) issues in polemics.

Moreover, contrary to its claims, this journal is not a students' journal tied to no particular ideology, given that students do not have any power to decide about the content of the journal and that the journal is hence tied to the ideology of the editor-in-chief Lockwood who makes the ultimate decisions about whether or not to publish a document. If he wants to, the editor-in-chief Lockwood can impose any border regarding the content of the journal, although he in practice allows "the territory of the journal" to be quite large. Lockwood thus allows this territory to be occupied by people from different disciplines who concentrate on a wide variety of themes that focus on different regions. However, unfortunately these people are mostly American or at least Western.

Hence, I do not criticise the decisions Lockwood makes regarding the themes covered by the articles in the journal and I applaud his innovative decision to publish movie reviews, but I do criticise the fact that the journal is largely filled with documents written by Western people. This probably implies that the views represented in the journal are restrained and does no justice to the different views that are likely to be present in non-Western world regions. Given that the journal is indeed the leading academic journal in the global human rights field and thus is very important to this field, I hence think that Lockwood should publish more documents from non-Western people in order to better represent all the different views on human rights issues and to avoid a Western bias. Furthermore, I think he should either share his power to make the final decisions regarding the content of the journal or should get rid of the claim that the *HRQ*

is a students' journal tied to no particular ideology. Moreover, although the *HRQ* is quite interdisciplinary, I still believe the journal should publish more articles from people who do not work at an university to make sure that the discourses prevalent in the journal no longer largely reflect only the experiences and ideas of university co-workers, but also of scholarly people who hold positions in other organisations and who probably have important different experiences and ideas.

Nevertheless, in sum, although the *HRQ* could also be called Lockwood's human rights journal that focuses on the Western academic world, it still remains an intelligent, in-depth and interesting journal for social science scholars as well as public policy makers who are engaged in researching or developing and implementing human rights policies. The leading journal offers a forum to discuss human rights issues and holds an important position in the human rights field, as it is actively engaged in furthering human rights (public policies) research, both on a reflective, theoretical and philosophical as well as on a more practical level. The *HRQ* is hence a valuable source of knowledge for all people engaged in human rights work.