

The Review of International Affairs

2008-2012

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This review is part of the Journal Review project of the research-master Modern History and International Relations (MHIR) at the University of Groningen. For more information, visit www.rug.nl/research/MHIR-journalreview



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Introduction

The Review of International Affairs is a research journal published by the Institute of International Politics and Economics (IPE) in Belgrade, Serbia. The institute was founded in the former Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in 1947, where Belgrade also was the capital city, and is the largest research institute within its field in Serbia. The journal was founded in 1950, up until recently as an English version to one of the institute's other journals "Međunarodna politika" (translation: International politics) (IPE 2013a). Međunarodna politika is the oldest journal at the institute, at that time a republic of Serbia and Montenegro. In order for the journal to continue to be published after its pause in 2000-2001, IPE took over the publication (IPE 2013b).

IPE publishes The Review of International Affairs on a quarterly basis, dealing with international affairs. The institute's various publications mirror the ongoing debate on foreign policy within Serbia. They conduct research on topics of special interest for the Republic of Serbia, and the institute has a close cooperation together with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (IPE 2013a).

In total, the institute publishes four journals. Except for The Review of International Affairs, and Međunarodna politika, it also publishes Međunarodna problemi/International problems, which is published partly in English and partly in Serbo-Croatian. The institute also publishes "Evropsko zakonodavstvo", European Union Legislation (translated). This journal is published in Serbo-Croatian and covers developments and trends, both politically and legislative within the European Union that are of special interest of Serbia (IPE 2013c).

The very changing and dramatic history of Serbia and its impact on the institutes work or publications is nothing that is discussed by the institute, nor is it covered by any of the articles I that have looked at. The institute does however describe that the initial researchers at the institute in 1947 was a small group, which eventually grew larger and larger (IPE 2013a). Still, very little is known about its history and how its research has been conducted or changed throughout the decades or even around the year of 2006 when the union between Serbia and Montenegro was separated.

My first impression was that this journal uses a lot of young and to some extent unexperienced scholars in academic publishing, which I throughout my work also found support for. I initially also knew that this is a small journal coming from a country that has suffered a number of wars in the recent history, and that still struggles with both internal and external difficulties regarding both political events such as the question of Kosovo's

independence, but also internal challenges regarding cultural and national identity, and different political beliefs.

Nevertheless, these factors are also reasons for my choice of this journal. It is not well known, and I wanted to look deeper into what kind of research within International Relations and Political Science is conducted in such a challenged country that Serbia has been, and still is.

In this paper, I will look at the issues published from 2008 to 2012, to map and discuss the content in terms of chosen keywords, fields of study, main actors in the articles, and geographical areas of study. I will also look at the authors behind the articles, and the editorial board and council behind the journal. The paper also contains a deeper discussion on a specific topic covered by the journal, and ends with conclusions and final remarks. However, the limitations of this analysis and the limited distribution and availability of the journal will first be addressed.

Availability, distribution and position in rankings

The Review of International Affairs is said by the institute to be distributed to Serbian state representatives, universities, research institutes, libraries, the European Union, the United Nations etc. in around 150 countries. It is also distributed in Serbia to various scientific institutions, news agencies, foreign embassies within Serbia, government agencies etc (The Review of International Affairs 2010 p. 305). The institute is also said, by itself, to be “one of the most reputable research centres in the world” (IPE 2013a). Despite the large number of different receivers of the journal, as well as the states importance of the institute, the double-issue 1138-1139 of 2010 was only circulated in 300 issues (The Review of International Affairs 2010 p. 2). This might explain the reason behind the difficulty of getting a hold of the already published issues of the journal.

Another challenge when searching for the journal in various databases was the case of the ISSN-number. According to the journal, it is ISSN is 0486-6096. But when searching, I found it with another ISSN – 0543-3657. The very few libraries that had the journal, regardless of which ISSN they used, only had it for a few year, and sometimes not even any of the issues of the last decades. After contact with the university library at Lund University, Sweden, I was also informed of that they did not have the last number of years which was stated in their e-catalogue. This was, according to the librarian, possible due to an embargo, but she could not provide any further information.

The final chances of getting access to the issues I needed was to contact the institute itself, or the Serbian Embassy to The Netherlands in The Hague, which according to the journal, should be distributed there. Unfortunately, none of these two institutions gave me any answer, and I was left with the issues I had managed to find through university libraries and the few abstracts available on the website of the research institute.

1.1 Position in rankings and citation

Assessing the impact factor of this journal is close to impossible. The journal is a scientific research journal, but the circulation is very small, and the distribution is limited. Despite the fact that the institute states that it has an important position in its field of research in the world (IPE 2013), the journal does not show up in any searches of the following ranking indexes.

The journal can not be found in the database Web of Science. The usage scope of this journal is very small, and it seems like the researchers working for the journal, as well as the ones publishing for it, at least among the domestic authors, are a relatively small group of researchers.

Searches on the citation index of authors do therefore not show citations of the articles published in The Review of International Affairs. The journal does not show up on any search result in the database of SCImago Journal & Country Rank either.

The final database checked is the Eigenfactor. The journal can not be found there either.

1.2 Limitations with the analysis

Because of the above mentioned difficulties, full issues were only available between 2009 and 2010. The abstracts with keywords from 2008 and 2012 were available at the institutes webpage, except for the issue of 1129 from 2008. One year, 2011, is only partly a part of the analysis, since it was nowhere to be found. Because of this, the analysis of the 1129 issue, the first from 2008, and the issues from 2011 will not cover the fields of study, nor the keywords or any specific content. These issues will only provide data for the analysis of the researchers. I decided to still take these issues into account regarding those topics, because they provide valuable information the characteristic of the journal in terms of what researchers are involved.

2. Editorial council, editorial board, and editor-in-chief

The journal does not state whether the articles are peer-reviewed or not. But since nothing is mentioned about this, I make the conclusion that they are not.

The editorial council is a group of eleven researchers, all with a PhD. Some of the researchers work in other countries than Serbia. Klaus Bachmann, who also has written four of the articles between 2008 and 2012 is a professor in Political Science at Warsaw School for Social Sciences and Humanities (FEPS 2013). Jouni Järvinen (Aleksanteri Institute 2013) is the director of educational programs at Aleksanteri Institute, which is associated to the Helsinki University. One of Dr. Järvinen's expertise is the contemporary history of the western Balkans. Vesselin Popovski (UNU 2013) is of Bulgarian nationality and works in Tokyo, Japan, where he is Senior Academic Programme Officer at the United Nations University. Dimitar Bechev (ECFR 2013) is a Senior Policy Fellow and Head of the ECFR's (European Council on Foreign Relations) office in Sofia, Bulgaria. Raju Thomas is Professor Emeritus of Political Science at University of California, Los Angeles, as well as the Allis-Chalmers Distinguished Professor Emeritus at Marquette University. He was also a US Fulbright Professor 2005-2006 at Belgrade University, Milwaukee (Marquette University 2013). Dejan Jovic is a researcher at University of Stirling, UK, and is also specialized in the field of politics of Serbia-Montenegro and the Balkans (University of Stirling 2013). Emilian Kavalski is associated with the School of Humanities and Communication Arts at the University of Western Sidney, and is specialized in European Union enlargement politics (University of Western Sidney 2013). None of the researchers in the editorial council that work abroad are women. The only woman who is a member if the council works at the IPE.

The remaining four Council members are Dragan Simeunovic, Radoslav Stojanovic, Aleksandra Jovanovic and Predrag Simic. All of them are professors at University of Belgrade, Dragan Simeunovic and Predrag Simic at the Faculty of Political Sciences, and Aleksandra Jovanocis and Radoslav Stojanovic at the Faculty of Law (The Review of International Affairs 2010). Dragan Simeunovic has also published four articles over the studied years in the journal. Only one of the eleven members of the Editorial council is a female.

The editorial board has six members. The two women Nevenka Jeftic-Sarcevic (PhD) and Sanja Jelisavac-Trosic (MBA) are both researchers at the IPE. Nevenka Jeftic-Sarcevic is also the Assistant Research Director (IPE 2013d; The Review of International Affairs 2010 p. 1).

Vladimir Grecic, PhD, is a professor at the Faculty of Economics at University of Belgrade (The Review of International Affairs 2010 p. 1). Slobodan Pajevic is a full time professor at Megtrend University in Belgrade, where he is specialized in Latin American Studies (Megatrend Univerzitet 2013).

Dusko Dimitrijevic, PhD, and Ratko Vukanic, BA, are also both associated with the IIPE. Dr. Dimitrijevic is the Director of the institute, and a Senior Research Fellow. Ratko Vukanic is not listed among the staff at the institute, but is according to the issue 1138-9 of 2010 (The Review of International Affairs p. 1; IIPE 2013d).

Editor-in-chief is Mina Zirojevic-Fatic, PhD, a Senior Research Fellow at IIPE (IIPE 2013d). Very little information about her is available. Nothing more than her title and her academic degree can be found on the institutes website.

In summary, this is a journal that has a wide range of members in its editorial board and editorial council. Two of the members do not hold a PhD degree, one of them has a BA degree, something that surprised me. Very little information about the Serbian researchers could be found. The reason behind this, whether it is because of lack of publications online or because not much research is produced, is something I haven't been able to find. However, I do not believe that one can jump to the conclusion and say that the board and council lack capabilities nor competence because of this.

3. Diversity among the authors

3.1 Academic background

As already mentioned, my first impression of this journal was that a substantial part of its authors do not hold a PhD. As seen in table 1 and table 2 (page 8), this is supported. In total of the 76 authors of the articles, two of them have a Bachelor's degree, and 22 have either a MA/LLM/MSc degree. That such a big part of the authors do not hold a PhD degree in a scientific research journal do not have to mean that the qualitative of the articles is being lowered too much. Instead, it can serve as an introduction and training for young researchers, especially if they write articles together with more experienced researchers.

13 of the authors have an unknown degree, some of them might be ruled out completely from having a PhD or even an academic degree as they work in political offices, at embassies and in the military service etc.

Academic degree of the male authors

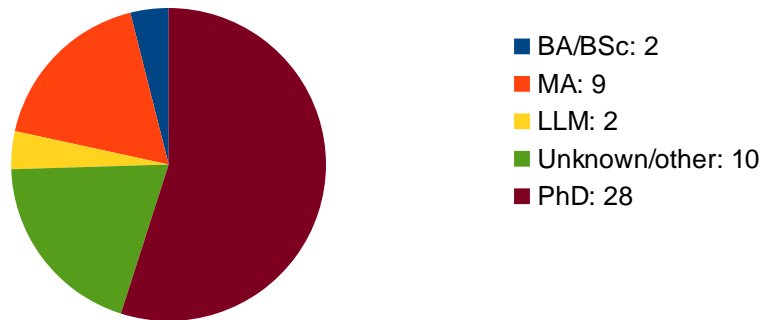


Table 1:

Academic degree of the male authors

Academic degree of the female authors

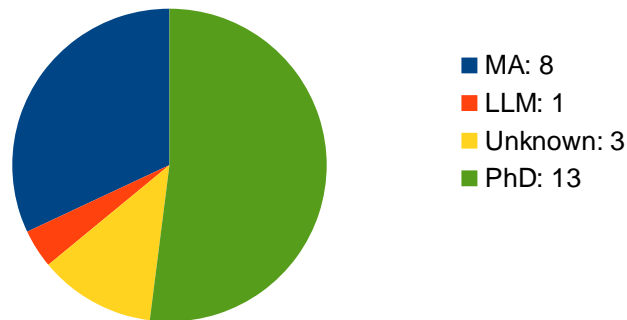


Table 2: Academic degree of the

female authors

3.2 Gender and country of employment

The above discussed topic of academic background is already divided by gender, but there is more to look at. Between 2008 and 2012, 90 articles were published by 76 authors, and only 25 of these authors were women. Also, the issue 1132 of 2008, and the double issue 1133-4 directly followed, with six and five articles in each respectively, and seven and five authors respectively, did not have one single female author. Only one of the issues had a 50-50 gender ration; issue 1135 from 2009, where there were five articles of six authors, where two women published one article together.

Because a very few university or research institute webpages provide the nationality of the researcher, I have not taken this into account in my analysis. Instead, I have focused on the country in which they work.

Countries in which the authors work

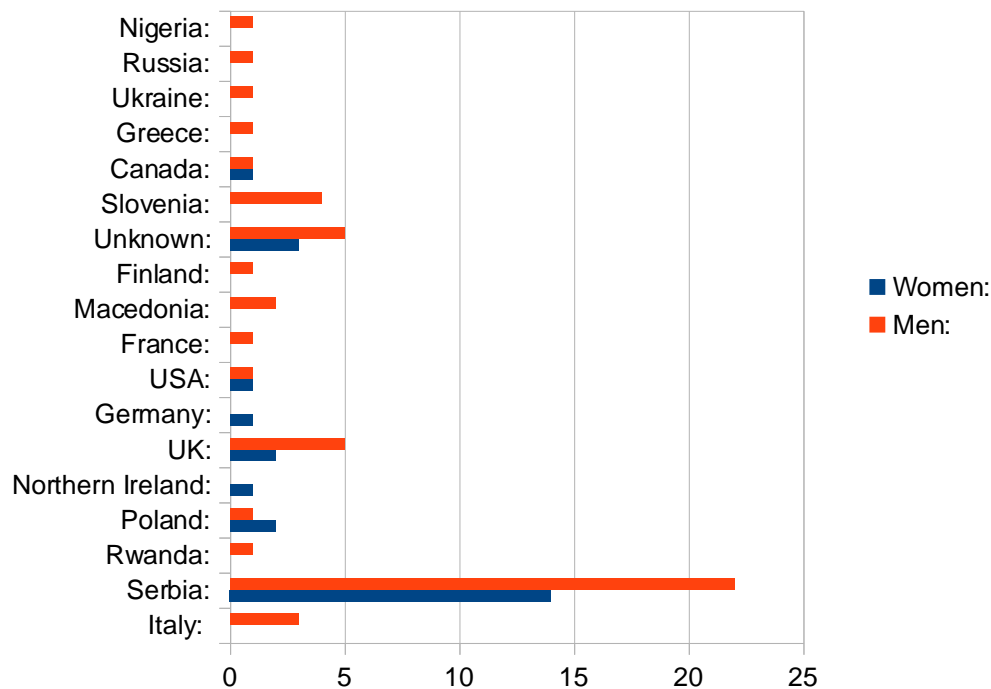


Table 3: Countries in which the authors work

56% of the women work in Serbia, and 43% of the men work in Serbia (table 3). How the result came up this way may have many explanations. One possibility would be that there is a higher percentage of men working both at the institute but also with the journal, and that these men have more contacts abroad. Another option can be, since the nationality is unknown, that a higher percentage of the Serbian men than women work abroad, but still write articles for the journal. In any case, the male authors tend to work abroad more than the female authors.

Over all, the countries in which they work are spread a lot around the world. Asia and Australia are underrepresented, as well as South America. Scandinavia and Northern Europe in general are also not represented much. There is also a much bigger spread among the men from different countries compared to the women from different countries. The cause for this is difficult to explain, one explanation might be that the journal has a higher percentage of men working at it, and therefore make more connections among the same gender abroad. Other explanations might be that more men tend to submit their articles for publication, or that the journal tends to chose more articles from male researchers.

4. Fields and regions of studies

4.1 Keywords

All the articles are presented with keywords. Most of them have five keywords in their abstracts. In the cases where there have been less than five keywords, I have added appropriate keywords. The issues that were unavailable are left out of this analysis. After 63 articles were left with five keywords each, two of the keywords for every article were randomly chosen, the result of that sample of 21 different keywords that have been used at least twice is presented in the following chart.

Surprisingly, “European integration”, “European identity” as well as “European Union” are words that have been used less than expected. Even more surprising is that “Kosovo” only was used once, even though Serbia is currently in a dispute with the region over independence, and since this issue also is being used in negotiations with the EU regarding possible membership for Serbia (Sofia News Agency 2012).

Less surprising are the keywords “human rights”, “organized crime”, “reconciliation”, “justice”, and “truth commissions”. All of them are keywords quite speaking for the history of Serbia and the western Balkans.

However, one could expect that there would be more keywords such as “cooperation”, and possibly also “Macedonia”, “Slovenia”, “Croatia”, etc. Keywords that would indicate that research would be done about possible cooperation, or reasons behind eventual non-cooperation, between the states in the area, and especially states of the former Yugoslav republic.

Something that is not shown in this sample is the frequency of the keyword “Russia”. However, Russia is a frequent main actor in the articles, shown in upcoming charts in this review. Recent interest from Serbia's part in Russia (Jovanovic 2012) might explain the frequency of “Russia” used in the keywords. Especially since the other four keywords used at the same time are “European integration”, and “Russian policy in the Balkans” (Sfetas 2010). If the institute also has a role in shaping Serbia's foreign policy together with the Ministry of foreign affairs, such articles might then be a result of the research being done at the institute, or the research they want to present and distribute to both domestic government representatives and officials, but also officials and representatives in foreign countries at embassies etc.

Some of the articles that deal with keywords such as “reconciliation” and “truth commissions” are articles where the regional scope is Africa. Those are topics that indeed are relevant, but more articles than expected deal with those issues in Africa, than in the Balkans. Expectations that those issues would be discussed exist, but perhaps in direct relation to Serbia more than what has been done.

Use of keywords

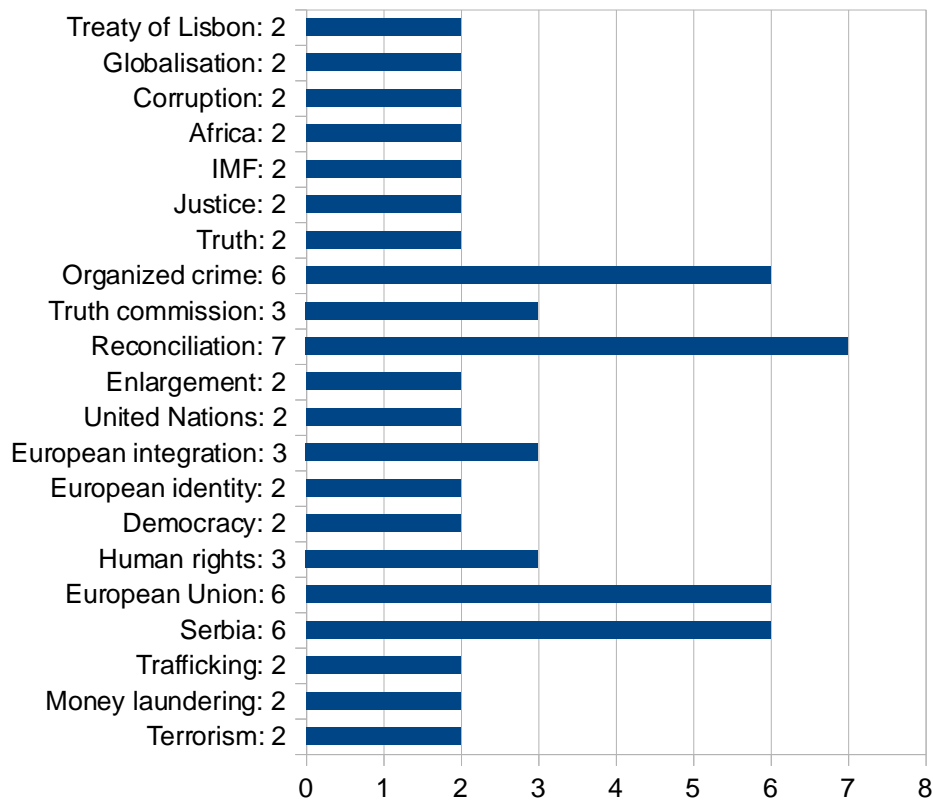


Table 4: Frequency of keywords used more than twice

4.2 Geographical areas and field of studies

The geographical areas studied

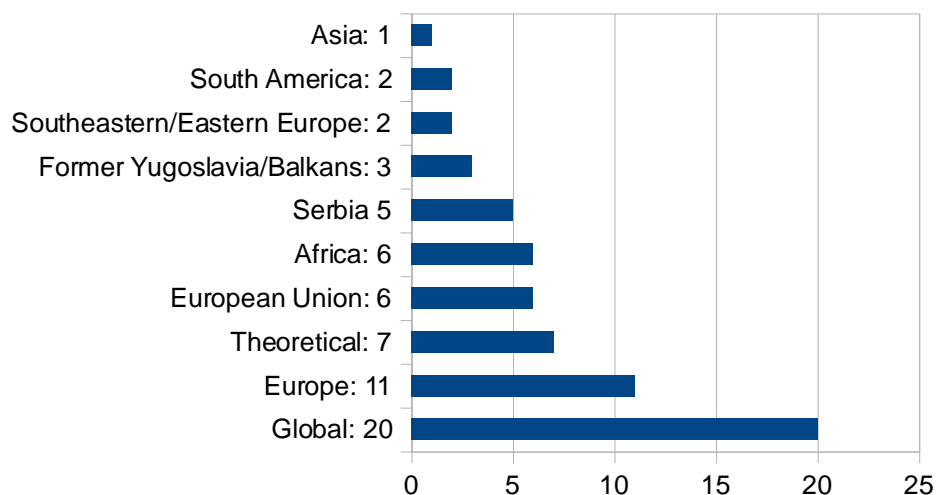


Table 5: The geographical areas studied

The geographical scope of the articles is shown in table 5. Most of the articles cover the whole world. Articles in that category are either articles that cover two or more parts of the world, or discuss a specific topic in general, such as the UN Security Council which in that case incorporates all continents.

As with the other categories and charts already discussed, not many of the articles cover the Balkans or Serbia alone. The European Union and Europe have been divided, so no confusion will arise if the articles discuss a state within or outside the EU. The states that are covered in the category of “Europe” are thus states that are not members of the EU, and the category of the EU does not have to be a Member State, it can also be the EU as a whole. Furthermore, when i.e. Serbia and the EU, or Turkey and the EU, are discussed, such articles are put in the Europe category.

The articles have also been divided into 16 different groups of research fields, with a 17th labeled as “No info” since there are a few issues not available. More overarching, the journal looks primarily on topics regarding international crime, international political economy, development theory (primarily in the articles that have Africa as the geographical area). Reconciliation is made as a separate category, and not put under i.e. War and conflict

or political history. This is because it was specifically mentioned among the keywords so many times, is its own special issue of April-September 2010, that its own category is justified.

War and conflict is also a category that is used several times, primarily between 2008 and 2009. One third of those articles deal with Africa, one third is theoretical papers not mentioning a specific actor or territorial area, and the last third is one article about South America and one about the Georgian-Russian war. None of them thus deals with the very recently conflicts and wars in the Balkans, many of which Serbia played a big role in.

The issue 1145 of 2011 deals a lot with the EU, as seen by the high amount of articles in the EU studies category. This issue, together with other articles in the same category, do indeed deal with the EU. Many of them discusses the European identity, the EU's relation to islam, and integration towards Eastern Europe. But the relationship between Serbia and the EU is rare, even more so the relationship between Serbia, the EU and Kosovo. Unfortunately, a potentially interesting article by Milovan Radakovic in issue 1143 from 2011 in this context is not available and therefore not a part of the analysis. It is titled “Countries of Western Balkans in the EU”. The issue of 1143 seems to have a very general theme as the topics spread across different areas.

The articles divided into categories of field of study

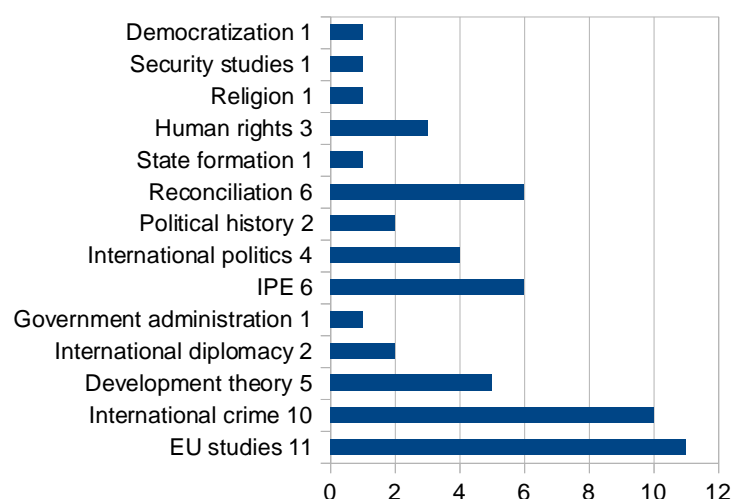


Table 6: The articles divided into categories of field of study

4.3 Main actors studied

This section deals with the two main actors from every article. The actors can be states, in some cases regions, such as the Balkans, where no specific state could be pointed out. An actor can also be criminal tribunal, a truth commission or a continent, such as Africa.

As discussed in the previous section, Serbia and the EU together are not often discussed in the same article. This is evident in the list of main actors where Serbia and the EU never are the main actors in the same article. The EU is a main actor once together with the Balkans, where police cooperation among the Balkans states is discussed. Unfortunately, the full article was not available, therefore, conclusions about the article, which deals with asylum, human rights and migration can only be seen through the available keywords.

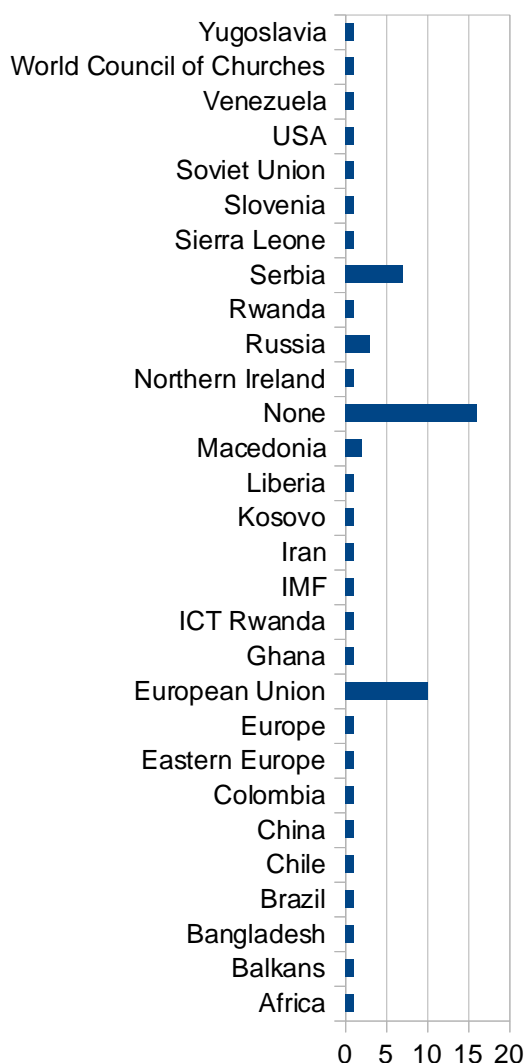
In the issue of 1145 in 2011, the EU was the only main actor. Eastern Europe is in this case not considered its own actor because the article deals more with a historical narrative of European integration. In general, both Serbia and the EU tend to stand alone as actors in the articles. Occasionally, Serbia and the Balkans has been mentioned with Russia, and the EU has been mentioned together with Turkey.

Most of the African states in the first list or second list of main actors corresponds with criminal tribunals in the other. Some have South American states as the other actor, and some are complemented by a theoretical part.

In general, many of the articles that lack either one or two main actors are either theoretical, or case studies where they exemplify a theory with either one or several actors, which will be shown in the closer look on the special issue 1138-1139 from 2010 in chapter six in this paper.

Table 7: List of main actors 1

List of main actors 1



List of main actors 2

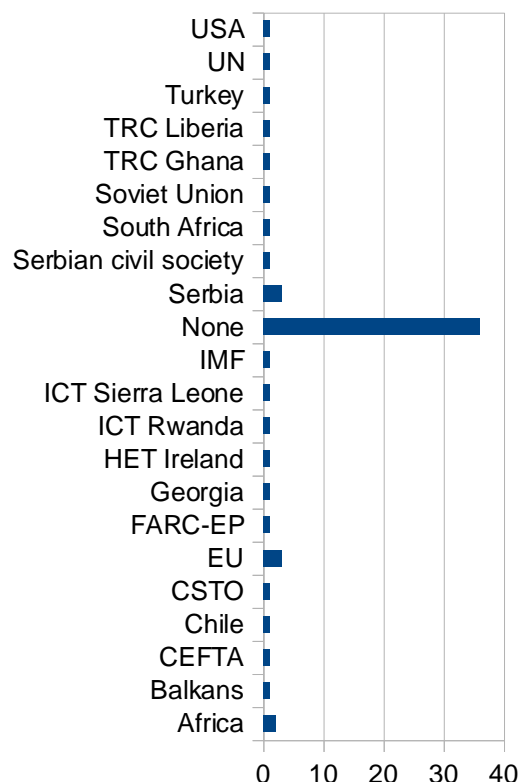


Table 8: List of main actors 2

5. A closer look on issue 1138-1139: Special issue on transitional justice

This section deals with the articles in the special issue 1138-1139 (2010) on transitional justice. Book reviews and conference papers are left out of the analysis, as well as the symposium papers on a book, because these types of articles and papers have not been taken into account in previous sections.

The issue is comprised by seven articles, of which only one of the authors is working in Serbia. One is working in Germany and one in Poland, writing about truth commissions

and reconciliation respectively, both touching upon Chile. One researcher works in Northern Ireland, which she also writes about. There are also two scholars working in the US, one writing a more theoretical article on reconciliation and the other one writing about reconciliation in Africa. The last article is also from a scholar active in the UK, that article too deals with reconciliation in Africa.

Dragan Simeunovic writes a first short article of thirteen pages, where he discusses collective guilt in general, gives a descriptive historic overview, but also exemplifies it with the case of Serbia, where he argues that the Serbian population has been ascertained a collective guilt. This, he argues, has been a process for the past two centuries where the environmental surrounding of Europe needs to be taken into account. Europe has distanced itself culturally from the Balkans, but still admitted to the region's geopolitical importance. The Serbs, in their turn, turned against Europe, especially Western Europe, which he describes as doing the same mistake. It is in this light, together with the two Balkan wars and the first world war that the collective guilt towards today's Serbs need to be seen in (Simeunovic 2019 p. 15-16). Simeunovic continues with a discussion on today's Serbs, with an approach that is not often presented in Western Europe today, where he describes how the Serbs were wrongfully accused of being interlopers in Kosovo, Bosnia and Croatia, and that the conflicts were more about Serbs protecting themselves and wanting to live in a Serbian state (Simeunovic 2010 pp. 17). The article is however concluded with a positive outlook that lessons can be learned from collective guilt, especially by the ones who it is ascertained to (Simeunovic 2010 p. 22).

Judith Renner (2010 p. 23-4), Ludwig-Maximilians-University of Munich, continues with an article on reconciliation and how it is being portrayed in processes of political transitions. She compares reconciliation in Sierra Leone, South Africa, Chile and Spain, and how reconciliation has been understood differently. One of her main findings is that reconciliation is often realised through a truth commission of some sort.

The third article is from Gabriel Twose (2010 p. 41), University of Kent. He compares how reconciliatory values are perceived depending on if they are told with a healing purpose or not. He found that reconciliation after a violent past is easier endorsed by South African students if it does have a healing purpose.

Klaus Bachmann (2010 pp. 71), Wroclaw University, touches upon the subject of Serbia and truth commissions, discussing the planning of one truth commissions but also how it was never established. A truth commission can help the reconciliation process, but it can

also be controlled by dominant governments e.g., or do absolutely nothing for the reconciliation process. The article is an assessment of 18 truth commissions in order to draw conclusions on what contexts suit a reconciliation process the best.

This first section of the four articles are categorized as more general in their nature, looking more at reconciliation as a method and its dimensions. The following three articles are case studies from around the world; Northern Ireland, Liberia and Ghana.

Patricia Lundy, University of Ulster (2010 pp. 101), looks at reconciliation in Northern Ireland. She particularly examines how the truth commission Historical Enquiries Team (HET) adds value to the past-focused mechanisms in Northern Ireland.

Rosalia de la Cruz Gitau (2010 pp. 134), New York University, writes about The Truth and Reconciliation Commission established in Liberia in 2005 to document the victims' suffering of the 14 year long conflict. De la Cruz Gitau seeks to assess whether the commission was successful or not and whether justice has been made for the victims of the conflict.

Seidu Alidu (2010 pp. 153), Leeds Metropolitan University, makes an assessment of the Ghanaian National Reconciliation Commission and the reconciliation there. He asks whether the establishment of the commission was necessary and if it has been helping towards reconciliation in Ghana. He stresses that the commission could have done more, and that truth commissions in general should look into more dimensions than political violations of human rights, such as economic, cultural and social (2010 p. 175-7).

These authors all have in common that they discuss reconciliation and truth commissions, which fits the topic of the double issue well – transitional justice. Simeunovic' article stands out somewhat to the extent that it has a normative sense and a tension to it that the other articles do not. The tension lies in the description of how Serbs were wrongfully accused of being interlopers (Simeunovic 2010 pp. 17) in Kosovo, Bosnia, and Croatia. As noted before, this is an approach that is not very common in Western Europe today.

In this issue of transitional justice, I expected to see more articles connected to the Balkan conflicts. The wars, even though they were recent, make a strong ground for research and academic articles on reconciliation and truth commissions. Indeed much research on the topic has been done. However, that also makes the topic well-researched in terms of finding suitable researchers which can submit their work.

Conclusions and final remarks

Since the institute is said to reflect the ongoing debates on foreign policy in Serbia, and that they also have a close cooperation to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, I was surprised by the content covered in the articles over the years, also in the special issue of transitional justice. Even though a little more than one year could not be fully analyzed due to lack of availability, expected issues such as the pressured relationship between Kosovo and Serbia is covered. This is surprising especially because it has been the major deal breaker between Serbia and the EU, and after long negotiations, a deal could finally be made between the Kosovo and Serbian prime ministers in order for the Serbian membership negotiations to continue. Kosovo is briefly mentioned in Simeunovic's (2010) article which is discussed in the previous section on transitional justice. However, the argument outlined there is not the typical debate stand in Western Europe. I refrain from draw any conclusions on weather this is a reflection of the research environment at this particular institute, or the institutes close connection to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Nevertheless, it is worth noting.

A few articles have discussed European integration and enlargement, but not as much as expected. This is also surprising since European integration is a major development in the Western Balkans today, with Croatia already a Member State since July, and Macedonia as a Member State since 2004. Furthermore, most of the former Yugoslavian countries have applied for EU membership. Both Serbia and the EU tend to be looked at as single actors in the articles, which is surprising since both of them have a lot of correspondence and cooperation with other states which is highly interesting, especially in relation to the scientific aim of the journal which is to spread knowledge among the public in Serbia.

The gender inequality of the journal is not surprising considering what the world in general looks like, but the paper could have a much better gender ratio especially among how many authors that are women, but also among foreign authors. It is worth noting that, despite the cause, the journal has a lot of non-PhD authors writing articles, which is a good first step for many young academics but may also give a voice to non-academics that work in organizations, government institutions etc.

Despite the small readership of this journal, and the fact that many of the issues are either not available or very difficult to get a hold of, I do believe that it serves a purpose both for the academic debate in Belgrade and Serbia, but also for the Balkans in general. I also believe that the journal has more potential than it shows, and by giving such journals more attention, they might be more likely to address some of the shortcomings it might have.

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