

# Do the International Editorial Board Members of Croatian Social Sciences and Humanities Journals Contribute to their Visibility?

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## SUMMARY

*The purpose of this research is to explore the composition, scholarly recognition and possible contribution of international editorial board members (EBMs) of Croatian social sciences and humanities (SSH) journals to their quality and visibility. The composition of the editorial boards was analysed on a sample of 676 international EBMs from 78 Croatian journals according to their country of origin. International EBMs come from 49 countries. Countries with the largest number of EBMs make up three groups of nations: ex-Yugoslav countries (Slovenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) and Serbia), neighbouring European countries (Austria, Italy and Hungary) and a set of large countries (USA, UK, Germany and the Netherlands). Scholarly recognition for each EBM has been analysed on the number of published papers, and their h-index in Scopus, number of papers in their parent journal and the citation count, as well as the influence of these papers on the SJR ( Scimago Journal Ranking) journal indicator. Comparative result analyses were performed on two sets of journals – those indexed in Scopus, and a non-Scopus one. On average, Croatian Scopus journals had more international EBMs and their productivity and h-index differ*

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*greatly from the same indicators in non-Scopus journals. Obtained result shows that generally, members of international editorial boards have not been recognized as exceptionally distinguished experts in most parent journals. Additionally, publishing contributions to parent journals and the citation count of those published papers do not have a positive effect on the parent journals. To obtain a more comprehensive picture, bibliometric indicators should be complemented by quality indicators, interviews and peer review analyses.*

Key words: Croatian scholarly journals, social science, humanities, editorial board members evaluation, journal evaluation

## **Introduction**

Journals are at least equally important as books in scientific communication in social sciences and humanities (SSH), especially in some disciplines (Jokić et al., 2012). However, they are not as frequently analysed in bibliometric research and in studies focusing on scientific communication in the social sciences and humanities. In comparison to the science, technology and medicine (STM) field, there has generally been relatively little research on the forms of scientific communication in social sciences and humanities. Most of the studies have emphasized the importance of monographs or books as communication media, particularly in the field of humanities (Moed et al, 2002; Hicks, 2004; Nederhof, 2006; Kousha et al, 2011; Sivertsen & Larsen, 2012; Verleysen & Engels, 2014). One of the possible reasons for this situation is the lack of relevant databases for bibliometric research comparable to Web of Science (WoS) – SCI (Science Citation Index) representing of the STM field. Although WoS – SSCI and A&HCI are considered to be equivalent to SCI in their own respective fields, differences in scientific communication between STM and SSH surely make their case unique. The main reason for this is the inadequate representation of journals from non-English speaking countries and the fact that books are not included in those sources. Another very significant issue is the fact that social sciences and humanities are primarily considered to be nationally oriented disciplines in most non-English speaking countries. Most journals publish papers in their local language, which surely hinders wider availability (Nederhof, 2006). When national journals, which mostly publish papers in native languages, are indexed in databases such as WoS – SSCI and A&HCI, low citation counts in relatively short time spans and thus low IFs (Impact Factor) cause these journals to be excluded from the database after a certain period of time. As proof of this, we would like to point out the example of Croatian SSH journals in the JCR Social Science Edition database. In 2011, that database contained 13 Croatian SSH journals,

while in 2013 it contained only 9. The excluded journals had an IF of 0.000 or so and their overall average citation count was also very low, with a noticeable tendency of self-citation. According to Archambault et al. (2006), the more probable cause of this situation has more to do with the language, and perhaps less with the quality of the papers. That is, it is more a matter of the intended recipients of the papers and an issue of availability of the papers. The most important decisions on which the intended recipients are, what kind of information is to be conveyed, and what the professional profile of the journals is, should be made by the EBMs, in addition to the journals' editors. The journal's editorial board plays the role of the gatekeeper and its members' task is to determine which papers will be published, whereby they affect the status of the academic profession (Lindsey & Lindsey, 1978). It is precisely because of the importance of a journal's professional profile that we were interested in the composition of editorial boards of Croatian SSH journals. In doing our research, we wished to place particular emphasis on the ratio and role of international editorial board members. We base our research on the notion that the presence of international experts in editorial boards of SSH journals in small non-English speaking countries represents a certain level of quality and recognition for these journals. It is a sign of recognition for a journal to have renowned international experts as members of its editorial board because it points to the fact that those experts recognize the journal as established enough to set aside their time to review manuscripts and to have their name linked to the task they perform for the journal. The importance of an international composition of editorial boards is exemplified by the fact that all prestigious journals, or any journal which holds its status in esteem, visibly emphasizes the list of its editorial board members in its editions. In addition to this, the presence of international EBMs sends a message to potential authors of papers about a possibly minimized partiality of the review procedure in comparison to editorial boards made up solely by domestic experts from small non-English speaking countries.

### *Background*

Among the first ones to write about the role of journals' editorial boards were Cole & Cole (1967), Crane (1967), Smigel and Ross (1970), Whitley (1970) and Lightfield (1971). The role of the editorial board can significantly influence the development of scholars' careers but surely also indicates the state of a scientific discipline. The success of an editorial board can be measured by the number of papers published and the quality of the findings. Whitley (1970) used the example of the composition of editorial board members of two British journals in the field of social sciences to perform a study on the professional status of manuscript authors, the sort of papers accepted, the professional resumes of editorial board members and the

time it took to reach a decision on whether a paper was to be accepted for publication. The results obtained appear not to have resulted in extensive influence on the editor's decisions. According to the data available to us, there have been few empirical studies in the field of SSH concerning the composition and competence of editorial board members of journals. This comes across as quite surprising, seeing as this is quite an important scientific activity, taking into account that editorial board members significantly influence the state of the discipline and the field with which the journal is concerned. Their decisions serve as a filter both for the dissemination of ideas and the creation of knowledge (Weinrach et al, 2006). The role of scientific journals is to communicate new knowledge and findings in a given field, which makes the role of editorial boards in choosing the pieces of content and information to be published very important and responsible. The ability of EBMs to evaluate a manuscript thus directly affects the quality of research and scientific publishing. Empirical research on this subject can largely be categorized into several thematic groups: studies that have dealt with productivity, visibility and citation count of editorial board members (Pardeck & Meinnert, 1999; Hardin et al, 2007; Bedeian et al, 2008; Lowe & Van Fleet, 2009; Kim, 2010), the composition of EBMs as measured by gender representation (Over, 1981; Kennedy et al, 2001; Nisonger, 2002; Chan & Fok, 2003; Ozbilgin, 2004; Savile & Buskist, 2004; Campanario et al, 2013; Weinrach et al, 2006; Fong et al, 2009; Stegmaier et al, 2011; Metz & Harzing, 2012) and their geographical distribution (Svensson & Wood, 2007; Brownstein, 2007; Svensson et al, 2007; García-Carpintero et al, 2010; Harzing & Metz, 2012). A very small number of papers focused on the influence of EBMs on the journals' quality (Brinn & Jones, 2007; Giménez-Toledo et al, 2009; Frandsen & Nicolaisen, 2010; Besancenot et al, 2012). Some papers dealt with analyses of the composition of EBMs in connection to individual scholarly fields within the area of social sciences and humanities (Chan et al, 2005; Fogarty & Liao, 2009; Burgess & Shaw, 2010; Papaioannou et al, 2013).

Aside from theoretical reasons, we got involved with this research out of pragmatic reasons, as well. One of those is the Croatian national system of evaluation of scientific work and researcher career promotion. Although the criteria for the evaluation of scientific work and researcher career promotion differ, a common feature of theirs is that the papers published in journals with international editorial boards are awarded the highest category (a1), despite the fact that these papers are mostly published in local journals. In addition to this, the question of what the term "international editorial board" implies has not been unequivocally answered. In the case of Croatia, the scope of this term often encompasses experts from ex-Yugoslav countries who can understand each other fairly well in a sort of common language. Being able to understand the language is by no means an irrelevant category for national

journals in SSH which do not publish as many papers in the English language. On the other hand, if the idea of including international experts in editorial boards of journals stems from a desire and a need to display the openness of a discipline and from an urgency to perform the review procedure more critically and more objectively, the term “international editorial board” should then imply including experts from countries and institutions which make significant contributions to the field of SSH and who are recognized for their scientific activity. Considering how difficult it is to reach a consensus on the notion of “international”, we cite a definition of international journals as provided by Zsindely et al, (1982): “Science journals were considered ‘international’ if their editorial board included scientists from five countries at least, irrespective to the title of the journal in question.” According to the criteria for the selection of journals called The European Reference Index for the Humanities and Social Sciences – ERIHPlus, journals with at least one third of papers published by authors abroad are also considered to be international, irrespective of the journals’ names.

Evaluating scientific work and researcher career promotion almost solely on the basis of a condition established by whether a journal has an international editorial board is rather questionable. The incertitude of this criterion emerges as palpable because the true position of EBMs in Croatian SSH journals is not transparent and well known, which particularly relates to the role of the EBMs in peer review procedures. If the EBMs are not actively involved with peer review procedures concerning received manuscripts, that criterion could have negative long-term effects on science policy and the development of science in Croatia. In order to allow for a more definitive grasp of the issue, we would like to point out that the Croatian scientific community in social sciences and humanities currently produces 152 scientific journals financed to a variable extent by the Ministry of Science, Education and Sports and that all those journals are available on the Croatian open access portal Hrčak. The share of SSH journals on that national portal in proportion to all other scientific fields approximately equals 50%, while the share of SSH researchers in proportion to the entire Croatian scientific community approximately equals 30%. This data speaks volumes and indicates the importance of the role of journals in scientific communication in social sciences and humanities in Croatia.

The purpose of this research is to assess the position and role of international experts in national SSH journals in order to try and make some changes to make the EBMs’ role truly important and to allow the results of the research and the used methodology to be utilized for the benefit of the journals’ quality, that is, to make them more available to the wider academic community, particularly beyond national borders.

## Data and Methodological Approach

There are currently around 320 scientific and scientific-professional journals in Croatia with a mostly regular publication dynamic. The national open access portal Hrčak lists 374 journals as available. The disparity in the figures mentioned stems from the fact that popular science magazines and other periodical publications (e.g. proceedings) were also included on the portal's list. The Ministry of Science, Education and Sports financially contributes to the publication of most of those journals and their publishers are largely academic institutions, professional societies and associations. The work of editors and editorial boards is most frequently done on a volunteer basis. Having examined all journals available on Hrčak, we singled out 152 journals dealing with the SSH subject field, which also provided us with an initial sample for the research. This set of journals was divided into two sub-categories based on whether the journals have been indexed in the Scopus database – one Scopus set of journals (N=50) and a non-Scopus one (N=102). The Scopus database has been chosen as a relevant source for our research due to our prior experiences with bibliometric studies, whereby we preferred it to the WoS database (Archaumbault et al, 2006). Scopus is more representative bibliometric source in comparison to WoS. As proof of this, Scopus indexes 50 Croatian SSH journals, while WoS temporarily indexes up to 20 of them. In more precise terms, the JCR Social Science Edition for 2013, a database using data from WoS, showed 9 Croatian SSH journals indexed (JCR 2013), while Croatian scientific classification allows for only 8 journals (journal *Psychiatria Danubina* was excluded).

For the 152 journals initially comprising our sample, a check has been made on the Hrčak portal and the journals' websites as to the online availability of data on the composition of EBMs. A number of journals (6 Scopus journals and 19 non-Scopus ones) had no publicly available data on the composition of their editorial boards, which reduced the number of journals from both sets in the latter course of the research to 127. By examining the available data on the composition of editorial boards we ascertained that journals present information on the composition of their editorial boards in various fashions. The most common way is to list the editorial board and the editorial committee. However, the same publication data often involves both an editorial board and an international editorial board, an editorial board and a journal council, an editorial board and a publishing council, an editorial committee and an international editorial panel, an editorial board alongside a journal council and a junior editor circle, an editorial board and an editorial council, as well as an editorial board in addition to a scientific panel. A similar situation has been identified in Spanish journals by Giménez-Toledo et al, (2009). Considering that the members' roles in the aforementioned bodies in terms of the scope of their activity in editing the journal, i.e. the scope of their involvement in review procedures and

decision-making on publishing vary, we have decided to include in this research only members of editorial boards or editorial committees with international memberships. In exceptional cases, we have also included members of editorial councils if the editorial board had been made up of less than three editorial board members. This decision is arbitrary because we have based our research on the assumption that members of editorial boards play an active role in the peer review procedure and actively take part in the decision-making process with regard to the choice of manuscripts fit for publication. Since we have primarily focused this study on the role of editorial board members, we have not included into our analysis editors-in-chief (unless they had been listed as EBMs) and the various sorts of counselling bodies listed in the journals' publication data.

For each member of the editorial boards (N= 1829) of the 127 journals we conducted a search in the Scopus database and gathered the data on the productivity and h-index. In addition to this, an inquiry was carried out as to the number of papers that the EBMs published in their parent journals. By singling out only international EBMs (N=676), which provided us with the definitive sample for this research, we wished to make use of the analysis of country representation to get an insight into what an international editorial board might mean for a journal. For the Scopus set of journals data on the citation count of papers by international editorial board members (N=442) in parent journals has also been studied. For non-Scopus journals, this data was not available. In order to have a more complete notion of the status of Scopus journals, that is, the possible influence of international EBMs on a journal's visibility and quality, data on the SJR indicator (SCImago Journal Ranking) and the language of the published papers has been used. The SJR indicator is based on data from the Scopus database and shows the status or the level of prestige of a journal. When calculating the value of the SJR, one presumes that the citations in prestigious journals from a given field have greater value than the citations in other journals. (Guerrero-Bote & Moya-Anegón, 2012). This indicator does not depend on the scope of a scientific field and is used to rank journals based on the average prestige of the articles. We measured the citations in a given year referencing the papers published in the paper in the last three preceding years, which makes SJR a somewhat more acceptable indicator than the IF (impact factor) presented by the JCR (Journal Citation Reports) database on the basis of data from the WoS database. Data from the Scopus database were gathered in September and October of 2014.

## **Results and Discussion**

The sample of 127 Croatian SSH journals, Scopus journals (N=44) and Non-Scopus journals (N=83) had a total of 1829 editorial board members or an average of 14.4 members per journal. The number of EBMs ranged from 3 to 50. Using a sample of

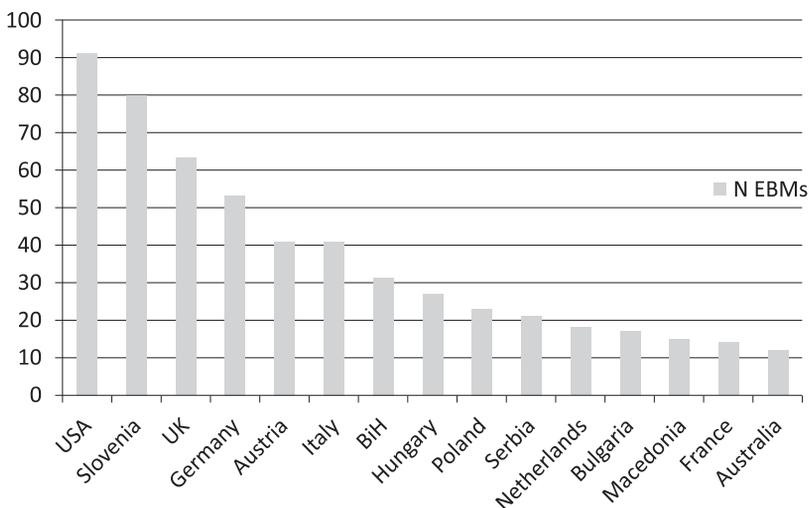
Spanish SSH journals, Giménez-Toledo, (2009) concluded that the average number of editorial board members was 11.3. The share of international EBMs in our sample was 676, which makes 36.9%, averaging 5.3 members per journal, not including the members of the Croatian diaspora (Croatian scientists living abroad). However, the actual state of affairs is somewhat different. 38.6% of Croatian SSH journals didn't have a single international editorial board member. That reduced the sample to 78 journals, which meant that the average number of international EBMs was 8.6. In comparison, Nisonger (2002) found in his research that political science journals had a share of 33.8% of international editorial board members, business journals had 22.8% of international EBMs, while journals in the field genetics had 55.7%.

Analysis of countries of origin of international EBMs has showed a wide dispersion which included 49 countries from all continents. The number of members of editorial boards per country ranged from 1 to 91 with a median value of 5 members per country. The set of countries above the median value for the number of members per country made 618 or 91.5% of editorial board members. The countries which had been represented by more than 10 EBMs could in this case be thought of as partners in scientific co-operation (Figure 1).

One can take notice of the international orientation of editorial boards of Croatian SSH journals by the representation of large countries (USA, UK, Germany and the

Figure 1. Countries with more than 10 experts in the editorial boards of Croatian SSH journals

Slika 1. Zemlje s više od 10 stručnjaka u uredništvima hrvatskih SSH časopisa



Netherlands). On the other hand, a regional orientation is expectedly noticeable, as well, primarily towards countries of the former Yugoslavia (Slovenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH), Serbia and Macedonia), respectively towards neighbouring countries (Austria, Italy and Hungary). A relatively large number of EBMs from Poland in no less than 6 Croatian philological journals can be accounted for by the fact that the Croatian language and the Polish language share common Slavic features. In comparison, Giménez-Toledo et al, (2009) argued in their study on Spanish SSH journals that the editorial board members mostly came from Spain and institutions which publish those journals, which they did not find to be positive. Moreover, they believe that internationalization would well benefit Spanish SSH journals. Ozbilgin (2004), using a sample of 22 journals in the field of international human resource management, showed that editorial membership during the preceding 20 years had mostly been made up by experts from the United States and Western Europe. The composition of editorial boards had been homogenous in terms of domination by experts from those areas, which the author considered to be a particular sort of parochialism. A study (Svensson & Wood, 2007) about ethnocentricity of the editorial board teams of academic marketing journals published in the USA, the UK and New Zealand indicated the existence of ethnocentricity in this field. The authors consider this data an impediment because “the worldwide research community in marketing would benefit from less ethnocentricity in academic journals”, considering how significantly ethnicity affects the status and quality of a journal. (García-Carpintero, Granadino, & Plaza, 2010) hold that institutional and geographical diversity of EBMs may help make manuscript selection more objective and contribute to avoiding endogamy. However, the diversity of countries from which EBMs come is not a particularly apt indicator in itself. The basic criterion for the choice of editorial board members should be the ability of an expert to be a proficient reviewer. Kim (2010) notes in his research a significant increase in the number of international editorial board members in Korean journals. Despite this, the level of internationalization of national journals as measured by the proportion of international EBMs has not been proven to have a statistically significant correlation to a journal's citation count and its impact factor. As Lowe & Van Fleet (2009) note, “The importance of editorial boards to the peer review process makes it imperative that board members be selected on the basis of proven records of scholarly achievement as demonstrated by publications in peer-reviewed journals and subsequent citations to those publications.”

In our sample, the recognition of EBMs from countries with more than 5 members (91.5% of them) as measured by the number of published scientific papers and the h-index in the Scopus database show that 37.8% had not had a single scientific paper indexed in the Scopus database. The h-index median of all international members of editorial boards from this set of journals was 1, while the h-index of the

EBMs who had at least one paper indexed in the Scopus database equalled 3, the h-index ranging from 1 to 105. Additionally, the productivity of international EBMs of Croatian SSH journals from this part of the sample as measured by the publication of at least one scientific paper in a parent journal shows that 22.4% of EBMs provided that contribution. This subset of EBMs also makes half of all productive international editorial board members. The number of papers published in parent journals ranged from 1 to 20 and the median value was 1. On average, the largest number of papers published in parent journals came from EBMs from Slovenia, Austria, Italy and the USA. The representation of those countries could be accounted for by the regional and international orientation of Croatian journals. The scientific fields covered by the journals from this subset include 14 areas in social sciences and humanities. The largest number of international EBMs from this subset came from social sciences, namely from economics, education science, information and communication sciences and psychology. EBMs who had published papers in parent journals specializing in humanities largely came from philological and theological backgrounds. Members of international editorial boards of Croatian philological journals who have published papers in their parent journals come from 16 countries, the largest number of experts being from Germany, USA, Poland, the Netherlands, Austria, France and Hungary.

Another subset, 58 experts (8.4%) in the EBMs of Croatian SSH journals came from the group of countries below the median value for the number of international EBMs per country. Interestingly, over two thirds of the journals in this group were indexed in the Scopus database. The extent to which international EBMs contributed to the status of those journals, in addition to the review procedure, can be seen in Table 1. An analysis of the fields with which the journals from this sample subset deal also points to the prevalence of social sciences in comparison to humanities. Within social sciences, journals in the field of economics are dominant, which is somewhat expected due to the fact that they were also the most numerous journals in the general sample. Moreover, this data confirms a larger degree of openness of social sciences (Mañana-Rodríguez & Giménez-Toledo, 2012), in particular of economics, which is universal in its research subjects and methodology. The proportion of international EBMs of journals in the field of humanities in this portion of the sample can be said to be indicative, although it is significantly smaller in relation to social sciences. With regard to philological journals, the EBMs involved not only share no common ground with the Croatian language (Table 1), but they also use different scripts (China, Japan), which is an interesting fact. Beside the fact that philology is characterized by a methodology not necessarily connected to the particularities of a given language, the true reason for this should be pursued by using other methodological approaches. Taking the number of papers published in parent journals to

Table 1. The representation of countries of origin of EBMs of Croatian SSH journals with 5 or less members per country

*Tablica 1. Zastupljenost zemalja EBMs hrvatskih SSH časopisa s 5 i manje članova po zemlji*

Country	N EBMs	N Scopus journals	Discipline	N papers in parent journals
Belgium	4	1	interdisciplinary; law; economics	0
Brazil	2	2	education	0
China	4	3	economics; philology	4
Cyprus	1	1	economics	0
Denmark	4	3	economics; philology; politology	0
Egypt	1	1	economics	0
Finland	2	2	economics	0
India	4	4	inform sci.; sociology; economics	0
Ireland	4	3	history; inform sci; ethnology; interdisciplinary	2
Israel	2	2	economics	5
Japan	3	3	education; philology	0
Latvia	3	3	economics	6
Lithuania	1	1	inform sci	0
Luxemburg	1	1	law	0
Malaysia	1	1	economics	2
Malta	1	0	law	0
Mexico	1	0	philosophy	2
Montenegro	3	3	economics; history	0
New Zeland	2	1	economics	0
Portugal	5	4	sociology; economics; inform sci.	0
South Africa	1	1	law	0
Switzerland	5	1	law; education; inform sci.; interdisciplinary	4
Tajikistan	1	0	economics	3
Ukraine	1	1	information sci	0

potentially represent the highest measurable contribution of this subset of international EBMs, we can conclude that their publications in parent journals do not significantly contribute to the journals' visibility. Namely, 21.1% of the members of

international editorial boards has published at least one paper in their parent journal. This figure being similar to the subset of countries above the median value of international members of EBMs. Those who have published one or more papers came from only 8 of the 24 countries, i.e. one third of the countries represented. The largest number of papers by members of EBMs in parent journals has been published by experts from Latvia, Israel, China and Switzerland (Table 1), the number of papers ranging from 1 to 5. The greatest number of papers has expectedly come from journals in the field of economics. In comparison to the set of countries with more than 5 members in editorial boards of Croatian journals, these results differ significantly only by the geographical position of the countries. In terms of these data, the results can be explained by the openness of economics and the universality of its subject and the methodology it uses. To compare the results with at least one other scientific field, that being accounting, we list the results of the study done by Lowe & Van Fleet (2009). According to their findings, EBMs in each of the 9 journals they analyzed had published papers in those journals, making up in between 20-80% of the total number of papers published, depending on the journal. The authors found that, in many disciplines, in order to become an EBM in a given journal, one must first have a certain number of papers published in that journal to be able to prove their credibility. On the other hand, publishing a paper in a journal whose editorial board one is member, of most probably involves less effort than under normal circumstances.

When we analyse the visibility of EBMs in this portion of the sample measured on the international level by the number of scientific papers published in Scopus-indexed journals, it is evident that 35.02% of EBMs did not have a single paper published. Nonetheless, the second part of the sample is composed of highly productive EBMs, with 46.3% published more than 4 papers. It is interesting to note that EBMs who have published papers in Croatian journals were also highly productive authors with high citation counts. EBMs who have published the greatest number of papers in parent journals and who had the highest h-indices came from Latvia (EBMs' h-indices amounting to 38, 19 and 3), Israel (h-index 9), China (h-index 8), etc.

These data could be considered as an indicator of contribution to the visibility and quality of a journal. Additionally, about one half of journals in which these productive and highly cited editorial board members published their articles were indexed in the Scopus database. However, due to a very small number of international EBMs who have published articles in parent journals, they are not deemed very relevant

On the basis of the presented data concerning the comparative analysis of the scientific visibility of international members of Croatian SSH journals' editorial boards and their contribution to parent journals via articles published in those journals, the differences between the two sample subsets – the countries represented by more

Table 2. The productivity and h-indices of international EBMs who have published 3 or more articles in parent journals

Tablica 2. Produktivnost i h-indeks stranih EBMs koji su u matičnim časopisima objavili 3 i više radova

N papers in parent journal	Field	Scopus journal	Country	N papers Scopus	h-index Scopus
20	theology	Yes	BiH	0	0
12	inform&comm sci	Yes	Slovenia	50	1
10	inform&comm sci	Yes	Slovenia	7	2
9	philology	Yes	Austria	2	0
8	law	No	USA	0	0
8	education	No	USA	0	0
6	psychology	No	Austria	13	3
5	psychology	No	Italy	20	5
5	economics	Yes	Israel	35	9
4	economics	Yes	Italy	6	1
4	economics	Yes	Latvia	232	38
4	inform&comm sci	Yes	Slovenia	5	1
4	inform&comm sci	No	BiH	0	0
4	philology	Yes	Czech Republic	1	0
4	etnol & anthrop	No	Austria	3	1
4	economics	Yes	China	17	8
3	economics	Yes	BiH	16	7
3	economics	Yes	Slovenia	20	7
3	law	Yes	Czech Republic	2	2
3	law	Yes	UK	2	0
3	Inform.&comm. sci.	Yes	Serbia	3	0
3	education	No	Slovenia	4	2
3	psychology	No	Slovenia	1	1
3	psychology	No	Austria	20	6
3	philology	Yes	France	7	1
3	archeology	No	Slovenia	5	2
3	economics	No	Tajikistan	1	1

than 5 or by less than 5 members of international editorial boards – were determined to be minimal. An equal percentage of international EBMs in both groups, amounting to over two thirds, did not have a single article published in parent journals. When analysing the productivity of EBMs in the area of finance, Hardin et al. (2007) came upon different results. They found that most of those EBMs published their articles in journals whose editorial boards they were members of. The authors of the study had expected those results because the study encompassed the most prestigious journals in this field.

As far as scientific activity measured by the publication of Scopus-indexed articles is concerned, we have obtained similar results for both subsets of EBMs. Just over a third of all international EBMs did not have their scientific articles registered in the Scopus database. On the sample of countries with less than 5 representatives in Croatian editorial boards, EBMs with h-indices higher than the median values of productive EBMs provided significantly higher contributions through publications in their parent journals. However, the numbers concerned being very small, it is difficult to reliably draw serious conclusions.

Seeing as our results have not yet demonstrated a significant contribution of international EBMs to their parent journals, we have been eager to establish the extent of international visibility and recognition of editorial board members who had 3 or more articles published in their parent journals (Table 2). As the Table shows, the EBMs who have published the greatest number of articles in parent journals had a relatively low average international visibility as measured by the h-index.

Editorial board members with the highest h-index values (5 and more) came from social sciences, namely from the fields of economics and psychology. As expected for this subset of the sample, if we analyse all the fields covered by the journals, then the EBMs of journals in social sciences contribute to the h-index values.

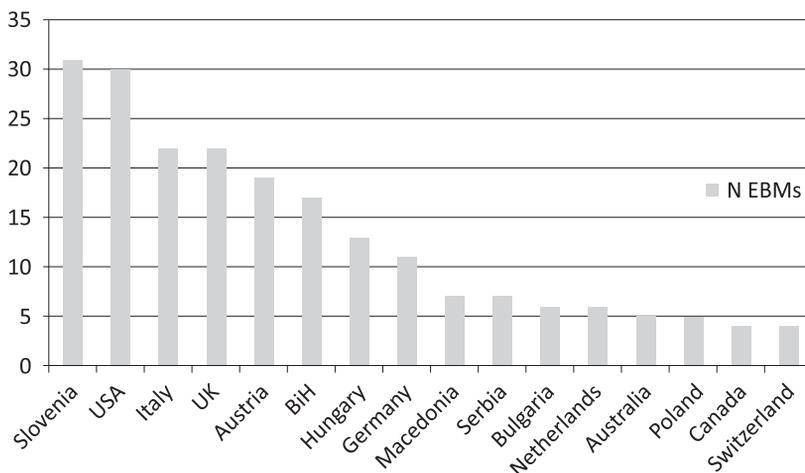
Seeing as one of the initial differential elements of the Croatian SSH journals was the fact that they were indexed in the Scopus database, we wanted to explore whether there are any significant differences in the composition of EBMs between Scopus-indexed journals and non-Scopus journals.

### **Non-Scopus Journals – the Contribution of International EBMs**

Among the 83 Croatian non-Scopus SSH journals with publicly available lists of EBMs, 47% of them (N=39) had at least one international member in their ranks. The total number of international EBMs equalled 234, which translates to an average of 6 members, in turn being significantly less in comparison to the total sample. The result obtained is the first differential element not only in relation to the total sample, but also, as expected, in relation to the set of Scopus-indexed journals.

Figure 2. The representation of countries of origin of international EBMs in Croatian Non-Scopus journals in the fields of SSH

*Slika 2. Zastupljenost zemalja stranih EBMs u hrvatskim Non Scopus SSH časopisima*



The EBMs came from 33 countries ranging between 1 and 31 members and the median value of the number of members was 4. The set of countries whose number of EBMs was above the median value was composed of countries listed under Figure 2.

Figure 2 shows that this set of editorial boards shares a similar regional orientation with the subset of countries with more than 5 international EBMs. Approximately one third of international EBMs in this subset come from ex-Yugoslav countries (Slovenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH), Macedonia and Serbia). These journals cover 13 SSH fields, with a prevalence of journals from the fields of economics, education, information and communication sciences, as well as interdisciplinary journals.

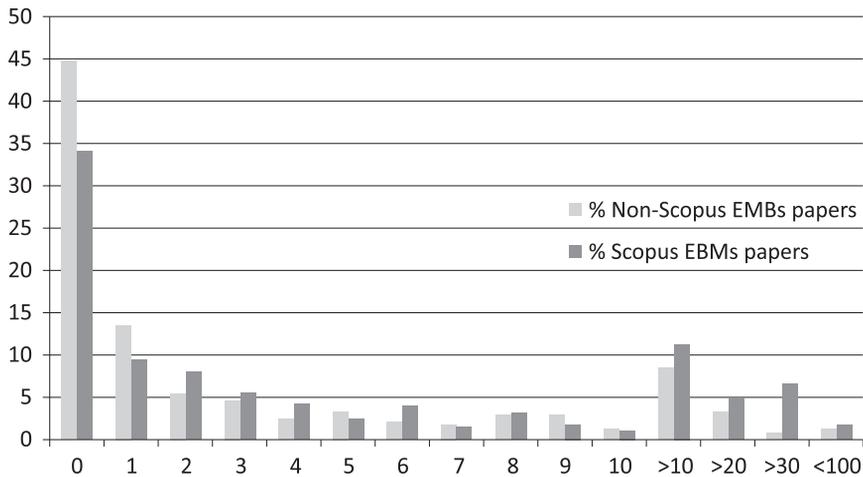
Although we had expected that at least some disciplines in the field of humanities would exhibit stronger co-operation through journals' editorial boards, this assumption has not been confirmed. One could propose that an indication of such developments can be found in the field of ethnology and anthropology (4 members), as well as history (3 members). Orientation towards the region of Italy, Austria and Hungary is marked with a 23% share, once again with 13 SSH fields. In this case, despite being beneficial to social sciences, the overview of the EBMs' dispersion across different scientific fields has shown that, for the first time in the humanities, the field of history has exhibited a slight increase in the number of international

EBMs. This data could be accounted for by the common historical roots of the countries, but also by Croatia's orientation towards the EU, of which it is now member. Beside this regional orientation, the international representation of EBMs coming from large countries such as the USA, the UK, Germany and the Netherlands is also significant. Most of the EBMs come from journals in social sciences dealing with economics, information and communication sciences, education and law.

A productivity analysis of international EBMs from non-Scopus journals has shown that 44.8% of them did not have a single article published in the Scopus database (Table 3). This indicates a negative deviation in comparison to the productivity of the total sample (37.8%) of international EBMs in Croatian journals. As expected, it deviates negatively in relation to Scopus journals, as well (Figure 3).

Figure 3. The distribution of scientific productivity of EBMs in Scopus and non-Scopus Croatian SSH journals

Slika 3. Distribucija znanstvene produktivnosti EBMs hrvatskih Scopus i Non-Scopus SSH časopisa



The h-index pertaining to authors who are EBMs and have published at least one paper indexed in the Scopus database had a median value of 2, in contrast to the h-index value of 0 ascribed to all international EBMs. The EBMs' h-index ranged from 0 to 11, which is also significantly less in comparison to the Scopus journals set.

The contribution of international EBMs of Croatian SSH journals from this sample subset measured in the number of published articles in parent journals has shown

Table 3. Summary of data on visibility of international EBMs in Croatian SSH journals

Tablica 3. Sumarni podaci vidljivosti stranih EBMs u hrvatskim SSH časopisima

	<b>Total sample of international EBMs (N=78)</b>	<b>Scopus journals (N=39)</b>	<b>Non-Scopus journals (N=39)</b>
N of international EBMs/ average number per journal	674/8.1	442/10	234/6
% of international EBMs without Scopus-indexed scientific articles	38.07%	34.16%	44.87%
All EBMs' Scopus h-index median value	1	1	0
Most productive EBMs' Scopus h-index median value (above median value)	4	5	2
% of EBMs who have published in parent journals	22.2%	19.23%	27.7%
% of EBMs who have published more than 2 articles in parent journals	4%	3.6%	4.7%
Most frequent countries of origin of EBMs who have published more than 2 articles in parent journals	Slovenia Austria BiH	Slovenia Czech Republic	Slovenia Austria
Most frequent scientific fields of journals in which international EBMs have published	economics inform.&comm. sci. psychology law philology	economics education inform.&comm.sci. philology	psychology education
First 10 countries with the largest number of international EBMs in Croatian SSH journals	USA (91) Slovenia (80) UK (63) Germany (53) Austria (41) Italy (41) BiH (31) Hungary (27) Poland (24) Serbia (22)	USA (61) Slovenia (49) Germany (43) UK (41) Austria (22) Italy (19) Poland (18) BiH (14) Hungary (14) Serbia(14)	USA (52) Slovenia (31) UK (22) Italy (22) Austria (19) BiH (17) Germany (10) Hungary (13) Macedonia(7) Serbia(7)

that 27.7% of them have published at least one article (Table 3). The largest contributors have been EBMs from Slovenia, the USA and Austria. This comes as no surprise if analysed against the backdrop of previously obtained and substantiated results. However, in comparison to the previously presented data, the novelty lies in the fact that the most active EBMs were the ones from the fields of psychology and law, as well as education, information and communication sciences and interdisciplinary fields.

Having considered all the presented data and without going into more detailed analysis at this point, one could claim that approximately one half of the international EBMs do not contribute to the reputation of Croatian SSH journals with their visibility and recognition, which could potentially be the reason behind the fact that they are not included in the Scopus database.

### **Scopus Journals – the Contribution of International EBMs**

Within the set of Scopus journals (N=44) whose editorial board composition was publicly available, 5 journals did not have a single international EBM. Therefore we continued our analysis with the same number of journals as within the non-Scopus set – 39. The share of international EBMs equalled 49.3% (442 members), which is significantly higher, i.e. almost doubled, in comparison to the non-Scopus set. The average number of international EBMs in the Scopus journals set equalled 11.3. This result could potentially be considered as a distinguishing element in terms of quality, if we take Scopus-indexation as a quality indicator. Beside the fact that a journal has an international editorial board, an important indicator should be the scientific activity of the EBMs in question. The productivity of EBMs within this set of journals shows a significantly higher percentage of EBMs who published at least one Scopus article (65.8%). This is another positive distinguishing element in comparison to the non-Scopus journals. However, only taking into account productivity does not necessarily guarantee the quality of a scholar's work. In support of this claim, the fact is that some of the most prolific EBMs' citation counts do not match their productivity (Table 2). Therefore, in addition to the EBMs' productivity, we have also taken into account their h-index as an important factor in establishing their international recognition. Productive EBMs' h-indices ranged from 0 to 105, median value being 2. If we exclude the EBMs without an h-index, i.e. with the h-index equaling 0, then the median value of the h-index value amounted to 3. Although the difference between h-index median values between Scopus- and non-Scopus journals' EBMs is small, this result could only potentially be considered to have a distinguishing effect due to the fact that we are investigating SSH fields, especially when taking into account the range of h-index values. Due to the particularities and

differences in publishing and citing behaviour in specific SSH scientific fields, one should be cautious when interpreting the obtained results.

If we evaluate the contribution of all international EBMs by looking into their publishing activity in parent journals, only 19.2% of those from the set of Scopus journals published one or more articles in their parent journals, which is significantly less in comparison to the non-Scopus journals subset (Table 3). The analysis of the number of articles in parent journals published by the international EBMs whose h-index was above median value shows that 24.4% of international EBMs published one or more articles in parent journals. This result can also not be considered a positive contribution to parent Scopus journals in comparison to the non-Scopus journals.

According to Scopus data, unproductive EBMs have been equally inactive in parent journals. More precisely, 80.7% of them have not published a single article in their parent journals. This makes their role of potential contributors to the journal relatively questionable.

The analysis of countries of origin of Scopus journals' EBMs who have published articles in their parent journals shows great dispersion. 85 international EBMs come from 26 different countries, which amounts to an average of 3.3 members per country. An above-average number of EBMs came from Slovenia (N=24), Italy, USA, Austria and Germany. The analysis of scientific areas in which international EBMs have published has once again showed a dominance of journals from the field of social sciences, i.e. those covering economics and information sciences. Among journals in humanities, philology has been dominant. We have used citation analysis in order to investigate the impact of international EBMs' articles published in parent journals. The 5 most productive international EBMs in parent journals have published a total of 56 papers. Those papers have received a total of 10 citations, the authors of which were only two EBMs. The presented data points to the fact that articles by international EBMs published in Croatian journals in SSH indexed in the Scopus database have been met with significantly less enthusiasm.

#### *International EBMs' recognition by their citation count in parent journals*

In order to better understand the role of international EBMs, we wanted to determine to what extent any of paper of international EBMs, indexed in Scopus, was cited in Croatian parent journals. Frandsen & Nicolaisen (2010) based their research on a common notion, according to which "flattery citations of editorial board members as potential referees are a common strategy among academic authors". However, their research on citation analysis of the EBMs of four library and information science journals analysed at five year intervals from 1995 to 2005 failed to provide

us with proof of this hypothesis. In our research, the analysis of the citation count of any article by international EBMs in a parent journal (not excluding self-citations) has shown that papers by only 22.4% of international EBMs have been cited. Among those, the largest number of international EBMs (53.5%) received one or two citations in parent journals. Potentially greater response and recognition could be warranted in cases where there have been 10 or more citations. We identified 11 EBMs (2.5 %) with more than 10 citation count. 10 EBMs were members of the editorial board of a single economics journal (*Tourism*), while the most frequently cited EBMs mostly came from the USA and Australia. The journal with the second most frequently cited international EBMs was an archaeology journal and the author came from Slovenia. The listed data clearly shows that the members of international editorial boards in the largest number of parent journals are not recognized as experts whose articles are worth citing, meaning that papers by international editorial boards are not cited for the purposes of flattery. Our research did not confirm Beattie & Ryan's (1989) hypothesis that EBMs are highly cited in their respective fields. The real reason behind this situation should be investigated by using a different methodological approach.

#### *Journals' SJR and the composition of international EBMs*

The SJR (SCImago Journal Ranking) indicator for Scopus journals with at least one international board member in our study ranged from 0.000 to 0.275. The SJR median value for all journals equalled 0.112. In comparison, the SJR median value for the same scientific fields for all covered journals, amounted to 0.496. The contribution of international EBMs to the SJR values of their parent journals above the median value of SJR has not been noted, except from the articles published by the EBMs of 2 economics journals. Therefore, there can hardly be any discussion of significant contribution by international EBMs to the visibility of Croatian SSH journals. Nisonger (2002) arrived at similar results on a sample of 153 journals in the fields of business, political science and genetics. He investigated the relation between the composition of international editorial boards and the impact factor (IF) of journals, i.e. their total citation count. Notwithstanding several exceptions (non-US journals in the fields of business and political science), Nisonger has not established a correlation between the composition of an international editorial board and the journal's IF, meaning that the composition of the editorial board had not had a decisive impact on the journal's higher level of quality. Campanario et al, (2013) conducted a study on the impact of EBMs' paper citation count on the IF of a journal. In 50% of journals, citations and self-citations of these authors contributed to the higher IF of a journal. In their research on the connection between the composition of the editorial board and a journal's quality, Pan & Zhang (2013) established

that the presence of international EBMs had not had any significant impact on a journal's quality.

*The languages of papers in Croatian SSH journals  
and the composition of international EBMs*

In order to understand as well as possible the overall state of affairs concerning international EBMs in Croatian SSH journals indexed in the Scopus database, we have analysed an analysis of the languages in which the published articles had been written. About one third (14 out of 39) of the journals included in the research had published more than one third of their articles in English. As expected, most of them (around two thirds) came from the fields of economics and information and communication sciences. In the sphere of humanities, only one journal (dealing with philosophy) had more than one third of its papers published in English. This result could be linked to the research conducted by Mañana-Rodríguez & Giménez-Toledo (2012), where the authors highlighted the differences between journals in social sciences and in humanities relating to publishing as well as to citation. The authors consider humanities journals to be more nationally and regionally oriented, while social sciences journals tend to be more open towards dissemination on an international level. Croatian social sciences journals that published most of their articles in English had a larger number of international EBMs. The involvement of these EBMs and the extent to which they contributed to the review procedure performed on the published articles should be further investigated.

*International EBMs and the acknowledgment of membership  
in editorial boards of Croatian SSH journals*

Regardless of their fields, scholars whose h-index equals 10 or higher for the sphere of SSH can quite safely be assumed to be acknowledged scholars – of course, leaving self-citation out of the count. Out of 676 international EBMs of Croatian SSH journals, 39 of them (5.8%) scored an h-index value of 10 or higher.

In addition to this, as expected and in accordance with most of the presented data, economics journals were most amply represented. Only 7 (or 17.9%) of the most prominent EBMs have contributed to their parent journals through publishing, this being mostly in the form of a single paper. The same international EBMs mention in their web available biographies that they have been members of Croatian journals' editorial boards. The most recognized scholars who listed their membership in the editorial boards of Croatian SSH journals in their resumes came from Slovenia, Hungary, Latvia, Australia and the USA.

## Conclusion

In this research, our initial assumption was that international EBMs have a significant role in national journals of a small non-English speaking country – primarily as prominent international experts who can contribute to the objectivity of the peer review procedure, a higher level of criticism and a gradual rise in a journal's quality. Our idea resembled the one by Brinn & Jones (2007) who claimed that EBMs represent the intellectual capital of a journal and that being on an editorial board of a journal is considered to be an honour within academia. We set out with publicly available data. The initial sample covered 127 Croatian SSH journals, Scopus (N=44) and non-Scopus (N=103), with an average of 14.4 editorial board members per journal. If we exclude Croatian members and members belonging to the Croatian diaspora, the percentage of international EBMs then equalled 36.9%, or 5.3 members per journal on average. Considering 38.6% of Croatian SSH journals did not have a single international EBM, further research included 78 journals with an average of 8.6 international EBMs.

The analysis of the EBMs' countries of origin demonstrated great dispersion and included 49 countries from all continents, the median value being 5 members per country. The set of countries above the median value of EBMs per country amounted to 91.5% of EBMs. The representation of these EBMs' countries of origin can principally be categorized into three groups: the international orientation of Croatian SSH journals' editorial boards towards experts from large countries (the USA, the UK, Germany and the Netherlands) and two sorts of regional orientation – the expected regional orientation, mostly towards ex-Yugoslav countries (Slovenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH), Serbia and Macedonia), and the orientation towards neighbouring European countries (Austria, Italy and Hungary). Most of the journals which had international EBMs dealt with the sphere of social sciences: economics, education, information and communication sciences and psychology. In the sphere of humanities, philology journals had the greatest number of international editorial board members. As expected, the largest number of EBMs in these journals came from Slavic countries, most notably Poland.

The international recognition of international EBMs measured by the number of scientific papers published and their h-index in the Scopus database shows that 37.8% of them did not have a single scientific paper registered in the Scopus database, while the median value of the h-index of all EBMs has proven to be 1. Although they relate to the field of social sciences and humanities, these data do not contribute to a more extensive international recognition of EBMs of Croatian SSH journals. The contribution of those international EBMs as measured by the publication of at least one scientific paper in their parent journals shows that only 22.4% of members of editorial boards provided that contribution, with a median value of 1

paper. On average, EBMs from Slovenia, Austria, Italy and the USA had the largest number of papers published in their parent journals.

The results of the analysis of the composition and the contribution of international EBMs of Croatian SSH journals indexed in the Scopus database and the ones which are not indexed in that database (non-Scopus) show certain significant differences. Both sets of journals with international editorial boards, whether they were Scopus journals or non-Scopus ones, numbered 39 journals (Table 3). The differences have proven to be significant in favour of Scopus journals, in the average number of members of international editorial boards, the number of papers they published which were referenced in the Scopus, the value of the h-index for the most productive EBMs and in the aspect of publication in their parent journals.

One relatively positive and substantial feature that distinguishes non-Scopus journals from the Scopus ones is their larger percentage of EBMs with papers published in their parent journals. Papers by members of editorial boards from former Yugoslav countries significantly contribute to this result. At the present moment, we have not yet focused our research on the question of whether or not that represents an advantage for a journal. Therefore it remains a possible subject of further study.

We have attempted to identify some additional indicators related to the role of international EBMs for the set of Scopus journals (N=39). Analysis shows that the citation count of papers by EBMs published in their parent journals is significantly lower than the average citation count of their other papers available in Scopus. This data directly support the claim that papers by international members of editorial boards published in Croatian SSH journals indexed in the Scopus database receive significantly less recognition. The information on the average values of the SJR indicator for Croatian SSH journals supports this claim, as well, being significantly lower than the average for those scientific fields.

The recognition of international EBMs of Croatian SSH journals as distinguished experts, as measured by the citation count of any of their papers in any scientific paper is marked by the fact that only 22.4% of international EBMs have been cited in their parent journals. In addition to this, more than half of the papers were cited two times or less, including self-citations. This data clearly shows that members of international editorial boards have not been recognized as exceptionally distinguished experts in most parent journals. There could be various reasons for this and their identification requires much more detailed research. However, these results also show that papers by international editorial boards are not cited for the purpose of flattery, which corresponds to the results obtained by Frandsen & Nicolaisen (2010).

The result that completes the overview of international EBMs in Croatian SSH journals refers to the fact that 5.8% out of 676 of them scored 10 or higher in the h-in-

dex. Only 7 scholars from the set made up by the most distinguished scholars list in their publicly available resumes that they have served as members of editorial boards of Croatian SSH journals. Interestingly, those members of editorial boards have published in their parent journals.

Although we have primarily based this research on bibliometric indicators, a clearer insight into the contribution and the role of international EBMs of Croatian scholarly journals to their visibility could be reached by applying other methodological approaches. Some of these methodological instruments might include interviews with EBMs or analyses of their participation in peer review procedures.

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# Doprinosi li međunarodni sastav uredništava hrvatskih društveno humanističkih časopisa njihovoj kvaliteti i vidljivosti?

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## SAŽETAK

Postojeći sustav vrednovanja i napredovanja u društveno-humanističkim znanostima u Hrvatskoj uvelike je determiniran međunarodnim sastavom uredništava časopisa. Kako bi se dobio uvid u postojeće stanje u članku je istražen sastav, znanstvena prepoznatljivost i mogući doprinos stranih članova uredništava (EBMs) hrvatskih društveno humanističkih (SSH) časopisa njihovoj vidljivosti i kvaliteti. Na uzorku od 676 stranih članova uredništava iz 78 hrvatskih SSH časopisa analiziran je sastav po zemljama (porijekla). Strani članovi uredništava dolaze iz 49 zemalja. Zemlje s najvećim udjelom EBMs podijeljene su u tri skupine: zemlje bivše Jugoslavije (Slovenija, BiH i Srbija), susjedne europske zemlje (Austrija, Italija i Mađarska) te skup velikih zemalja (SAD, Velika Britanija, Njemačka i Nizozemska). Za svakog člana uredništva (EBM) analizirana je znanstvena prepoznatljivost na temelju ukupnog broja objavljenih radova i h-indeksa preuzetih iz baze Scopus, broju radova objavljenih u matičnom časopisu, citiranosti i utjecaju tih radova na SJR indikator časopisa. Usporedne analize rezultata rađene su na dva skupa časopisa, Scopus i Non-Scopus. Hrvatski Scopus časopisi imaju prosječno veći broj članova stranih uredništava, njihova produktivnosti i h-indeks značajno se razlikuju od istih indikatora Non-Scopus časopisa. Ipak, dobiveni rezultati pokazuju da, općenito, strani članovi uredništava nisu prepoznati kao istaknuti stručnjaci u većini matičnih časopisa. Na to ukazuje činjenica da njihov doprinos matičnim časopisima objavljivanjem radova, kao i citiranost tih radova nisu pokazali pozitivan učinak na matične časopise. Kako bi se dobila cjelovitija slika stanja bibliometrijske bi indikatore trebalo dopuniti kvalitativnim indikatorima, intervjuima i analizama recenzija.

Ključne riječi: hrvatski znanstveni časopisi, društvene znanosti, humanističke znanosti, evaluacija članova uredništava, evaluacija časopisa