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RETURN MIGRATION AND RE-INTEGRATION OF RETURNEES CHALLENGES IN THE ORIGIN COUNTRY

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Abstract: *Return migration, traditionally not a well-studied and often neglected area, is becoming an important component of the international migration debate. Reintegration is an essential part of return migration and identified as a complex process that is experienced differently by returnees. The adaptation of immigrants in the host country has been extensively studied, while much less attention has been paid to economic and socio-cultural reintegration and the difficulties return migrants face once they come back to their homeland. Especially children and youth born in destination countries with sociolinguistic and socialization difficulties face a particularly tough reintegration process. Theoretically, there is comprehensive literature focused on return migration and reasons for return, but less in return migration policies and reintegration process. Empirically, there is a lack of studies focused on the reintegration of returnees, particularly in the socio-cultural aspect. With increased attention to the importance of this process, many states and governments have established policies or programs to encourage the return of their citizens, and facilitate returnees' successful and permanent relocation in the new society of the origin country. This paper aims to analyze theoretically and empirically the processes of reintegration of returnees in the origin country by identifying the challenges they encounter in the economic and social-cultural life of the origin country.*

Key-words: *return migration, second generation returnees, economic reintegration, socio-cultural reintegration, return migration policies.*

1. Introduction

Migration in a globalizing world is an increasing phenomenon. People are looking for new opportunities and chances to improve their lives, since migration often is recognized as a 'route out of poverty' for many and a pathway to prosperity for some (King, Mata-Codesal and Vullnetari 2013, 74). The significant increase in international mobility is an outcome of the increased transportation links and the rapid growth in telecommunication

technology. Migration is a dynamic and complex phenomenon, controlling and managing the movement of people worldwide is often challenging for states and governments. Particularly nowadays, most countries are not dominated by one type of migration, such as labour migration, family reunion, refugee movement or permanent settlement, but experience a whole range of types at once (Castles, de Haas and Miller 2014, 4). Migrants may move temporarily or permanently, individually or in groups, transnationally or nationally, return to their countries of origin or migrate to another country, or move between two or more countries.

Migration has gained increasing political salience over the past decades (Castles, de Haas and Miller 2014, 5), return migration, not a well-studied area, is becoming an important component of the international migration debate scene. Among scholars, the debate recognizes the positive contribution of returned migrants in poverty reduction, economic growth and sustainable development of the origin country. Returnees often bring significant benefits to their new communities in the form of skills, strengthening the labour force, investment and cultural diversity. They also play an important role in improving the lives of communities in their countries of origin through the transfer of skills and financial resources and taking up entrepreneurial activities in aid of their families and communities. In conclusion, there has been a growing recognition among policymakers that return migration is an indispensable part of a comprehensive approach to migration management, and that this can only be achieved through complementarity of efforts and coordination among State and non-State actors at both national and international levels (IOM 2018, 5).

2. Why do migrants return? Return migration and typology of returnees.

International experience shows that a majority of migrants return to their origin country. While data on international migration is more complete, data about return migration are missing and incomplete. On average an estimated two migrants in five will leave the host country within five years of arrival (Wahba 2015, 1); In Slovakia, on average each tenth person working abroad returned (Masso et al. 2016, 3), for regions such as Eastern Europe and Asia return migration may imply that 20 to 30 percent of highly educated emigrants return home when they are still productive and contribute importantly to the average income and wages of the sending country (Mayr and Peri 2008, 28); for the UK, Dustmann and Weis (2007) estimate out-

migration rates of 40 percent for men and 55 percent for women after five years, using data from the 1990s (Dustmann and Weiss 2007, 253).

There are various reasons which encourage international migrants to leave the destination country. Not all international migrants will come back; some of them are having with them their families which are adapted in the new society. This category will not go back to the homeland. Another category of international migrants who will not return is the category of migrants who think about returning but they never act towards realizing it. The third category is the returnees, international migrants who leave the destination country urged by economic or non-economic reasons. The reasons which prompt return may vary from nostalgia for the homeland to return related to family ties or family reasons. Dumont and Spielvogel (2008) identify four main reasons to explain return migration: i) failure to integrate into the host country, ii) individuals' preferences for their home country; iii) achievement of a savings objective, or iv) the opening of employment opportunities in the home country thanks to experience acquired abroad (Dumont and Spielvogel 2008, 163).

Return migration is not an isolated phenomenon but it needs to be seen in the larger context of the international migration cycle of individual migrants, and in the context of migration management instruments applied by governments and states. Return migration can occur at different stages of the migration cycle, shortly after arrival in the destination country or many years later. No one can predict when the return will happen. There are different types of return, Marianne Haase and Pia Honerath (2016) identify four types: Involuntary return migrants; Return migrants whose return is "voluntary but unavoidable; Voluntary return migrants and Second-generation "quasi-returnees". The first category refers to individuals with no legal residence status, whose economic and/or social integration failed, and who are deported back home (Haase and Honerath 2016, 6). The second form of return might look voluntary, but is usually the inevitable consequence of failed migration and failed integration experiences in the host countries. The third are migrants that have an explicit intention to return, especially once they have reached their savings goals, or acquired skills, higher education or business networks in their host countries which they can transfer and apply back home. The fourth refers to second (or third)-generation diaspora members who wish to invest in the home country of their parents or grandparents (Haase and Honerath 2016, 7). Even though there are many types of return, the most preferred is voluntary return.

Many authors have contributed to the study of return migration by identifying different typologies of returnees like Gmelch (1980) and

Bovenkerk (1974). One of the most frequently mentioned typologies of return migration is the one identified by Cerase (1974) distinguishing between four types of migrant returns: “Return of failure”, “Return of Conservatism”, “Return of Retirement” and “Return of Innovation” (Cerase 1974, 254). King (2000) suggests another typology of returned migrants by taking into consideration the length of the time spent back in the origin country: occasional returns, seasonal returns, temporary returns and permanent returns (King 2000, 10-11). Recently Batistella (2018) use two variables: the time for return and the decision to return to identify four main types of return. Return of achievement: the migrant returns voluntarily at the end of the migration project (or contract) having achieved the purpose for which he or she went abroad. Return of completion: the migrant returns after completing the contract, but it is not a voluntary return, because the migrant would have liked to stay abroad for another period or to go abroad again; however, it is not possible. Return of setback: the migrant returns voluntarily but before the end of the migration process, for various reasons, including unhappiness at working conditions, family reasons, experience of abuse, or trafficking. Return of crisis (forced return): caused by situations like political upheaval or environmental disaster (Batistella 2018, 3-4).

There are many theories which explain the reasons affecting people to come back to their homeland. Jean-Pierre Cassarino (2004) identifies 5 theories which explain return migration in different perspectives. According to the Neoclassical Economics theory, return occurs as a consequence of their failed experiences abroad or because their human capital was not rewarded as expected (Cassarino 2004, 255). This theory states that return is perceived as a failure; New Economics of Labour Migration (NELM) views return migration as the logical outcome of a “calculated strategy”, defined at the level of the migrant’s household, and resulting from the successful achievement of goals or target (Cassarino 2004, 255). The focus of a third theory, Structural Approach, is on the extent to which returnees may or may not have an impact on their origin societies once return takes place (Cassarino 2004, 259). According to transnationalism approach, returnees prepare their reintegration at home through periodical and regular visits to their home countries. They retain strong links with their home countries and periodically send remittances to their households (Cassarino 2004, 262).

Social Network Theory views returnees as migrants who maintain strong linkages with their former places of settlement in other countries (Cassarino 2004, 265). According to this theory social networks created and shaped during the migration period are beneficial in the origin country by enriching migrants with resources and information. Similar to transnationalism, even

Social Network Theory does not consider return migration as the end of the migratory process.

Return migration has, in recent decades, emerged as a critical element of many governments' migration policy - an integral part of effective migration management. According to Lesińska (2013), the state's policy towards return migration could take two forms: a more active or more passive form.

- 1.: A reactive state policy is implemented *post factum*, i.e. as a response to the already existing processes. Commonly, returns are a direct effect of an economic crisis in destination countries followed by growing unemployment, when migrants usually decide to return to live through the difficult time at home.

- 2.: An active state policy is executed *a priori*, i.e. to encourage nationals to return. When returns are recognized as a positive and desirable process (as a remedy for particular economic or social problems), then policy-makers act to stimulate migrants' decision to return and to facilitate the process of coming back to the home country (Lesińska 2013, 79).

Many governments, especially from less developed regions, have instituted policies or programs to encourage the return of their citizens. Globally, 72 percent of governments have policies to encourage the return of their citizens. The share of governments seeking to encourage the return of their citizens is highest in Latin America and the Caribbean (88 percent), followed by Africa (78 percent) (United Nations 2017, 8). Furthermore, some governments have also established dedicated agencies or ministries, research hubs and centres, and virtual databases and networks to connect potential returnees with opportunities in the countries of origin (Debnath 2016, 10). States benefit from the return of migrants since they have positive impacts for the development of countries of origin through capital inflows, investments and the transfer of technologies and skills.

As migration becomes more complex, there is also an increasing need for international brokering of cooperative approaches between origin, transit and destination countries. International Organization of Migration (IOM) has established some multilateral programs to foster effective partnerships on return migration. IOM through its programs is helping and supporting different categories of returnees. IOM is playing a crucial role with its Assistance and Reintegration Programs (AVRR). At the beginning of these programs they were providing support bases for facilitating the issue of transport return, but with time it has evolved into more comprehensive programs to integrate a range of services to promote sustainability of return. IOM operates through three types of AVR programmes: a) General return assistance for irregular migrants, unsuccessful asylum seekers, refugees and

others wishing to return from the host country; b) Specific return and reintegration assistance tailored to the needs of certain groups (e.g. nationality, vulnerable groups, skilled and qualified nationals); c) Assistance to migrants stranded en route (IOM 2008, 2). These programmes enhanced return counselling, information services and reintegration support for the returnees.

3. Theoretical Approach on Reintegration

A developing trend in academic literature starts to conceptualize return migration and reintegration as broad processes dependent upon various aspects and actors instead of the simple journey of “returning home”. Consequently, also more and more attention is paid to the difficulties reintegration processes bring with them, which often are manifold and increasingly complex (Gomilkó et al. 2015, 14-15). While the situation of immigrants has been extensively studied, much less attention has been paid to the difficulties return migrants face when they come back to live in their countries of birth. This relative lack of research may be based on a view that once immigrants have returned to their home country, they blend back in and are then essentially no different to other natives in that country of origin (Barrett and Mosca 2012, 2).

IOM in the Glossary of migration defines reintegration as a “re-inclusion or re-incorporation of a person into a group or a process, e.g. of a migrant into the society of his or her country of origin or habitual residence “(IOM 2011, 82). But beyond this definition, IOM identifies three fields as crucial aspects for a returnee to readapt in the new society. One of these fields is the economic reintegration which is defined as “the process by which a migrant is reinserted into the economic system of his or her country of origin, and able to earn his or her own living.

Returnees’ employment and integration into the labour market are crucial elements in their reintegration into the origin society. Economic reintegration is important not only because it provides the income for the household, but the lack of income affects the wellbeing of the returnees. Having a job has constantly been identified as a major factor to positively influence many issues related to the psychological well-being and the social integration of returnees such as: reestablishing self-esteem and confidence, engaging with social networks and community and improving of the language and social skills with non-migrants in the origin country. In addition, the origin country may profit by experience and the skills of returnees acquired in the foreign country. Despite its importance, returnees are faced with certain challenges

regarding their economic reintegration such as: lack of employment in the origin country, differences in labour market between host and origin countries, lower wages comparing to their abilities and experience the skills of the return migrant may not be well matched to the economy of the origin country, lack of networks helping to find a job, limited economic opportunities upon return etc.

The second aspect is the social reintegration which is defined as “the reinsertion of a migrant into the social structures of his or her country of origin. This includes on the one hand the development of a personal network (friends, relatives, neighbours) and on the other hand the development of civil society structures (associations, self-help groups and other organizations)” (IOM 2011, 82). Social ties to the home country during the stay abroad seem to be of great relevance for the process of return and reintegration. Migrants stay in contact with friends and family at home and those contacts can be pull-factors for return migration. The social networks play a paramount role in informing about socio-economic and political conditions of the origin country and a support and facilitator in the return and reintegration process. They are a central tool in welcoming returnees back into the community, providing them with information and social capital, helping in finding a job or in starting a new business and in the provision of housing. Next to the more material function, social relations appeared to be crucial in the overall well-being and emotional needs of returnees (Kuyper 2008, 18).

On the one side, for many returnees, having established good social networks in the origin country is important to facilitate their reintegration but to the other side, returnees often face challenges when they try to (re)create social relationships and networks that may be useful for their economic, social or political activities in the country of return (Åkesson and Eriksson-Baaz 2015, 13).

The third field of reintegration is focused on the cultural aspect, in the context of return migration, it refers to the “re-adoption on the part of the sets the reintegration into three aspects, cultural, ecological and social returning migrant of the values, way of living, language, moral principles, ideology, and traditions of the country of origin’s society” (IOM 2011, 82). It is true that migrants are coming back to their homeland but during their absence a lot has changed, tone of the reasons why the reintegration of returned migrants in their country of origin is a tough process (Chobanyan 2013, 7). Return migrants are back in their own culture, they know the language, and they are not foreigners. They recreate new networks or keep in touch with old friends but during the time that they have ‘been away’ many socio-cultural aspects of the origin country have changed and for more there is a difference between

the society, norms, values and lifestyle of the destination and origin country. While for some migrants the cultural reintegration happens gradually and without any issue, for some others it is a very difficult process. Markowitz and Stefansson (2004) highlight that the return migrant might face a cultural shock on the homecoming and thus, return is experienced as a culture shock, a trauma or a new displacement, whereby returnees become alienated from their homeland (Markowitz and Stefansson 2004, 10).

Just the process of returning is not enough but the return needs to be permanent and sustainable, otherwise return may be just one part of the migration cycle. Koser (2015) defines 'sustainable return' as when: 'The individual has reintegrated into the economic, social and cultural processes of the country of origin and feels that they are in an environment of safety and security upon return' (Koser 2015, 3). According to this definition, reintegration is a necessary precondition for meaningful sustainable return and it also highlights that the returnee must perceive that they are in conditions of safety and security upon return.

In the process of reintegration, the supportive mechanisms like return policies, social networks and families have a key role in facilitating, informing and supporting returnees and contributing to the sustainability of return. Kuschminder (2017) identifies 4 types of reintegration strategies for returnees and specifies characteristics of each type describing many variables. The reintegration strategies are not permanent and return migrants may adopt different strategies at different stages of their return.

The first strategy is named 'reintegrated', these returnees have been abroad for a longer duration (more than five years), has a high preparedness for return, and possesses skills or a comfortable level of wealth (Kuschminder 2017, 46). They identify themselves as being transnational and have a strong access to the labour market due to their skills and adaptability. The second strategy is 'enclave' strategy. Return migrants in the enclave strategy are similar to those in the reintegrated strategy in that they have been abroad for a longer duration (more than five years), have a high preparedness for return, and possesses skills or a comfortable level of wealth (Kuschminder 2017, 46). They maintain the culture of the country of migration and do not adapt to the local culture, and the social network of the enclavists is primarily comprised of other returnees. The third strategy is the 'traditionalist'. The traditionalist typically has been abroad for a shorter amount of time (3-5 years), has a medium level of preparedness for return, and had less social status than the enclavists or reintegrated. The traditionalist has fully adapted to the local culture and rejects the culture of the country of migration (Kuschminder 2017, 46). The traditionalists' social network is primarily comprised of locals

with minimal to no interaction with other return migrants and the cross-border networks from the country of migration. The final reintegration strategy is the 'vulnerable'. The vulnerable have been abroad for a shorter duration (less than 2 years), have a low preparedness for return, and often are low skilled with low social status. The vulnerable generally have had an unsuccessful migration experience and may have been forcibly returned as a deportee (Kuschminder 2017, 47). They do not associate with the culture of the country of migration and are often rejected by the dominant culture in the country of origin.

4. Empirical Studies on Reintegration of Return Migrants

The focus of the studies on return migration is varied, like intentions to return, reasons for returning back, some other scholars have been studying the reintegration process which takes place after the return. These studies try to expose a panorama of the reintegration process, including difficulties and challenges faced by returnees. In this context, they may be used by governments and states to draft and implement successful return and reintegration policies. While the reintegration process is multidimensional, an important and most studied topic in empirical studies is economic reintegration. This is due to the fact that returnees are generally perceived as individuals bringing skills and innovation to their homeland; and their economic success is not only the effect in the household income but the important economic implications in the development of the origin country. The economic reintegration of returnees is not always easy; returnees often face challenges in finding a job, lower wages, etc.

The economic reintegration studies are mostly focused on two areas: entrepreneurial activity among returnees and studies that compare the wage paid of returnees with non-migrants. The findings vary considerably from study to study. Barrett and Goggin (2010) in Ireland found a significant wage premium for returned migrants relative to stayers at each educational level. Returnees who possess a postgraduate qualification earn a 10 percent wage premium relative to stayers with postgraduate qualifications (Barrett and Goggin 2010, 9). In another study in Ireland, Barrett and O'Connell (2001) showed that among graduates of Irish colleges, returning males do indeed earn more than males who stayed in Ireland although no effect is found for returning women (Barrett and O'Connell 2001, 19).

Rooth and Saarela (2007) in Finland found that return migrants have over 10 percent higher unstandardised earnings than those who stay in the host country (Rooth and Saarela 2007, 93). Co, Gang and Myeong (2000), in

Hungary found there was a large wage premium (40 percent) for returning migrant women in Hungary but found none for men. According to this study, the time spent abroad improves the labour market performance for female migrants but not for male migrants. Gender differences in payment are even found by Hazans (2008), after controlling for worker demographic characteristics and education, as well as foreign experience and unemployment experience of family members, return migrants command a substantial earnings' premium: about 15% on average, more than 20% among men, and 6% among women (Hazans 2008, 24). Di Cintio and Grassi (2016) in Italy studied migrants and non-migrants who have a Ph.D. The study revealed that migrants earn around 3.7% more than non-migrants. Conversely, those who choose to remain abroad for longer periods seem to enjoy increasing wage gains. On average, duration between one and two years is associated with a 7.5% higher wage, a duration between two and three years with a 13.2% increase and a duration of at least four years with a 27% increase (Di Cintio and Grassi 2016, 11). Masso et al (2016) analysed return migration of young people (15–34 years). Estonian returnees reap benefits in terms of higher wages, but no evidence was found of a positive effect of migration and return on the upward occupational mobility of the returnees (Masso et al. 2016, 3).

Some studies focus on difficulties of returnees in finding a job in the origin country after their return. Abarcar (2016) studying the Filipino labour market of returnees, demonstrates that employers do not favour return migrants when similar workers with the same set of skills and educational background are available. He explains that the following factors play at best a minor role: First, that employers perceive return migration to be a negative signal, indicating negative selection into migration or failure abroad; second, that employers believe return migrants demand high wages; third, that employers think return migrants are overqualified; and fourth, that employers believe return migrants have high job turnover rates. A fifth possible explanation, the depreciation of location-specific human capital, appears most plausible (Abarcar 2016, 2).

Some other returnees have experienced different difficulties once they have returned. Connell (2009) studied the return of skilled workers, doctors and nurses who have returned to the island of Pacific, Samoa, Tonga and Fiji. Many migrants find return difficult, facing lower wages and standards of living, difficulty in establishing businesses and, simply, culture shock (Connell 2009, 74). Van Meeteren, Engbersen, Snel and Faber (2014) studied different post-return experience of returnees in Morocco and identified three types of experiences; while the first group was well-prepared and generally reported

no difficulties, the second group was moderately prepared and reported some difficulties, especially in the beginning of their return. The third group reported a lot of difficulties, especially in coping with failed migration experiences and because they had made practically no preparations for their return (Van Meeteren et al. 2014, 355). Setrana (2017) studying returnees in Ghana found that the result indicates that returnees who are satisfied about their return are more likely (130 percent) to successfully reintegrate than those who are not satisfied about their return. In other words, reintegration is easily achieved when returnees are satisfied with their situation upon return, even in the midst of challenges and vice versa (Setrana 2017, 40).

Some studies focus on the sector of the labour market in which returnees are more engaged. Kupets (2011) analyses the labour market of returned migrants in Ukraine by specifying types of economic activity and occupations dominated by returned migrants compared to non-migrants. The most common occupations by returnees belong to the following four occupational groups: craft and related workers, elementary occupations, service workers and shop and market sales, and plant and machine operators and assemblers (with a large share only in the formal sector) (Kupets 2011, 23). Arif and Irfan (1997) investigate issues related to the professional change of returning migrants to Pakistan. The authors noted the tendency of Pakistani emigrants to change the profession after returning and switching to self-employment by creating businesses and farms. The result showed that among the employed, 44 percent, changed their pre-migration occupations upon return, mainly from production-service occupation to small businesses (Arif and Irfan 1997, 27). Ilahi (1999) in Pakistan, return migrants exhibit a high tendency for self-employment over waged employment. Upon return, savings become a significant factor in the choice of self-employment over waged employment (Ilahi 1999, 170).

Many empirical studies have yielded consensus on the positive relationship between return migration and entrepreneurial activity. These enterprises can be significant contributors to economic growth and alleviating poverty by creating jobs, employment and increasing income for households. Many research studies suggest that returnees have higher probability to be engaged to entrepreneurial activity comparing to the people who never migrate. McCormick and Wahba (2001) found that both overseas savings, and the duration of stay overseas increase the probability of becoming an entrepreneur amongst literate returnees to Egypt (McCormick and Wahba 2001, 16). Dustmann and Kirchkamp (2002) studying returnees to Egypt conclude that most of them engage in entrepreneurial activities (Dustmann and Kirchkamp 2002, 351); while Wahba and Zenou (2009) find

that returnees are more likely than non-migrants (11%) to become entrepreneurs (Wahba and Zenou 2009, 21); Batista, McIndoe-Calder & Vicente (2014) study in Mozambique shows that being a return migrant is associated with a significant increase of 13 percentage points in the probability of owning a business relative to non-migrants (Batista et al. 2014, 25); Marchetta (2012) provides evidence of high propensity of returnees to engage in entrepreneurial activities and econometric analysis evidences the fact that returnees have a significantly higher probability to survive over time as entrepreneurs if compared to stayers (Marchetta 2012, 23).

There is a lack of empirical studies focusing on cultural reintegration. Setrana and Tonah (2014) studying returnees in Ghana, found that returnees faced cultural difficulties once they came back to their homeland. Return migrants often have to regain an understanding of how local structures work at home, and often face a period of adaptation due to prolonged time spent abroad, during which a realistic picture of the home context may be lost. Some of the major factors that obstruct the return migrants' ability to induce change include poor local work ethic, poor working conditions, lack of adequate and modern infrastructure as well as a slow bureaucracy characterized by corruption (Setrana and Tonah 2014, 137). Similar results have been found by Mercier, David, Mahia, and De Arce (2016) studying Ecuadorian return migrants from Spain who have experienced significant cultural interactions with their host society. The returnees who embraced many aspects of the host culture subsequently experience difficulties to reintegrate in their origin country and to interact with the home culture (Mercier et al. 2016).

Another group of researchers has analyzed the social reintegration of returns by identifying returnees' experiences and highlighting the important role of family and social networks as emotional and material support for them.

Kuyper (2008) studied returnees in Vietnam and found that the majority of returnees experienced a negative change in their social relations compared to before they left Vietnam. They experienced a lack of understanding about their return from the side of family, friends, neighbours and people in the community (Kuyper 2008, 19).

There are studies focused on family, social networks and their impact on returnees' life. They are perceived as a support mechanism for the returnees, helping them in different aspects like finding a job, house or emotional support. In Armenia, Fleischer (2008) found that after return, more than half of the sample (54%) received support and assistance from their family. Family members provided psychological and moral support (48%), gave returnees an update in the current situation (41%), (re)established

contacts/networks (29%) and/or assisted in the search for employment (21%) (Fleischer 2008, 11). Another study in Armenia, Chobanyan (2013) found that after return, the family was of great support to the returnees interviewed, both financially and emotionally (Chobanyan 2013, 9).

Social networks and family help and support the reintegration of not only the first generation but also the second generation. Reynolds (2008) studying the return of the second generation in the Caribbean, found that family supported their reintegration by assisting them with practical details of the return such as the building and purchasing of homes, finding work and other employment opportunities, and information concerning duty and tax concessions (Reynolds 2008, 19).

Similar results were found also by Paasche (2016) in studying the return of Iraqi Kurds from Europe, and Crescenzi et al (2016) analyzing returnees to Sardinia (Italy).

Beyond the above-mentioned studies, some other researchers and studies have shown that returnees have experienced mental health issues. Birara (2017) revealed that hopelessness, social isolation and development of low self-esteem prevail in the Saudi Arabian returnees (Birara 2017, 36). While Barrett and Mosca (2012) found feelings of disappointment, isolation, alienation and not belonging among returnees (Barrett and Mosca 2012, 4).

5. Children and Youth in Return Contexts

Within migration studies, with few exceptions, children and youth as a group only recently have 'become visible' (Hunner-Kreisel and Bohne 2016, 4). They have remained outside the focus of migration researchers for a long time, but as migration increases around the world, their interest in the role of migration in children's and youth's well-being is growing. Migration phenomenon affects them either if they migrate together with their families, or if they stay behind with their relatives or acquaintances in the homeland.

In sociological studies, the return of children or youth to the homeland of their parents is known as return of "second generation". They may have left the origin country in their early years or even been born in the destination country. Second generation individuals returning to their parents' country of origin actually move to a country where they were not born and raised in. The "second generation" is not a homogenous group and challenges may be more severe for some children and youth than for others. Children and youth with no experience in their parents' homeland often have problems adjusting to their new location and dealing with issues of identity and belonging. Being born and raised in a different society and culture requires adaptation to the

new environment. The process of socialization is often disrupted as it requires the adoption of norms and values which are often different from those of the destination country where the children were born. Educational integration is of crucial importance for returning children and youth. This is due to an unequal start resulting from the need to adapt to the system and the educational environment, as well as language barriers, which in turn affect the children's educational achievements. They have to adjust to the new educational system in which the content, teachers' attitudes and teaching methods differ from those they are used to. Still, for the children, the return journey and attempts of reintegration can often be overwhelming, especially if they have spent significant parts of their lives (or even were born and raised) in host countries. Since adults are almost never immune against a possible 'return shock', there is an additional special need for children to enjoy the return and reintegration phases without or only limited psychosocial unrest and trauma (Gomilkó et al. 2015, 17-18).

There are some empirical studies which have analysed the children and youth returning to the parents' origin country and the problems of adaptation both in the educational system and in the psycho-social aspect.

Lepore (1986) found that migrant children commonly face problems related to education because of differences between languages, teaching content, and educational methods practiced in the two countries. Kilinc (2014) studying the return of second-generation Turk-Germans to the parents homeland, found that adolescents who came back with their parents had difficulties adapting to the Turkish educational system as well as communication difficulties with people in Turkey. Similar results were also found by Terlikbayeva (2017) studying children returning to Kazakhstan. Li, Zhu and Zuo (2019) empirically estimated the impact of return migration on the mental health of children. The results showed that the experience of return migration has a significant negative impact on children's mental health as measured by depression risk, self-esteem and resilience. Vathi and Duci (2016) found similar results in Albania. The study showed that migration at a young age, even as part of a family's return to their country of origin, can negatively affect children's and young people's psychosocial wellbeing (Vathi and Duci 2016, 63). Second generation children who returned to Japan, who had little exposure to Japanese culture, are described by Fry (2009) as "educational refugees and were regarded as culturally ambiguous, socially marginalized and academically marginalized". Yehuda-Sternfeld and Mirsky (2014) found that the second generation of Israeli-Americans who returned to Israel was surprised and disappointed that they encountered difficulties,

and felt and were treated as strangers (Yehuda-Sternfeld and Mirsky 2014, 61).

6. Conclusion

Worldwide, the number of international migrants is increasing each year; consequently, the movement affects people, the origin country, the destination country and state policies. International return migrants have received increase attention due to the fact that many states are facing the intensifying numbers of returnees and flows of refugees. Hence, there is a need to manage the movements and mitigate the negative consequences associated with it. Even though the focus of this paper is voluntary return, and it is the most preferable alternative, it becomes evident that states face even involuntary return of different categories. International migrants who decide to leave the destination country and return to their homeland are motivated by personal, familiar and economic reasons. The migration experience can be stressful, and so is return migration which can negatively impact the returnees in many aspects: economically, socially and psychologically. The reintegration experiences of return migrants in their home countries have received some attention in the sociological literature, theoretically and empirically. Even though returnees are often faced with difficulties in finding a job because of the local labour market, empirical studies identify that once they are employed; their payment is higher than non-migrants. Also many empirical studies have yielded consensus on the positive relationship between returnees and engagement in entrepreneurial activity. These enterprises are significant contributors to economic growth and alleviating poverty by creating jobs, employment and increasing income for households.

From the social aspect of reintegration, returnees often lack access to networks and friends. They find it difficult to build up new social relations again. Friends and network have a crucial role in facilitating the reintegration process of returnees especially when they first come back. Their support includes finding a job, a house and even emotional support. Some empirical studies have highlighted the feeling of frustration, isolation, and feelings of alienation among returnees. Children and youth who come back to their origin country or that of their parents' face challenges in different aspects; language problems especially for the children and youth born in the destination country, difficulties in the school environment, lack of socialization and mental health issues.

State policies of reintegration play an important role in supporting the returnees and facilitating their social and economic reintegration. The state

can benefit from the returnees and their skills by facilitating the creation of entrepreneurial activities. This policy helps returnees and their family in reintegrating and also creates jobs for non-migrants, helping in the economic growth and prosperity of the country.

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THE BASOVIZZA MONUMENT: CONSTRUCTING MEMORY AND IDENTITY

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Abstract: *The Foiba di Basovizza monument in northeast Italy commemorates victims of mass killings instigated by communist partisans at the end of World War II. These killings are known as “foibe” in the Italian literature. This word has come to signify the “ethnic cleansing” of Italians by Yugoslavians, despite evidence indicating that the majority of victims of these killings were from Slovenia and Croatia and that the killings were politically motivated. The Foiba di Basovizza was designated a national monument in Italy in 2007 and the narrative of “ethnic cleansing” it presents has been accepted throughout Italy as a legitimate version of history. Nationalistic comments made by European Parliament president Antonio Tajani at the monument’s annual commemoration on 10 February 2019, however, sparked international outcry and revealed that the site is still a vortex for longstanding discursive battles over territorial rights and victimhood contests. This paper argues that the Basovizza monument outmaneuvers questions of historical and scientific accuracy by constructing an exclusive notion of Italian identity that galvanizes nationalism and fuels fear of foreign infiltration. My analysis is a case study that investigates how productions of public memory can be used politically to influence the formation of national, ethnic, and cultural identity.*

Key-words: *monuments, memory, identity, nationalism, Foibe, Italy, Slovenia*

1. Introduction

The Foiba di Basovizza monument in northeast Italy, which stands about three kilometers from the Slovenian border, commemorates victims of mass killings instigated by Tito’s communist partisans at the end of World War II. These killings are known as “foibe” (plural of “foiba”) in the Italian literature, a word that has come to signify the “ethnic cleansing” of Italians by Yugoslavians, despite evidence indicating that the majority of victims of these killings were from Slovenia and Croatia and that the killings were politically motivated. Among the victims were Fascist and Nazi military personnel,

Fascist officials, and anyone considered to be a threat to the developing communist regime, including Slovene and Croat landowners and industrialists (Burigo 2005, 320). Recent Slovene scholarship documents research expeditions that have uncovered some mass graves in caves in Slovenia (Dežman 2008; Ferenc 2008; Mihevc 2013, 2017; Podbersič 2016). Their research, and continuing research by scholars at the Study Centre for National Reconciliation in Ljubljana, is informed by ongoing discoveries and excavations of caves in Slovenia that began in the early 2000s, in which remains are analyzed according to established scientific methods. This type of scientific research has not been conducted in Italy, yet foibe commemorative artifacts and events in Italy far outnumber those in Slovenia.

The discovery of mass graves in Slovenia and commemoration of the victims of mass violence is often positioned in competition with remembrance of Nazi and Fascist violence. Discussions of how to memorialize victims are tied to competing understandings of World War II and postwar national history and are mythologized to varying degrees in current political deliberations in Slovenia. In Italy, however, foibe remembrance has successfully been promoted as non-political and is accepted by both right and left. Initially, the inauguration of the site at Basovizza as an Italian national memorial was controversial: ultra-right political actors and nationalist civic organizers constructed the monument and called for its national recognition while opponents said it made claims that lacked evidence and presented a pro-Fascist view of World War II. Since its designation as a national monument in 2007, however, the monument and the narrative of “ethnic cleansing” it presents have been accepted across political divides in Italy as a legitimate version of history.

At the annual commemoration of the monument on 10 February 2019, however, nationalistic comments made by European Parliament president Antonio Tajani sparked international outcry, revealing that the site is still a vortex for longstanding discursive battles over territorial rights and victimhood contests. The situation also shows an attempt, by Tajani, his cohorts, and the many Twitter followers who defended his comments, to energize a concept of Italian national identity that is narrowly defined through the trope of ethnicity. Although this exclusive construction of Italian identity and the rendition of history presented by the Basovizza monument reflect a forceful political stance, the monument normalizes this stance through persuasive rhetorical strategies that work to convince visitors of its neutrality.

My analysis of this monument is an examination of how a public memory artifact can be used to impose a political agenda by enforcing particular

notions of identity. I aim to show here how the monument constructs a specific definition of Italian identity that summons a sense of belonging that is more powerful than empirical evidence. Debates regarding the accuracy of what the monument presents have been rendered moot by a rendition of Italian identity that galvanizes nationalism and fuels fear of foreign infiltration. I propose that this case study speaks to broader global issues, since scientific research is increasingly overshadowed by arguments that revolve around belonging to whichever side of an issue claims to represent truth, often silencing marginalized minorities.

2. Foibe: The Power of Naming

The words “foibe” (plural), “foiba” (singular), and “infoibati” (those killed and thrown and buried in the foibe) are derived from the Latin *fovea*, which, as stated in the leaflet available at Documentation Center (a small, one-room museum at the monument site), refers to the “natural chasms typical of the karst landscape,” which, “since ancient times” have been used “to dispose of objects and corpses which nobody wanted found.” The term “foibe,” states the leaflet, “came into use in 1943, after the discovery on the bottom of some chasms of hundreds of bodies of victims of massacres of that period; in some cases they had been thrown in alive” (Documentation Center Brochure, n.d., n.p.).¹ Stories in the Italian press in and around Trieste began using the word “foibe” to describe more generally any type of Yugoslavian violence against Italians during WW II (Pupo and Spazzali 2003; Fumich 2008; Orecchia 2008; Pirjevec 2009). Thus, the term “through a synecdoche became a way to refer to the whole Yugoslav anti-Italian violence” (Dato 2013, 38). The Basovizza monument further generalizes the term “foibe” by mourning Italy’s territorial loss of Istria after World War II as part of the foibe violence. Italians who lost land or property to Yugoslavia are presented as victims alongside those who were killed and Italy itself is presented as a victim of territorial invasion.

The Foiba di Basovizza monument presents foibe victims as Italian civilians who were subject to an ethnic cleansing campaign instigated by the Yugoslavians. This gives the word “foibe” a highly emotional metaphorical significance by not only referring to horrific physical burial but by suggesting burial of Italian identity. The word invokes what Accati and Cogoy refer to as the “perturbante” (Accati and Cogoy 2010), a pathological fear of annihilation

¹ This leaflet, “Foiba di Basovizza: Monumento Nazionale,” is printed by the Lega Nazionale (LN) in Trieste. The LN is a national civic organization that receives federal funding; the LN in northeast of Italy is controlled by local right-wing political parties.

of self and of identity. The word “foibe,” therefore, coalesces an understanding of Italian identity that is based on the notion of ethnicity and of blood kinship. According to this notion, all Italians *could have* been targeted by the Yugoslavian communist regime, and therefore all Italians can identify with the narrative of victimhood. This rendition of the foibe skews the historical context, omitting the violence carried out by the Fascist regime and the occupation and dismemberment of Yugoslavia during World War II. Instead, it advances a narrative of Yugoslavian westward territorial expansion and presents Italians as a persecuted ethnic group.

Furthermore, unlike memorials in Slovenia, which are constructed at the sites of caves in remote forest areas after scientific analyses of exhumed remains, the Basovizza “foiba” is not even an actual foiba cave. The monument is constructed over a pit from an old mineshaft. A thorough process of exhumation and identification of remains, like those conducted in Slovenia, was never completed after initial explorations of the cave were abandoned soon after the war. The pit has been sealed shut since 1959. By naming the pit a “foiba,” however, the site is imbued with the significance and emotional weight granted by the rhetorical power of the word.

My aim in analyzing the Foiba di Basovizza monument is to identify the strategies that have convinced Italians across political divides to believe that the site is a mass grave where Italians were subjected to “ethnic cleansing.” In what follows, I first explain why monuments are particularly powerful memory artifacts and why I chose the Basovizza monument for this case study rather than any other form of foibe remembrance. Next, I analyze three rhetorical strategies central to the success of the Foiba di Basovizza monument in promoting a particular rendition of memory and Italian identity. The first is the use of mystery as proof. I show how the claim that excavations are impossible is used to create an aura of mystery and calls upon the trope of the unknowable, eliciting belief in a limitless number of victims. The second is the terminology of ethnic cleansing and the appropriation of the terms “genocide” and “holocaust,” terms used in Italy, but not elsewhere, for the foibe (I use “holocaust” in quotes here to refer to the Italian use of the word to describe the foibe; I use Holocaust, capitalized and not framed by quotation marks, to refer to the genocide of Jews, Roma, and thousands of others instigated by the Third Reich). The third strategy I analyze is the mass publicity of the story of a foibe victim named Norma Cossetto, the personality known as the “Anne Frank” of the “Italian holocaust.” An embodiment of traditional Fascist values of beauty, femininity, and patriotism, Norma Cossetto elicits empathy and produces identification with the foibe narrative while equating the foibe in trauma value to the Holocaust.

3. The Power of Memorial Sites

The Foiba di Basovizza monument is one of many forms of foibe remembrance in Italy, which include the television mini-series *Il Cuore nel Pozzo*, which was produced by Italy's national television station and reportedly watched by over six million viewers (Knittel 2014, 172), an array of fictionalized memoirs, public speeches, and a national holiday. I chose to analyze the monument, however, because of the rhetorical power of public memory sites. The monument references these other commemorative artifacts through an interaction of material, visual, and discursive elements, yet, as Endres and Senda-Cook argue, "places, imbued with meaning and consequences, are rhetorical performances" (Endress and Senda-Cook 2011, 260), rather than merely reflections of prior discourses. The monument performs a narrative that summons belief and constructs a particular, and narrow, understanding of Italian identity. Those who identify do so through belief in the shared memory produced by the monument; those who believe can share that memory and identity.

As Maurice Halbwachs initially articulated, memory and identity are co-constituted and memory itself "could not function without words and ideas, instruments the individual has not himself invented but appropriated from his milieu" (Halbwachs 1950, 51). Alison Landsberg asserts that interactive and experiential sites, such as memory places, can enact "prosthetic memory," producing a sense of physical remembrance that "emerges at the interface between a person and a historical narrative" (Landsberg 2004, 2) and becoming "part of one's personal archive of experience, informing one's subjectivity as well as one's relationship to the present and future tenses" (Landsberg 2004, 26). Landsberg argues that increasingly fluid and accessible forms of media make it possible for previously disconnected groups of people to connect through common memory and identity (albeit problematized by cultural hegemonies), yet I argue that, additionally, the connectedness produced by some shared memories can also produce what Reisigl and Wodak refer to as "ingroups and outgroups" (Reisigl and Wodak 2001, 45), that is, a connectedness that is fueled by exclusion and that demands definitions of belonging and not belonging.

According to Dickenson, Blair, and Ott, the physical structure and location of a memory place can "mobilize power in ways not always available with other memory *techné*." (Dickenson, Blair, and Ott 2010, 29). As Edward Casey argues, a memory place "is both attached to a past (typically an originating event of some sort) *and* acts to ensure a future of further remembering of that same event. Public monuments embody this Janusian trait; their very massiveness and solidity almost literally enforce this futurity" (Casey 2004,

17). The Basovizza monument's massive concrete slab, towering cross, and memorial stones bestow a sense of timelessness and claim this contested location, characterized by intermingling populations, shifts in borders, and changes in nationhood, as the site of purely Italian memory. It marks the past in a way that ensures a future in which Italian identity is defined through this narrative of victimhood and sacrifice.

4. Rhetorical Strategies

4.1. Mystery as Proof

A memorial stone at the monument site is inscribed with the words "a section of 500 cubic meters contains infoibati corpses." According to historians Cernigoi (2012, 193; 2018) and Kersevan (2006, 187), however, a photograph of the stone from 1996 shows that the inscription read "a section of 300 cubic meters contains infoibati corpses." The estimated depth of the pit on the memorial stone was changed from 300 to 500 cubic meters, even though the pit has been permanently sealed since 1959. Yet the fact that this change is not based on exploration of the pit and actual measurements has no bearing on the credibility of the claim it makes. The inscribed memorial stone summons belief without question.

The validity of the Foiba di Basovizza relies on the claim that further exploration of the pit, and discovery and excavation of any other foibe in Italy, are impossible. Although this claim is disproved by the ongoing excavation missions of caves in Slovenia, Italian foibe remembrance disregards these missions and their findings. At the Foiba di Basovizza, lack of evidence is used to impart an aura of mystery to the pit and to present the horror of the foibe as an Italian trauma too vast to ever comprehend. Initial explorations were conducted in 1945 by the Allied Military Government after local inhabitants reported that Yugoslavians had thrown Italians they had shot into the pit.² The explorations were called off shortly after they had begun, however, due

² From a memo written by Alexander Kirk, US Ambassador to Italy 1944-1946, and sent to U.S. Secretary of State, Washington, D.C., June 22, 1945, received June 23; Number 2725; DC/L:MAS:MEM 7/18/45; 16-248-1; Unclassified/Declassified Holdings of the National Archives (U/DHNA); National Archives Trust Fund (NWCT-2R/Room # 2710); National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD (NACP).

to hazardous conditions.³ In 1948 a team of Italian speleologists led by police inspector Umberto De Giorgi attempted to excavate the pit. De Giorgi and his team exhumed the bodies of German as well as Italian soldiers, a Soviet officer, and Slovene civilians (Pirjevec 2009, 141-147, quoted in Dato 2013, 41), yet their initial explorations of the pit were abandoned before completion. In 1953 a scrap metal company “declared that it was able to reach the bottom of the abyss without encountering any corpses” (Dato 2013, 41). What appeared in the local Italian press during these years, however, were not these inconclusive findings but estimations of how many corpses could fit into the pit based on mathematical calculations: for example, if five bodies could fit per cubic meter and the pit were estimated to be more than 600 square meters, the total number of victims could potentially be more than 3000. Articles reporting these calculations swayed public opinion and helped transmit the notion that, as De Giorgi stated, the Basovizza mine shaft was “the biggest natural burial ever heard of” (Pupo and Spazzali 2003, 233, quoted in Dato 2013, 42), even though it was not even a “natural” cavity.

Local veterans’ groups, priests, and the Lega Nazionale, an association whose stated purpose is to promote Italian culture, organized commemorations and Masses at the mine shaft site that drew larger and larger crowds. In 1959 the pit was sealed shut with a concrete slab at a Mass attended by over two thousand people. The dedication of the concrete slab signaled a shift in the conceptualizing of the pit. Queries about empirical evidence and scientific research were ousted by Catholic iconography and terminology, evident in the writings of Flaminio Rocchi, the priest who dedicated the concrete slab and the memorial stone whose estimated depth inscription was changed. Rocchi refers to the “Calvary of the Infoibati,” the victims’ “via crucis,” and “il cammino verso il sacrificio” – the path towards the sacrifice. As historian Pamela Ballinger states, “Rocchi depicts these victims in Christ-like terms” and “as having been sacrificed for the sins of others” (Ballinger 2003, 141).

Mystery regarding numbers of victims and lack of evidence worked in tandem with the Catholic narrative of martyrdom: we need not, and dare not, ask for physical proof if we believe in the power of the sacrifice. Belief in this mystery, promoted by Italian nationalist organizations and Catholic priests, is tied to a normative view of Italian identity. In a region historically

³ From memos submitted by the Eighth Army Headquarters to U.S. Secretary of State, July 1, 1945; AFHQ/A GSI (b); M 465 I. U/DHNA; NWCT-2R/Room # 2710; File No. G-1/Br/15110/-3. 10 July 1945; U/DHNA; NWCT-2R/Room # 2710; NACP.

characterized by competing claims of autochthony between Italian-speaking and Slovene-speaking populations, belief in the Catholicized, mystery-imbued Basovizza “foiba” grants membership to the category of “true” Italian – an Italian identity that is white, Catholic, not Slavic, and not immigrant.

4.2. Terminology of Ethnic Cleansing

Rebranding the foibe as ethnic cleansing was a crucial step in lifting the narrative of the Foiba di Basovizza from its local context to a national stage. Recasting foibe discourse in ethnic terminology silences political controversy by presenting the narrative as an unarguable human rights concern. Additionally, this terminology deflects attention away from Italy’s intense political rivalries after World War II and instead focuses on linking the foibe killings to the “esodo,” the mass departure of Italians from Istria when it was allocated to Yugoslavia in 1947.⁴ This linkage promotes the notion of an ethnically homogeneous population of Italians who were being “cleansed” from territory overtaken by Yugoslavian expansionism.

With the foibe conceptualized as acts of ethnic cleansing, the Foiba di Basovizza invites visitors to understand themselves as potential victims, potential “infoibati.” This allows the monument to work through what Barbie Zelizer calls “the subjunctive voice” (Zelizer 2004, 157). “Technically defined as the mood of a verb used to express condition or hypothesis, the subjunctive creates a space of possibility, hope, and liminality through which spectators might relate to images” (Zelizer 2004, 163). The monument coalesces the notion of “Italians” by creating a space of horrific possibility of mass extermination. By presenting Italian lives lost as sacrificial deaths, the monument conjures hope through the act of remembering the so-called genocide.

A combination of circumstances in Italy and internationally influenced the public acceptance of the ethnic cleansing narrative. Political scandals in the early 1990s led to a complete overhaul of the Italian government, resulting in disorganization of the left and an energizing and coalescing of the right. Several prominent historians published works in the early and mid-1990s that devalued the largely communist-led Italian Resistance in World War II and rehabilitated Fascist soldiers. The breakup of Yugoslavia brought the terminology of ethnic cleansing and genocide into Western European public discourse, providing a “ready-made label for the foibe” (Franzineti 2006, 89) and giving Italians “new occasions to denounce the Slavs as wild animals”

⁴ Most of Istria is now part of Croatia, with a small area in the north that is part of Slovenia.

(Wolff 2006, 112). The terminology of ethnic cleansing churned up longstanding antagonism between Italian-speaking and Slovene-speaking populations along the border to construct a notion of “Italian” as an ethnic category, as a discrete ethnic group that could be distinguished biologically from “Slav,” the opposing and equally fabricated discrete “ethnic” group.

Terminology and the names we give things shape the way we conceptualize and understand reality. In his articulation of the “terministic screen,” Kenneth Burke states “not only does the nature of our terms affect the nature of our observations, in the sense that the terms direct the attention [sic] to one field rather than to another. Also, *“many of the ‘observations’ are but implications of the particular terminology in terms of which the observations are made”* (Burke 1966, 46). The terminology of ethnic cleansing directs attention towards a definition of Italian identity based on blood kinship and presents the foibe as an exclusively Italian tragedy. It creates a terministic screen that masks the memory of the vast numbers of Slovene, Croatian, Roma, and many other non-Italian victims of mass violence and that excludes understandings of “Italian” that are complicated by ethnic, linguistic, and cultural hybridity, immigration, and many other incarnations of difference.

4.3. Norma Cossetto

The monument guides visitors past the outdoor memorial stones and their Catholicized inscriptions that honor martyrdom, sacrifice, and Italian unity and into a small museum called the Documentation Center. Inside the building visitors can read a series of panels describing the events of the foibe and can watch a DVD of personal testimonies about the “esodo.” Nostalgic descriptions of beautiful Italian homes that were taken over by Yugoslavia and depictions of the bucolic days of Italian Istria are intertwined with horrific descriptions of mass extermination in the foibe, and all are brought to life through the character of Norma Cossetto, the “Anne Frank” of the Italian “holocaust.” Her sepia-toned photograph is a familiar icon in foibe discourse and is displayed prominently in the Documentation Center.

Like Anne Frank, Norma Cossetto dies only because of her ethnicity. In a circular logic, then, she affirms a definition of “Italian” as an ethnic group. She echoes the trope of mystery as evidence; unlike Anne Frank, Norma Cossetto never produced a diary, and her life and death, like the unknowable numbers of victims who might possibly lie buried in the unexplored pit, are only documented in fictionalized texts. Nonetheless, Norma Cossetto is one of the most salient symbols of the foibe and she is the subject of fictionalized

memoirs, social media sites, a film, and a graphic novel.⁵ According to an account by Arrigo Petacco, echoed by many other authors, Norma Cossetto was a 23-year-old university student in Istria when she was captured and arrested by Croatian communists in 1943 and subjected to “every kind of agony” (Petacco 2000, 61). She is said to have died “per l’italianità dell’Istria,” for the Italian-ness of Istria, after an “excruciating via crucis” (Petacco 2000, 62). Norma Cossetto animates the notion of a Catholicized Italian “holocaust” through the character of an innocent and vibrant young girl who is transformed into a sacrificial character, a martyr whose death saves Italian identity by suggesting the possibility of resurrection through her memory.

5. Conclusion

The Foiba di Basovizza monument illustrates how identity construction can outmaneuver politically contentious questions of historical accuracy. While researchers in Slovenia seek to find accurate information about victims of mass violence through established scientific methods, monuments in Slovenia that commemorate victims of postwar communist mass killings do not rally the nation the way the Foiba di Basovizza does in Italy. Movements towards reconciliation in Slovenia have only deepened political divisions and heightened memory contests. In Italy, on the other hand, Italian foibe remembrance has evaded obligations to scientific research and historical accuracy yet appeals to Italians across political divides. The Foiba di Basovizza deploys mystery, “ethnic cleansing” terminology, and the heavily publicized heroine character, Norma Cossetto, in order to construct a rendition of the foibe that is understood as a narrative about human rights rather than a political issue.

⁵ See, for example, Giuseppina Mellace *Una Grande Tragedia Dimenticata: La Vera Storia Delle Foibe* (NewtonCompton, 2014); Emanuele Merlino and Beniamino Delvecchio, *Foiba rossa. Norma Cossetto, Storia di un’Italiana* (Ferrogallico, 2018); Gianni Oliva, *Foibe: Le stragi negte degli italiani della Venezia Giulia e dell’Istria* (Mondadori, 2002); and the 2018 film *Red Land (Rosso Istria)*, in which “Norma Cossetto emerges as a key figure - a young Istrian woman, student of the University of Padua, barbarically raped and murdered by Tito’s partisans - chosen for this brutal crime only because she was guilty of being Italian” (quoted from the IMDb website: https://www.imdb.com/title/tt7548328/?ref_=ttpl_pl_tt).

This reinvention of public memory rhetoric enacts a specific notion of Italian identity that cuts a boundary between those who belong and those who do not. This boundary separates so-called “true” Italians from multicultural and multilingual populations, such as those living in Italy’s border regions. Furthermore, as Tajani’s comments illustrate, this boundary can be useful in fueling a fear of immigrants, energizing a distrust of many types of difference, and promoting exclusionary actions in political and civic arenas. Basovizza is a vivid example of a monument that is palatable across Italy’s political spectrum because the spectrum itself has veered towards a right-wing agenda, affirming a notion of “pure” Italians based on exclusion and calling upon values that are no longer considered Fascist, but are seen as Italian.

In order to move towards just and equitable remembrance and to take steps towards reconciliation today, I ask whether it might be useful, for the purposes of honoring the dead, to dislodge the remembrance of crimes committed by totalitarian regimes from comparisons of left- and right-wing ideologies. I propose that it could be beneficial to find alternate terminology that separates violent acts instigated by totalitarian regimes from the modern political spectrum that incorporates functional democratic political systems that necessitate deliberation and open elections. Nazism, Fascism, and Communism are totalitarian regimes whose similarities in intention and action are far more significant than their differences in political ideology.⁶ In commemorating lives lost, is it productive to align perpetrators and victims with left- and right-wing ideologies? This alignment only perpetuates divides, reinforces assumptions and stereotypes about allegiances, and generates victimhood contests in a world in which many families suffered severe losses instigated by more than one totalitarian regime.

⁶ Although some might contend that Fascism was never a totalitarian regime, I argue that it was because it carried out violent measures against those who questioned its practices. It was the Italian journalist Giovanni Amendola who coined the term “totalitarian” in 1923 to describe Fascism. Amendola wrote on May 12, 1923 that the “Fascist refusal to allow the opposition to prepare and present its list for the election is a ‘totalitarian system’ (*sistema totalitaria*) as opposed to the ‘majoritarian’ and ‘minoritarian’ systems previously prevailing” (Gleason 14). Amendola was beaten to death by Fascists four years later.

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BETWEEN THE STATE AND CIVIL SOCIETY: ANTI-CORRUPTION DISCOURSE OF MOVEMENTS AND NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS IN RUSSIA

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Abstract: *The main objective of the article is to define the main strategies of discourse of an anti-corruption civil society (ACS) and to analyse functioning of its main models, which are presented by the activity of three organisations: The All-Russia People's Front, the Transparency International–Russia, and the Anti-Corruption Foundation. For this analysis, we selected the content analysis and critical discourse analysis of anti-corruption investigations and used other documents demonstrating the organisations' activities. According to the research results, all three models exist in Russia but their correlation is asymmetric. All-Russia People's Front acts on behalf of the state as the main anti-corruption agent. Transparency International presents itself as a part of the global anti-corruption movement based on the principles of professionalism and political independency. The Anti-Corruption Foundation declares that state authorities are corrupt and therefore cannot fight against corruption using adequate measures. The asymmetry of the models presented is determined by the lack of checks and balances in the country, where the state presents itself as the single agent of curbing corruption and creates fictive anti-corruption civil society.*

Key-words: *corruption, civil society, anti-corruption organisations, movements, state, content analysis, critical discourse analysis*

1. Introduction

The problem of corruption is a complex phenomenon with multiple causes and effects, as it takes on various forms and functions in different contexts. Corruption is traditionally defined as abuse of public power for private gain. The definition of corruption varies depending on different approaches and types of corruption. In this article, we will focus on the political corruption that can be described as “a hidden exchange between public agent and a third party” (Della Porta, Vannucci 1999, 17) that violates public trust and

effectiveness of political institutions (Wedel 2012). Such exchanges can involve not only public officials and heads of public enterprises as the main agents, but also other persons and groups that are indirectly involved in different sorts of corruption deals (bribes, cartels, conflicts of interests, etc.). The sociological approach to corruption includes the differences in cultural traditions and values in different countries. Some authors recognise the correlation between corruption and social conditions, and the level of democracy (Mungiu-Pippidi 2013; Karklins 2005; Rothstein 2011). According to them, corruption can be considered as a problem of collective action, especially in a context of systemic corruption (Rothstein 2011, 231). In this case, systematic corruption becomes a self-sustained phenomenon where the corruption behaviour “facilitate the emergence of new norms” (Della Porta, Vannucci 1999, 255) and lead to more and more corrupt institutions and standards. Corruption turns into the vicious circle, and the majority of anti-corruption measures appear to be ineffective or even can be substituted by imitation of anti-corruption activity that in reality can promote or hide further corrupt practices.

One of the necessary mechanisms of anti-corruption policy is controlling corruption through civil society involvement. At the same time, there are some problems with the civil society participation in anti-corruption work. For instance, according to the World Bank, there is an overwhelming lack of legitimacy and credibility for civil society when dealing with governance in fighting corruption (Civil Society Involvement 2014).

For these reasons, the social movements and actors combatting corruption and their functions in this activity need to be systematically analysed.

Anti-corruption mechanisms and politics work both on domestic and international level, in public, non-governmental and private sector. There are some difficulties in identifying these actors and relationships between the international and domestic, state and civil society agents. The anti-corruption civil society includes two main aspects. Broadly, it includes “individuals and groups outside the public sector” (UNCAC 2004, art. XIII). This aspect includes not only different sorts of non-governmental organisations (NGOs), community and business associations, but it also presupposes participation of citizens outside formal organisations (The World Bank’s Strategy 2006, 17) In this aspect, the anti-corruption civil society may also include active individuals, journalists, local activists, etc. The other aspect, the “narrow” one, refers to the so-called “institutionalised civil society” (Holloway 2002) that includes anti-corruption NGOs and other formal organisations and associations specializing in anti-corruption issues.

The general role of civil society is defined as its large contribution in building trust in society (Putnam 1993) and creating democratic culture (Foa, Ekiert 2017; Themudo 2013) The main functions of ACS include the following areas: research and other related activities; advocacy works in some corruption cases; raising public awareness about corruption issues; proposing action plans for fighting corruption; monitoring government activity and decisions; providing leadership to remove corrupt leaders at national and local levels, etc. Carr and Outhwaite (2011) generalized these types of activities into four large groups: (1) raising awareness; (2) stakeholder engagement; (3) research; and (4) advocacy and monitoring.

The anti-corruption roles and effects of civil society in its narrow and broad aspects are determined by different factors depending on the social, economic, and political situation in the specific country, and need to be analysed by taking these factors into account. For this reason, the main objective of this article is to define the main strategies of discourse of Russian anti-corruption movements and organisations.

As a country with long traditions of corruption, Russia is a good example of different sorts of anti-corruption organisations and movements that try to fight corruption, especially on the high political level. At the same time, last non-democratic changes put the civil society's functioning in this sphere to inconvenience if it criticises the existed political elites that become less and less transparent and accountable. As a result, civil society's anti-corruption activity is controlled by the state. However, some movements continue their activity despite of the state pressure.

For our research, we have chosen the three most famous Russian organisations specialising in anti-corruption investigations and presenting different forms of anti-corruption movements – state-linked, international and domestic. In order to study their discourse, we will use quantitative (content-analysis), and qualitative (critical discourse analysis) methods. Amongst the issues that we identify as particularly important to be investigated are as follows:

1. The anti-corruption investigations are usually aimed at political elites' and public officials' corrupt behaviour that enables the tension between the state and civil society organisations.
2. Results and impacts of these investigations depend on the organisations' status and their relations with the state. These relations, in their turn, are associated with certain Russian social and political circumstances.

3. The government imitates anti-corruption civil activity by using state-linked civil society, and tries to control other civic agents fighting corruption.
4. In these conditions, other anti-corruption civil society organisations (domestic and international) try to build ties with the state by using specific strategies and forms of activity that are presented in their publications.

Accordingly, the main research questions are as follows:

- What are the main focuses of different organisations' anti-corruption investigations and evaluation of their impact? What factors can explain similarities and differences between the organisations' activities?
- How does each organization present its own relation with the state? How does it depend on the status and type of organization?

This paper is structured into three main sections as follows. Following this introductory section, we will examine the situation with anti-corruption civil society around the world and consider the three main types of ACS. The second section of the paper is a presentation of methodology of research. The third section focuses on the main dimensions and results of different organisations' anti-corruption investigations. After that, we will review the main strategies of civil society's anti-corruption discourse. The final section contains the concluding provisions.

2. New challenges for anti-corruption civil society

It seems to be obvious that the government of any country should consider anti-corruption civil society (ACS) as an independent monitoring tool of their activity. However, in fact, certain deviations from this ideal model are in evidence that could demonstrate different agents' authoritative resources and different forms of ACS's interrelation with the state institutions.

Civil society is broadly defined as a system of groups, organised as a source of political or social power, independent from the government, which serve the function of promoting citizenship (Hudson 2003), fostering collective action based on horizontal ties and social trust (Putnam 1993). Civil society is also defined more narrowly as non-government, non-commercial or public organisations (NGOs). The relations with the state are crucial for civil society organisations because they are intended to protect rights of different social groups, and to maintain the system of checks and balances between the state and society. However, these characteristics often hardly apply to post-soviet

countries where the governments do not have sufficient political will to have independent partners, and citizens are not ready to be engaged in civic dialogue and policy making. Researchers agree that Russian civil society is one in which the state is more closely related to civil society than in other countries (Grzegorz and Kubik 2014). The Russian civil society's dependence from the state has increased over the past years and put obstacles for democratic processes in Russia. The sphere of anti-corruption work is the most problematic area in such conditions, because it needs to be "truly independent" from the government to make it more transparent and accountable (Buxton and Konovalova 2013).

The weakness of the civil society in Russia is explained by the lack of "bottom-up" initiatives, which are considered to be a part of soviet legacy (Cook and Vinogradova 2006) and by the blurry line between political and civil spheres (McFaul and Tryger 2004; Chebankova 2013). In 2017, only 4.8 percent of citizens were members of civil society organisations (Rossija v cifrah 2018). CSO activities in Russia are mainly focused on social issues – assistance to disabled people; prevention of social orphanhood; work in orphanages. Advocacy and environmental organizations today are in an absolute minority. According to the data of the monitoring of the state of civil society, the proportion of Russians participating in at least one NGO activity decreased from 19 to 16% from 2009 to 2015 (Doklad o sostojanii grazhdanskogo obshhestva 2017). Since 2011, programs of support for socially oriented non-profit organizations have appeared at the federal level and in a number of regions. On the other hand, there is an opposite tendency to increase control and pressure on the activities of NGOs working primarily in the human rights field. The most notable and widely discussed step in this direction was the adoption of amendments to legislation introducing the status of "foreign agents" for NGOs (Informacionno-analiticheskij bjulleten'... 2016). Since 2005, NGOs' activity is supported by the government in the form of President's grants. However, majority of money was given for the charity or social projects (Kolomiets 2017).

In our research, we will study anti-corruption organisations that present themselves as a part of civil society or movement aiming to fight against corruption in Russia. For the sake of classification of ACS, we will consider three models (Holloway 2002, Moroff and Schmidt-Pfister 2010): (1) state-linked civil society, which is created or absorbed by the state institutes or ruling parties; (2) international civil society as the main provider of anti-corruption policy around the world, and (3) traditional "bottom-up" model of "domestic" civil society.

The first model is characteristic of the countries with weak civil society, e.g. post-communist countries or countries with authoritarian regimes. ACS should have sufficient social resources to successfully confront with current corrupt elites. Otherwise, such elites, being more resourceful and powerful, could suppress them. As a result, NGOs may be absorbed by the state institutions or ruling parties. The impact of civic activity in this model also depends on the characteristics and level of collaboration with governmental structures and on the state's political parties will to move in the same direction with civil society. Andersson and Heywood (2008) admit inevitable complications in breaking the "vicious circle" of corruption in the countries where it is strongly embedded in economic and social life. Anti-corruption rhetoric in such situation turns into the tautology, because "monitoring devices and punishment regimes should be largely ineffective since there will simply be no actors that have an incentive to hold corrupt officials accountable" (Persson, Rothstein, and Teorell 2013, 450).

The second model represents "the western donors' model of an NGO" (Holloway 2002, 19). The global NGOs' actions around the world are aimed at raising people's awareness about the harm of corruption and elaborating some tools and knowledge for effective implementation of national anti-corruption policies. The leader among them on a global level is Transparency International (TI) founded in 1993 with branches in over 100 countries. Lately, here has been certain criticism related to international civil society efforts in curbing corruption. It is mainly based on the fact that these efforts create a framework for stigmatising some countries as "corrupt" by measuring the corruption level (e.g. Corruption Perception Index) and ignoring contextual factors and specific national conditions (Andersson and Heywood 2008; Bukovansky 2006; Smiljov and Dorosiev 2012; Gephart 2009.). Authors also have doubts about the positive impact of international anti-corruption campaigns sponsored and controlled from abroad in developing and post-soviet countries, especially through activation of grass-roots movements (Andersson and Heywood 2008; Bukovansky 2006). Researchers point out the neoliberal context of the international anti-corruption organisations' activity and their indirect control over less developed countries by using anti-corruption measures and campaigns (Gebel 2012; Hindess 2005).

The last, third type of ACS is a traditional "bottom-up" model of activity. Such organisations are usually called "domestic NGOs" because they are created initiatively for local or national purposes when corruption creates obstacles for doing business or causes inequality and poverty. These movements include not only civil society organisations and their supporters

but also the representatives of the groups that suffer from corruption most of all (Mungiu-Pippidi 2013). Sampson (2010) considers the groups of local activists, who do not have such developed tools and try to adapt their work to local conditions, in contrast to the international anti-corruption “industry”.

All three models of ACS can demonstrate contention or even confrontation between agents that stay behind different types of civil society: public authorities, international organisations, political parties, business organisations, media, and local activists. “The existing anti-corruption consensus is problematic” (Gephart 2009, 32) because in some post-communist countries the co-existing of different types of anti-corruption agents turns into struggle for the power. In that regard, the main objective of our research is to reveal how these three models of anti-corruption organisations work in Russian social and political circumstances.

Corruption is a big problem in Russia. In 2017, Russia’s CPI rating was 135th among 180 countries with the score of 2.9. Both petty and grand corruption in Russia is the result of soviet legacy and the consequence of lack of transparency and accountability of Russian authorities. Forms of corruption in Russia are undergoing serious changes; corruption is no longer associated with bribery as such. Corruption practices are shifting to a higher level and taking forms of a conflict of interest, violation of prohibitions and restrictions for public and officials, non-declaration of income or illegal enrichment (Percova et al. 2018). In 2018, 75 percent of Russian citizens believed that level of corruption in the country is high; in 2014, 66 percent had such an opinion (Uroven' korrupcii v Rossii 2018).

In 2008, the Anti-corruption Act passed in Russia, and the National Anti-Corruption strategy was introduced by the former President Dmitry Medvedev in 2010. Every two years the National Anti-corruption Plan is updated. According to the National Anti-Corruption Strategy, one of the key areas of its implementation is “ensuring the involvement of civil society institutions in countering corruption” (National Anti-Corruption Strategy 2010). However, we can see very little information about the concrete forms of civil society’s participation in this process in the National Anti-corruption Plans.

After EU enlargement and with Russia actively engaged in different international initiatives, the country has been involved in many global economic, political, social, and cultural projects. One of them was anti-corruption agenda. At the same time, during that period, the government also initiated many projects for studying corruption. Since 2008, Russia has enjoyed some success in creating institutes for preventing petty corruption at the level of ordinary people’s relation with public official in solving everyday

problems. The institutes of public transparency and accountability, hot lines and online systems of whistleblowing were established for state and business organizations. Every municipal authority was subject to organised anti-corruption monitoring and research of people's attitudes about corruption, and their satisfaction of anti-corruption policy (Sostojanie bytovoј korrupcii 2010).

The state's anti-corruption activity during that period was primarily aimed at arresting and prosecuting corrupt officials (mostly heads or employers of regional or municipal administrations, ministries, and governmental agencies). For the past few years, the general number of citizens convicted for corruption offences has increased three times from 2012 to 2017 (Dannye sudebnoj statistiki 2018).

The new age of anti-corruption agenda started after March 2017, when thousands of people went out to the streets for the protest against corruption. Such protests have been led by Alexey Navalny, the head of the Anti-corruption Foundation, and inspired by his movie "Do not call him Dimon". This movie shows the results of the investigation of secret property owned by the Russian Chairman of the Government Dmitry Medvedev. People from 85 cities participated in protest demonstrations, totalling about 150,000 participants, about 1,000 people were arrested afterwards. Any civil society's anti-corruption activity was put on hold. Vladimir Putin said that no anti-corruption organisations and committees will be created in Russia, because their main goal is destabilising political situation in the country (Garmonenko 2017). Over the past few years, Russian government has opposed every international anti-corruption campaign in Russia, and considered global anti-corruption movements as potential threat to national security and a "Trojan horse of subversive foreign powers" (Moroff and Schmidt-Pfister 2010).

The civil society's anti-corruption activity has been marginalised, and even demonstrated as anti-state or extremist. Thus, the role of civil society in anti-corruption activity is very unclear in Russia, and is thinly represented in the laws and regulations. At the same time, there are some anti-corruption organisations and movements that try to fight against corruption in different ways. One of them is anti-corruption investigations that provide "naming and shaming" and raising people's awareness against corruption. This activity has become one of the main tools of Russian anti-corruption civil society.

3. Methodology

We have selected three organisations corresponding to the three models of anti-corruption civil society organisations functioning. The first one includes

the so called “official” or state-linked organisation actively supported by the state: All-Russian People’s Front “For Russia” (APF) implementing a project “For honest procurements” (Za chestnye zakupki 2018). This organisation manifests itself as “social movement”, and “a new form of institutionalisation of political participation and civic activism that is supposed to be a mediator between the state and civil society” (Kandyba 2015). The organisation was founded in 2011 at the Vladimir Putin’s initiative. Despite their positioning as an innovative form of organisations, they share similarities with the soviet time’s Pioneer and Komsomol organisations and the youth movement “Nashi” as a quasi-civil society organisation (Hemment 2012; Heller 2008). We can call this organisation a “state-linked movement” because it has direct relation to the President. At the same time, its representatives outline their distance from the state and informal character of their functioning. Among their activities (volunteering, patriotic, ecological etc.), this movement conducts anti-corruption investigations in the sphere of public procurement. This organisation is a good example of integration into the “vertical power” arrangements (Ljubownikow, Crotty, and Rodgers 2013) and Russia’s GONGOs (Government-Organised Non-Governmental Organisations) as an “ersatz social movement” (Hemment 2012; Robertson 2010; Cheskin and March 2015). The most famous international anti-corruption organisation is presented by Russian TI-chapter (TI). It was founded in 2000 and, among other forms of activity, has been conducting anti-corruption investigations for the last three years. The domestic part of anti-corruption movement is presented by the Anti-corruption Foundation (AF) led by oppositional politician Alexey Navalny. This NGO lays emphasise on the totally corrupt state system, where majority of top-level officials, including the President, are closely connected with business or have undeclared property and incomes.

At the first stage of the research, the content analysis of anti-corruption investigations was conducted. The web-documents (publications on the organisations’ web sites) containing the results of corrupt cases investigations and corrupt individuals’ ‘naming and shaming’ have been analysed (totally 455 documents from January 2015 until April 2018.)

The following categories were taken for this analysis:

1. Year of publication
2. Actors of corrupt behaviour or interaction (agent/client)
3. Benefits for actors
4. Organisation’s actions following the result of investigation
5. Consequences of investigation and their evaluation by authors
6. Types of evidence and materials used for the investigation

The number of publications of every organisation are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Number of publications and their percentage in a year

Year	AF	TI	APF	Total
2018	8 (8.5)	7(7.3)	15(5.7)	30 (6.6)
2017	30(31.9)	56(58.3)	70(26.4)	156(34.3)
2016	37(39.4)	20(20.8)	92(34.7)	156(34.3)
2015	19(20.2)	13(13.5)	88(33.2)	145(31.9)
Total	94(100)	96(100)	265(100)	455(100)

Source: Author.

At the second stage of our analysis, we have applied the method of critical discourse analysis (CDA) to the anti-corruption discourse. There are two main features of CDA: its intensity in studying social problems and studying inequality and power (Van Dijk 2001). The anti-corruption discourse reproduces many agents and their interactions, which can also make the anti-corruption discourse the subject matter of CDA. The main research question of our study is: how does anti-corruption discourse present civil society institutions aimed at implementation of power of different sorts of actors, and what strategies are used for that? This fairly general question needs to be concretised. For that purpose, we have taken different anti-corruption organisations' documents (anti-corruption investigations, materials from their web-sites, social media, informational booklets, reports, toolkits, speeches, and interviews in the public media of Russian nongovernmental anti-corruption organisations and their representatives (572 documents).

The important direction of CDA is the implementation of strategies of the discourse. They can be used for different purposes and must have some connection with and the logic of the "positive self-presentation and the negative presentation of others" (Wodak 2011, 49). The strategy can be defined as the conceptual project of actions and practices directed or adapted for the achievement of political, social or cultural purposes by using some linguistic options (Fairclough 1992, 64). The first level of analysis includes *referential strategies*, "by which social actors are constructed and represented" (Wodak 2011, 49). On this stage, it is also necessary to show the different actors' point of view on corruption, its reasons, and the main ways of its curbing.

Another objective is to find out the principles, strategies and directions of the participants' relationships and roles (Van Dijk 2009). We will call them

the strategies of legitimising (KrosravNik 2013, 199). Legitimation includes verification of actors' activities and creates behavioural models that are based on certain view of the world. In our study, we will consider how the anti-corruption organisations explain their activity and justify their objectives.

What can be found out as a result of the analysis? It can be the logic of the discourse and certain relations between the actors, their behaviour and ideas. Van Dijk defines this construct as "topoi" (a worldview), specific social knowledge presented in strategies, oppositions and in perspective. (Van Dijk 2009, 83-85). Topoi can be defined as interrelated propositions that guarantee compliance with the intended regulations, rules or ideas (Wodak 2011, 50). At this stage, we evidence the "positive self-presentation and the negative presentation of others"; in other words, the "topoi" structure shows how the anti-corruption discourse presents the main actors' positions and their relations of power in the anti-corruption field. As a rule, the "corruption/anti-corruption" opposition can imply different meanings and agents that "tend to negate and substitute each other in the course of political struggle" (Kajsi 2014, 38).

4. Anti-corruption investigations in Russia: the main dimensions and results

The results of content analysis are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. The results of content analysis (percentage from the total amount of cases)

	AF	TI	APF
Agents of corruption			
Representative of federal authorities	56.4	20.8	1.1
Representative of regional (local, municipal) authorities	29.8	63.5	55.1
Representative of public (municipal) enterprises	8.5	18.8	38.9
Individual(s) associated with authorities	23.4	7.3	0.1
Representative of business	2.1	0	6
Representative of NGOs	0	1	0
Types of corrupt behaviour			
Misappropriation of goods	34	2.1	1.5
Abuse of power	2.1	10.4	0.4
Bribery	4.3	0	0

Conflict of interest	17	28.1	1.1
Money laundering	3.2	4.2	0
Cartel, collusion	22.3	13.5	8.7
Embezzlement	2.1	3.1	0
Revolving doors	4,3	15.6	0.4
Proceeds concealment	31.9	17.7	0.4
Discrepancy between property and income	17	3.1	0.4
Irregularities in public procurement	30.9	29.2	30.9
Offshore manipulations	8.5	7.3	0
Expensive purchases in public procurement	6.4	7.3	61.5
Ineffective use of the state budget	4.3	5.2	6.7
Consequences of the organisation's actions			
Case filed	7.5	5.2	3.8
Party in fault convicted	2.2	3.1	1.9
No response	8.6	8.3	3.8
Agent denies its involvement	6.7	3.1	1.5
Prosecution refused	8.6	6.3	4.9
The case is under official verification	4.3	3.1	9.6
Resignation	2.2	7.3	0.4
Recognition of misbehaviour	6.5	16.7	32.1
No information about consequences	55.9	53.1	54
Evaluation of consequences of investigations			
Excellent	3.2	12.5	22.3
Positive	18.1	16.7	18.5
Not clear	63.8	54.2	54.7
Negative	14.9	16.7	4.5
Evidence used in investigations			
Documents	69.1	84.3	-
Video from drone	39.4	1.2	-
Photo	47.9	8.4	-
Testimony	2.1	-	-
Social media materials	9.6	3.6	-
Media	13.8	25.3	-
Analytical materials	13.8	43.4	-

Source: Author

The main agents (subjects of corrupt behaviour) of anti-corruption investigations are public officials of different levels. In AF's investigations these are federal public officials – ministers, deputies, members of government, and Administration of the President. TI's and APF's investigations are conducted with respect to the representatives of regional and municipal authorities and public enterprises.

The most popular type of corruption is related to irregularities in public procurement. The main sphere of AF's interest is misappropriation of goods (estate, lands, public money, luxury cars, or yachts). This organisation also often investigates cases of financial crime, proceeds concealment, land capture and appropriation of public property. TI is mostly interested in cases concerning conflicts of interest, and APF – in expensive and luxury purchases during the procurement.

The main objective of anti-corruption investigations is “naming and shaming”, drawing attention to the facts of corruption. For this reason, the main form of the organisations' activity is publication of information related to corrupt behaviour. In our research, we marked the “publication” variant only in case if it was the only form of the organisation's activity following the results of investigation. Such actions prevail in AF's materials. First of all, it is explained by the fact that this organisation often publishes materials about high-ranking public officials or politicians, therefore appealing to public authorities could be ineffective. Indeed, 30 percent of “only publication” results are usually connected with high-ranking corrupt agents. Another reason could be insufficient amount and quality of evidence of corruption. APF prefer to appeal directly to the agent's organisation because they act on behalf of the federal authority and can expect to succeed. TI often appeals to the Antimonopoly Service and Prosecution Authority. In most cases, the consequences of investigation are not clear or not presented. APF receives the largest fraction of feedbacks on their appeals in comparison with other organisations. As a rule, such feedback represents the admission of misconduct and does not always lead to specific sanctions. APF as a state-linked organisation has the biggest number of successful outcomes. In most cases, they involve recognition of misconduct and cancellation of public procurement.

The evaluation of investigation was identified as excellent if the case was closed. It means that suspicious deal was cancelled, the party in fault was convicted or fired, etc., and the authors are very satisfied with the outcome. Positive evaluation was given in case if misconduct was recognised but no decision was rendered. Negative evaluation means that there was no reaction or refusal regarding the appeal. Such outcomes are more popular in TI's and

AF's publications. APF as a state-linked organisation has the largest number of successful outcomes. In most cases, they involve recognition of misconduct and cancellation of public procurement.

Evidence of corrupt behaviour are not presented in APF's documents. The most popular evidence in the TI's and AF's investigations are the documents, including extracts from the registers of property, links to the public procurement webpages, other specialised materials, certificates, and the organisation's correspondence with public authorities. AF mostly uses video and pictures received from drone or satellite maps. TI's experts more often use analytical materials containing detailed investigations. They also refer to journalists' anti-corruption investigations.

5. The main strategies of anti-corruption discourse

At first, we divided Russian anti-corruption discourse to three types, according to the specific of anti-corruption organisation: official (APF), international (TI), and protest (AF). Referential strategies demonstrate the understanding of corruption, forms of fighting against corruption, and organisations' role in this process. APF position themselves as a leader of anti-corruption investigations that unmask mostly regional or local authorities' misconduct in public procurement. Although they act on behalf of the President, APF's representatives call themselves "public controllers" and highlight wide public support of their activity: *"Not only the amount [of successful cases] rises but also participants improve as professionals. Anybody can become an activist... But the main feature that is common for all of them is unindifference"* (Prihodko 2017). They tend to explain corruption by the lack of control and good governance on the local level, and underline success of their activity in preventing luxury purchases or any irregularities.

TI's representatives highlight the broad scope of the corruption issues that their investigations deal with (Higher School of Economics 2017). They believe that only civil society can fight against corruption effectively. "We have to state: up to date, neither authority, nor media, nor supervisory bodies, nor legal system can actively fight against corruption in Russia" (TI-Russia, n. d.). However, some of their actions are a success: regarding their requests to the authorities, some actions are being taken by the authority to impose liability on the persons who try to use budget money or property for private benefits (TI-Russia 2017). TI's views of the causes of corruption focus on the lack of authorities' political will in the implementation of anti-corruption legislation: "It is like hourglass: successful fight against corruption only takes place where political will meets public will. Nowadays, we have a lot of public

will and enough political will but they are moving towards each other very slowly, stumbling over every stone" (Azar 2017). Another reason for corrupt misconduct is the authority's unawareness of the necessity to comply with international law and collaborate with international community.

The Anti-Corruption Foundation investigates the corruption "among high-ranking Russian government officials" (Anti-Corruption Foundation, n.d.). Their investigations are aimed at finding out top-level Russian authorities' events of misconduct, incomes or property hidden from the public. The main targets of their activity are the senior-most officials of the Russian authority: the Chairman of the Government Dmitry Medvedev, the Prosecutor General Yury Chaika, the Minister of Defence of the Russian Federation Sergei Shoigu, etc.

Anti-corruption Foundation points out the totally corrupt nature of the state system, where majority of top-level officials are illegally connected with business and have undeclared property or incomes. The main cause of corruption, according to Navalny and his colleagues, is existence of two different systems of law enforcement: elite system, where crimes and corrupt practice remain unpunished; and mass system, where people feel unprotected from uncontrolled actions of the authorities and liberal construction of the law. Corruption is robbing people: "No big deal, they will write off other two billion from our pockets. Small change, really (although in normal countries, these two billion are enough to build a decent stadium" (Navalny 2017).

Legitimation strategies show the ways of self-presenting and justification of anti-corruption organisations' activities. Organisations use different arguments of importance of their own activity. APF tends to use "state" and "patriotic" arguments: its representatives try to show themselves as assistants of public authorities in fighting against corruption. They refer to their leader Vladimir Putin who said that "sooner or later, public officials will have to learn how to live with public control" (All-Russian People's Front 2017). They characterise the Russian authority as the main corruption fighter, and Vladimir Putin as the main decision maker about the fate of high-ranked corrupt officials: governors, ministers, local authority representatives, etc. The All-Russia People's Front's activists created a series of cartoons, where Putin has meetings with corrupt officials, and they suddenly disappear thereafter (Ivanickaja 2016). The representatives of the Russian authority also underline the importance of "civil society" in preventing corruption; at the same time, they point out that not entire civil society can be helpful in this field. For instance, Sergey Naryshkin, Head of the Foreign Intelligence Service, said: "The main task of the authority at every level is not only to listen

to the information communicated by unindifferent citizens, but also to involve in anti-corruption activity patriotically and, I have to insist, constructively oriented activists” (All-Russian People’s Front 2017).

The TI’s self-legitimation is based on a “global argument” as their connection with the international anti-corruption movement. For this reason, their activities are presented as using professional and experienced tools and best practices developed internationally. TI’s leaders call themselves “representatives of international Think Tanks” (Pustovaja 2016). At the same time, they admit the existing complications with the implementation of international tools in Russian realities, and some limitations determined by their “foreign agent” status in recent years. In spite of it, they insist on their independent position from the state and any political players. “It is necessary to understand for what reasons we maintain an independent position from the authorities. This is very important: meetings with authorities should not lure into their orbit and circle; otherwise, people will stop trusting any non-profit organisation... We do not claim to be an authority, it is not our aim” (Pustovaja 2016).

Unlike TI, the Anti-corruption Foundation presents itself as politically oriented opposition to the existing corrupt elites. In his publications, Navalny encourages to support him in the election, join protest actions against the corrupt authority, because, in his opinion, only changing incumbent political authorities can help curb corruption in the country. Thus, this organisation tries to force not only anti-corruption but also “political mobilisation” (Cheskin Ammon, and March 2015, 262), and sometimes its leaders enjoy a big success, especially in the anti-corruption protests in March 2017.

The topoi of discourse is a conceptual model of anti-corruption organisations’ self-presentation that is best manifested in oppositions to “others” or “discursive construction of ‘us’ and ‘them’” (Wodak 2007, 205). The most popular “others” for our organisations are not only corrupt agents mentioned above, but also the state and other anti-corruption organisations. In this regard, the most important question is the existence of “anti-corruption consensus”, mutual understanding of different agents regarding anti-corruption activity.

APF demonstrates close cooperation with the state and the President as its main advantage: “Our main advantage is an opportunity of a direct contact with the journalists and activists, and the same time, a direct contact with our leader Vladimir Putin” (Vinokurov 2017). The main corrupt agents are usually “light-fingered public officials” (All-Russian People’s Front 2015a) evading the policy of budget saving. “In the context of regional budget cuts, authorities should do everything to pursue the procurement as effectively as possible,

sparingly, saving budget funds and ensuring the quality of work" (All-Russian People's Front 2015). At the same time, the organisation's opposition to corrupt public officials is emphasized by the local authorities bullying APF's activists (Pervoe antikorrupcionnoe SMI 2017). In November 2015, Vladimir Putin personally promised to support the activists (All-Russian People's Front 2017). The efficiency and achievement of real results are demonstrated as the main advantage of APF's activity, in contrast, for instance, to AF (Svobodnaja pressa 2017). APF works "systematically", "carefully", "hard", "effectively", "and professionally". AF's investigations, in APF representatives' opinion, are "populist", "unconstructive" and do not have sufficient evidential base.

The main TI's aspects of disagreement with the state are their status of a "foreign agent" and the lack of public trust as a result of the restrictive policy towards international organisations and civil society as such. "Russian government has undermined the credibility of civil society institutions, and it will take a considerable amount of time to fix it." (Otkrytaja policija 2016). TI opposes its activity not to the state in general but to specific aspects of the state policy that violate Russian and international laws, principles of transparency and accountability. The leaders of the organisation point out the professional and scientific base of their anti-corruption work. They think that the hard evidence is the main advantage of their work, especially in comparison with AF. *"Yes, he [Navalny] makes mistakes, and blunders... But Navalny has already announced that he wants to be the President, so he has another objective now..."* Elena Panfilova, the founder of TI-Russia, noted that the TI's job is "digging trenches" and "not going over the top" as Navalny does (Nemcova 2017). Hard day-to-day work with data is the most important part of anti-corruption activity.

The context of AF's activity is determined by the direct opposition to the state because of the odious person of Alexey Navalny and his scandalous investigations related to the representatives of the Russian elite. The opposition to them is clearly presented in the materials. Their authors usually oppose poor ordinary people to the rich authority. "About thirty percent of people in this country earn less than 25 thousand roubles per month. In other words, poverty reigns in the country. And we have this remarkable public oil company "Rosneft", the head of which bought a yacht for 8.6 billion roubles as a present to his wife, and is building a house for 3.8 billion roubles" (Navalny 2017a).

Among other anti-corruption organisations, AF approves of TI's activity most of all; some of AF's investigations refer to TI's materials and admit their usefulness (Gimadi 2017). At the same time, Navalny criticises APF for being a "fictive" civil society that receives money from unclear sources and just

imitates anti-corruption activity. He points out that AF is not only a real anti-corruption civil society organisation but also the leader of political opposition that have many supporters. “This regards the efficiency of authority and opposition. 455 million [APF’s budget for 2015] out of nowhere is gone God knows where against 28 million from private sponsors [AF’s budget for 2015] that have been spent on clear projects noticed by media and people” (Navalny 2016). The results of the discourse analysis are presented on the Table 3.

Table 3. Strategies of anti-corruption discourse

Strategy discourse	Category	Official discourse (APF)	International discourse (TI)	Protest discourse (AF)
Referential	Causes of corruption	Actions of ‘negligent’ officials that spend public money under conditions of budget economy	Lack of the state’s political will, weak collaboration with international civil society in fighting against corruption	Corrupt political elites appropriating public goods
Legitimation	Values, principles of activity	Patriotism, efficiency, implementation of the national anti-corruption policy	Professionalism, political independence, using international ‘pills’ for fighting against corruption	Combating the corrupt authority, mobilisation for protest actions, public support
Topoi	Relations with the state in fighting against corruption	Collaboration, assistance by using administrative resources in working with local authorities	Attempts of dialogue, watchdog activity, supporting local activism, pressure from the state (foreign agent)	Confrontation, political opposition, unmasking corrupt officials

Source: Author

Every organisation positions itself as a ‘real’ anti-corruption actor by using specific arguments for this role (Table 3). APF presents itself as a state assistant in fighting against corrupt regional and local officials and points out the efficiency of this work. TI is present themselves as a team of Think Tanks and representatives of international anti-corruption movement and insist on a hard-day-to-day work for changing values and building a system of check and balances with the state. AF criticises a high-level of the Russian

authority's corrupt behaviour, their incapability to fight against corruption, and tries to mobilise people for protest activity. However, open confrontation with the state significantly limits the impact of its investigations.

The main differences in the three types of anti-corruption discourse are based on the main forms of relations with the state: collaboration or even merging, attempts of dialogue, and opposition (Table 3). However, this triad is unbalanced. The state prefers to imitate civil society participation in fighting against corruption by using quasi-nongovernmental institutions modelled on civil society organisations and put aside independent or international NGOs.

Table 4. Main oppositions of anti-corruption discourse

Type of the discourse	Positive self-presentation	Negative presentation of others
Official discourse (APF)	Public activists acting on behalf of the President	Neglecting regional or local officials
	Patriotic movement	Foreign agents (e.g. TI)
	Constructive, effective anti-corruption work	Destructive, subversive activity (TI, AF)
International discourse (TI)	Using internationally elaborated effective tools (anti-corruption "pill")	Limitation of international organisations' activity by the state
	Independence from the politics in anti-corruption work	Politically oriented activity (APF, AF)
	Professionalism, scientific base of investigations	Lack of hard evidence in investigations (AF)
	Hard day-to-day work with data	Populism, unjustified heroism (AF)
Protest discourse (AF)	Revealing truth about corruption among the high level authority	Falsification of official information, restriction of social and protest activism (public authorities)
	The bottom-up oppositional movement on behalf of people that suffer from corruption	Stealing goods from citizens by corrupt officials and their inner circles
	Domestic donations from supporters	International (TI) or public sponsoring (APF)
	Effective honest investigations sparking public outcry	Ineffective spending public money for anti-corruption work, imitation of anti-corruption activity (APF)

Source: Author

The main oppositions of anti-corruption discourse are presented in Table 4. They show the lack of dialogue between the main anti-corruption agents.

The official position is more radical in these relations: it perceives other players as enemies that threaten internal and external security. In 2011, the Chairman of the Government and the Head of state-linked party "United Russia" Dmitry Medvedev shared information about an address with the party's activists, and said: "Do not give it [fighting against corruption] away to opposition" (Medvedev 2011). The representatives of the "official" ACS show off their support from the state authority and distinguish themselves from the so-called "non-system opposition" that uses anti-corruption mottos for their political interests or even anti-state efforts. They present themselves as public controllers acting on behalf of the state. Discourse also does not demonstrate a developed mechanism of interaction between organisations, which does not enhance democratic principles in the country.

6. Conclusion

These three parts of the civil society present different agents of the relations on the Russian internal and external arenas. Anti-corruption discourse presents the state's intention to monopolise fighting and prevention of corruption, and to leave all other players behind the scene. A demonstrative example could be the anti-corruption organisations that are "more or less politically oriented" (Holloway 2002, 16), and involved in different political relationships. Corruption is one of the issues that have been raised lately as sensitive and crucial for international and national interests. The anti-corruption issue has become a powerful solution for preserving social capital and social hegemony for different sorts of actors.

This research demonstrates the tendency of a "not successful transition" to democracy in Russia over the recent years resulting in creating "marionette" organisations (Cook and Vinogradova 2006, 34) or "uncivil society" (Cheskin and March 2015, 263) that are entitled to be a flagman of anti-corruption work. The state's restrictive activity against all bottom-up anti-corruption movements reduces the possibility of development of the system of checks and balances in curbing corruption and public accountability in the Russian society.

The situation with Russian anti-corruption civil society is not unique. In some post-soviet and transitional countries, anti-corruption movements and organisations struggle for good governance and accountability, too. Researchers associate these problems with insufficient concreteness of anticorruption projects, low popularity of domestic organisations, insufficient trust to international NGOs, complications in building coalitions with governments, etc. (Mungiu-Pippidi 2010; Moroff and Schmidt-Pfister 2010).

In some Balkan and Caucasian countries, “it is quite alarming to find out that very corrupt governments are the main sponsors of chief anticorruption organisations”. (Mungiu-Pippidi 2010, 24).

At the same time, the significant success in creating civic culture in the post-soviet space is confirmed by people’s actions against corrupt governments and their decisions by ACS’ support. With the beginning of democratic reforms, civil society in many post-communist countries (e.g. Poland and Latvia) actively cooperates with governmental structures and with anti-corruption bodies, and tries to build coalitions with state and business institutes (Gephart 2009). In developed countries (e.g. Sweden, Germany), such coalitions take the form of “policy networks” that discuss and adopt anti-corruption regulations. In the case of Russia, impact of civil society’s anti-corruption activity is low, moreover, because of the state’s reluctance to build relations with different types of anti-corruption agents as well as organisations’ unwillingness to collaborate with each other, the civil society has to be involved into the vertical power relations with the state instead to be its partner and controller. In the situation of weak civil society and rule of law, the government define, which organisations will be allowed to fight against corruption. These “marionette” organisations assist the government to pursue its own policy beyond any international and domestic movements. As a result, the civil society’s role “is to monitor and control society, instead of doing so to the state” (Cheskin and March 2015, 263-264). It is very good demonstrated in our study by All Russian People’s Front’s anti-corruption investigations that are aimed at regional authorities and small public enterprises only. Their strategies as the controllers on behalf of the state usually enjoy success, in contrast to real civil society organisations that criticize the big political and business players. Thus, the state’s battle against protest movements and western influence has turned into paradoxical ‘anti-anti-corruption’ struggle against ‘real’ civil society organisations.

Our research has shown that TI and AF admit limitations of their activity and pressure from the state that ignores freedom of expression and rules of law by stigmatizing them as representatives of “foreign agent” and ‘unsystematic’ opposition. At the same time, they do not present themselves as abandoned outcasts. Everyone keeps acting in accordance with the traditions of ACS: raising awareness, research and advocacy. TI focuses on depoliticization and professionalism, AF – on political opposition and domestic public support. In transitional countries, the current situation with Russian ACS would be perceived as a normal way to democratization and to gradual development of “anti-corruption consensus”. In Russia, such optimistic future can be arguable due to growing totalitarian tendencies,

defiance of international anti-corruption practices and standards, and suppression of pluralism in public life.

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OIL PRODUCTION AND THE PROBLEMATIC OF WATER POLLUTION IN THE NIGER DELTA: A STUDY OF SELECTED COMMUNITIES IN BAYELSA STATE

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Abstract: *This study examines the problematic of oil production and water pollution in selected oil-bearing communities in Bayelsa State. The design of the study was descriptive survey. The instrument used for data collection was questionnaire. The data were analyzed using chi-square. The findings of the study revealed that there is a significant relationship between the role of the Nigerian State, multinational oil companies as well as the community leadership and the negative effects of water pollution on the health, occupation/economic and the livelihood standard/poverty level of the people of the oil-bearing communities in Bayelsa State. The study recommended among others that the multi-layered levels of government should formulate and genuinely implement policies that will mitigate the effects of water pollution on the health, economic and livelihood status of the people and the multinational oil conglomerates should be truly committed to integrated policies and strategies that will close the developmental gaps in the Niger Delta Region.*

Key-words: *oil production, water pollution, Niger Delta, Bayelsa State, communities.*

1. Introduction

Globally, development has become part of society, whether in the developed or developing world. Development is also multi-faceted and multi-dimensional cutting across all sectors. Development is equally trans-boundary with its systems, processes, costs and benefits affecting different societies, their environments including plants, animals and human beings that

inhabit them. Human beings that are central to the development agenda and process are fortunately and unfortunately the major beneficiaries and sufferers (Ejumudo 2015).

In Nigeria, the major sector where development has taken place is oil. And since the quest for development appears unending in Nigeria, the many-sided effects (both positive and negative) are inevitably resident with us. In fact, since the discovery of oil in commercial quantities at Oloibiri in Nigeria in 1956, oil exploration and production has continued without ceasing and the sector has remained the mainstay in the largely mono-product rentier economy that Nigeria represents (Humphrey 2015). The treasure-base for oil exploration and production process and activities in Nigeria is the Niger Delta region.

All the same, in the face of the petroleum and allied laws, policies and the attendant actions and operations of the Nigerian state, the multi-national oil conglomerates and their local partners have through their oil exploration, production and transportation activities contributed to the destruction of the Niger Delta including water. Arguably, water is an important constituent of biotic community (Narayanan 2017) and it is biologically necessary for life and therefore plays a vital and pervasive role in the health and welfare of a modern economy (Field 2015). Apart from the fact that water is essential for nearly every human efforts and enterprise, more than any other environmental factor, its availability of water determines the location and activities of humans on earth (Cunningham 2016). In fact, the importance of water quality for human existence and health cannot be overemphasized.

It is instructive to note that the inevitability of oil production especially in a developing country like Nigeria largely due to the quest for development has made water pollution which includes the alteration of the properties of water and the presence of some inorganic, organic, biological, radiological or physical foreign substance in the water to be common place and part of society. According to Narayanan (2017), water pollution tends to degrade its quality and render it unfit or less fit for all purposes. King (2016) also posited that water pollution as a result of the activities of man makes it less suitable for all or any of the purposes for which it would be suitable in its natural state, while Tietenberg (2015) opined that water pollution renders it unusable or dangerous as regards food, human and animal health, industry, agriculture, fishing or leisure pursuits. Thus, water pollution reduces the amount of pure fresh water that is available for such necessities as drinking, cooking and cleaning and for recreation activities.

The factors responsible for water pollution may be artificial or natural. However, more than natural factors, it is the unprecedented industrial

production rate that is responsible for the scarcity of pure drinking water (Ejumudo 2011). Despite the fact that water has become a scarce commodity today on account of the innumerable ways in which human beings pollute it, human beings are making increasing demands on water and industrial activities including oil exploration and production, agriculture, irrigation, mining, power generation and the concentration of millions of people in cities and towns.

While the above factors have contributed to the escalating and worrisome levels of water pollution in the Nigeria's Niger Delta, several studies have, in fact, shown that crude oil production and spillage polluted the environment including land and water. For instance, Asia et al. (2007) examined the effects of petroleum exploration and production operations on the heavy metal contents of soil and ground water in the Niger Delta. The result of the study showed that the water was polluted by lead, the pH of the water samples was also found to deviate significantly from DPR limits and W.H.O. standard for potable water. Olusiyi (2009) explored the effects of oil spillage on the socio-economic activities of the people and the environment in some communities in the Niger Delta and the findings showed that there is a strong relationship between the volume of oil spilled and the area coverage and a higher concentration of heavy metals.

In a similar vein, Isola (2014) investigated the impact of oil production on human condition in Nigeria and the study revealed that oil production worsened environmental degradation and adversely impacted on infant mortality rate, while it positively affected life expectancy. Raffia and Muhammad (2014) also examined the major sources of water pollution, water resources policies and challenges to improve water quality in Malaysia and the findings indicate that the major problem associated with water pollution is that human heart and kidneys can be adversely affected if polluted water is consumed regularly. Nizel and Nazrul (2015) equally investigated water pollution and its impact on the human health and the results clearly indicated that the water quality of Turag river may not be in a position to sustain the aquatic life and not suitable for using domestic purpose.

In like manners, Akankali and Nwafili (2017) evaluated the impact of crude oil pollution on aquaculture and the study established that crude oil pollution has adverse and severe socio-economic impacts on fish farming and that crude oil pollution led to increased fish mortality rates, reduced yield and general poor quality of cultured fishes. Abosede (2017) equally examined the effect of oil exploitation on the socio-economic life of the Ilaje-Ugbo people of Ondo State and the result showed that oil exploitation brought about environmental degradation which depleted the fishing and farming output

and led to subsequent loss of income base and poverty. Afonughe and Mukoro (2017) also investigated the impact of oil exploitation on the socio-economic life of Orogun community and the study revealed that the activities of crude oil exploration companies are impacting negatively on the development of the community.

Specifically, one of the many areas worse hit by oil production and related activities and operations, apart from devastation in the form of air pollution and soil degradation is water pollution. Notably, the importance of water to development is evident in the critical role it plays in health and sanitation, education, food production and security, fish farming, diet and livelihood, industrialization, manufacturing, laboratory science and technological advancement, trade and commerce, entrepreneurship, occupational growth and production. Moreover, the critical link that water provides if the environment is to perform its functions particularly in the supply of resources for development purposes cannot be over-emphasized. The contention of this study is that despite the utilitarian value of the water resource for development at all levels: individual, local, national and international and the inevitability of the exploitation of the environment and the use and possible misuse of its resources for development with consequential implications including water pollution, poor sanitary condition, deteriorating health and socio-economic dislocation due to occupational challenges and poverty, multi-national oil companies, community leaders and the government have largely failed to effectively manage the challenges of oil production and water pollution in Nigeria's Niger Delta.

2. Statement of the Problem

The interface between the agent of development (oil production) and the environment of the Niger Delta, particularly the Bayelsa State oil-bearing communities (environments) have many-sided negative effects including air pollution and deterioration, social-degradation and particularly water pollution that is the focus of this study. The above interface has also produced benefits mainly in the form of revenue derived from export of crude oil and its investment in infrastructural development. The contention in this study is that the while water pollution, the product of the inter-linkage between oil production (agent of development) and the environment where oil is exploited is a problem and a cost, the major problem is the failure of the Nigerian State (Federal and the Bayelsa State Governments in this instant case), multi-national companies and the community leadership to effectively manage the inevitable result of the interface (water pollution) through

adequate investments in the provision of clean water, health facilities and alternative sources of income and livelihood.

The above poor management of the water pollution resulting from oil production activities in Bayelsa State, this study further argues has seriously affected the health, occupation/economic status and the livelihood of the people in the oil-bearing communities. This study therefore examines the problematic of oil production and water pollution in selected oil-bearing communities in Bayelsa State.

2.1. Objectives of the Study

The general objective of the study is to examine the problematic of oil production and water pollution in selected oil-bearing communities in Bayelsa State, while the specific objectives are to:

Assess the role of the Nigerian State and the community leadership in the negative effect of water pollution on the health of the people of the oil-bearing communities in Bayelsa State.

Examine the role of the Nigerian state, multinational companies and the community leaders in the negative impact of water pollution on the occupation/economic status of the people of the oil-bearing communities in Bayelsa State.

Examine the role of the Nigerian state, multinational companies and the community leaders in the negative impact of water pollution on the livelihood standards/poverty level of the oil-bearing communities in Bayelsa State.

2.2. Research Hypotheses

The following research hypotheses were formulated to guide the study:

- There is no significant relationship between the role of the Nigerian State, multinational companies and the community leadership and the negative effect of water pollution on the health of the people of the oil-bearing communities in Bayelsa State.
- There is no significant relationship between the role of the Nigerian state, multinational companies and the community leadership and the negative impact of water pollution on the occupation/economic status of the people of the oil-bearing communities in Bayelsa State.
- There is no significant relationship between the role of the Nigerian state, multinational companies and the community leadership and the negative impact of water pollution on the livelihood standards/poverty level of the oil-bearing communities in Bayelsa State.

2.3. Empirical Studies on Oil Production and Water Pollution

Osumgborogwu, Okoro, and Oduaro (2018) assessed social effects of crude oil exploration and extraction activities in some selected communities in Egbema of Imo State. To achieve this, 150 copies of well-structured questionnaire were distributed to residents of the study area. Of this number, 141 copies were correctly filled and returned, thus, representing 94 percent of respondents. Ten oral interviews were also conducted with identified heads of households. The results as presented showed that social activities in the community have not been affected by crude oil production. However, some hostile behaviours such as youth restiveness is as a result of demand for compensation/payment from oil companies operating in the study area were observed. It is therefore recommended that further research be carried out to assess security effects of crude oil production.

Abosede (2017) examined the effect of oil exploitation on the socio-economic life of the Ilaje-Ugbo people of Ondo State, Nigeria. Primary data were obtained through in-depth interviews, Focus Group Discussions (FGD), and a questionnaire. Oil exploitation, through environmental degradation, depleted the fishing and farming output, resulting in the subsequent loss of income base, thereby accentuating poverty, which in turn created divisive tendencies leading to endemic social conflict. Nigerian government top-down approach to the development of the oil-bearing areas has not been people-centered, participatory, and sustained. Any effort to eradicate poverty in the oil-bearing areas must seek to revive the traditional economic activities. Providing viable employment opportunities for the people and channelling their energies into the development of sustained livelihoods can reduce tensions and conflict in the Niger Delta region.

Afonughe and Mukoro (2017) also investigated the impact of oil exploitation on the socio-economic life of Orogun community, an Oil Producing Community in Delta State, Nigeria. The states in the Niger Delta have the largest concentrations of these oil deposits. Expectedly, this is supposed to translate into economic prosperity for these “fortunate” states and communities. Sadly, the reverse is the case. There have been cries of marginalization, environmental pollution, climate change, unemployment, prevalence of sicknesses and diseases due to the activities of crude oil exploitation in these oil producing communities. It is against this backdrop that this study was conducted. Orogun community was selected as a case study because of its prominence in the comity of oil producing communities in Delta State, and also for the fact that despite its enormous contributions to Nigeria’s GDP, very little or no research has been conducted to ascertain the negative impact of oil exploration on its socio-economic life. The study

identified that the activities of crude oil exploration companies are impacting negatively on the development of the community. Farmlands have been rendered infertile, thereby hampering agricultural output and productivity. Rivers and streams have been polluted as a result of oil spillage, leading to the reduction in the availability of fishes and other aquatic products, resulting in untold hardships being experienced by the indigent populace. In order to ameliorate the situation, this paper recommends that a proper legislation and a regulatory framework guiding the operations of the oil exploration companies should be put in place.

Mehtab, Muhammad, Asma, Sidra, Nayab, Sharon, and Jaweria (2017) equally explored water pollution and human health. The data that was used for the study was obtained and compiled through a thorough review of various published research articles of international reputed journal and relevant books. Water covers about 70% Earth's surface. Safe drinking water is a basic need for all humans. The WHO reports that 80% diseases are waterborne. Industrialization, discharge of domestic waste, radioactive waste, population growth, excessive use of pesticides, fertilizers and leakage from water tanks are major sources of water pollution. These wastes have negative effects on human health. Different chemicals have different affects depending on their locations and kinds. Bacterial, viral and parasitic diseases like typhoid, cholera, encephalitis, poliomyelitis, hepatitis, skin infection and gastrointestinal are spreading through polluted water. It is recommended to examine the water quality on regular basis to avoid its destructive effects on human health. Domestic and agriculture waste should not be disposed of without threatening.

Akankali and Nwafili (2017) evaluated the impact of crude oil pollution on aquaculture, with the objective of assessing its impacts and the extent of the identified impacts socioeconomically. Data were obtained from a total of 150 fish farmers in five communities of Gokana LGA of Rivers State, Nigeria using structured questionnaires. The study established that crude oil pollution has adverse and severe socio-economic impacts on fish farming. The results of the study also showed that, crude oil pollution led to increased fish mortality rates, reduced yield and general poor quality of cultured fishes. The Kendall's coefficient of concordance, W was 0.97, indicating high degree of agreement among respondents. Recommendations based on the findings include the provision of more accessible means of information about the adverse consequences of oil pollution to the local communities in particular, educating the people on the socio-economic impact of crude oil pollution and the effects of consuming aquatic resources from polluted waters on the health of humans. Best practices for spill and pollution abatement/prevention

including quick response to spill site and mobilizing communities through Global Memorandum of Understanding (GMOU) model to take more direct responsibility for monitoring oil theft and sabotage were recommended to be implemented by the crude oil producing companies within the Niger Delta region, as a means of abating the negative effects of crude oil pollutants adversely impacting aquaculture.

Imoukhuede and Afuye (2016) assessed water pollution and its effect on water consumption in Akure. The research focuses primarily on the causes, consequences and ways of mitigating the ongoing fresh water pollution problems among Akure communities. Surface water quality of River Ala, which cut across the town of Akure was assessed and three locations (3) were chosen spatially to reflect a consideration of all possible human activities capable of changing the quality of river water. Water samples were analyzed for physio-chemical parameters and it was observed that variations exist in the quality of the sampled waters and impaired to different degrees using WHO drinking water standards for the selected parameters. Leo road (Ala 3) has the highest dissolved solids, which shows that the dumping of waste to the water bodies might have caused the higher occurrence; the PH was low in Ala 3 and high in Ala 1 (Oke-Ijebu) with 6.9 and 7.4 respectively. The water is coloured, total alkalinity total hardness, iron and turbidity were found to be above the WHO standard, therefore not suitable for domestic use.

Nizel and Nazrul (2015) investigated water pollution and its impact on the human health. This study was conducted to find out the pollution situation of Turag River of urban Dhaka, the capital city of Bangladesh and the health problem of the surrounding residents. The results clearly determine that the water quality of Turag river may not be in a position to sustain the aquatic life and not suitable for using domestic purpose. This is indicated by the very low dissolved oxygen (DO) levels and other measured parameters in the river. The maximum recorded values of pH, color, turbidity, biochemical oxygen demand (BOD₅), hardness, total dissolved solids (TDS), chloride (Cl⁻), carbon-di-oxide (CO₂) and chemical oxygen demand (COD) were 7.1 mg/L, 625 ptcu, 97.2, 4.65 mg/L, 1816 mg/L, 676mg/L, 5 mg/L, 15.5, and 78 mg/L, respectively. The maximum concentration of turbidity, BOD, hardness, TDS, and COD found in the Turag river is much higher than the standard permissible limit. The study also provides evidence that local communities are suffering from a variety of health problems including skin, diarrhea, dysentery, respiratory illnesses, anemia and complications in childbirth. Yellow fever, cholera, dengue, malaria and other epidemic diseases are also available in this area. Furthermore, the people are suffering by the odor pollution and respiratory problems.

Abul, Mazlin, Mohd, Muhd, Goh, Rahmah & Muhammad (2015) assessed the impact of polluted river water in the context of environmental risk as well as ecological risk. A rigorous survey has done on the existing literature of environmental risk and water pollution in respect of ecological, social and economic boundaries in the river basin area. The review findings concluded that polluted river water is seriously caused for hampering of the Sustainable Development (SD) especially in the context of sustainable development, ecosystems change, sustainable livelihoods, land cover, ecosystems, environmental sensitivity, biodiversity and geodiversity as well as social and economic arena in a river basin over the world. The study has drawn Necessary recommendations & policy considerations which would be raised and highlighted for implementation by policy and decision makers throughout the study.

Similarly, Isola (2014) explored the impact of oil production on human condition in Nigeria. The paper used environmental degradation, life expectancy, and infant mortality rate as proxies of human condition. The data were obtained from the statistical bulletin of the Central Bank of Nigeria and World Development Indicator. The study covered 1980 to 2012. Vector autoregressive (VAR) model and variance decomposition analysis were explored. Three striking results were reported: (i) oil production of the first period positively impacted environmental degradation, while it was negative in the second period; (ii) Its first period lag has positive relationship but second period lag has negative relationship with life expectancy; and (iii) The variance decomposition analysis showed that oil production worsened environmental degradation and adversely impacted on infant mortality rate, while it positively affected life expectancy. Two major recommendations emanated from the study: (i) since oil production has a negative impact on human condition in Nigeria, efforts should be made to control carbon emission from fuel by ending gas flaring, especially in the Niger Delta region; and (ii) Government should look for means to channel their efforts into sustainable policies that would aim at transforming some of the largess from the oil sector into the health sector, as well as into the provision of infrastructural and life enhancing facilities like good roads, portable water, and so on. These can help to enhance life expectancy beyond its current stagnant state. All these as suggested will make the oil sector to have huge positive impact on human condition.

Sajini (2013) reviewed socio-economic problems of oil exploration and exploitation in Nigeria's Niger Delta. Since the 1970s, Nigeria's socio-economic and political fortune have been intricately linked with oil explorations, with petroleum oil providing about 95 percent of exports

earnings and accounting for over 80 percent of government revenue as well as generating over 40 percent of the GDP. It is revealing to note that the oil that generate these numerous benefits to Nigeria come solely from the Niger Delta region. However, the paradox is that while oil from Niger Delta has generated massive economic and social transformations of many parts of the country on the one hand, it has resulted into unparalleled damage to the Niger Delta environment thus inducing multi-faceted problems in the region. This paper examines the social and economic problem of oil exploration and exploitations in the Niger Delta region. The paper identified abject poverty, deprivation, social conflict, occupational dislocation, ill health, etc. as some of the social and economic problems resulting from environmental pollution associated with oil extractions activities in the Niger Delta. The paper also made recommendations.

In the same vein, Olujimi, Adebayo, and Sogbon (2011) investigated environmental implications of oil exploration and exploitation in the coastal region of Ondo State, Nigeria: A regional planning appraisal. In the light of this, the paper appraises the implications of oil exploration and exploitation in the coastal region of Ondo State. Data used in the paper were obtained through physical verification, regular observations, constant monitoring, documentation and records of oral history and administration of questionnaire in some selected settlements in the region. The paper highlighted several direct environmental and associated problems that emanated from oil exploration and exploitation in the region. The problems identified among others include large-scale environmental pollution and degradation of agricultural land which serves as source of income for the people coupled with social unrest arising from unpaid claims of compensation and lack of concern for the people in the exploration area. The paper advocates for oil spill management plan, control and clearance of spills; giving concessions to indigenous oil companies during bidding process by granting licenses to operate in the Niger-Delta region; adoption of long-term monitoring and surveillance mechanism; continuous provision of infrastructure for the host communities by prospecting oil companies; and development of national oil spill contingency plan among others with a view to guarantee sustainable development of the environment in the region.

Olusiya (2009) examined the effects of oil spillage on the socio-economic activities of the people and the environment in some communities in the Niger Delta. The objectives are to determine the quantity of oil spilled from pipelines, the area of coverage and to assess the effects of oil spillage on the people, soil and water. Data were collected from both primary and secondary sources. The primary data relied on the administration of structured

questionnaires; 319 questionnaires were randomly distributed to a sample population (household heads), with 302 retrieved. Secondary data were sourced from published materials. Also, soil samples from four locations and water samples from five locations were collected to determine the pH value of the water, the presence and concentration of heavy metals in the soil and the total hydrocarbon content (THC) of water. Soil and water samples were analyzed using the atomic absorption spectrophotometer and gravimetric methods for soil and water, respectively. There was a strong relationship between the volume of oil spilled and the area coverage. Laboratory soil analysis from sampled communities showed a higher concentration of heavy metals (chromium, lead, arsenic, etc.) above the World Health Organization (WHO) permissible levels as well as the figure for controlled site. The study therefore recommended that environmental laws should be strictly adhered to and compensation should be adequately and promptly paid to the communities, and remedial action should be speedily undertaken whenever there are spills.

Asia, Jegede, Jegede, Ize-Iyamu and Akpasubi (2007) examined the effects of petroleum exploration and production operations on the heavy metal contents of soil and groundwater in the Niger Delta. Soil and water samples obtained from four sampling points; around an oil well head, flare site, waste pit and effluent discharge point in an exploration area in the Niger Delta were analyzed for their heavy metal contents. The results showed that the amount of lead present in the soil ranges from 3.40 – 99.40 mg/kg, copper values were in the range of 5.10 – 49.30 mg/kg, Nickel concentration vary from 1.60 – 13.80 mg/kg, values for cadmium, iron, zinc, and chromium were 0.04 – 0.95 mg/kg, 536.00 – 12,872.00 mg/kg, 11.1 – 274.00 mg/kg and 1.30 – 165.00 mg/kg respectively. Apart from zinc and nickel, all other heavy metals were higher than the toxicity limits for heavy metals in natural soil; this implies pollution of the soil by heavy metals. Also, the waters were found to be polluted by lead, the pH of the water samples was found to deviate significantly from Department of Petroleum Resources and World Health Organization DPR limits and W.H.O. standard for potable water. This also implies pollution. Remediation measures were suggested so as to render the soil and ground water fit for use.

3. Presentation of Results

3.1. Hypothesis 1 (Ho₁)

There is no significant relationship between the role of the Nigeria State, multinational oil companies and the community leadership and the negative effect of water pollution on the health of the people of the oil-bearing communities in Bayelsa State.

Table 1: Chi-square analysis of questionnaire for the relationship between the role of stakeholders and negative effect of water pollution on the health of the people

Items	Yes	No	Total	Df	X ² -cal.	X ² -cri.	Decision
1	57	43	385	1	8.19	3.84	Ho ₁ is Rejected
2	51	49	385				
3	45	56	385				
4	61	39	385				
5	42	58	385				

Source: Field Work 2018

P>0.05

In table 1 above, with alpha level of 0.05, the degree of freedom (DF) of 1, the critical value is 3.84 while calculated value is 8.19. Since the calculated value is greater than the critical value, the null hypothesis is therefore rejected. This shows that there is a significant relationship between the role of the Nigeria State, multinational oil companies and the community leadership and the negative effect of water pollution on the health of the people of the oil-bearing communities in Bayelsa State.

Hypothesis 2 (Ho₂)

There is no significant relationship between the role of the Nigeria State, multinational oil companies and the community leadership and the negative effect of water pollution on the occupation/economic status of the people of the oil-bearing communities in Bayelsa State.

Table 2: Chi-square analysis of questionnaire for the relationship between the role of stakeholders and negative effect of water pollution on the occupation/economic status of the people

Items	Yes	No	Total	Df	X ² -cal.	X ² -cri.	Decision
1	65	35	385	1	8.67	3.84	Ho ₂ is Rejected
2	48	52	385				
3	51	49	385				
4	45	55	385				
5	44	56	385				

Source: Field Work 2018

P>0.05

In table 2 above, with alpha level of 0.05, the degree of freedom (DF) of 1, the critical value is 3.84 while calculated value is 8.67. Since the calculated value is greater than the critical value, the null hypothesis is therefore rejected. This shows that there is a significant relationship between role of the Nigeria State, multinational oil companies and the community leadership and the negative effect of water pollution on the occupation/economic status of the people of the oil-bearing communities in Bayelsa State.

Hypothesis 3 (Ho₃)

There is no significant relationship between the role of the Nigeria State, multinational oil companies and the community leadership and the negative effect of water pollution on the livelihood standard/poverty level of the people of the oil-bearing communities in Bayelsa State.

Table 3: Chi-square analysis of questionnaire for the relationship between the role of stakeholders and negative effect of water pollution on the livelihood standard/ poverty level people in Bayelsa State

Items	Yes	No	Total	Df	X ² -cal.	X ² -cri.	Decision
1	66	34	385	1	35.81	3.84	Ho ₃ is Rejected
2	43	57	385				
3	36	64	385				
4	75	25	385				

5	55	45	385				
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Source: Field Work 2018

P>0.05

In table 3 above, with alpha level of 0.05, the degree of freedom (DF) of 1, the critical value is 3.84 while calculated value is 35.81. Since the calculated value is greater than the critical value, the null hypothesis is therefore rejected. This shows that there is a significant relationship between the role of the Nigeria State, multinational oil companies and the community leadership and the negative effect of water pollution on the livelihood standard/poverty level of the people of the oil-bearing communities in Bayelsa State.

3.2. Discussion of Results

The study showed that there is a significant relationship between the role of the Nigeria State, multinational oil companies and the community leadership and the negative effect of water pollution on the health of the people of the oil-bearing communities in Bayelsa State. This is evident to the fact that local communities are suffering from a variety of health problems including skin, diarrhea, dysentery, respiratory illnesses, anemia, complications in childbirth, Yellow fever, cholera, dengue, malaria and other epidemic diseases and respiratory problems caused by oil exploration in the region (Nizel and Nazrul 2015).

This finding is in congruence with Afonughe and Mukoro (2017) who reported that expectedly, oil production supposed to translate into economic prosperity for these “fortunate” states and communities but sadly, the reverse is the case. There have been cries of marginalization, environmental pollution, climate change, unemployment, prevalence of sicknesses and diseases due to the activities of crude oil exploitation in these oil producing communities. They added that the activities of crude oil exploration companies are impacting negatively on the development of the communities; farmlands have been rendered infertile, thereby hampering agricultural output and productivity, rivers and streams have been polluted leading to the reduction in the availability of fishes and other aquatic products, resulting in untold hardships being experienced by the indigent of these oil-bearing communities in Niger Delta Region.

The study showed that there is a significant relationship between role of the Nigeria State, multinational oil companies and the community leadership and the negative effects of water pollution on the occupation/economic status of the people of the oil-bearing communities in Bayelsa State. One plausible explanation to this finding is that oil exploitation, through environmental

degradation has depleted the fishing and farming output, resulting in the subsequent loss of income base, thereby accentuating poverty, which in turn created divisive tendencies leading to endemic social conflict in the region (Abosedo 2017).

This finding concord with Afonughe and Mukoro (2017) who asserted that expectedly, oil production supposed to translate into economic prosperity for these “fortunate” states and communities but sadly, the reverse is the case. There have been cries of marginalization, environmental pollution, climate change, unemployment, prevalence of sicknesses and diseases due to the activities of crude oil exploitation in these oil producing communities. They added that the activities of crude oil exploration companies are impacting negatively on the development of the communities; farmlands have been rendered infertile, thereby hampering agricultural output and productivity, rivers and streams have been polluted leading to the reduction in the availability of fishes and other aquatic products, resulting in untold hardships being experienced by the indigent of theses oil-bearing communities in Niger Delta Region.

The study revealed that there is a significant relationship between the role of the Nigeria State, multinational oil companies and the community leadership and the negative effect of water pollution on the livelihood standard/poverty level of the people of the oil-bearing communities in Bayelsa State. This finding may be attributed to the fact that crude oil pollution has adverse and severe socio-economic impacts on fish farming that is the main occupation of the people leading to increased fish mortality rates, reduced yield and general poor quality of cultured fishes (Akankali and Nwafili 2017).

This finding concord with Afonughe and Mukoro (2017) who asserted that expectedly, oil production supposed to translate into economic prosperity for these “fortunate” states and communities but sadly, the reverse is the case. There have been cries of marginalization, environmental pollution, climate change, unemployment, prevalence of sicknesses and diseases due to the activities of crude oil exploitation in these oil producing communities. They added that the activities of crude oil exploration companies are impacting negatively on the development of the communities; farmlands have been rendered infertile, thereby hampering agricultural output and productivity, rivers and streams have been polluted leading to the reduction in the availability of fishes and other aquatic products, resulting in untold hardships being experienced by the indigent of theses oil-bearing communities in Niger Delta Region.

3.3. Methodology

The study adopted descriptive survey research design. The use of descriptive survey design is predicated on the fact that the researcher used a questionnaire to obtain information on the variables under study from the sample that was drawn from the population. This design enables the researcher to collect detailed information that describe existing phenomena in their natural setting, make comparison and evaluation, as well as identify problems or justify current conditions and practices as well as determine what others are doing with similar problems to solutions and benefits from experience making future plans and decisions.

The population of the study comprised of all the 36 oil-bearing communities in Bayelsa State, while the sample of the study consists of four hundred (400) adult. The four hundred adults were selected from eight oil-bearing communities in Bayelsa State using Stratified and simple random sampling techniques. The instrument that was used for data collection is the oil production and water pollution Questionnaire was used as an instrument for data collection which is made up two sections and it contains nineteen (15) items which enabled the researcher to spread the questions/items across the independent and intervening variables. The data were collected by the researcher and eight (8) research assistants and all the research hypotheses were tested for significant difference at 0.05 level of significance using Chi-Square.

4. Conclusions/Recommendation

Undoubtedly, oil production has over the decades provided critical inputs for the expected development agenda at the different levels of government in Nigeria. The rather unending quest for more development has also made the exploitation and utilization of the rich oil resource glaringly inevitable in Nigeria's Niger Delta. While the ensuing and continuous developmental efforts engendered mainly by oil production activities remain common-place and therefore a reality in Nigeria, it is the poor management of the negative out-comes of the use and misuse of the oil resource for development purposes that is the crux of the matter. To this end, the study based on its major findings, concludes that since there is a significant relationship between the role of the Nigerian State, multinational oil companies and the community leadership and the negative effects of water pollution on the health of the people of the oil-bearing communities in Bayelsa State, the collective roles of the three stakeholders above have negatively impacted on the health status of the people of the oil-bearing communities. Besides, in view of the fact that

there is a significant relationship between the role of the Nigerian State, multinational oil companies and the community leadership and the negative effect of water pollution on the occupation/economic status of the people of the oil-bearing communities in Bayelsa State, it is concluded that that the collective roles of the three stakeholders above have negatively impacted on the occupation/economic status of the people of the oil-bearing communities. To the extent that there is a significant relationship between the role of the Nigerian State, multinational oil companies and the community leadership and the negative effect of water pollution on the livelihood standard/poverty level of the people of the oil-bearing communities in Bayelsa State, it is equally concluded that the collective roles of the three stakeholders above have negatively impacted on the livelihood standard/poverty of the people of the oil-bearing communities.

In the light of the findings and conclusion of the study, the following recommendations are made: the multi-layered levels of the government should formulate and genuinely implement policies that will mitigate the effects of water pollution on the health, economic and livelihood status of the people in the Niger Delta Region; the multinational oil conglomerates should be truly committed to integrated policies and strategies that will close the developmental gaps and proactively enhance the capacity of the people of the Niger Delta to live decent and fulfilled lives and the community leaders in the Niger Delta should sincerely partner and cooperate with both the multi-layered levels of government and the oil conglomerates in order to actualize the yearnings and aspirations of the people.

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THE REPUBLIC OF NORTH MACEDONIA - A 'NEW' COUNTRY IN THE WESTERN BALKANS

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Abstract: *The article tries to explain and define political processes and changes through history of the 'new' Western Balkans country - the Republic of North Macedonia. It is word about analysis of the political dispute between Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) and Greece, from its beginnings until the present day. This paper will try to give the real picture of political area in the Balkans and explore deeper roots of the 'Macedonian Question' controversy. Also, it will give the explanations of the resolution of 27-year dispute, (between the two neighbor countries), by signing the Prespa Agreement. Hence, leaving by side national identity and history, the North Macedonia will be able to join the European Union and NATO. Thus, in short period of time, a 'new' country in the Western Balkans has putted in the center of the regional politics, with clear purpose: promoting ethnic and cultural heritage in the edge of the European continent.*

Key-words: *North Macedonia, Greece, the 'Macedonian Question', the name issue, the Prespa Agreement, identity, the Western Balkans, the European and Euro-Atlantic integration.*

1. Introduction

In recent time, North Macedonia has hold attention on the regional political scene of the Balkans, as a 'geopolitical fault line' (Armakolas et al. 2019, 1).

Nearly three decades, the 'Macedonian Question' has been subject of many round-table discussions, descriptive articles and many analyses from diverse perspectives. Because of the importance of this unique political conflict in the international relations, its implications have various natures (from historical, linguistic, political and legal, to ethnological and psychological) (Dzuvalekovska et al. 2013). Despite a lot of descriptive articles on the North Macedonia name issue with Greece, in the literature there is no theoretically

informed analysis of this complex Question, from the roots till the resolution of this name dispute - conflict.

The goal of this research paper is to further explore: the political relations between North Macedonia and Greece, historical roots of this name dispute; pragmatic dimensions and (political, historical and cultural) factors contributing to the resolution of this neighbor conflict, with a special focus on North Macedonia (West-East) relations, which represent a good basis for the further North Macedonian European and Euro-Atlantic integration. Also, this article tries to explain how the international community has reacted and responded to the resolution of the 'Macedonian Question'. Finally, the article includes conclusions which are in relation with the possible scenarios at the political Balkans scenes, including the ratification and implementation of the *Prespa Agreement* in North Macedonia. In that light, it will be a few words about the next North Macedonia's steps to the EU and NATO accession.

Hence, it is important to mention that 'the dispute about name of the Republic of Macedonia constitutes just one dimension of a broader latent conflict, one that touches so much upon the fundamentals of the two societies involved' (Sofos 2013, 226). In that way, North Macedonia left by side its social identity, history of Macedonians and its own statehood, although Greece claimed the virtual ownership of the term 'Macedonia' and its connection with the name of Alexander the Great and his Empire.

On February 12, 2019, SFR Macedonia officially changed name in the Republic of North Macedonia or North Macedonia for short. It changed its name to avoid the confusion with Greek northern-country region, also called Macedonia. Thus, neighbors' countries ended a 27-year name row. In accordance with it, North Macedonia, in short period of time is making significant progress on its path to the European and Euro-Atlantic integration process in the region. In accordance with it, North Macedonia signs *NATO Accession Protocol* on February 6, 2019.

The resolution of this intense neighbor' conflict - the 'Macedonian Question', in future will bring better conditions for the Western Balkans countries, which means promoting ethnic, religious and cultural heritage in the edge of the European continent.

Research hypothesis is: 'The Resolution of the 'Macedonian Question' is finished with the signing of the *Prespa Agreement* by the two countries, Greece and North Macedonia, which represents good basis for investing in the stability, security, prosperity and neighbor relations of the Western Balkans' (despite the fact that majority of citizens in both countries opposed the *Agreement*). Hence, my theoretical framework is based on realist theory with many historical facts, which seems the most appropriate to analyze The

Republic of North Macedonia - a 'new' country in the Western Balkans. Taking all these aspects into account, after 27 years, it is ended political (name) dispute between two neighbors' countries. In that way, North Macedonia will be in position to join the European Union (EU) and NATO. Also, after February 12, 2019, Macedonia was officially changed the name to the Republic of the North Macedonia (North Macedonia).

2. Historical background of the conflict

North Macedonia is the Western Balkans country. It represents a complex border country between West and East, Europe and Asia. Hence, it is important to underline that during the history, today's territory of North Macedonia was interesting area for conquerors.

Hence, Dr. Bozhidar Dimitrov in his book *'Macedonia-Holy Bulgarian Land'* presents two opponent historical points of view: the Macedonian and the Bulgarian¹. Thus, in this article, with special attention, I try to digest only Macedonian view over Macedonian country history. In accordance with it, Macedonian country dated from the ancient times, when Macedonians lived in their (Bulgarian) lands. They are ancestors of the Alexander the Great - the Ancient Macedonians². Since that time, they have been oppressed by: the Byzantine Empire, Bulgaria and Ottoman Empire.

Furthermore, in 9th century, during the rule of Bulgaria, two Macedonian brothers, Cyril and Methodius invented the Glagolitic Alphabet, later modified by Cyrillic Alphabet by St. Clement of Ohrid. In the end of 10th century, Macedonian seceded from the Bulgarian Empire and established their first and the only country in medieval times led by Macedonians Tsar Samuil. After

¹ According to Bulgarian history, Macedonians, Macedonian culture and Macedonian language didn't exist. Hence, different points of view are defined as a historical conflict between Bulgaria and FYROM. Furthermore, later version of this conflict is formalized as official world history and recognized by Bulgaria, Greece and serious historical dealing with the Balkans history (Damyanov, n.d.).

² The Macedonians have led a very peripheral existence and they had small partake in intellectual, cultural and social progress of Southern Greece. However, the golden period of the Kingdom of Macedonia was under Philip II. During his reign, the Kingdom was politically and military strong, with its enlargement through a series of successful military campaigns, Philip II included a large part of Southern Balkan Peninsula. After dead of Philip II, his son Alexander the Great has established enormous Empire in Europe, Asia and Africa. In that way, he was spreading military and ideological crusade against the Persians (Floudas, n.d.).

the Tsar's reign, Macedonia was ruled by Byzantine Empire³ (Damyanov, n.d.).

And the last ruler over Macedonia was Ottoman Empire. Therefore, many Balkans countries were under Ottoman Empire, from 14th up until early 20th century, in some parts of this region (Šorović 2018). In accordance with crucial sphere of influence and regional political order, Ottomans controlled the Balkans territory, including Macedonia⁴, till the end of the Balkan Wars⁵, after which Macedonia was divided among: Bulgaria, Serbia and Greece. But, before the Balkan Wars, from 1903 to 1908, the Macedonian freedom fighters, Damyan Gruev and Georgi Delchev established the organization – VMRO, which main aim was struggle and political independence of Macedonia from Ottomans (Damyanov, n.d.).

2.1. Yugoslavia and its dissolution

Yugoslavia was a political creation of great powers. It was established at the end of World War I. In that period of time, Slovenian, Bosnian and Croat territories (as a part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire) united with the Serbian Kingdom. But, this creation did not exist for long. During World War II (WWII), the country broke up under the (Nazi) occupation. Thus, Nazi - allies created independent Croat state, which was reunified at the end of War, when communists liberated the country.

After WWII, one of main political priority of the U.S. Government was Yugoslavian unity. Hence, it is important to point out that Yugoslavia made changes in political sphere of influence. Although, it was communist country: in 1948 Yugoslavia broke away from Soviet sphere of influence, in 1961 it become a founding member of Non-Aligned Movement and during the Cold War it adopted less repressive and more decentralized form of government –

³ During the Byzantine and later Ottoman Empire, the term 'Macedonia' is used in geographic sense, because it was covered the boundaries of the former Roman administrative regions of Macedonia. This region was larger than 'historic Macedonia', the core domain of the Macedonian Kingdom in 4th century B.C. It was inhabited by different Balkan ethnic groups (Floudas, n.d.).

⁴ During World War I, the Serbian segment of Macedonia was incorporated into the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes (after 1929 it was called Yugoslavia). After World War II, the Serbian segment of Macedonia was incorporated into the Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia (later, the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia) (Danforth 2019).

⁵ The Balkan Wars consisted of two conflicts, from 1912 to 1913. Also, they are known as wars for independence of the Balkans against Ottoman Empire occupation.

compared with other communist countries of East Europe (The Breakup of Yugoslavia 1990-1992, n.d.).

It is important to mention that in 1944, Tito, the Yugoslavian leader, created a new federal state (consisting of six republics). He renamed the southernmost province, previously known as Vardarska Banovina (i.e. District of Vardar River). The new country name was People's Republic of Macedonia⁶ (Floudas, n.d.).

Focusing on the Eastern Europe, there were wide specters of reasons for the Yugoslavia's breakup, ranged from religious and cultural divisions between ethnic groups. However, a series of major political events served as the catalyst for exacerbating inherent tensions in the Yugoslav republic. Following the death of Tito in 1980, provisions of the 1974 constitution provided for the effective devolution of all real power away from the federal government to the republics and autonomous provinces in Serbia by establishing a collective presidency of the eight provincial representatives and a federal government with little control over economic, cultural, and political policy. External factors also had a significant impact. The collapse of communism in Eastern Europe in 1989, the unification of Germany one year later, and the imminent collapse of the Soviet Union all served to erode Yugoslavia's political stability. As Eastern European states moved away from communist government and toward free elections and market economies, the West's attention focused away from Yugoslavia and undermined the extensive economic and financial support necessary to preserve a Yugoslav economy already close to collapse. The absence of a Soviet threat to the integrity and unity of Yugoslavia and its constituent parts meant that a powerful incentive for unity and cooperation was removed' (The Breakup of Yugoslavia 1990-1992, n.d., 1).

For great powers, especially during and after dissolution of Yugoslavia, the Balkans region has become the 'playground' for their strategic accomplishment of diverse interests of several actors (Šorović 2018). Day by day, ethnic tensions and political misunderstandings, led to idea of Yugoslavia's dissolution and politics independence of every Yugoslavian republic.

Furthermore, 'on December 23, 1990 a referendum in Slovenia supporting independence triggered off the chain of events that led to the dissolution of the Federal Socialist Republic of Yugoslavia. In similar referendum on

⁶ This Republic was constitutive part of federal Yugoslavia. The 'titular nation' name was *Makedontsi* (Macedonians), while, their Macedonian language become one of Yugoslavia's official languages (Floudas, n.d.).

September 8, 1991, a large majority in the Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia voted in favor of independence and the Republic duly declared its sovereignty on September 17, 1991. At the same time, it started seeking international recognition as the 'Republic Macedonia' (Floudas, n.d., 3).

2.2. Path to the European and Euro-Atlantic integration

The declaration of independence of Republic of Macedonia's in 1991 was crucial for establishment of the new country and its recognition on the international level. More precisely, Greece delayed Macedonian recognition by international community and its accession to the United Nations (UN). Main reason was **the inclusion of the term 'Macedonia'** in the declaration of independence in 1991. Also, there were two vital problems which facing the newly country at political scene. It was ensuring for Albanian minority rights (for fully citizenship) and gaining international recognition under its constitutional name, what was underlined with Macedonian membership in international organizations.

Hence, neighbor countries find compromise formula - 'the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia' (FYROM). It was used as provisional reference, rather than an official country name. According to it, in April 1993, Macedonia became part of the UN. Following existing practice of this prestigious supranational organization, the international organizations (such as, the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank) adopted the UN terminology, and with that action, a large number of countries in the international community recognized the country as the **FYROM**. However, Greece was not satisfied with that political decision. It initially refuses to recognize FYROM at all. Hence, it imposed the trade embargo on it, until 1995. The embargo affected on Macedonian economy and damaged it.

In the context of *A 1995 Interim Accord*, neither country was mentioned by name, what led to the stabilization of relations in the Western Balkans. More precisely, with this treaty were defined fundamental frameworks for establishing diplomatic relations between neighbor countries, FYROM and Greece. In that context, FYROM changed its flag (dropping the **Vergina Sun**⁷),

⁷ The predominant theory of the Vergina Sun represents a simplified symbol, not only for the astral, also in the religious system of the Ancient Greeks and the Macedonians. This symbol usually had 8, 12 or 16 'rays', while in the center was a 'rodakas'). For better understanding, it is important to mention that 'rodakas' means 'flower' and it represented a decorative motif. It had particular importance in the Ancient Greece. On the symbol of the Vergina Sun, a 'rodakas' is putted in the center and it symbolized the Earth on which all the spiritual and material goods are fertilized. On the other side, the number 16 was symbol of completeness and totality. More precisely, the

made amendment to its Constitution and they specifically denied any claims on the Greek territory. On the other side, Greece agreed not to block Macedonian accession to the international organizations and it provided that Macedonia would accede in international community under the name of 'Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia'. From that moment, Greece became close economic partner and one of the main foreign investor Macedonia (Macedonia's dispute with Greece 2019).

Also, relations between the two countries are improved between 1995 and 2008. Because of their intensified collaboration, it was marked an increased trade and influx of Greek direct investments to the Republic of Macedonia (Dzuvalekovska et al. 2013).

'The Stabilization and Association Agreement' represents a framework document for the further path of the Balkan countries' on the EU integration progress. During the negotiations, it is necessary to abide all deadlines and conditions which the country needs to fulfill in order to become the full EU Member State. Also, this document defines guidelines - general principles for: political dialogue, international cooperation, free movement of people, goods and capital, harmonization of domestic legislation with EU directives, improvement of market competition, cooperation policy, etc. Hence, every country that strives to become the EU Member State needs to comply with the rules and regulations of the EU. In addition, it is important to point out that after the summit in Thessaloniki, the EU sends a clear message that „there are no shortcuts to the EU” (Đurović 2012, 335) and that the accession process is quite complex and „it requires a lot of engagement of all key segments of society in one country” (Đurović 2012, 335). This Agreement confirms the status of a potential candidate for membership in the European Community, but without a precisely defined the date of entry into the EU. In short, the Agreement represents a „waiting room” for country's entry into the EU. Hence, full membership in the EU is based on the individual capacity of the country to accept European criteria and standards, which derive from its affiliated membership' (Đurović 2012, quoted in Šorović 2018, 85-86).

It is important to underline that on April 9, 2001, the Republic of Macedonia was the first country from the Western Balkans who signed a

complete Vergina Sun set symbol consists of the four elements (that constituted the world in the Ancient time): the Earth, the Ocean, the Air and the Fire, while the four quadrants (created by vertical axes) are placed the 12 gods.

Those symbols, the archeologists have discovered on Hellenistic coins, vases, etc. However, after 1977, the symbol of the Vergina Sun was connected with the Dynasty of Philip II and his son, Alexander the Great (LATO, n.d.).

Stabilisation and Association Agreement with the European Union, in light of the worryingly rise of the ethnic tensions between the Albanian minority and Slavic majority in the country. This document granted the Republic of Macedonia the candidate status for the EU membership in 2005, but it still is waiting for starting the accession process (Cvijic 2009).

'**The Stabilisation and Association Process (SAP)** for aim has stabilization and regional cooperation between countries of the Western Balkans. The first phase of the SAP begins with the establishment of a dialogue, in the form of the regular meetings between representatives of the European Commission and the potential candidate for the EU Member State, and finishes with the publication of the Feasibility Study (by the side of the European Commission, which represents the readiness and the ability of the country to fulfill the necessary conditions arising from the Agreement on Stabilization and Association). Therefore, this Agreement represents an international agreement between the EU and country, which is the legal framework for mutual cooperation, as well as approximation to EU values and standards. By concluding this Agreement, the country confirms the status of a potential candidate for EU membership, without defining whether the country may join the EU: start the institutionalization relations of the country with the EU' (Mihanović 2005, quoted in Šorović 2018, 86).

The **Ohrid Framework Agreement** represents a key instrument for maintaining inter-ethnic harmony in FRYOM. More precisely, the Albanian minority conflict is resolved by constitutional changes led by many international organizations: the EU, NATO, OSCE and the United States (Damyanov, n.d.). It was signed on August 13, 2001, 'and ended Macedonia's armed conflict between Albanian rebels and Macedonian security forces' (European Stability Initiative, n.d., 1). This *Agreement* was main pillar for country progress on path to becoming a multi-ethnic, multi-cultural, multi-religious and stabile society, towards its goal in the EU and NATO integration process. Hence, with the *Ohrid Framework Agreement*, FYROM is stabilized its political institutions, passed legislation reforms and create the room for more equitable ethnic representation in public institutions (Ibid.). However, 'the *Ohrid Framework* which came out as a solution and compromise between Macedonians and Albanians could be very useful and serve as a guiding tool which gives hope that any current ethnic conflict between Bulgaria and FYROM could be resolved and any future conflict could be prevented preserving and sustaining the ethnical peace and good neighborly relations' (Damyanov, n.d., 32-33).

In 2003, The European Council adopted **The Thessaloniki Agenda for the Western Balkans: Moving towards European integration** at the

Thessaloniki Summit, where it was announced that 'the future of the Balkans lies in the EU' (The Thessaloniki agenda for the Western Balkans 2003, quoted in Šorović 2018, 85). 'At this summit, the countries of the Western Balkans have been given the promise that with their certain progresses and reforms process, those countries will become the EU Member States' (Šorović 2018, 85).

At the **NATO summit in Bucharest**, in April 2008, Macedonian government and UN mediator, Matthew Nimetz presented proposals – including the name 'Republic of Macedonia (Skopje)'. But, Greece rejected all proposals and vetoed the Macedonian accession to Euro-Atlantic integration. Hence, the Greek veto was clear example of breach of the 1995 *Interim Accord* (Office of the Historians, Bureau of Public Affairs). This Greek political decision presented the deterioration in mutual neighbor trust. More precisely, with that stand, Greece was drawing of red lines in negotiations, which for its purpose had denied of the Macedonia's national, cultural and linguistic identity. After this summit, Macedonia filed an application for a ruling by the International Court of Justice (ICJ) on the legality of action of Greece, at the Bucharest summit. Hence, in December 2011, the ICJ confirmed that Greece had breached the *Interim Accord* by blocking Macedonia's membership of NATO. It is important to mention that the terms of the *Interim Accord* obliged Greece not to obstruct the integration process of Republic of Macedonia within the international organizations, because the provisional reference are established in the aforementioned UN Resolution (Dzuvalekovska et al. 2013).

The **Berlin Process** is a summit dedicated to the Western Balkans, 'whose main goal was to reach a common agreement on strengthening regional cooperation in the Western Balkans and establishing a four year framework (2014-2018) for resolving all the remaining outstanding issues in the region' (Berlinski proces 2016, quoted in Šorović 2018, 85).

The **Prespa Agreement** is the most important document for establishing the 'new' country in the Western Balkans. It was signed beside the Prespa Lake, **on June 17, 2018**, between the two neighbor's countries, North Macedonia and Greece. Hence, this Agreement is ratified by the Macedonia's and Greece's parliament, on January 25, 2019 and went into force on February 12, 2019. Following that fact, on this date, the name of the country was changed from the Republic of Macedonia to **the Republic of North Macedonia (North Macedonia)**. Citizens of North Macedonia are called '**Macedonians/citizens of the Republic of North Macedonia**' who speak '**Macedonian**' language (family of South Slavic languages). Furthermore, this

Agreement replaced A 1995 *Interim Accord*, following on that way the *NATO Accession Protocol* on February 6, 2019 (Danforth 2019).

By this *Agreement* are précised and defined the terms 'Macedonia' and 'Macedonian' in historical and cultural heritage context. Thus, North Macedonia left by side the disassociation with the Ancient Hellenic civilization, developed in historical Macedonia. Also, North Macedonia revised its Constitution, in aim to ensure full domestically application of the *Agreement* and in the same time to revise/eliminate all passages that could be taken to imply aspirations towards Greece and Greek nation (Tzifakis 2019).

However, political system in Greece has putted by side the social cohesion and quality of democracy. The resolution of the name issue represents a main positive development in the Western Balkans, bringing consolidation and stability in the region and advancement in the European and Euro-Atlantic integration. Because of that, the resolution of the *Agreement* had a serious paradox. There were huge discrepancy between the political views of Greek society (against any compromise on the matter) and its elected representatives in the Parliament and most political parties on the other side. In that order, political parties have used the resolution of the conflict as an opportunity to adjust their tactics and score points at the parliamentary elections. On that way, combination of the name dispute with the electoral consideration has established polarization of politics in Greece (dichotomies: 'patriots-traitors' and 'pragmatists-ultranationalists'). Taking all these aspects into account, the 'Macedonian Question' has been latent conflict for almost three decades. But, despite of that, there has never been any serious country debate in order to inform the people about real state, just strong emotional arguments connected with the self-determined account established in historical origins of the Ancient Macedonia. Also, long and existed economic crisis in country influenced that Greeks feel like they have already paid too heavy price (materially and symbolically). In this regard, the NATO partners have unequivocally supported the resolution, by which is affirmed and served the international over Greek interests (Ibid.).

3. The 'Macedonian Question'

It is the fact that the conflict about a name is very sensitive and, in the same time, a quite difficult question. But, the right of self-determination of a nation is undisputed for every country in the world and it is corroborated by a whole series of legal acts, from the UN to the Council of Europe. However, it is really difficult to negotiate if myths, the Balkans nationalist legends and the controversial history are involved in it. Besides of all that, so much blood and

young life were spilled in this part of the Balkans, from the beginning of the 19th century, through the Balkan and World Wars, until the Civil War from 1946 to 1949, which was run mainly in Greek Macedonia. Hence, it is almost impossible to conduct political talks, if it is word about the negotiation process on identity issues (which are the most delicate for each country, especially for the Western Balkans region) (Lukač 2016).

However, the 'Macedonian Question' becomes the longest lasting dispute at the political scene in the recent history. 'The issue was easily being dismissed as the product of the intransigence of two typically nationalistic Balkan countries' (Kolozova 2019, 1). In addition, one of the best given explications of the name dispute is on the best way defined and explained by the statement on the website of the Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs (now is taken down): 'the use of the name expresses claims on Greek cultural heritage, history, and, hence, identity and this in itself constitutes "irredentism". That is, the dispute was about history and identity, and not the territory'(Kolozova 2019, 1).

Historically, **“the geographical term 'Macedonia' is a Greek word and was used in antiquity to designate the area inhabited by the Macedonians, 'the tall ones', apparently on account of the distinguishing physical height of this tribe”** (Floudas, n.d., 1). Also, this term represents the culture of Ancient Macedonians which is connected with the Hellenistic nation, as a part of the Greek-historical heritage. The term 'Macedonia' geographically refers the wider region of several Balkan countries - the largest part is in Greece, where 2.5 million Greeks for centuries live as Macedonians. Therefore, the Greek government has identified three issues for the alleged Macedonian aspiration for expansion: the country name of Macedonia, the national flag contains the Vergina Sun and the Constitution of November 17, 1991, which in Article 49 required the protection of minorities and the cultural promotion of Macedonians abroad (Lukač 2016).

The Former Prime Minister of Greece Konstantinos Mitsotakis and many nationally oriented Greeks considered that term 'Macedonia' had always been Greek and it is related to the territory of Greece. Besides that, the Vergina Sun with the sixteen rays, which origin dated from the historical emblem of the Ancient Macedonian Royal family Philip II, father of Alexander the Great. On the other side, the critics of the Greek position claimed that it is unlikely that the FRYOM with only two million inhabitants and 10,000 modestly armed soldiers would attack a well-equipped Greek army of 122.000 soldiers. Also, they pointed out that the Greek Constitution, in Article 108 prescribes the Athens care about the Greek diaspora. In accordance with it, Macedonia, in

the same way, just like Greece, wants to take care of its people who do not live within the borders of Macedonia (Lukač 2016).

The dispute over Macedonia's constitutional name dates from 1991, after the collapse of Yugoslavia and the peacefully declare independence of the Republic of Macedonia, on September 17, 1991. Despite that fact, the breakthrough in the Greek-Macedonian relationship was achieved on September 13, 1995, thanks to the *Provisional Agreement*. This bilateral problem was solved thanks to the fact that Macedonia changed its state flag in a way that the Sun with sixteen rays was replaced by the Sun with eight rays. As a counteroffensive, Greece abolished a one-sided economic blockade. The two neighbor countries have agreed on mutual recognition of their sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence (Ibid.).

In December 2016, at the parliamentary elections, pro-Western government led by Zoran Zaev came to power. His government wanted to Macedonia made progress at the path of European and Euro-Atlantic integration, leaving history by side and finding solution for better future of Macedonian society. In accordance with it, North Macedonia signed with Greece the *Prespa Agreement*, on June 17 2018. The main aim of this political agreement was resolving, nearly thirty years standing name dispute between the two Balkans nations.

The *Prespa Agreement* represents the enduring attraction of European and Euro-Atlantic integration of the Western Balkans countries. More precisely, Prime Minister of North Macedonia Zoran Zaev, Foreign minister Nikola Dimitrov and Macedonian government have embarked on a compromise solution, in order to secure the entry of their country into NATO and eventually the EU, under the compromise name 'North Macedonia'. On the Greek side were Prime Minister of Greece Alexis Tsipras and Foreign minister Nikos Kotzias (Armakolas et al. 2019).

The two neighbor countries had obligation to recognize each other's concerns, in the order to address them. The Greek side was underline that the term 'Macedonia' laid a claim on the Hellenistic nation, as a part of the Greek-historical heritage and its identity. The Macedonian side had justified fear, that, with the change of the name of the country, it would delete and throw away its national history, identity and language (Kolozova 2019). Hence, in Article 7 of the *Prespa Agreement*, North Macedonia and Greece addressed these issues recognizing that the term 'Macedonian' could have two different meaning at the same time: 'for the Macedonian side, it means nationality, ethnic belonging and a South Slavic language, whereas, for the Greek side, it refers to the cultural heritage of Ancient Greece and the legacy of the Kingdom of Phillip and Alexander of Macedon'(Kolozova 2019, 1).

More precisely, in the *Prespa Agreement*, in Article 8 is defined that 'within six months following the entry into force of this Agreement' (Final Agreement for the settlement of the differences as described in the United Nations Security Council Resolutions 817 (1993) and 845 (1993), the termination of the Interim Accord of 1995, and the establishment of a Strategic partnership between the Parties 2018, 10) North Macedonia 'shall review the status of monuments, public buildings and infrastructure on its territory, and in so far as they refer in any way to ancient Hellenic history and civilization constituting an integral component of the historic or cultural patrimony' of the Greece 'shall take appropriate corrective action to effectively address the issue and ensure respect of the said patrimony' (Ibid). Also, the similar story is with the symbol formerly displayed on Macedonian former national flag, which needs to be changed. In accordance with the recommendations of the UN Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names, the two countries shall abide to use the official geographical names and toponyms in the territory of the other country. Additionally, after one month of the signing of this Agreement, the two countries 'shall establish a joint Inter-Disciplinary Committee of Experts on historic, archaeological and educational matters, to consider the objective, scientific interpretation of historical events based on authentic, evidence-based and scientifically sound historical sources and archaeological findings' (Ibid. 2018, 10). In that way, they will revise textbooks, atlases, teaching guides, official documents, maps etc., in accordance with the aims and main principles of UNESCO and the Council of Europe. Thus, the Committee shall set specific timetables for the ensuring countries that will not being used any material that contains any revisionist references. Also, at least two times per year, the Committee shall submit an Annual Report on its activities and recommendations, approved by the High-Level Cooperation Council. On the other hand, between Athens and Skopje is intensified cooperation in different area: in the context of the international and regional organizations, political and societal cooperation, economic cooperation, cooperation on the fields of education, science, culture, research, technology, health and sports, police and civil protection cooperation, defense cooperation, etc. (Ibid. 2018, 10-16).

Besides the fact that the *Prespa Agreement* undermines the Macedonian identity, in Greece, between 60 and 70% of population is against this Agreement. Furthermore, even though this dispute, 'North Macedonia has had a virtual monopoly on it for at least the past 27 years. There is a sense in Greek society that the agreement was imposed by foreign players, specifically "the West", and that the name was "given away", with Greece getting essentially nothing in return' (Filis 2019, 1). Because of that political dissatisfaction, the

Greeks created an expression 'painful national compromise' (Filis 2019, 1), in order to represent the general disappointment. However, in long term, the *Prespa Agreement* could be 'a catalyst for convergence between the two sides, with Greece influencing in a positive way its northern neighbor's engagement with the West, which may gradually restrain nationalist dynamics in North Macedonia' (Ibid.).

Also, with this *Agreement*, the principle of the Macedonia's self-determination is reaffirmed. In the same time, it was negotiated the inclusion of the Slavic and Hellenic signifiers. In order to achieve the *Agreement* between two conflict sides, it was used sensitive rhetoric and redouble effort, in a way which was delicate to their political cultures, history, national identity and concerns. And, in the end, the Prime Ministers have been nominated for a Nobel Peace Prize, because this *Agreement* provides stability and prosperity in North Macedonia and Greece, what is good basis for the security of the Western Balkans and the whole Europe. Hence, this resolution of name dispute (between neighbor countries), will be defined in their history as a great vision and huge sense of responsibility of the two Prime Ministers (Koložova 2019).

It is important to mention that the 'Macedonian Question' again entered at the political scene in the second half of 2017. The opposition parties leading by New Democracy party tried to link Novartis scandal⁸ with the negotiations on the opened name dispute, stating in that way that ruling party SYRIZA retailed national interest in order to remain in power. In this light, nationalist adopted uncompromising attitudes on this emotional issue, as a result of the Prime Minister Tsipras and SYRIZA government (Armakolas et al. 2019).

Early phase of negotiations was very pessimistic. There were many reasons for it. Public debate in Greece was very limited, ('for or against' the name solution) because of that, most of Greek population considered this solution as an unacceptable. Also, in recent years, the importance and influence of 'mainstream' media radically reduced. Last, but not least important is the regional dimension of opposition to the name dispute. Opinion polls presented that a majority across entire country opposes compromise solution (Ibid.). 'However, attitudes are much more hardened in Northern Greece (Thessaloniki, Greek Macedonia regions, Thrace, and parts of central Greece). Conservatism and nationalism are more salient in Northern Greece as a result of developments in the last century, and especially

⁸ For more information about Novartis scandal, see for example here: <http://www.politico.eu/article/greece-politics-novartis-scandal-pharmaceutical-whistleblower/>

the traumatic experience of the Greek civil war (1940s) during which many Slavic speaking inhabitants sided with the rebel Communist Army, a move widely seen in Greece as an effort for a violent carve-up of Greek Macedonia' (Ibid. 2019, 5).

At the end of 2018, after rallies (in Thessaloniki and Athens), things are looked more optimistic.

4. International community

In recent years, North Macedonia has commanded attention to political scene of the Western Balkans. Thus, with special attention, I try to analyze how international community (the EU, Russia and the Western Balkans) has impact on the new Balkans country and mention main neighbor conflicts connected to its previous political establishment.

4.1. The European Union

It is the fact that the European Union (EU) has been faced by a succession of crises in last few years: the aftershocks of the global financial meltdown in 2008, which affected on the Eurozone's foundations; Russia as a geopolitical challenge; war in Syria – the Migration Crisis and asylum seekers in 2015 – 2016 and Brexit as the special Union question.

Hence, the European community is not yet completely secure to deal with the daunting problem – task of international consolidation. Besides all previous the EU tasks, Skopje-Athens negotiation over name dispute reached in June 2018. In accordance with it, the EU and NATO made crucial decision on the European and Euro-Atlantic integration of North Macedonia: the EU's General Affairs Council, on June 26, put North Macedonia on the path toward opening accession negotiations in 2019, while, on July 11, NATO invited North Macedonia to start with accession negotiations. More precisely, both political decisions were based on rewarding North Macedonia for signing the *Prespa Agreement*, on June 16. Also, country has changed political regime who took place in 2017 and it puts North Macedonia into democratic transformation, after a decade of country capture of VMRO-DPMNE (ruling) party.

Germany as important player on political scene has supported North Macedonia's European and Euro-Atlantic integration process in Western Balkans. Thus, Germany puts efforts on the EU and the West to manage the 2015-2017 political crises in this country (Armakolas et al. 2019).

After a while, the skepticism about the EU enlargement is left by side, thus, Germany was approved the opening of the EU accession negotiations with North Macedonia, 'but that the opening of the first negotiation chapters

should be conditional of the implementation of certain reforms (in the areas of justice and public administration reforms, the fight against corruption and organized crime) (Ibid. 2019, 10).

However, France has had valid reasons for its skepticism (Albanian issue). In mid-June 2018, at traditional biannual intergovernmental talks between Germany and France at Marseberg, French President Emmanuel Macron 'insisted there should be no further steps toward EU enlargement before the May 2019 elections for the European Parliament' (Ibid. 2019, 11).

From the establishment of the EU, the EU enlargement was trademark policy. Following the previous Union practice, 'the EU needs to remain an interesting Community that would attract Eastern countries, from the edge of the continent, without *enlargement fatigue*' (Šorović 2018, 2). With that concept, there would be space for every country to spread and share common Union's values and freedoms, building ties between the EU and the Western Balkans countries.

4.2. Russia

During the centuries, Russia has had interests to control the Balkans region, as important counterbalance area to the West. Through diplomatic channels and with mediation role, Russia tries to remain an important player who is fighting for post-Soviet space.

Obstructionism of Russia has a function in confrontation with the United States and the EU. The culmination of this 'clashes of civilization' is triggered by Crimea's annexation. Thus, relations between the Western countries and Russia in South Eastern Europe weren't completely based on zero-sum conception. There are evident overlapping interests in this area (through energy infrastructure). In recent time, South Macedonia is 'playground' for great powers.

Following the previous, between 2015 and 2017, some political analysts have described the Macedonian political crisis 'as a continuation of the standoff between Vladimir Putin's Russia and the West'(Armakolas et al. 2019, 1). The previous Prime Minister of North Macedonia Nikola Gruevski 'remained rhetorically committed to the European Union and NATO, he put considerable effort into building up ties with the Russians. For instance, Skopje and Moscow developed plans to supply the country with gas. Russian companies have invested in other parts of energy sector' (Ibid. 2019, 13). When is word about the *Prespa Agreement*, Russian attitude about it has been ambivalent, although, the Foreign Ministry of Russia Sergey Lavrov welcomed the compromise. On the other hand, Russia continues to express its opposition to North Macedonia's entrance to NATO. Because of that, Russia's

soft power is used in disinformation campaigns and proactive measures to boost nationalism in both country, North Macedonia and Greece, and, in the same time, it is in accordance with its policy of pushing back against the West.

In this scenario, North Macedonia as member of NATO is finished political 'business' dating back to 1990s. For the West, this information is great political victory, in way to contain Russia away from the post-Yugoslav space. Also, it is important to underline that NATO would be 'bridge' between the ethnic divide in North Macedonia, as well as supra-national organization with aim to boost and secure internal and external security (Ibid. 2019).

4.3. The Western Balkans

The implementation of the *Prespa Agreement* was successful. In accordance with it, the countries of the Balkans region will increase pressure to resolve all bilateral issues (primary relations between Serbia and Kosovo).

During the previous year, Bulgaria questioned the distinctiveness of the Macedonian language and nation. Thus, this 'neighbor problem' has roots down deep in the history of those two nations and the ethnical origin of today's North Macedonians. Hence, 'Bulgarians claim Macedonians are Bulgarians and have Bulgarian history while Macedonians deny it and claim they are Macedonians with their own history' (Damyanov, n.d., 6).

Between Bulgaria and North Macedonia was signed and ratification the *Treaty on friendship, good neighborly relations and cooperation*. During the Bulgarian presidency of the EU the *Treaty* came into force. Thanks to this *Treaty*, both countries recognized territorial integrity, led by side the different views on history and focused on cooperation in economy, culture and infrastructure. Hence, Agreement is a basis for Bulgarian political action and neighbor country support to join NATO and the EU. Hence, in short period of time, Bulgaria changed its external policy (from suspicious neighbor to a strong supporter and promoter of North Macedonia's European and Euro-Atlantic integration. On the other side, Serbia took five years to recognize North Macedonia as an independent country. However, the Serbian Orthodox Church didn't accept the independence of the Macedonian Orthodox Church.

Relations between North Macedonia and Serbia become tense since change of government in Skopje. More precisely, previous Prime Minister of North Macedonia Nikola Gruevski enjoyed strong support from the Prime Minister of Serbia Aleksandar Vučić and his ruling party. However, with come into power new government in Skopje, relations between those two countries are changed. New government of North Macedonia is defined as a creation of a 'Great Albania' who plays into the Albanians hands, in favor of the dissolution of North Macedonia (Armakolas et al. 2019).

5. Conclusion

The identity dispute is not supposed to be happening on the European continent, especially in 21st century. Because of that, the 'Macedonian Question' should be used as a 'potent reminder of the considerable influence that nationalistic divides have always exerted in the Balkan region' (Floudas, n.d., 1).

The dispute resolution is a historic achievement and represents 'new chapter' in the relations of two neighbor countries. Although, this emotional issue was a previously latent conflict that has touched so deep in the fundamental pillars of the two nations. The claim of Greece to a 'virtual' ownership of the name 'Macedonia' was very irritating, but history and numbers prove their point of view. Greek Macedonia is the largest country region, with a large population and the electoral weight big enough to make the 'Macedonian Question' important matter in Greek politics (Liaras 2018).

On the presidential elections, on May 5, 2019, North Macedonia elected the pro-Western candidate, Stevo Pendarovski, supported by the ruling Social Democrats. The result of the elections is defined as a victory of the pro-European and Euro-Atlantic integration process (with the 51,66% in a run-off vote), and in the President's words it was characterized as 'our ticket to Europe' (Smith 2019, 1). Now, the new government, leading by President Pendarovski, has enormous responsibility in order to fully implement the *Agreement*. It is a sensitive area and because of that he could make turnover in the North Macedonia's domestic and international politics, putting in danger, on that way, the previous *Agreement* ratification. The politics is the art of possible. Hence, the time will give us all the answers.

Although, North Macedonia had needed to face with the loss of identity, the resolution of the 'Macedonia Question' is an excellent example for the Western Balkan region and it represents an excellent model for resolving other difficult disputes that still exist in the political (international) community. The resolution of the name dispute between the two Balkans countries sends clear message in the world – 'nationalism is defeated'. In that order, it is evident that 27-year conflict is resolved through political dialogue and border collaboration, using history as a lecture, not as a mistake from the past. In that way, 'the powder keg of Europe' is presented as a friendly political area which by joint action neighbor countries invest in future, promoting the regional stability, security, prosperity and neighbor relations of the Western Balkans'.

The 'Macedonian Question' finished with the provocative fear on Greek side, overcoming the obstacles, imposed by wrong information and many misunderstandings, which for the main purpose have wrong perception of

name 'Macedonia', established in historical and geographical claims, rooted in possible territorial demands over Greece. Hence, the *Prespa Agreement* will normalize the relations between two countries with *win-win* outcome. On that way, North Macedonia and Greece will improve regional stability, echoing the view of the Western countries that see NATO and the EU membership as the best way of preserving peace and stability in the Balkan region. In accordance with the previous, the summer of 2019 will be marked in international community as North Macedonia's the European and Euro-Atlantic integration process. More precisely, NATO will welcome its 30th member state, while the EU will expect to start with North Macedonian membership negotiations. Also, it is time that North Macedonia proves as an important partner of the EU who helps in reducing the extent of the Migration Crisis - asylum seekers from the Middle East (because of popularity of the Balkans migrant route).

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