

Negotiation and Foreign Policy Decision Making

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Decision Making

By

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**CAMBRIDGE
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P U B L I S H I N G

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FOREWORD

The concern for the subject treated in this paper came from the perceptions generated by the impressive sequence of events on the international scene in which the speed, diversity and the agglomeration and seriousness of events make not only the specialists in foreign policy and international relations analysis wonder where the answers lie, but also how the macro and micro decisions in international politics are made, who the actors are, and how they react to such situations that affect our daily lives.

Such events which are seemingly hard to explain, have a reason in the complexity of global interdependence. Foreign policy decisions are influenced by many factors. The real world is complex and many variables have to be considered when making a decision. Often the expected effect can have unexpected characteristics and often may be accompanied by consequences that the originators have not suspected. The psychological approach to decision-making facilitates the understanding and explaining of the complexity of foreign and global policies precisely because of the prolonged transitional stage of the contemporary international system.

Why this concern for foreign policy decision-making? Because it proves the necessity of a transformation of the international system to one based on cooperation, collaboration and communication. Because the psychology of decision-making is reflected in foreign policy, where situations involving choices occur in varying degrees: from starting a war, peacemaking, forming an alliance, establishing diplomatic relations, implementing a certain position, imposing economic sanctions or the ratification of conventions.

Why is the study of the foreign policy decision-making process important? Because we can thus cover the cognitive processes that lead to a decision and "we enter the mind of" leaders who make decisions. We can also identify the individual and general behavioural patterns of decisions and we can identify views on leadership styles and the personalities of leaders, which cannot only be revealed through a systematic approach to foreign policy analysis.

The course of world politics is shaped by the decisions of leaders. Uncertainty involved in decision-making in foreign policy can belong to the motivations, beliefs, intentions or calculations of the opponents. If we

cannot understand how decisions are made, then maybe we can understand the decisions and, perhaps more importantly, we can predict some results on the international scene.

Both the Cold War and the previous history of international relations have mainly shown processes of change in the international system, as a result of the encounter of conflicts and war; even the last post-Cold War decades demonstrate that another world conflict is not possible anymore (in one year time we will record the sad celebration of the passing of a century since the First World War), which is why I have proposed an analysis—a case study of the negotiation process in connection with decision-making in foreign policy because I believe that leaders, states, regional and international organizations, including international NGOs should go through a new phase of learning about political and diplomatic negotiations and beyond.

This paper brings a new element into the study of international relations by analyzing the subjective elements (idiosyncrasies) that occur in decision-making at the individual level. The use of psychological methods of analysing the foreign policy decision-making process proposes a necessary investigation path into international relations.

The case study is Romania's process of accession to the European Union (2000-2004), from the perspective of the analysis of psychological factors that intervene in the decision-making at the individual level (Chief Negotiator of Romania's accession to the European Union). Through discourse analysis (political and public speeches, media representations and interviews), I have tried to identify the idiosyncrasies that have acted in decision-making, providing a measure of their influence regarding decision-making in foreign policy.

This paper is an invitation addressed to the specialists in foreign policy analysis, in international relations, to dare to use new approaches for the deciphering and involvement in foreign policy decision-making.

A word of gratitude is sent to my colleagues at the University who have supported me with competence and patience in undertaking this scientific approach, convincing me that there are brave pioneers who succeed not only for them but also for others, and that appreciation could only come as a just measure of the hard work done.

University “Babeş-Bolyai” Cluj-Napoca, 11.11.2013

INTRODUCTION

Formulating the Problem

In recent years there has been a significant increase in the importance of the study of decision-making within several specialty areas (Zang 2009, 15). Foreign policy decisions are influenced by many factors. The real world is complex and many variables must be taken into account when a decision is made. The role of information processing, as well as the classification and idiosyncrasies necessitate a psychological approach to foreign policy decision-making (Mintz and De Rouen 2010, 97). The psychological approach to decision-making also facilitates an understanding and an explanation of its complexity in other disciplines, especially in international relations theory.

The psychology of decision-making is reflected in foreign policy, where situations involving choices occur in varying degrees: starting a war, peacemaking, forming an alliance, establishing diplomatic relations, implementing a certain position, imposing economic sanctions or the ratification of conventions (Mintz and De Rouen 2010, 3). Decision-making in foreign policy relates to the choices made by individuals, groups or coalitions, which affect the actions of a nation at an international level (Mintz and De Rouen 2010, 3). Decisions taken in the field of foreign policy are characterized by the stakes involved, by a high level of uncertainty and by substantial risk (Renshon and Renshon 2008, 509).

Studies in international affairs only focus on the actions of states and their leaders. To decipher these actions it is useful to know what lies behind a decision, and what is pressing the action and the event. Decision-making in foreign policy is an important area of research because the manner in which decisions are made can determine a possible choice to fall into a pattern. Therefore, an actor can reach a different result depending on how the decision was made. Moreover, significant cognitive limitations distort information processing. Some decisions are carefully calculated, while others are intuitive.

The analysis level of the foreign policy decision-making process is different from that of international relations, where experts talk about individuals, states and the system as the main unit of analysis. In foreign policy decision-making, units refer specifically to entities which decide:

leaders, groups and coalitions. Foreign policy decisions can be examined in terms of three levels: individual, group and coalition (Hermann 2001, 47).

Decisions at the individual level refers to the behaviour of groups, coalitions and states. These decisions occur where leaders have a surplus of power within the state. Strong leaders do not have to seek consensus. Examples include Fidel Castro in Cuba, Mao Tse-tung in China, Stalin in the USSR (Hermann 2001, 47). Institutional constraints are not a major factor for these decision-makers.

Individuals are very important in critical situations. Margaret Hermann states that in high-level diplomacy, crisis and the interest of leaders increase the likelihood of individual decision-making (Hermann 2001, 48). For example, decisions to start a war or to attend international meetings are often associated with decisions made by a dominant leader. Studies related to the decisions made at the individual level focus on psychological factors related to the personality of the decision-maker, on operational codes, learning, evoked sets, cognitive consistency and misperceptions.

Why is the study of the foreign policy decision-making process important? Because we can thus uncover such cognitive processes that lead to a decision and "we enter the mind of" leaders who make decisions. We can also identify general behavioural patterns and individual decisions and can generate views on the leadership styles and personalities of leaders, which cannot be revealed through a systematic approach to foreign policy analysis. This approach to foreign policy analysis has the potential to become more and more important to the study of international relations. The foreign policy decision-making process may deepen the understanding of idiosyncrasies, motivations and perceptions that occur in making a decision, especially at the individual level. Moreover, the growth and development theories of cognitive psychology and decision theory have stimulated advances in the study of foreign policy decision-making. The course of world politics is shaped by the decisions of leaders. Any uncertainty involved in decision-making in foreign policy can belong to motivations, beliefs, intentions or calculations made by the opponents. If we cannot understand how decisions are made, then maybe we can manage to understand the decisions and, perhaps more importantly, we can predict some results on the international scene (Mintz and De Rouen 2010, 4). Factors such as the personality and beliefs of leaders, leadership style, emotions, images, cognitive consistency, use of analogies, intelligence, the manner in which they influence decision-making and the expected results question the explanatory power of the rational model. But this does not mean that decision-makers are *irrational* (Mintz and De Rouen 2010, 97),

but rather, they are limited by their abilities to going through all the stages of the rational model. The presence of idiosyncrasies (these personal and social factors) (Campanale and Shakun 1997, 13) influencing decisions can lead into other approaches to decision-making, which are different from the "classical" rational model. Rationality in foreign policy decision-making cannot be considered the sole factor. In the best case, it may be taken as a reference factor, but postmodern approaches bring the consideration of the role and influence of psychological factors to the attention of specialists.

At the individual decision-making level, Jackson and Sorensen talk about the limited capacities of human beings to make rational and objective decisions, and these limitations are related to the way in which information is perceived and processed (Jackson and Sorensen 2007, 234). The effects of cognition and beliefs upon foreign policy-makers are demonstrated by the beliefs' content of the decision-makers, through to the organization and structure of the decision makers' beliefs by common patterns of perception (or misperceptions) and cognitive stiffness (or flexibility) for change and learning (Rosati 2000, 47).

The literature on human cognition and belief brings questions regarding the notion of rationality and calls for a different interpretation of cognition. Rosati calls on specialists in international relations to not just stick to "simplistic and naive statements" about rational choice but to focus attention on cognitive approaches in order to substantiate their theories in psychology (Rosati 2000, 47).

It should be noted that the approach to foreign policy decision-making can relate to issues that affect all nations. Nations have security issues, commercial disputes and many other situations on their agenda (environmental and political) which require decisions.

Given the complexity of the foreign policy decision-making process, it becomes clear that the approach to foreign policy analysis, focusing on decision-making is vital to the understanding of the foreign policy behaviour of our world and the specific behaviour of different nations. Foreign policy decision-making has models and theories that can help us understand how bias, error, uncertainty and internal policies may determine decisions.

The idea for this research came from an article written by Erik Jones (2003), called *Idiosyncrasy and integration: suggestions from comparative political economy*, in which he tried to find answers to questions regarding the coincidence of national idiosyncrasy and international integration, and of process of European integration. The article is based on Karl Polanyi's (1957) insistence on the social embeddedness of market institutions and

Gunnar Myrdal's (1956) interpretation of the cumulative causality behind integration at the national and international levels. The article concludes by suggesting a research program that could develop from the interface between idiosyncrasy and integration. So, it was interesting to see if idiosyncrasies could appear at the level of European integration from the point of view of accession:

When examining any particular facet of European integration, the first step is to look where reactions differ across member states and the second is to attempt to analyze plausible distributive accounts for these differences in reaction. The point is not that integration and idiosyncrasy covary in some direct or linear sense. Rather it is that any aspect of integration may give rise to reactions that differ from one member state to the next for distributive reasons which are strongly influenced by the local structural environment. (Jones, 2003, 152)

Describing the Research

This research brings a new element into the study of international relations through the analysis of subjective elements (idiosyncrasies) that occur in the decision-making process at the individual level. The use of psychological methods for the analysis of foreign policy decision-making opens a new path of investigation in the field of international relations. The case study which will be the subject of this research, is the process of Romania's accession to the European Union (2000-2004), from the perspective of the psychological factors that have intervened in decision-making at the individual level.

Although many researchers have tackled this topic (Pușcaș 2007, 2005, 2003, Goriță 2008, Gallagher 2010), this paper brings a new perspective: the analysis of the subjective elements that influenced the decision-makers involved. The decision-maker analyzed is considered to be Romania's Chief Negotiator, Minister Delegate, Professor Vasile Pușcaș. Through discourse analysis (political speeches, public, media representations, and interviews conducted during 2000-2004) we shall try to identify the idiosyncrasies that have affected decision making. The analysis model used is an adaptation of one belonging to Wilson (2006).

The work has been organized in accordance with reporting standards in the field of social sciences. The main chapters of this paper are: the introduction, evolutions in the International System after the Cold War, the foreign policy decision-making process—recent approaches, alternatives for the decision-making models, idiosyncrasies in foreign policy decision-

making, an idiosyncratic analysis of Romania's E.U. accession negotiation process (the case study) and conclusions.

This research is a qualitative one, and this is an important and new research element in the field of international relations, where quantitative research methods are present in a high enough proportion. The option for qualitative research is given by the fact that it fosters the study of a topic, process or phenomenon "in its natural environment, based on the meanings that people bring with them" (Denzin and Lincoln 1994, 3).

After formulating the problem to be investigated, giving reasons for the choice of qualitative research, specifying the study periods and a "sample" of publications and research methods to be used; the interrogations from which this scientific investigation starts, will be presented. They aim to identify the idiosyncrasies that influenced the decision-making process of Romania's accession to the EU (at an individual level), their specificity, only for the decision-making process of the accession to the European Union, and the determination of political, cultural and social idiosyncrasies at some individual level, that have led to the decision-making process of Romania's accession to the European Union.

The answer to these questions will be given through the qualitative research, respectively the discourse analysis of the interviews, the media representations and public and political discourses from the period between the years 2000–2004, of Romania's Chief Negotiator with the EU.

The theoretical and methodological basis of this research consists of five chapters, each of them managing to complete the overall picture for an understanding of the psychological approach to decision-making.

The first of these chapters is "Evolutions in the contemporary international system after the Cold War". It provides an overview of the context and recent primary debates on the international system and the main actors, then presents some arguments advocating its restructuring. Changes in the structure of the contemporary international system are distinct from changes in the system unit. Therefore, changes in polarity will cause changes in the way in which the security is realised. Changes in polarity are those that have spread most rapidly in the contemporary international system. What changes should occur in order to transform the international system? The most available answer is that the system transforms itself and that interdependencies strengthen its ties and the institutions smooth the way for peace. The subchapter "Arguments for restructuring the International System after the Cold War" provides some of the necessary answers. The chapter continues with a description of the concepts and theories relating to the restructuring of the international system and the current state of the restructuring. The Contemporary

International System has waited for more than two decades to be restructured and its concepts reconsidered. The end of the Cold War could not stop the international crisis. On the contrary, some old concepts were reactivated and some new concepts, including Europe, have begun to emerge stronger. Some strategic regions of the world have increased in importance and the balance of global power was always considered when important international political decisions were taken. This "traditional" behaviour of the important actors in the international system after the Cold War, explains the slow rhythm and sometimes the withdrawal from the main transformations of the system. The last two decades have shown that the phenomenon of transformation and the processes within the international system could not be stopped. The Contemporary International System can be considered as a complex network of units involving many interactions, transactions and communications. In order to see these interactions as power relations (*balance of power*), the cooperative and integrative potential of transactions and communication needs to be observed (Puşcaş 2010, 25).

The second chapter of the thesis, "Foreign policy decision-making process—recent approaches" describes the most important elements of decision-making: its role in the formulation and implementation of foreign policy, the types of decisions, levels of analysis and context for decision-making. In recent years, the importance of the decision-making process has increased significantly in several specialty areas. This psychological approach to this process provides "hooks" for understanding and explaining its complexity in other disciplines as well, especially in international relations theory. The first subchapter brings a new, psychological approach to the perspective of international relations decision-making, also arguing its usefulness. Among the levels of the decision-making analysis, the most important for this work is the individual level, as it will highlight the subjective factors that influence decision making. The chapter ends with the presentation of three "classic" decision-making models: the rational actor, organizational behaviour and government policies. Decision-making models cause the premise that it is useful to conceptualize nations as unitary rational actors whose behaviour can be adequately explained by reference to the structure of the system, because individuals, groups and organizations acting on behalf of the state are sensitive to pressures and internal constraints, including elite action, electoral politics, public opinion, interest groups, ideological preferences and bureaucratic policies.

The alternatives to the traditional models of decision-making analysis are presented in chapter three. It is a chapter that will provide the bridge

between the three traditional patterns of decision-making analysis and the subjective elements that influence a decision, but have not yet been caught in the patterns of model analysis. All models of analysis used for analyzing foreign policy decision-making are mentioned: the cybernetic model, the prospective theory, the poliheuristic theory, the multistream model and the psychological approaches (groupthinking, the counselling system and the cognitive approach). The most useful to the present research is the psychological approach. This is done individually, with particular attention to the psychological aspects of the decision-maker, especially the perception of the actor. Important elements to be considered in the analysis of the foreign policy decision-making process are: the misunderstanding of the intentions and actions of other actors and the underlying reasons behind them, pre-existing beliefs (hence the tendency to perceive other states as more hostile than they really are) and mistaking desires for reality (wishful thinking). Psychological approaches have challenged the concept of rationality within the decision-making process because they focus on the human factors and the influences that shape the responses that decision-makers use for the outside world (Saikaly 2009).

The fourth chapter "Idiosyncrasies in foreign policy decision-making" presents the subjective (psychological) factors acting at an individual level and influencing decision-making. Basically, the presence of idiosyncrasies demonstrates the need for a psychological approach to foreign policy decision-making (Mintz and De Rouen 2010, 97). The factors acting here are: the personality and beliefs of leaders, leadership style, emotions, images, cognitive consistency, the use of analogies, intelligence and how these influence decision-making and the results expected. These factors call into question the explanatory power of the rational model. This chapter presents the main types of idiosyncrasies acting in decision-making: cognitive idiosyncrasies, idiosyncrasies of social perception, motivational and emotional idiosyncrasies.

The fifth chapter of the thesis synthetically describes Romania's accession process to the European Union, from an idiosyncratic standpoint, this being the first such case applied to us. After presenting the accession of Romania to the European Union, using the psychological approach, based on the scheme developed by Hermann (2011, 9), the idiosyncrasies that acted with the previously mentioned decision-maker factor will be identified in the public communication made by Romania's chief negotiator with the European Union in 2000-2004.

The paper ends with the final conclusions, presenting our responses to the interrogations of the research, but also with some proposals for future research.

The Motivation of Using Qualitative Research

Băban considers that in recent years, we have witnessed the emergence of a methodological paradigm that is complementary to the positivist one and the new paradigm:

...emphasizes the social construction of reality, the ultimate goal being a richer, more nuanced and authentic understanding of phenomena [...].
(Băban 2002, 12)

Sociology, anthropology and political science have quickly adopted qualitative methodology because it does not only belong to a single scientific discipline (Băban 2002, 13). What is relevant for the use of qualitative analysis in international relations is precisely the possibility of studying a subject-phenomenon "in its natural environment" (Denzin and Lincoln 1994, 4). Qualitative research is given by the complexity of social interactions and the meanings attributed by the participants in these interactions (Denzin and Lincoln 1994, 4).

In the field of international relations, qualitative analysis brings useful information through specific research methods, that can develop explanations of problems or of a process or situation analyzed (Hancock and Algozzine 2006, 7). Where few data are available, qualitative analysis helps to identify the factors that influence a situation (Hancock and Algozzine 2006, 8).

Qualitative research does not belong to a single scientific discipline, it offers the possibility of an interdisciplinary approach to a certain topic. The dynamics of international relations favour interdisciplinary approaches and the presence of psychological investigation methods, the analysis of the psychological factors that influence the evolution of a situation, advocate for qualitative research. This type of research involves the interpretation of data, usually few in number, within the social and cultural context, for a certain period of time (Grix 2001, 44).

Another important argument for the use of qualitative research is its own interpretive and creative character (Băban 2002, 30): "In the social sciences everything is interpretation, nothing speaks by itself" (Denzin and Lincoln 1994, 13). To understand the data, a combination of knowledge, rational and intuitive understanding and also interpretative ability are required (Webb 1998, 556).

Qualitative research fosters the holistic approach to a situation, and it is reflective regarding the role of the researcher in the research process. The case study is a type of qualitative research, different from other approaches belonging to other scientific disciplines, and requires intense analysis and

descriptions of a single unit in space and time (Hancock and Algozzine 2006, 11). The topics frequently approached by the case studies are about individuals, events and groups. Using the case study enables a deep understanding of a situation and of the people involved in it, and can influence policies, procedures and future research (Merriam 2001, 7).

All of these features constitute grounds for choosing qualitative analysis, i.e. the case study and discourse analysis as the main research methods.

Study Periods

The study period investigated is 2000-2004, when Romania's accession negotiations to the European Union and the activity of the decision-making factor as Chief Negotiator were conducted.

“The Sample”

Quotation marks are used because in qualitative research the term “sample” is not used. In qualitative research, the size of the “sample” is not important. For example, the discourse analysis of ten interviews can provide equally valid information as hundreds of responses to a structured analysis.

This research will analyze the public communication of the Chief Negotiator, Vasile Pușcaș; i.e., interviews, media representations and public speeches, as well as policies supported and presented on various national and international media channels (printed media, TV and online).

Research Methods

The present qualitative research uses *the case study* as a research strategy, the method of data analysis is the *discourse analysis* and the interpretation method is *interpretive research* (Băban 2002, 21-22).

The case study was chosen for this research because it favours the analysis of multiple sources of information, the research process being defined by systematic steps, designed for a careful investigation of the case (Hancock and Algozzine 2006, 10). Choosing the case study as a research strategy means that: a) it is a qualitative research method, b) the research is holistic and consistent; c) it uses some kind of “sample”; d) the “sample” is selected in real contexts; e) the topic to be discussed is diffuse; f) it may involve triangulation (using multiple research methods); g)

research considers a single process, phenomenon or situation (Gerring 2007, 17).

The study unit in this case is represented by Romania's accession negotiations to the European Union.

The main research method used is discourse analysis, one of the "traditional" methods of qualitative research (Neuman 2008, 61). It has experienced impressive developments in the last decade (Băban 2002, 121).

The psychological approach to decision-making, through language study, will provide an identity to the decision-maker, to the mental processes that occur, without ignoring the individual; his behaviour will be contextualised (Băban 2002, 122). The history of discourse analysis can be characterized by a return towards the language of German phenomenology, French poststructuralism and postmodernism (Băban 2002, 122): "the rediscovery of language was a crucial time for the development of discourse analysis in the social sciences" (Harre 1995).

This method has opened the way to the investigation of meanings and the way they are made. Every person, event or situation can be described in several manners, and taking into account the social context is the most important one (Băban 2002, 123).

Discourse analysis will basically provide, basically, the *social story* of human subjectivity by studying linguistic resources that build and replicate the sociopolitical domain (Burman 1991, 325):

discourse analysis is the method that studies how language is structured in a certain way so that it produces meanings and discourses which operate independently of the intentions of the speaker or the text writer. (Parker 1992, 125)

This research method will facilitate the highlighting of the idiosyncrasies that influenced the decision-making process involved in negotiating Romania's accession to the European Union.

The individual level of the decision-making process will be analyzed by means of a scheme elaborated by Wilson (2006, 29), starting from the one proposed by Hermann:

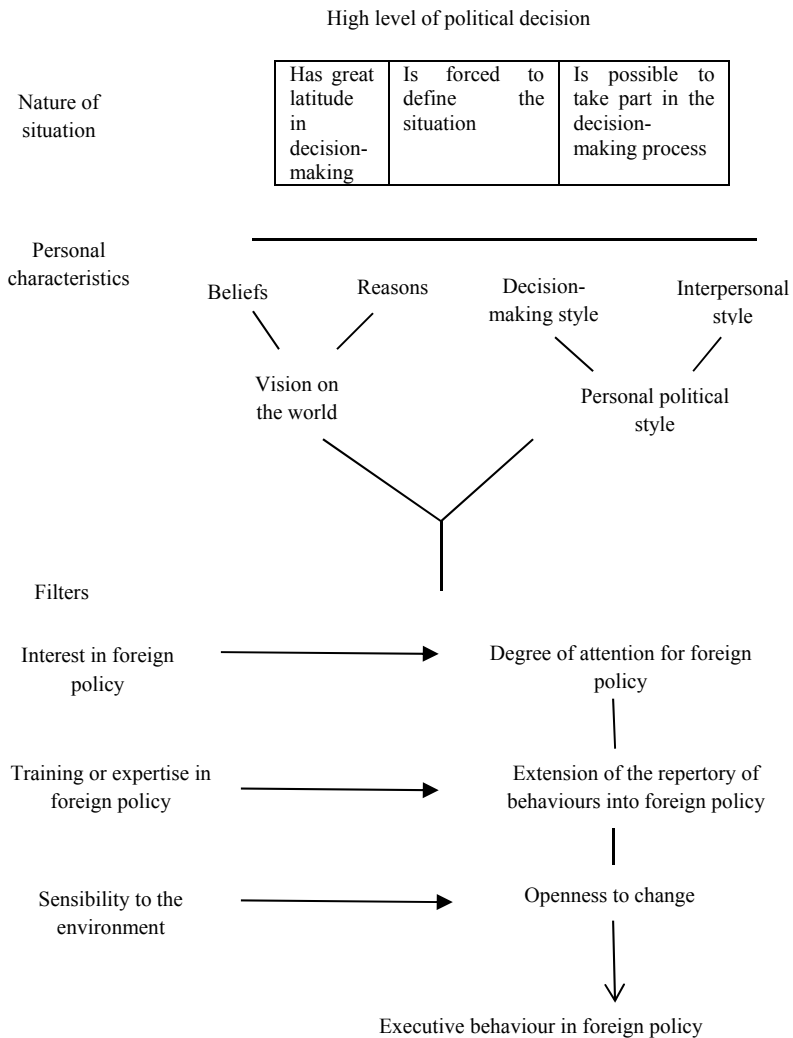


Fig. 0-1. The relationship between personal characteristics of decision-makers and executive behaviour in foreign policy, based on Margaret Hermann's theoretical framework (adapted from Wilson 2006, 29).

Based on the elements presented in the previous figure, their representation in the public and political discourse, the media representations and interviews conducted by the Chief Negotiator for Romania's accession to the European Union, Vasile Pușcaș, in 2000-2004, all of which appeared in national and international publications of that period were identified. The meanings contained in the investigated material offer the size of the *representations* (Neuman 2008, 61), and the *system of meanings and social constructions* (Băban 2002, 133), a trademark of the idiosyncrasies that occur. Basically, the speech is seen as a social construction, as a sum of meanings shared by a certain community (Băban 2002, 133).

Therefore, the psychological approach to the decision-making process of Romania's accession to the European Union was to analyze the representations and elements presented in the previous figure, from the public communication made by Romania's Chief Negotiator, Vasile Pușcaș.

The analysis was conducted in three stages: a) a description of how the language is used (metaphors, evaluative terms used and representations); b) an interpretation; and c) explanations, the most important step, which would highlight the relationship between power, domination and ideologies grounded in statements. We have sought to identify discursive patterns that would mark the presence of certain types of idiosyncrasies, and investigate the association of their presence with the decisions undertaken. An important element that will transpire throughout the analysis, which will have a bearing on the decision-making analysis, is the identification of the elements of power, favoured by the use of discourse analysis; "discourses reproduce the power relationships" (Băban 2002, 130).

Reflexivity is a central concern in discourse analysis, representing the point of connection between the individual and society (Băban 2002, 129). The reflexivity of the researcher aims to produce new meanings of phenomena, it involves evaluations and requires options, but also active participation in the production of knowledge. Note that discourse analysis also recognizes the *active role* of the analyst (Băban 2002, 130).

Interrogations of the Research

This research has started from the following questions: **Which are the idiosyncrasies that influenced the decision-making process of Romania's accession to the European Union? Are these idiosyncrasies characteristic only to the decision-making process of Romania's**

accession to the European Union? Are there specific elements (political, cultural or social) that have influenced the emergence of the individual idiosyncrasies in the decision-making process of Romania's accession to the European Union?

CHAPTER ONE

EVOLUTIONS IN THE INTERNATIONAL SYSTEM AFTER THE COLD WAR

Context and Debates Regarding the Contemporary International System

Post-crisis economic recovery is happening at different speeds—faster in the advanced economies and slower in the emerging or developing ones (as of April, 2010, Global Financial Stability Report mentioned). Among the advanced economies of the world, the United States is recovering faster than Japan and the European Union. Among the emerging and developing economies, Asia is in a more advanced position, while other emerging economies, and the economies of the Commonwealth, are still behind. Such an economic recovery will continue at different speeds.

Although the global economic recovery has gained "in traction", stability is not yet assured (Blanchard and Viñals 2010, XI). IMF estimates indicate a decrease in losses caused by the crisis at \$2.3 trillion in April 2010 from \$2.8 trillion in October 2009 (the lowest point reached by the crisis). The general framework indicates significant differences between the segments of the banking systems characterized by lack of capital, a high risk of further asset damage, and chronically poor profitability. Corporate strategies which should have provided solutions for low earnings growth were greatly affected by the damaging of assets, which has hit both gains and capital.

At the same time, better growth prospects in many emerging economies and low interest rates in major economies have triggered a resurgence of capital flows into some emerging economies. These increased capital flows have come with an increased risk of inflation pressure and asset boom. So far there is no clear record of assets, although there are some hot spots and risks may occur in a distant time horizon. Recoveries of cross-border financial flows have brought some changes in the exchange rate—depreciation of the US dollar and appreciation of other currencies of advanced and emerging economies. But these changes have

been limited and global current account imbalances are expected to widen again.

Perspectives over activity remain uncertain and the risks deriving from fiscal fragility have come to the foreground. A main concern is that political manoeuvres in many advanced economies have extended. Moreover, the sovereignty risks in advanced economies could undermine the financial stability gains and extend the crisis. The rapid growth of public debt and deterioration of fiscal balances can be transmitted to the banking systems or across borders.

This underlines the need for political action to support the recovery of the global economy and the financial system. The political agenda should include several important elements. One of the key tasks that should be achieved in the future is to reduce the vulnerability of sovereignty.

The ability to sustain a long-term high global growth against a medium term one depends on the rebalancing of global demand. This means that economies which before the crisis had an excessive external deficit will need to consolidate their public finances so as to limit the damage to growth and demand. Economies that have an excessive current account surplus will have to increase domestic demand to sustain growth, as excessive deficit economies lower their demands. As the currency of the excessive deficit economies depreciates, surplus economies' currencies will appreciate. Rebalancing will have to be supported by the financial reform sector to favour the growth of structural policies for both types of economy, either with surplus or deficit.

However, the current times are the times of mortgage crisis, banking crisis, crisis of the system and not least, crisis of confidence (Chorafas 2009, XIV). At a meeting of the Harvard Club on April 4 2008, the respected economist Dr. Paul Volker said that usually financial crises do not occur in the absence of economic problems, which are to be found at the base, adding that the financial system has failed the test market (Chorafas 2009, XIV). He also pointed out that current events have shown that specific risk management tools did not work. His thesis is the following:

- Global economy needs a global regulatory solution;
- Regulated institutions are placed in a better position to face the crisis than those uncovered by regulations;
- Lack of stability of the dollar affects the world economy.

Economic and financial experts warn of the danger of a second crisis, that of the credit default swaps; such a credit offers buyers and sellers the

opportunity to separate exchange risk from such characteristics as loan (for example, the interest rate). Theoretically, this is like an insurance policy to protect against the exchange risk, but in reality, it is merely another tool of speculation on credit quality, which has been assessed in a portfolio for each bank and for many investors, and now appears to be just toxic (Chorafas 2009, XIV).

The transition from a bipolar to a unipolar system and then to a multipolar one, with more centres of power, has shown that the international system should be dynamic and find its operating mechanisms while on the go, by means of reforming.

An interesting approach to the international system belongs to Professor Zaïka Laidi at the Centre for International Studies and Research of the Institute of Political Studies in Paris (Laidi 2005, 1). He states that, as our world has become increasingly broader, our ability to find out its meanings has diminished:

With the end of communism came the end of the intimate alliance between power and ideology. There isn't any power in our globalized world which can claim to provide meaning. In our desperation, we look into the past at the old models (religious traditions, nationalism, ethnicity) to give us a new sense of identity. But how effective are these old certainties in a globalized world, which is constantly in a state of flux? (Laidi 2005, 1)

The end of the Cold War did not just mean the end of communism, but the end of an intense historical period, the most intense geostrategic expression and the most complete ideological form. The strong feelings about change in the world order that was to come about after the fall of the Berlin Wall are equal to our inability to provide meaning or interpretation. Professor Laidi speaks of three principles that have been deployed with the fall of the Berlin Wall (1) "foundation" (meaning the basic principles of a collective project), (2) "unity" (meaning that the "images/representations of the world" are reunited as a whole), (3) the "end" or "ultimate goal" (meaning projecting it somewhere, where it seems to be better). It was obvious that "market democracy" have triumphed, and political, economic and financial turmoil fit less well into a general framework, though they were never more interdependent. Never has the need to project ourselves into the future been stronger, and this leads to a greater rupture between our historical past and our difficulty in interpreting it. These ruptures are at the foundation of the global crisis: a crisis unable to provide us with meaning.

The author speaks further about nationalism (closely linked to the search for identity), as one of the important features of the post-Cold War,

which is based on three sources, which are sometimes complementary: *sense of loss, fear, and instrumentalization*.

The first source—the *sense of loss*—is one of the motivating forces of neo-nationalism that is present in Russia today. This was about the fall of an empire, rather than the end of communism, a fact which has greatly damaged Russia's identity. It is obvious that the idea of "returning to nationalism" will not be supported if it implies only the return to a past that once existed. The peculiarity of Russia today is that it can have a brief appeal to history because, following the end of communism, the situation is not similar to that of 1917, but to that of the sixteenth century. The double rupture, with communism and the empire, is fuelling feelings of humiliation and loss.

Fear is the second motivating force of the identity movement. It is generally based on self-fulfillment in anticipation of reality. Therefore, in Yugoslavia, the idea of breaking the Federation was mentally present long before it actually happened. When the fire of discord was kindled for the first time in Slovenia, when it was expected to happen in Kosovo, it was precisely because the Slovenians—more economically advanced and ethnically homogeneous—anticipated the rupture. Therefore, they separated from the Federation of Yugoslavia, fearing the consequences of this rupture. In contrast, the Bosnians, who could hardly afford to become independent, opted to maintain the Federation. It was only when the survival of Yugoslavia was impossible, that the fear of bearing the costs of the Serbo-Croatian dismantling forced the Bosnians to think of them more in terms of a nation, even as an Islamic one. Their nationalism is not genetic because they are a creation that belongs to Tito. The strength of fear has left them with no other choice but to declare themselves "nationalists". It is easy to see that the explanation of the Yugoslav conflict as a mechanism of the exacerbation of nationalism or of religious antagonism is assumed to be an effect of this cause. In this case, religion lubricates rather than establishes the celebration of difference.

Instrumentalization is the third factor of post-Cold War nationalism. It expresses a simple reality: nationalist claims are never purely abstract or symbolic. In order to thrive, they need occasional meeting requirements or concrete materials, whose rationality is relatively clear: claims related to the possession of a national identity are made for not having to share the wealth and other goods with those considered deprived. Rejecting the idea of socialism and redistribution, "economic segregation" does not have any motivation to advance under cover. Lombard regionalism or Flemish or Slovenian nationalism cannot be understood without taking this factor into account.

The identity approach, belonging to Professor Laidi is complemented by an analogy of Freud's theory on the "narcissism of small differences", focusing on the artificial formation of groups around a "fixed point". This idea can be translated into the field of international relations, where the system bears the clear signs of a deployment process: the loss of collective labels following the death of the bipolar system (the loss of a fixed point, if we take Freudian theory as a reference).

The unipolarity exercised by the United States at the beginning of the post-Cold War period did not result in a clear delineation of the functioning mechanisms of the international system, despite the strategies initiated by the administrations of President Bill Clinton (building the nation, social international assistance and use of force) and President George W. Bush (nurturing relations between the great powers and rebuilding the national military force) (Ikenberry 2002, 40). The author even speaks of the outlining of a comprehensive strategy by the United States to fulfill its "imperial ambition". Maybe it was just the vulnerable spot of the unilateral US power: emphasizing military force, at the expense of the political and economic ones.

The agenda of President Barack Obama, self-proclaimed at the start of his term as the "American President from the Pacific", with special attention to maintaining the liaison with growth reservoirs in Asia and Latin America, and by his European tour which started in May last year, has demonstrated a reconsideration of the global agenda (Puşcaş 2011). Europe is considered "America's vital global partner" (Puşcaş 2011).

Today, decades after the fall of the Berlin Wall, neither the mechanistic thesis of decline, nor of a unipolar world are enough to understand the US role in the world, for reflecting their structural power in the post-Cold War world (Laidi 2005, 140). If the idea of unipolarity and decline co-exist in the debate, it is because the terms capture elements of truth, or do not take into account all situations. The theme of decline remains important for understanding the need to choose between internal and external priorities and remains operational if a reference is made to a mechanistic approach (short-term) or a dynamic one (long-term). For almost symmetrical reasons, the unipolarity theme offers advantages and disadvantages. It allows the United States to demonstrate its prominent place on the world stage, taking into account the inertia of its potential competitors: this is why there will be a sort of "American unipolarity by default". This idea is not enough for an understanding of the international reality, because, with the end of the Cold War, the conditions for insertion into the global system have been changed by globalization itself.

In contrast with Asia, but following the example of the Islamic world, Europe has stated and publicized its desire to have a meaning within the contemporary international system (Laïdi 2005, 48). Europeans feel the need to set their own agenda regarding the future, while Asians are interested in the current arrangements.

Thanks to the interaction between economic interdependence and cultural interpenetration, the world ceased to resemble a billiard game, where each ball was a nation-state (Laïdi 2005, 140). It is rather the sum of global processes, which are fluid and social (such as drugs, trade, environment, financial markets and media), and towards which the nation-states have a position of total domination "from beginning to end", but are looking to control those in a manner that is most advantageous to them. Within this ever-growing-in-complexity social system, the idea of a global architecture loses its value. It is no longer a matter of building a world like "planetarium Meccano" in which are used good plans prepared by embassies, but rather in the best case, it is a question of regulating global social processes in which states, businesses, organized social groups and individuals may intervene. If the meaning of the term is related to the ability of a nation to unite the "planetary ambition" with the increase of the collective well-being and social cohesion, then this explanation is valid for demonstrating that the United States was the last superpower of the world.

It can be said that globalization has caused the loss of the unipolarity of the contemporary international system for three main reasons: the first is the fact that states have a lesser role in spreading political processes, and social, economic and cultural rights and that, as a result, the ambition of states to "carry" messages to other states was reduced: a US-originated technology no longer has an American meaning; the second reason is explained by the rapid acceleration of diffusion processes, so that political actors can—at best—form, channel and influence these processes, but cannot resist them: for example, the world power of CNN which is only marginally dependent on American political power; the third reason is that globalization is evident everywhere in the world and the priority of the states is not so much linked to the idea of carrying their own message, but to regulating globalization so as not to obey it completely (Laïdi 2005, 142). Even for a very strong actor like the United States, globalization is much too extensive a process to be controlled. In trying to achieve this aim, the purpose has become too defensive: it is no longer necessary to cut an empire to the size of a state, in an environment that can be formed, but *to redefine the state territoriality in a globalized social system* (Laïdi 2005, 143). Both for the United States and for other powers, this is not about defining the sphere of influence, but rather of delineating their role

in a globalized space. Globalization is a broad and comprehensive process, which cancels the states' political claims of playing an exclusive global role.

Another important element to consider in light of the term "superpower" is the divisible nature of power. If we hear more about the decoupling between the military and economic power, another reason appears on stage: the decoupling between economic strength and social cohesion (Läidi 2005, 144). Today, as a result of intensified international economic competition, in almost all advanced economies, social cohesion determines the dominance of technological flexibility, as in Europe, or an increased tolerance for unemployment or social flexibility, which is reflected in the disappearance of guaranteed employment, or increased income.

Medium-term projections indicate that the most powerful vector of US influence in the world is its social model and not its economic power, also based on military infusions. The dissemination of this model, especially in Europe, will not depend on the political will of the United States. The advantages of the communitarian model of identification, while increasing social atomization with the breaking of social ties and the merchantability in social relations and tolerance of inequalities are the most relevant elements of the "Americanization" of the world, even independent of the intrinsic political power of the United States, in its desire to maintain or not maintain troops in Europe, and to take part or not take part in international security issues.

If the American power continues to have something to say worldwide, then this will be due to its social model and reconversion to the "smart power", rather than its political and military power, as used to happen during the Cold War, with all the ambivalences which this model implies: on the one hand, factors related to flexibility and mobility, and on the other hand elements of social disintegration. Globalization has once again emphasized the blurring of "the positive" and "negative influence" and this is the final step in breaking the subjective link which was established in the past between influence, progress and modernity.

The architecture of the contemporary international system feels the need for change, and major economic players within the global governance will have a say in this regard: the G20 and G8 forum.

G20 is the forum of finance ministers and Central Banks Governors which was created to address the specific needs of the international monetary and financial system, to strengthen the international financial architecture, to serve as a platform for discussion and to address international economic questions and, therefore, the group reflects a much broader constituency and global legitimacy than its parents G7/G8,

although it still excludes the representation of the poorest countries or of those in developing countries. This forum has connections with other important actors, international organizations (IMF Development Committee, Finance Committee, Financial Stability Forum, WTO, UN, OECD, NEPAD), has its own publications and issues its own documents, thus proving the important position that it upholds. G20 brings together countries whose populations amount to two-thirds of the world population and 90% of GDP. However, the G20 does not have the mandate and capacity to tackle a variety of global issues. Therefore, one of the future proposals is to convert this forum into a group of leaders (Hajnal 2007, 1).

The international post-crisis led to a deeper analysis of the causes of the situation arising in 2008 and to developing a strategy to provide guidelines designed to reduce external imbalances.

At the meeting which took place on April 14-15 2011 in Washington, G20 members established several indicators for evaluating persistent large imbalances, which will allow the focus to be on a two-step integration process:

1. public debt and fiscal deficits, private savings and private debt;
2. external imbalance composed of the trade balance and net investment income flows and transfers, taking into account at the same time, the exchange rate, fiscality and further monetary policies.

To complete the first step, several milestones were established that will be achieved by evaluating the indicators mentioned above. Without the political targets these landmarks will set benchmarks for each indicator available, favouring the identification of countries for the second step of the evaluation. Four approaches have been proposed:

- a structural approach, based on an economic model and economic theories, in which each member of G20 will have one indicator as an assessment reference, so that the specific circumstances, including large commodity producers, can be taken into account;
- a statistical approach of the members of G20, which will reference the national historical trends;
- a statistical approach which will reference specific historical indicators of G20 members against groups of countries at similar stages of development;
- a statistical approach which will reference specific national indicators of G20 members in relation to the entire G20.

The statistical approach will be based on data from 1990-2004, because this is the period preceding the emergence of external imbalances. The reference values in the period 1990-2010 will also be used. In all four approaches, the forecast for 2013-2015 will be compared with the values suggested by the indicators, to determine whether or not this is a case for an in-depth assessment. Those countries which will be identified, in at least two of the four approaches, as having strong imbalances, will be evaluated in-depth to refer, in the case of the second step, the nature of the roots of the imbalance and to identify the impediments to adjustment.

Professor Dani Rodrick, of Harvard University, believes that the G20 leaders meet too often and offer grandiose theoretical solutions, but lack a plan for immediate action in response to a crisis (Rodrik 2008, 21). Discussion of a new global financial system should not be at the top of the agenda of this forum. The immediate challenge is uniting against unilateral actions that may create a vicious circle which can drag the world economy into a deeper crisis. Professor Rodrick offers some solutions: the agreement of G7/G8 members on their governments' members having an appropriate degree of fiscal expansion to stimulate their economies, common actions of the policy-makers on the degree of fiscal expansion that will be more effective than individual action, current account surplus countries should adopt policies that increase domestic demand the creation by the IMF of a Short Term Liquidity Fund where developing countries would have access to some facilities of four of the emerging economies, those whose accidental financial excesses are not their own fault. The financial crisis, Rodrick states, has clearly shown that a new approach to financial regulation at national and international levels is urgently needed. The rules governing global financial functioning should be reconsidered to ensure that finances serve their primary purpose—allocations for projects with high profitability and minimum risk—without creating instability and crisis (Rodrik 2008, 22).

Raghuram Rajan, former IMF Chief Economist, and Professor at the University of Chicago, believes that the G20 leaders should focus on global governance and that they should boost the IMF's financial strength (Rajan 2008, 29). Global financial coordination requires a wider group than the G7/G8 and G20 and the European Union should hold a single position in the G20+, in order to facilitate a broader representation. The secretariat of this new group should be a restructured IMF. Rajan believes that the current dialogue conducted in the global economy is a dialogue of the deaf, because: