

# Cold War Perceptions



# Cold War Perceptions

*Romania's Policy Change  
towards the Soviet Union,  
1960-1964*

By

Elena Dragomir

Cambridge  
Scholars  
Publishing



Cold War Perceptions:  
Romania's Policy Change towards the Soviet Union, 1960-1964

By Elena Dragomir

This book first published 2015

Cambridge Scholars Publishing

Lady Stephenson Library, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE6 2PA, UK

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data  
A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

Copyright © 2015 by Elena Dragomir

All rights for this book reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without the prior permission of the copyright owner.

ISBN (10): 1-4438-7073-0  
ISBN (13): 978-1-4438-7073-3

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of Tables.....	vii
Abstract .....	viii
Acknowledgements .....	x
Abbreviations .....	xii
Introduction .....	1
The research problem	
Theory and method	
Previous research	
Sources of the study	
Structure of the study	
Chapter One.....	22
Romania's Post-war Grand Strategy	
1.1 Conceptualising Romania's post-war grand strategy	
1.2 Bargaining for friendship	
1.3. Romania – A loyal bandwagoner	
Chapter Two.....	40
The Reformation of the CMEA, 1960-1962	
2.1 Romania's opposition to specialisation	
2.2 Attempts at CMEA integration	
Chapter Three.....	72
Coping with the Perceived Integration Threat	
3.1 Re-launching integration	
3.2 Romania's first dissent	
3.3 Developing new tactics to block integration	
3.4 Settling the integration dispute	

Chapter Four .....	128
Looking for a Balance with China	
4.1 Romania and the Sino-Soviet dispute, 1960-1962	
4.2 In search of an ally	
Chapter Five .....	178
The April 1964 “Declaration of Independence”	
5.1 The perceived threats of early 1964	
5.2 Attempts at mediation	
5.3 Romania’s public dissent	
5.4 Soviet reactions to the RWP’s Declaration	
Conclusion.....	237
Annex: Biographical Information.....	257
References .....	261
Index.....	276

## LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: The Romanian-Soviet exchange of letters (March-June 1963) .... 103

Table 2: The dissemination abroad of the RWP's 1964 Declaration..... 213

## ABSTRACT

This study investigates Romania's early 1960s policy change towards the Soviet Union, focusing on two questions – why the change occurred and what actually changed. Calling it *detachment from Moscow, dissidence, new state security strategy, independent or autonomous line*, historiography focuses – from an objectivist perspective – on the external permissive conditions that allowed the change. It works within a paradigm which maintains that after the war Romania allied (balanced) with the USSR against the Western threat, but contends that Romania's alliance with the USSR and its (post-1960) opposition to the USSR were mutually exclusive. In tackling this dichotomy, some scholars argue that the change was simulated or apparent, while others acknowledge a partial, incomplete detachment, but pay little attention to what actually changed.

Drawing from recently declassified archive materials, this study used a perceptual approach and a paradigm which argues that post-war Romania allied not against the threat but with the (perceived) threat – the USSR. It focused on the proximate causes triggering the change and explained what changed. It investigated the emergence of Romania's opposition to the USSR mainly through two case studies (the CMEA reform process and the Sino-Soviet dispute) and covered the period between 1960 and 1964 – between Romania's first categorical (albeit non-public and indirect) opposition to the USSR and the issuing of the Declaration marking Romania's first public and official (although indirect) acknowledgement of the disagreements with the USSR.

This study found that the proximate causes of Romania's policy change towards the Soviet Union resided in the Romanian leaders' perceptions of the threats posed to Romania's interests by various specific Soviet policies, such as the attempts to impose the CMEA integration or a strong collective riposte against China. The Romanian leaders considered that such Soviet policies had to be blocked, but they feared that opposition risked triggering even bigger threats or even the ultimate (perceived) threat to Romania's security – an open confrontation with the USSR. Thus, they responded to the perceived threats by conceptualising the change in Romania's policy towards the USSR not in terms of breaking off the alliance but in terms of finding *practical ways (tactics)* to block specific



(perceived) less-than-ultimate Soviet threats, without provoking a confrontation with the USSR.

Through its findings, this study opens new research perspectives on the Romanian-Soviet post-war relations and on the role of the leaders' beliefs in Romania's foreign policy choices. It may also be a starting point to understand the unusual present-day relations between Romania and the Russian Federation.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This book is the result of a PhD research which I defended in January 2014 at the University of Helsinki (Finland). During the time I spent on this study, I incurred considerable debts to many individuals in Finland and Romania. Pursuing a doctorate is an experience that truly reveals the importance of teachers and mentors, of colleagues and friends, and, over the past years, I have had the privilege to found myself within a supportive set of social and professional networks.

As a researcher and graduate student, I greatly benefited from the academic environment at several institutions: the Department of Political and Economic Studies (at the Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Helsinki), the Graduate School for Russian and Eastern European Studies (at the Aleksanteri Institute in Helsinki), and the Grigore Gafencu Research Centre (at the Valahia University of Târgoviște, Romania).

I also had the privilege to participate in two significant research projects, *Competition in Socialist Society*, run by the University of Helsinki (director of project Dr. Katalin Miklóssy) and *Utopia versus realism in Romania's foreign policy*, run by the University Valahia of Târgoviște (Director of Project Dr. Silviu Miloiu). The weekly Graduate Seminar at the Department of Political and Economic Studies, the conferences and seminars organised at the Aleksanteri Institute, the monthly conferences and workshops from the Grigore Gafencu Research Centre provided me with settings for presenting work in progress – and sometimes distress – and for receiving supervision, guidance, feedback, comments, suggestions or challenging questions.

Numerous participants joined these academic groups over the years, and many deserve particular mention for their comments on different working papers which I presented or for how they supported me in solving different but often crucial administrative and practical matters. I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Seppo Hentilä, Pauli Kettunen, Katalin Miklóssy, Suvi Kansikas, Silviu Miloiu, Marjukka Laakso, Marjatta Rahikainen, Riikka Palonkorpi, Juhana Aunesluoma, Sari Autio-Sarasmö, Ohto Rintala, Markku Kivinen, Markku Kangaspuro, Ira Jänis-Isokangas, Eeva Korteniemi, Hanna Ruutu, Anna-Maria Salmi, Cezar Stanciu.

Working under the supervision of Professor Seppo Hentilä and of Dr. Katalin Miklóssy, I have been taught rigor and reason. Time is a very precious commodity of academic life and I am very grateful for the time that Professor Seppo Hentilä and Katalin Miklóssy took to read and comment my apparently never-ending drafts. The study could not have reached the current state without their patient reviews and rechecks, and I feel most deeply indebted for their useful discussions and numerous remarks pinpointed on each chapter.

I would also like to thank to Professor Mihai Retegan, from the University of Bucharest, who acted as opponent during the public examination and to Professors Dennis Deletant and Liviu Tirău, who, acting as pre-examiners of my dissertation, presented me with challenging and useful suggestions and comments.

I am deeply indebted to my colleague and friend Suvi Kansikas who unselfishly devoted time and effort to read and comment my work. Moreover, Suvi's help and guidance with regard to the practicalities of the last phases of the doctorate programme was crucial. I am convinced that without Suvi's support with regard to different practicalities I would have not finished the programme. Thank you, Suvi!

Silviu Miloiu also read and commented my drafts and for that I am very grateful to him as well. I am also indebted to Dr. Mihai Croitor (from the Department of Contemporary History and International Studies, Faculty of History and Philosophy, Babeş-Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca, Romania) and to Dr. Cezar Stanciu (from the Department of Cotemporary History, Faculty of Humanities, University Valahia of Târgovişte, Romania) for their insightful discussions, especially during the last phases of the research.

Silviu Miloiu and Katalin Miklóssy have been the first two people who have shown confidence in me and in my academic potential. If my work will ever count for something, then that is because they encouraged me to do research and because they often guided me through it.

I am also forever grateful to my friends and neighbours, Cati and Florin Savu. Without their support, I could not have started the programme several years ago. Many thanks are also due to Dr. Tom Junes for his useful language corrections.

During the time I was in the doctoral programme, several funding bodies financed my work: The Finnish Centre for International Mobility, the Valahia University of Târgoviste (through the *Utopia versus realism* research project), the University of Helsinki (through the *Competition in Socialist Society* research project), and the Dinu Patriciu Foundation (through the Open Horizons scholarship program). I am grateful to them all.

## ABBREVIATIONS

AA	–	Armistice Agreement
AC	–	Agricultural Conference
AMAE	–	The Archives of the Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs
ANIC	–	The (Romanian) National Central Historical Archives
CIA	–	Central Intelligence Agency
CC	–	Central Committee
CCP	–	Chinese Communist Party
CAER	–	The Romanian equivalent of the English CMEA/Comecon
CMEA	–	Comecon/ Council for Mutual Economic Assistance
CPSU	–	Communist Party of the Soviet Union
EC-CMEA	–	Executive Committee of the CMEA
FOIA	–	Freedom of Information Act
GDR	–	The German Democratic Republic
GNA	–	Grand National Assembly
HU OSA	–	Open Society Archives at Central European University, Budapest, Hungary
MIA	–	The Marxist Internet Archive
NDF	–	The National Democratic Front
NLP	–	National Liberal Party
NPP	–	The National Peasants' Party
OSA	–	Open Society Archives
PCAF	–	The Permanent Commission for Agriculture and Forestry
PCM	–	(Archive Fond) Presidency of the Council of Ministers
PCC	–	Political Consultative Committee of the Warsaw Pact
PHP	–	Parallel History Project on NATO and the Warsaw Pact
PPS	–	(Journal) <i>Problems of Peace and Socialism</i>
PRC	–	People's Republic of China
RCP	–	The Romanian Communist Party
RPR	–	The Romanian People's Republic
RWP	–	The Romanian Workers' Party

- TFCMA – Treaty of Friendship, Collaboration and Mutual Assistance
- UNO – United Nations Organisation
- US/USA – United States/United States of America
- USSR – The Union of the Soviet Socialist Republics
- WTO – Warsaw Treaty Organisation



## INTRODUCTION

After the collapse of the socialist system, an improvement in Romanian-Russian relations was expected, but it turned out that such an expectation was too optimistic. The two parties negotiated for ten years until they reached an agreement making possible the signing on 4 July 2003 of a treaty intended to unlock the bilateral economic and political relations.<sup>1</sup>

Despite this achievement, relations remained relatively cold until today, with representatives in Moscow and Bucharest declaring from time to time that they were looking forward towards an improvement in their relations. For instance, in February 2011 the Romanian Foreign Affairs Minister, Teodor Baconschi, declared that he had been given the mandate to improve the Romanian-Russian relations and to take “symbolic measures to increase trust” between the two states. A few days later, the ambassador of the Russian Federation in Romania, Aleksandr Churlin, characterising the bilateral relations as “pretty good” and “normal”, asked Romania to replace the “symbolic gestures” with “concrete actions” and emphasised that he “would wish” Romania and the Russian Federation “to return, if not to the very close relations from 130 years ago, then at least to friendly relations”.<sup>2</sup>

This study is an investigation into the origins of the process that brought Romania and the Russian Federation to the present-day situation, being neither friends nor enemies. For the last two decades, Romanian-Russian relations experienced an ongoing transition which did not result though in improved relations.

In this situation, a reassessment of bilateral Romanian-Russian/Soviet relations could be relevant for two reasons. Firstly, today’s bilateral relations cannot be unlocked without the proper understanding of the historical burdens that they carry, and, secondly, this investigation could serve as a benchmark to restructure Romanian-Russian relations.

---

<sup>1</sup> Dinu C. Giurescu (coordinator), *Istoria României în date*, Enciclopedică, București, 2010, 818.

<sup>2</sup> Corneliu Vlad, ‘Fază a semnalelor în relațiile româno-ruse’, in *Curentul*, 20 February 2011.

## The research problem

The case of Romanian-Russian relations is very generous with regard to examples of reversing or restructuring state relations, as through history they oscillated between cordial ties, close cooperation, friendship, neutrality, “pretty good relations”, open hatred and even war. During the First World War, Romania and the Russian Empire were on the same side, but in the interwar period the two experienced tense relations which culminated during the Second World War, in which they found themselves on opposite sides.

The end of the conflict brought the former two enemies into a frame of friendship, cooperation and alliance, and from the late 1940s to the end of the 1950s, Romania acted both domestically and internationally as the most trusted friend and ally of the USSR, posing no serious problem to Soviet policy. From the early 1960s onwards Romania became a problem for Moscow, being called “the nationalist” of the bloc<sup>3</sup>, and opposing in many instances all the other bloc members, the USSR included. However, officially, Romania and the USSR remained “friends” and members within the same military alliance – the Warsaw Pact.

The major reversals of relations from the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century – from allies and friends to enemies and then from enemies to friends and allies again – occurred within the context of major military conflicts, while the change of the early 1960s did not occur in circumstances of war. In a way, the 1960s change was not a reversal as it did not replace friendly relations with open hostile relations.

The early 1960s Romanian approach to the USSR was rather unusual – neither friends, nor enemies, collaborators with regard to some aspects, and adversaries (even public adversaries) with regard to others. Still, both Romania and the USSR continued to declare publically that there were no divergences between them. Given the absence of any military conflict or of any drastic domestic change (a regime change, for instance) within Romania or the USSR, and the unusual Romanian position towards the USSR (neither friends, nor enemies, supporters in some cases, public contesters in others) the following research questions arise: Why did the change in Romania’s policy towards the USSR occur in the early 1960s and what actually changed?

---

<sup>3</sup> Note concerning the talks between Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej and Liu Fang, the Chinese ambassador in Romania, 5 June 1964, in Romulus Ioan Budura (coordinator), *Relațiile româno-chineze, 1880-1974*, București, 2005, 465.



This study investigates the emergence of Romania's opposition to the USSR between 1960 and 1964 – that is between Romania's first categorical (albeit non-public and indirect) opposition to the USSR and the issuing of the RWP's Declaration marking the Romanian leaders' first public and official (although indirect) acknowledgement of the Romanian-Soviet disagreements. It focuses on two case studies: the development of Romania's opposition to the USSR in the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (CMEA) and its defiance of the USSR with regard to the Sino-Soviet dispute.

The former case was chosen because the CMEA specialisation was perceived by the Romanian leaders as the first major post-war Soviet threat to Romania's interests – hence their opposition to the USSR in relation to the Council's reformation. The latter case was chosen because, on the one hand, the Romanian leaders tried to use the Sino-Soviet dispute to pressure the USSR to accommodate their views with regard to the CMEA reform process and because, on the other hand, the Sino-Soviet quarrel provided the proximate cause for the issuing of the RWP's April 1964 Declaration.

Focusing on the emergence of a change in the policy of a small state, Romania, towards a great power, the USSR, this study does not intend, however, to survey the bilateral Romanian-Soviet relations, nor to analyse the USSR's policies towards Romania, nor to provide a detailed analysis on Romania's participation in the CMEA in the early 1960s or on Romania's involvement in the Sino-Soviet dispute. Nor is it interested in investigating the international response to the new Romanian approach, its consequences for Romania's international situation or how the Romanians' beliefs, perceptions or ideas were formed. The purpose of the study is limited to revealing the proximate causes of the change and the content of the change.

## **Theory and method**

In addressing the causal research question – why the change in Romania's policy towards the USSR occurred – this study focuses on the proximate causes of the change. According to Randall L. Schweller, a cause could refer to both permissive causes (permissive conditions) and proximate causes. The antecedent conditions allow an event to happen, but they cannot explain the occurrence of the event if not joined by the proximate ones. "Oxygen and dry fuel, for instance, are permissive conditions for

there to be a fire, but there must also be a spark, the proximate cause”, Schweller contends.<sup>4</sup>

Other researchers use the distinction between long-term causes or preconditions and short-term causes or immediate triggers.<sup>5</sup> The previous literature on Romania’s detachment from Moscow prevalently concentrated on the permissive, external conditions allowing the change, but this study focuses on the proximate, immediate causes triggering the change.

The main concepts that the study operates with are perceived threats, state grand strategy and tactics (ways of acting). The study focuses on the perceived threats posed by a superpower, the USSR, vis-à-vis a small state, Romania. According to one historiographical perspective, a small state is defined in terms of territory, population, and resources.<sup>6</sup> A second perspective underlines the capacity of the state to obtain or preserve security – in other words, its power<sup>7</sup>, while a third analyses the role of the state in the system.<sup>8</sup>

This study, however, considers Romania a small state and the USSR a great power because this is how the Romanian leaders perceived and defined Romania and the USSR in the 1960s. Taking into consideration variables such as the states’ territory, resources, power or their international influence, the Romanian leaders considered that Romania was a small state and that the USSR was a world superpower threatening Romania’s interests.<sup>9</sup>

The Romanian archives provide evidence of the Romanian leaders’ beliefs, perceptions, views, conceptions with regard to the Soviet Union’s goals and intentions towards Romania. It is not the focus of the study to establish whether the Romanian leaders’ perceptions of the Soviet Union’s intentions were accurate, according to “reality as it was”, or whether they were misperceptions. In this study the terms “perceptions” or “views”

---

<sup>4</sup> Randall L. Schweller, *Unanswered threats: political constraints on the balance of power*, Princeton University Press, 2006, 16-18.

<sup>5</sup> Chester S.L. Dunning, *Russia’s first Civil War. The time of troubles and the founding of the Romanov Dynasty*, Pennsylvania State University Press, 2001, 15.

<sup>6</sup> David Vital, ‘The inequality of states: a study of the small power in international relations’, republished in Christine Ingebritsen, Iver B Neumann, Sieglinde Gstohl (eds.), *Small states in international relations*, University of Washington Press, Seattle, 2006, 81.

<sup>7</sup> Robert L. Rothstein, *Alliances and small states*, New York University Press, 1968, 1-29.

<sup>8</sup> Robert O. Keohane, ‘Lilliputian’s dilemmas. Small states in international politics’, in Ingebritsen et al, 55-61.

<sup>9</sup> For instance, *Minutes of the Plenum of the CC of the RWP on 17 February 1964*, ANIC, CC of RCP, Office, File 7/1964, 4-32.

refer to how the world or a certain aspect of it was viewed and interpreted by the Romanian decision makers.

In the International Relations field, there are two contrasting perspectives on the linkage between an actor's behaviour and external conditions. One is the objectivist perspective which considers that the researcher can describe the environment in objectively accurate terms and that the decision makers correctly see objective incentives in this environment. The main problems with this approach are that decision makers may perceive the external environment differently than assumed by researchers, that the perceptions of the external conditions may vary between different decision makers, and that the role of perceptions in the decision makers' policy choices is overlooked.<sup>10</sup>

On the other hand, a perceptual perspective takes into consideration the role of the perceptions and views of the actors in explaining the state's behaviour. Colin S. Gray, Robert Bathurst, William Wohlforth and Alexander George, for instance, contend that the actors act in accordance with their perceptions, views of the world, set of beliefs, values, ideology. As George phrases it, "much of an individual's behaviour is shaped by the particular ways in which he perceives, evaluates and interprets incoming information about events in his environment". A perceptual approach accepts that the objective factors affect the actors' views, but argues that scholars should not assume that they could know what the actors think about those factors.<sup>11</sup>

While it is a truism that people act on the basis of their perceptions or views of the world, the previous literature on Romania's early 1960s detachment from Moscow advances an exclusive objectivist perspective, paying no systematic attention to the Romanian leaders' beliefs, views or perceptions. There seems to be one timid exception, however, in the form of a 2009 study by Mihai Croitor, who, addressing Romania's involvement in

---

<sup>10</sup> Frank Ninkovich, *The Wilsonian century. US foreign policy since 1900*, University of Chicago Press, 2001, 6-10.

<sup>11</sup> Colin S. Gray, *Recognizing and understanding revolutionary change in warfare. The sovereignty of context*, Strategic Studies Institute, Army War College, 2006, 20-49; Alexander George, *Presidential decision making in foreign policy. The effective use of information and advice*, Westview Press, Boulder, 1980, 57; Robert Bathurst, *Intelligence and the mirror. On creating an enemy*, International Peace Research Institute, Oslo, 1993, 3-20; William Wohlforth, *The elusive balance. Power and perceptions during the Cold War*, Cornwell University Press, Ithaca, 1993, 6-48.

the Sino-Soviet dispute, paid some attention to the views of the Romanian leaders.<sup>12</sup>

Occasionally, different authors do write about what the Romanian leaders believed, feared, hoped or intended<sup>13</sup>, but there is no work produced so far to systematically propose a perceptual approach. Thus, this is the first study that, investigating Romania's policy change towards the USSR in the early 1960s, systematically takes into consideration the way in which decision makers perceived and internalised the external environment.

Regarding the questions as to who made the decision to change Romania's policy towards the USSR, the study selected the key actors in Romania's domestic and foreign policy in the early 1960s (and many years before and after) – Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej, Alexandru Bîrlădeanu, Ion Gheorghe Maurer, Nicolae Ceaușescu, Emil Bodnăraș, Gheorghe Apostol or Corneliu Mănescu.<sup>14</sup> This selection is also supported by the fact that there is enough data to study these leaders' perceptions and views or their role in making the decision of changing Romania's policy towards the USSR.

Regarding the other research question – what actually changed in Romania's policy towards the USSR – the study operates with the concepts of state (grand) strategy and tactics. According to Richard Rosecrance and Arthur A. Stein, “in modern terms, grand strategy came to mean the adaptation of domestic and international resources to achieve security for a state”, but in this study the term “grand strategy” is understood as “a theory explaining how it [a state] can cause security for itself” – as Stephen M. Walt phrased it.<sup>15</sup> If the term “grand strategy” refers to the way the Romanian leaders theorised on how Romania could provide security for itself, the term “tactics” refers to ways of acting, to something done.

---

<sup>12</sup> Mihai Croitor, *România și conflictul sovieto-chinez, 1956-1971*, Mega, Cluj-Napoca, 2009, 240-241.

<sup>13</sup> For instance, Dan Cătănuș, *Tot mai departe de Moscova. Politica externă a României, 1956-1965*, INST, București, 2011, 388; Florin Constantiniu, *O istorie sinceră a poporului român*, Univers Enciclopedic, București, 2008, 487; Cezar Stanciu, *Devotați Kremlinului. Alinierea politicii externe românești la cea sovietică în anii '50*, Cetatea de Scaun, Târgoviște, 2008, 8-25.

<sup>14</sup> See *Annex – Biographical information*, page 256.

<sup>15</sup> Richard Rosecrance, Arthur A. Stein, 'Beyond Realism. The study of grand strategy' in Richard Rosecrance and Arthur A. Stein (eds.), *The domestic bases of grand strategy*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca, 1993, 4; Stephen M. Walt, *The origins of alliances*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca, London, 1987, 2.

Laure Paquette observe that a state strategy is “an imaginative idea that orchestrates and/or inspires sets of actions (tactics) in response to a given problem” and that it is composed of a goal (the object to be accomplished by actions), tactics (the actions, the ways of acting to achieve the goal), a core idea (a metaphor or analogy expressed by a slogan or image) and style or principles (that is general ideas that guide the selections of tactics).<sup>16</sup>

In this study, doing nothing is also regarded as a form of action, as a type of response to a problem. Thus, here the term includes doing-nothing-tactics, passive tactics, argumentative tactics and active tactics (avoidance, ignoring, postponement, drawing analogies, alteration, employing threats or balancing).

To analyse the written material, this study uses discourse analysis, drawing on the concepts of discourse and foreign policy discourse developed by Ole Waever, Lene Hansen and Henrik Larsen, who contributed to a theory designed to introduce discourse analysis as a method of foreign policy analysis. Ole Waever argues that discourse is the dimension of society where meaning is structured, forming “a system which is made up of a layered constellation of key concepts”. Seeing structures in language, Waever contends that discourse “can deliver the coherent, well-structured constraints on foreign policy”.<sup>17</sup> Henrik Larsen maintains that “a general problem in foreign policy analysis is how to deal theoretically with general beliefs to which actors adhere” – where “beliefs” refer not only to their political ideology but also to meaning attributed to concepts such as state, security etc. – and argues that a discursive analysis approach can solve this problem.<sup>18</sup>

Accepting Larsen’s thesis according to which the meaning attributed by actors to concepts (that is the political discourse on those concepts) is important in explaining foreign policy choices, this study focuses on the Romanian leaders’ discourse about Soviet (perceived) threats to Romania’s interests. Lene Hansen emphasises that foreign policy discourses are analytical constructions and not empirical objects and that they are identified through the reading of texts. However, there are not as many

---

<sup>16</sup> Laure Paquette, *Political strategy and tactics. A practical guide*, Nova Science, New York, 2002, 4-19.

<sup>17</sup> Ole Weaver, ‘Identity, communities and foreign policy. Discourse analysis as foreign policy theory’, in Lene Hansen, Ole Weaver (eds.), *European integration and national identity. The challenge of the Nordic states*, Routledge, London, New York, 2003, 20-49.

<sup>18</sup> Henrik Larsen, *Foreign policy and discourse analysis*, Routledge, London, 1997, 1-6.

discourses as (spoken or written) texts, the individual texts converging instead around common themes and sets of policies, Hansen maintains, reasoning that “the foreign policy debates are bound together around a smaller number of discourses” which are built around key representations which might be geographical identities, historical analogies, striking metaphors or political concepts.<sup>19</sup>

Focusing on the Romanian discourse of the perceived Soviet threats to Romania’s interests, this work provides also a detailed study of the articulations of those perceived threats and of the responses to threats as identified within the texts. Not all texts explicitly advance the perceived threats and the response policies to the threats. The minutes of secret Politburo meetings and Gheorghiu-Dej’s annotations on different reports, for instance, provide explicit examples of the perceived threats to Romania presented by the USSR and by the other bloc members, while official communiqués or public declarations, without explicitly elaborating on the perceived threats, do incorporate the policy response to these perceived threats and are part of the political discourse.

The Romanian early 1960s (non-public) discourse on the perceived Soviet threats is built around a set of key representations under the main umbrella of the relationship between Romania and the (allegedly threatening Soviet) other. There are geographical and power representations such as the vicinity of the threatening other, the opposition between the (perceived) small powerless Romania and the (perceived) powerful Soviet Union or its (perceived) territorial expansionism.

The discourse is also built around historical analogies between the perceived early 1960s Soviet threats to Romania’s interests and previous Soviet behaviour and policies such as the annexation of Bessarabia and Bukovina, the Soviet (perceived) vengeance upon Romania in the aftermath of the Second World War (for instance, in the form of organising the SovRoms<sup>20</sup> or of maintaining Soviet troops, counsellors and spies on Romania’s territory), the Soviet conduct towards Yugoslavia in the late 1940s or towards Albania and China in the early 1960s.

The public responses to perceived threats, on the other hand, are structured mostly around key concepts and representations such as the state’s sovereignty and independence, mutual advantage, territorial integrity, unity or friendship.

This study uses new primary evidence to analyse events and historical facts that have been rarely if ever presented in the previous literature.

---

<sup>19</sup> Lene Hansen, *Security as practice. Discourse analysis and the Bosnian War*, Routledge, London, 2006, 17-54.

<sup>20</sup> SovRoms were joint Romanian-Soviet ventures, established in 1945.

Thus, besides providing an analysis of the perceptions behind the decision-making process, this book also presents detailed accounts on several events that the historiography has failed to consider or even notice, despite their significance in understanding the Romanian-Soviet relations in the early 1960s. For instance, nobody has noticed until now the relevance of the 1960 Agricultural Conference in the process of Romania's detachment from Moscow. Nobody has ever investigated Romania's role in blocking Mongolia's accession to the Warsaw Pact in 1963 or Romania's reasons for acting in such a way. Nobody has observed or studied the March-June 1963 Romanian-Soviet crisis and the scholarship has not raised awareness to the fact that the 1962, 1963 and 1964 Romanian-Soviet secret negotiations on the CMEA integration concluded with secret agreements relevant not only for the bilateral relations but also for the overall bloc integration. Moreover, nobody observed until now that the *Valev Plan* was not known in Romania until early June 1964.

### Previous research

Scholars have paid much attention to what triggered Romania's early 1960s change of policy towards Moscow, but there has been little if any systematic exploration of what actually changed. According to historiography, Romania was the most loyal, the perfect or one of the most docile satellites of the Soviet Union until the late 1950s and early 1960s, afterwards detaching itself from Moscow and turning to independence, autonomy or emancipation. Generally, the leaders' "desperate need to stay in power" is seen as "the reason for which the foreign policy" of Romania "represented" until the late 1950s "a loyal emulation of the directives and principles supported by the Soviet Union at the international level", as Cezar Stanciu phrased it.<sup>21</sup>

---

<sup>21</sup> Stanciu, 2008, 8-25; Vladimir Tismăneanu, *Stalinism for all seasons. A political history of Romanian communism*, University of California Press, Berkeley, 2003, 167; Mioara Anton, *Ieșirea din cerc. Politica externă a regimului Gheorghiu-Dej*, INST, București, 2007, 17-31; Gheorghe Boldur-Lățescu, *The communist genocide in Romania*, Nova Science Publishers, New York, 2005, 36; Gheorghe Ciobanu, *Relațiile internaționale ale României între anii 1948-1964*, Junimea, Iași, 2006, 38; Dennis Deletant, *Communist terror in Romania. Gheorghiu-Dej and the Police State 1948-1965*, Hurst&Co., London, 1999, 147, 244; Maria Mureșan, 'Romania's integration in Comecon. The analysis of a failure', in *The Romanian Economic Journal*, Year XI, no. 30, (4) 2008, 27-58, 45-48; Raluca Rus, *România și conflictul israeliano-palestinian*, Lumen, Iași, 2008, 24-25.

Addressing the reasons or causes for Romania's detachment from Moscow, scholars focus, from an objectivist perspective, on the Romanians leaders' material interests and on the permissive causes or conditions allowing detachment to occur. They often emphasise that the change in Romania's policy towards the USSR was caused, triggered, allowed or favoured by the 1958 withdrawal of the Soviet troops from Romania, by the victory of the "Gheorghiu-Dej group" over the "Muscovites group", by Stalin's death, by the Soviet attempts to reform the CMEA, by Khrushchev's policies of peaceful coexistence and de-Stalinisation, by the Cuban Missile Crisis, by the Sino-Soviet dispute or by the abolition of SovRoms.<sup>22</sup> Without contesting the important role of such permissive conditions (a subject often addressed by previous research), this study focuses instead on identifying the proximate causes of the change.

Regarding the causes of Romania's detachment, historiography advances three main interpretations. According to the dominant one, the Romanian leaders feared that the Soviet de-Stalinisation or the CMEA reform process would have resulted in their replacement with another leading team. Thus, according to this interpretation, they decided to distance themselves from Moscow as a means of preserving their domestic political power.<sup>23</sup> A

---

<sup>22</sup> Elis Neagoe-Pleșa, 'Rolul lui Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej în elaborarea politicii externe și în direcționarea relațiilor româno-sovietice (1960-1965)', in *Annales Universitatis Apulensis, Series Historica*, 9/1, 2005, 231-240; Mihai Retegan, *In the shadow of the Prague Spring. Romanian foreign policy and the crisis in Czechoslovakia, 1968*, The Center for the Romanian Studies, Iasi-Oxford-Portland, 2000, 17-18; Florian Banu, Liviu Țăranu, 'Studiu introductiv', in Florian Banu, Liviu Țăranu, *Aprilie 1964. 'Primăvara de la București'. Cum s-a adoptat 'Declarația de independență' a României*, Enciclopedică, București, 2004, VII-C; R.J. Crampton, *Eastern Europe in the twentieth century and after*, Routledge, London, 1997, 311-312; Raymond L. Garthoff, 'When and why Romania distanced itself from the Warsaw Pact', in *Cold War International History Project Bulletin*, Issue 5, Spring 1995, 111.

<sup>23</sup> For instance, Brîndușa Costache, *Activitatea României în Consiliul de Ajutor Economic Reciproc, 1949-1974*, INST, București, 2012, 43; Cătănuș, 2011, 388; Vladimir Tismaneanu, *Gheorghiu-Dej and the Romanian Workers' Party. From de-Sovietization to the emergence of national communism*, CWHIP, Working paper no 37, 2002, 31-46; Vladimir Tismaneanu, *Reinventing politics. Eastern Europe from Stalin to Havel*, New York Free Press, 1992, 82; Retegan, 2000, 19-22, 35-42; Constantiniu, 485-488; Richard C. Frucht, *Eastern Europe. An introduction to the people, lands, and culture*, ABC-CLIO, Santa Barbara, 2005, 760; S.N. Sen, *Contemporary world*, New Age International Publishers, New Delhi, 2006, 121; Deletant, 1999, 281; Mircea Munteanu, 'When the levee breaks. The impact of the Sino-Soviet split and the invasion of Czechoslovakia on



second school of thought argues that detachment from Moscow was Romania's way of defending its economic interests in the context of the CMEA reform process<sup>24</sup>, while the third contends that in opposing the CMEA integration the Romanian leaders were genuinely concerned with the preservation of the state's independence, sovereignty, territorial integrity and economic interests.<sup>25</sup> Many scholars however argue that the Romanian-Soviet divergences were not about Romania's sovereignty, independence or economic interests and that the Romanian leaders' claims in this regard were just propaganda.<sup>26</sup>

Regarding the question of what changed in Romania's policy towards the USSR from the early 1960s onwards, there are also three main historiographical approaches. According to the first, nothing changed, Romania only simulated its detachment from Moscow. According to the second, Romania opted for a complete detachment, for independence or autonomy, for a new foreign policy doctrine or for a new state strategy; while according to the third, detachment was incomplete, partial, or limited to some political independence, to independence in a numbers of areas, to economic independence or to domestic autonomy.

Traian Ungureanu, for instance, contests the existence of a change in Romania's relations with Moscow and argues that "the myth" of Romania's "independence inside the pan-Soviet system" was only a product of communist propaganda.<sup>27</sup> Criticising the "myth" of Romania's autonomy or independence, Andrei Miroiu emphasises that Romania remained throughout the Cold War a member of the CMEA and of the

Romanian-Soviet relations, 1967–1970', in *Journal of Cold War Studies*, Vol. 12, No. 1, Winter 2010, 43–61; Stelian Tănase, *Elite și societate. Guvernarea Gheorghiu-Dej, 1948-1965*, București, Humanitas, 1998, 187-189.

<sup>24</sup> Georges Haupt, 'La genese du conflit sovieto-roumain', in *Revue française de science politique*, vol. XVIII (1968) no 4, 669-684; Horia Socianu, 'The foreign policy of Romania in the sixties', in James A. Kuhlman (ed.), *The foreign policies of Eastern Europe. Domestic and international determinants*, Sijthoff, Leyden, 1978, 167-173; Tismăneanu, 2003, 179, 182; Stephen Fischer-Galați, *Europa de Est și Războiul Rece*, Institutul European, Iași, 1996, 52-55.

<sup>25</sup> Banu&Țăranu, VII-L; Brândușa Costache, 'Romania and Comecon. Principles of cooperation, 1949-1991', in *Arhivele Totalitarismului*, No 1-2/2002, 168; Ana-Maria Cătănuș, 'Tensiuni în relațiile româno-sovietice în anul Primăverii de la Praga', in *Arhivele Totalitarismului*, No 1-2/2006, 227.

<sup>26</sup> Tănase, 187-189; Tismăneanu, 2003, 179; Cezar Stanciu, *Frăția socialistă. Politica RPR față de țările lagărului socialist. 1948-1964*, Cetatea de Scaun, Târgoviște, 2009, 280-281.

<sup>27</sup> Traian Ungureanu, *Despre Securitate. România, țara 'Ca și cum'*, Humanitas, Bucuresti, 2006, 94.

Warsaw Pact and – implying that Romania’s alliance with the USSR and its opposition to the USSR were mutually exclusive – contends that Romania’s opposition was simulated.<sup>28</sup> Miroiu claims that the real goal of this simulated opposition was to trick the West into developing better economic relations with Romania.<sup>29</sup>

Most scholars, however, acknowledge a change in Romania’s policy towards the USSR in the early 1960s. This change is presented under a large variety of names, although it is rather poorly conceptualised. It is defined either as a “fake autonomy” or as a Romanian “liberal foreign policy”; either as “a greater independence vis-à-vis Moscow” or as a genuine “independent line” from the USSR.<sup>30</sup>

However, scholars often observe the next dichotomy – on the one hand, Romania opposed the USSR, its leadership and its policies, but on the other hand it praised the Soviet Union, the common Romanian-Soviet interests, collaboration and alliance; on the one hand, Romania criticised the CMEA and the Warsaw Pact, but on the other hand it remained a member of both organisations and the USSR’s ally. Seeing these two alternatives as mutually exclusive, some analysts contend that, as Elis Neagoe-Pleșa phrased it, “a genuine independence was out of the question since Romania continued to be member of the Warsaw Pact and of the CMEA – two of Moscow’s main instruments of control”.<sup>31</sup>

Trying to solve this dichotomy, scholars operate with concepts like comparative independence, limited independence, economic sovereignty, economic independence, domestic autonomy, some political independence, substantial independence in a number of areas, independence of the Romanian communist elites from the Soviet elites, suggesting that detachment affected only some aspects of the bilateral relations, such as the economic or the party fields. Sometimes, scholars even argue that one could at most acknowledge Romania’s independence from Moscow only

---

<sup>28</sup> *Opoziție aparentă*, in Romanian.

<sup>29</sup> Andrei Miroiu, *Balanță și hegemonie. România în politica mondială, 1913-1989*, Tritonic, București, 2005, 136-186.

<sup>30</sup> Boldur-Lătescu, 49; Mihaela Cristina Verzea, ‘Desovietizarea culturii românești la începutul deceniului șapte’, in *Arhivele Totalitarismului*, No 3-4/2003, 127; Johanna Granville, ‘Dej-a-vu. Early roots of Romania’s independence’, *East European Quarterly*, XLII, Vol. 4, January 2009, 366; Donald F. Busky, *Communism in history and theory. The European experience*, Praeger, Westport, 2002, 23; John Lampe, *Balkans into Southeastern Europe. A century of war and transition*, Palgrave Macmillan, New York, 2006, 201.

<sup>31</sup> Dennis Deletant, ‘*Taunting the bear. Romania and the Warsaw Pact, 1963–89*’, in *Cold War History*, Vol. 7, No. 4, November 2007, 496; Neagoe-Pleșa, 231-240.

by comparison with the previous period, implying that independence was allowed by the USSR itself and that it was not complete.

Stelian Tănase and Mircea Chirițoiu, for instance, argue that, in the context of de-Stalinisation, the change in Romania's policy towards the USSR was about the autonomy of the Romanian political elites from the Soviet elites. In other words it was not about the autonomy of the state. According to Tănase, between 1962 and 1965, Romania "renounced pro-Sovietism", while the 1964 Declaration was "the climax of the conflict between the local elite and the suzerain [Soviet] elite".<sup>32</sup>

Joseph F. Harrington and Bruce J. Courtney maintain that from the late 1950s onwards Romania struggled to "obtain its economic autonomy" or its "economic independence", while Gheorghe Ciobanu writes about Romania's "new economic doctrine of economic independence"<sup>33</sup> – which means that only in the economic field Romania could act independently or autonomously.

Amy Hampartumian and Paul D. Quinlan consider that from the early 1960s onwards Romania exerted "some political independence" or "a foreign policy substantially independent" from Moscow in a "number of areas"<sup>34</sup>, but they do not detail why Romania chose to be "substantially independent" only in some "areas", what "substantially" actually meant or how and why some areas were selected and other were not. According to Oșca and Popa, after the issuing of the RWP's 1964 Declaration Romania was able to "surpass to some extent its condition of [being] a satellite state rigorously subordinated to the uncontested leader of the communist world" – namely the USSR – but what "to some extent" meant is a problem that the two authors do not tackle either.<sup>35</sup>

Vlad Georgescu similarly argues that in the early 1960s Romania moved from "full subordination to comparative independence".<sup>36</sup> Duțu contends that Romania adopted a "policy of limited emancipation from

---

<sup>32</sup> Mircea Chirițoiu, *Între David și Goliat. România și Iugoslavia în balanța Războiului Rece*, Demiurg, Iași, 2005, 111; Tănase, 123, 172, 192-199.

<sup>33</sup> Joseph F. Harrington, Bruce J. Courtney, *Relații româno-americane, 1940-1990*, Institutul European, Iași, 2002, 196, 197, 214, 225; Ciobanu, 175.

<sup>34</sup> Amy Hampartumian, 'The relationship between Britain and Romania during the rule of Nicolae Ceausescu, 1966-1989', in *Arhivele Totalitarismului*, No 3-4/2003, 55; Paul D. Quinlan, *The United States and Romania. American-Romanian relations in the twentieth century*, Woodland Hills, 1988, 165.

<sup>35</sup> Alexandru Oșca, Vasile Popa, *O fereastră în Cortina de Fier – România. Declarația de Independență din aprilie 1964*, Vantrop, Focșani, 1997, 209.

<sup>36</sup> Vlad Georgescu, *Romania: 40 years, 1944-1984*, Praeger, New York, 1985, 41.

under the Soviet tutelage”.<sup>37</sup> According to Stanciu, in the early 1960s, Gheorghiu-Dej did not pursue a “complete detachment” from Moscow but only “some space of manoeuvre”. These scholars do not explain either what they mean by “incomplete detachment” or by “comparative independence”.<sup>38</sup>

However, Robert King and Dennis Deletant conceptualise Romania’s detachment more carefully. According to Deletant, “autonomy, defined by the right to formulate indigenous policy rather than independence, characterised Romanian foreign policy in the early 1960s under Gheorghiu-Dej and under Ceauşescu thereafter, for throughout the Cold War Romania remained a member, despite some misgivings, of both the Warsaw Pact and Comecon and consistently restated its loyalty to the Socialist camp”.<sup>39</sup>

King reasons that “independent” is not the accurate term to describe Romania’s policy change towards the USSR as “independence” means a total liberation from the foreign control. “Autonomy” is therefore a better term to describe Romania’s right of self-government, of making one’s own laws and of administering one’s own affairs, King contends, emphasising also that autonomy was granted or permitted by the Soviet Union.<sup>40</sup>

But this approach cannot explain why Romania blocked in July 1963 Mongolia’s membership in the Warsaw Pact, why in November 1963 Romania voted at the United Nation Organisation (UNO) in favour of a resolution to establish a nuclear-free zone in Latin America when the other socialist bloc countries abstained, or why in 1964 Romania opposed the Soviet intended “strong collective riposte” against China – to give just few examples from 1963 and 1964.

The early 1960s change in Romania’s relations with the USSR is differently and rather vaguely conceptualised by different authors. It is called detachment, dissidence, distancing, separateness, independence, economic independence, opposition, pretended opposition, economic sovereignty, comparative independence, turn, shift, rift, new foreign policy

---

<sup>37</sup> Alexandru Duţu, *Revoluţia din 1989. Cronologie*, Craiova, Sitech, 2010, 36.

<sup>38</sup> Stanciu, 2009, 280-281.

<sup>39</sup> Drawing from Deletant’s definition, in a recent study, Cezar Stanciu made his option for the term “autonomy”, which “should be limited only to the foreign policy, meaning Romania’s self-proclaimed right to make decisions and pursue interests that were not coordinated with or accepted by Moscow”. Cezar Stanciu, ‘Crisis management in the Communist bloc. Romania’s policy towards the USSR in the aftermath of the Prague Spring’, in *Cold War History*, Volume 13, No 3, August 2013, 356; Deletant, 2007, 496.

<sup>40</sup> Robert R. King, *History of the Romanian Communist Party*, Hoover Institution Press, Stanford, 1980, 135-136.

doctrine, re-orientation of the Romanian external politics, autonomy, emancipation, deviation etc. With very few exceptions, authors do not explain why they choose one concept over the other, but they all work within a paradigm maintaining that after the war Romania allied (balanced) with the USSR against the Western threat and contend (or imply) that Romania's alliance with the USSR and its (post-1960) opposition to the USSR were mutually exclusive.

In rather rare cases, historiography defines Romania's change of policy towards the USSR in terms of state security strategy. Andrei Miroiu, for instance, argues that until 1958 Romania identified the security threat in the West, therefore looking for a strategic alliance with the USSR and its eastern allies. From 1972 onwards, Miroiu continues, Romania opted for a new "security strategy", identifying threats coming from "all directions", including the USSR. However, Miroiu fails to discuss what happened in terms of security strategy between 1958 and 1972 or how this change affected Romanian-Soviet relations.<sup>41</sup>

Cristian Troncoță also suggests that after the war Romania identified threats to its security in the Imperialist West, but he argues that from the late 1960s onwards, the USSR became the main threat to Romania's security.<sup>42</sup> Similarly, Cezar Stanciu and Paul Nistor contend that – allying with the USSR in 1948 (through the Treaty of Friendship, Collaboration and Mutual Assistance) and in 1955 (through the Warsaw Pact Treaty) – Romania aimed to secure its strategic interests against a prospective Western attack.<sup>43</sup> This paradigm – which maintains that after the war Romania allied (balanced) with the USSR against the Western threat – lead scholars to assume that Romania's alliance with the USSR and its post-1960 opposition to the USSR were mutually exclusive.

Drawing from the balance of threat theory – as developed by Stephen M. Walt – this study advances instead a paradigm which argues that in the aftermath of the Second World War Romania allied not against the threat but with the (perceived) threat – which was the USSR. The balance of threat theory contends that the alliance behaviour of states emerges depending on the level of threat. According to Walt, "when entering an alliance, states may either balance (ally in opposition to the principle

---

<sup>41</sup> Miroiu, 136-173, 186.

<sup>42</sup> Cristian Troncoță, 'Securitatea și serviciile secrete sovietice (1968-1989)', in Constantin Hlihor (coord.), *Structuri politice în secolul XX*, Curtea Veche, București, 2000, 548.

<sup>43</sup> Paul Nistor, *Înfruntând Vestul. PCR, România lui Dej și politica de îngrădire a comunismului*, Vreimea, București, 2006, 285; Stanciu, 2008, 25-35, 71-74, 116-117.

source of danger) or bandwagon (ally with the state that poses the major threat)".<sup>44</sup> Or, as Patricia A. Weitsman phrased it, when "the threat becomes so grave that a state's very survival is at stake, the threatened state may opt to ally with its enemy, that is, bandwagon, to save itself".<sup>45</sup> In other words, alignment with the perceived source of danger may be motivated by fear and may be a form of defensive appeasement.

### Sources of the study

The study is based on Romanian primary sources, especially on unpublished documents from the Romanian National Historical Central Archive (ANIC) and from the Archive of the Romanian Foreign Ministry (AMAE). The laws in force regulate the access to the Romanian historical archives so that documents concerning foreign policy can be available for research 50 years after their creation, personal files of different politicians – 75 years after their creation, documents regarding national security and national integrity – 100 years after their creation.<sup>46</sup> However, the ANIC allows researchers' access to the documents up to 1989 provided that they have been processed.

From the ANIC, the study uses several main fonds: the Central Committee of the Romanian Communist Party (with the sections Foreign Relations; Office; Foreign Relations–Alphabetical; Administrative–Political; Propaganda and Agitation); Presidency of the Council of Ministers (with the sections Presidency of the Council of Ministers and Minutes); the CMEA (with the sections The Governmental Commission for Economic and Technical Collaboration and Cooperation in the CMEA – Governmental Commission for the CMEA problems, and The Protocols of the CMEA sessions); and the Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej Collection (Fond 80). The Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej Collection was taken over by the National Archives from the Ministry of National Defence in 1995 and contains valuable reports and letters (most of them annotated by Gheorghiu-Dej himself) regarding Romania's relations with the USSR and China or Romania's activity within the CMEA.

---

<sup>44</sup> Stephen M. Walt, 'Alliance formation and the balance of world power' in *International Security*, vol. 9, No 9, 1985, 4.

<sup>45</sup> Patricia A. Weitsman, *Dangerous alliances. Proponents of peace, weapons of war*, Stanford, Stanford University Press, 2004, 12.

<sup>46</sup> Law no 16/ 2 April 1996, modified by the Law no 358/ 6 June 2002 and by the Emergency Ordinances no 39/ 31 May 2006 and no 64 /28 June 2003, *Monitorul Oficial*, No 71/9 Aprilie 1996; no 476/3 Iunie 2002; nr. 464/29 Iunie 2003.