

DIPLOMATIC SERVICES TODAY: BETWEEN POLITICAL DECISIONS AND ADMINISTRATIVE CRITERIA

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Abstract

As a highly specialized and relatively small sized public service (in terms of staff and budget), diplomacy has always been in a particular position within the administrative system of most countries. Not only does diplomacy attract the pretended 'elites' of the public sector's employees but also a lot of popular criticism with regard to its performances, transparency, dedication to public interest, procedures of recruitment, privileges, and sometimes moral exigencies. This paradoxical ambivalence of 'elitism' and public distrust coexists with variable degrees of tension between politicization and the need of effective technocracy. This article explores the concepts, delimitations and functioning of the political-ideological vs. administrative components of diplomatic systems, in the wider context of the administrative paradigms and political cultures to which they belong. While the theoretical distinction between foreign policy and diplomacy is way more developed in European classical approaches, though with controversial results, the American authors and officials traditionally use the two concepts interchangeably. Notwithstanding this theoretical flexibility, the borderline between the political level of diplomatic representation and the professional diplomatic and consular corps is clearer and better regulated in the U.S. system than in most of the European countries. A case study focused on the reform of the Romanian diplomatic service, in the pre- and post-EU accession years, serves as empirical analysis of this demarche.

Keywords: foreign policy, diplomacy, politics, bureaucracy, diplomatic service, Romania, reform.

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1. Introduction: diplomacy between politics and administration

Speaking about diplomacy as a specialized service of central administration is correct but not enough. It is however a challenging, multi-disciplinary enterprise at the same time. On the one hand, based on the general organization scheme of the government system, it is obvious that diplomacy is part of the civil service, like all other departments are, and therefore it should obey the same transparency rules and criteria of accountability as anyone else who spends tax payers' money. On the other hand, because of the very special nature of its activities, relative small size in terms of staff and budget, sophisticated issues and the unique feature of acting abroad, in considerably different political, economic, social and cultural contexts, diplomacy is not really expected to deliver the goods in the same way as police, public education system or fiscal administration do in their homeland. Almost everywhere in the world, diplomacy faces the paradox of being considered the privileged 'elite' of public administration but also being distrusted by ordinary people. How is this possible? In order to understand this 'double standard' assessment of diplomacy that stirs so much controversy on it, a definition of diplomatic service would be useful for a clear start of our analysis. According to G.R. Berridge and Alan James's consecrated *Dictionary of Diplomacy* (Berridge and James, 2003), the diplomatic service is 'the bureaucracy of the professional diplomats of the state, usually embracing personnel in the ministry of foreign affairs as well as those employed at foreign postings' (Berridge and James, 2003, p. 83). Various names and structures for the diplomatic services are met in different countries, such as the Foreign Service Officers (FSOs) in US. Starting with the Lisbon Treaty (2009), the European Union has developed the European External Actions Service (EEAS) led by a High Representative. In many countries, especially in Europe, the law with regard to diplomatic and consular corps also includes the political level of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (the minister and secretaries or undersecretaries of state) within the diplomatic corps, during their term. It is the case of France, Germany, Romania, Poland and other EU member states but not of the US and Canadian diplomatic systems. The result of this amalgamation in Europe is sometimes a confusing mix of politics and bureaucracy which will hallmark diplomacy in public's eyes along its entire existence. On the contrary, in the United States not only they 'exclude' the political dignitaries from the diplomatic corps but also ambassadors, who – without hypocrisy! – represent a list of 'reserved positions' for the nominees of the head of the executive branch. Beyond political appointments at designated levels, the diplomatic and consular corps remains in the 'new world' a real professional body, with very few (if any) political interferences. From this very simple perspective, at least people know what to expect from every level of diplomacy, in other words the public knows who is politically affiliated and who is a professional diplomat. In many European countries, there is a clear legal interdiction for professional diplomats (ambassadors included) to be members of political parties.

Regarding the politicization of ambassadors' appointment, we learn from the website of the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs that: 'There is such a procedure in the

United States, where Ambassadors change with the President. In France, it is rare. The choice is nearly always a diplomat with a good mastery of the profession, in other words diplomats that have reached the grade of envoy or at the very least the grade of counsellor (first class)' (France Diplomatie, 2014). It is nevertheless explained that these 'diplomats with a good mastery of profession' are appointed ambassadors by the President of the French Republic in a meeting of the Council of Ministers, at the proposal of the Government (Ministry of Foreign Affairs). At the end of the day it is the same political decision in both situations, with the only difference that the French system insists that there are no other criteria than the professional ones.

The enlargement of the list of 'diplomatic actors' in recent times, beyond classical diplomatic services run by governments, changes substantially the perspectives and shapes of nowadays diplomacy. NGOs, multinational companies acting overseas, lobbyists, media, cultural or sports personalities etc. involving for one cause or another bring their own approaches and styles and draw a different picture of diplomatic processes. We witness a spectacular 'contraction' of time and distances but a widening of the spectrum of diplomatic actors. Online communication, mobility of people and a greater access to prompt information speed up everything. Globalization changed diplomacy more than someone ever predicted. But diplomacy in its turn is having an impact on governments, through various means.

More than any other department, the diplomatic service floats more or less skillfully on a thin borderline between politics and administration. Its specific 'job description' as well as external and internal pressures offer actually no alternative to this permanent 'ballet', with inevitable political and bureaucratic 'figures'. The subtle and effective way in which a government manages to keep the fine balance of these two conflicting paradigms gives in fact the expression of its performances, coherence and public credibility.

2. Theoretical framework of analysis

Recognized authors in the field of foreign policy and diplomacy propose a set of concepts, theories and criteria for describing the processes related to the activities conducted by the departments of foreign affairs. Based on these analytical instruments, diplomatic services can be measured and evaluated today, at least from an administrative perspective (staff, budget, technical skills, consular services, infrastructure and logistics etc.) if not from a political one.

The theoretical framework of this section is based on Marijke Breuning's main findings from her famous book of 2007, *Foreign Policy Analysis*. The author suggests that the decision making process actually looks like an iceberg, with the visible top represented by the decision-makers and the sunk bottom represented by the bureaucratic structures fuelling the decision flow (Breuning, 2007, p. 88). Usually, it is accepted (Ciot, 2012, p. 115) that there are three decisional patterns: the rational actor model (in which the government acts solely, based on the national interest), the organizational behavioral model (in which a number of agencies and organizations act on the basis

of inertia and feasibility criteria) and the public policy model (in which a plurality of actors, including individuals pursue their interests based on complex negotiations). In fact, these three models are reflected in practice by the main versions of diplomacy's conduct: the very politicized, the bureaucratic-inertial and the political-administrative or pluralist model. As we shall see later on, the first is the most disposed to reforms (but also to risks), the second is the most reluctant to change while the third is an intermediate and sometimes ideal model of foreign policy and diplomacy. Christer Jönsson and Martin Hall make a useful distinction between institutional and organizational dimensions of diplomacy. 'Diplomacy [...] should be seen as an institution, understood broadly as a relatively stable collection of social practices consisting of easily recognized roles coupled with underlying norms and a set of rules or conventions defining appropriate behavior for, and governing relations among, occupants of these roles' (Jönsson and Hall, 2005, p. 25). All these ingredients act in the sense of shaping expectations, prescribing behaviors, or limiting actions, as long as diplomacy is not only about what you can do but also about you cannot do. An institution in its largest meaning may involve one or more organizations. From this perspective, the two authors affirm, diplomacy is an institution while the Foreign Ministry is an organization.

As I have mentioned before, globalization both challenged and changed diplomacy. During the lifetime of one single generation of diplomats, so many considerable changes occurred only in the past decades. Some of them came out from new information technologies, others from increased mobility or even social and cultural mutations. But diplomacy survived, though it is not the one it used to be thirty or forty years ago. One possible description of this adjustment asserts that 'the gradual unification during the twentieth century of the bureaucracy of diplomacy, including that of the diplomatic and consular services, no doubt played its part in enabling the MFA to resist the next challenge to its positions, which came in the century's last decades, chiefly from 'direct dial diplomacy' (Berridge, 2010, p. 8). Starting with the 1960s and 1970s, the conceptualization of 'public policy analysis' came to give more structured and coherent instruments for assessing public activities of central or local authorities. At least four types of analyses have been identified: normative, legal, rationale, and empirical analysis (Pal, 2002, p. 33). Leslie Pal explains what each of them means, from the moral foundations of a public policy and its legal dimension to logical considerations and practical consequences of that policy.

Let's take the recent example of a Western foreign policy dilemma: the military coup d'état in Cairo, on 3 July 2013. According to any elementary political science handbook, the arrest of then-newly elected (June 2012) President Morsi by the Egyptian army and the abolishing the Constitution (adopted in the December 2012 referendum) through a simple military decree clearly represented the defining ingredients of a coup. According to US legislation, Washington would have been obliged to stop any financial support for an illegitimate regime if the ousting were recognized as coup. On the other hand, the advance of Islamism in Egypt would have threatened

the strategic position of Egypt as a steady ally of US, Israel and Western states in the complicated region of Middle East and Northern Africa. More than 1,000 supporters of the ousted president were later on killed in violent confrontations with the army on Cairo streets. The massive protests were eventually contained only with exceptional military measures such as curfew and state of emergency. From this perspective, it simply looked like the West sacrificed the principle of democracy and human rights for defending strategic interests in the region. However, the situation was even more difficult because of the split of Egyptian society between Muslim Brotherhood and Morsi's supporters, on one hand, and the opponents of Morsi regime on the other hand. A 'solution' of either ambiguity or embarrassing silence was adopted by most of the Western countries. Among them, the United States and Germany asked with half-voice Egyptian military to stop violent crackdown against protesters but eventually refrained from naming the intervention as coup d'état and did not officially condemn it, because of self-evident obligations in their future action. Continuing the 'public policy analysis' with regard to the West's foreign policy and diplomacy towards Egyptian crisis of 2013 on the other three dimensions mentioned by Leslie Pal, we actually face the same essential difficulties. Legal analysis: 'coup' or 'legal restoration of order'? Rationale: 'military abuse' or 'public interest'? Empirical evaluation: 'bloody crackdown' or 'stability'? It depends on whose side is the narrator. From the military perspective, the intervention was legal, logical and with positive consequences. For Morsi's supporters, the coup was illegal, looking only for taking over power, and was disastrous in terms of political, economic and social consequences. Concluding this miniature of analysis, the attitude of the West towards events of summer 2013 in Cairo may seem correct or immoral, brave or coward, long term oriented or hypocritical, depending on the answers we favor at a number of key-questions.

3. No clear 'borderlines' between diplomacy, politics and administration

The interference of politics and sometimes ideology with diplomacy as pretended neutral diplomatic service has several other faces. Not only do politics affect diplomatic attitudes in relation to other foreign representatives (somehow understandable) but also parts of internal administrative processes like mechanisms of recruitment and promotion, financing or the way tax payers' money are spent. To a larger or lesser extent, this influence is valid in North America as well as in Europe, but specific features of different political cultures are identified.

Europe is more than any other part of the world under the conceptual influence of the nation-states (where this idea was born in the second half of the 19th century) and, consequently, under the influence of the cultural and administrative pattern of nation-states. For one reason or another, America is more ideological today (and so it was in the whole postwar period) than the 'old continent' which favored consensus and ideological convergence for almost five decades. The competing liberal and conservative perspectives have in the US and Canada way more consistent impact on public policies than classical doctrines used to have in the post-WWII Europe, al-

though Europe is the cradle of modern ideologies. As I have mentioned earlier, the bureaucracy is not fully passive in this relation with politics and has its own 'fettering' and inertial effect, with a limiting action on government political strategies.

Henry Kissinger, for instance, disliked administration. We can only suppose that his fabulous experience as US secretary of state was somehow marked by a tough meeting with the professional culture of Foreign Service Officers (FSOs) and their traditional, cautious reflexes. Speaking about Kissinger's impressions after a number of years at the lead of the Department of State, T.G. Otte notes: 'the spirit of policy and that of bureaucracy are nearly irreconcilable opposites. Policy is contingent, creative, partly conjectural and involves a willingness to take risks; bureaucracy strives for safety, calculability, 'objectivity' and risk-avoidance. Its essence is instrumental rationality and administrative feasibility; it is not concerned with ultimate values. Bureaucratic edifices thus tend to introduce an element of rigidity into the political process' (Otte, 2001, p. 188). Because of its British tradition, Canada defines its executive branch of government in three instead of the two levels of authority which are specific to presidential systems, although the highest one is rather symbolical. They thus report decisions and public policies to: symbolic or ceremonial executive (the Crown represented by the Governor General), then democratic or political executive (the Prime Minister and the Cabinet) and last but not least the permanent or administrative executive, the latter being formed by professional (non-elected) bureaucracy.

It is to be noticed that public administration is in fact named 'The Government of Canada' (unlike continental Europe, where 'government' is usually referring to the political level), sometimes known as the Federal Public Service. 'The chief public servant in Canada is the Clerk of the Queen's Privy Council. Within departments, the Minister is responsible before the Parliament, in solidarity with the Prime Minister and the cabinet team, while the Deputy Minister is the highest public servant. The deputy minister is formally reporting to the Clerk of the Privy Council and not to the minister, in order to make a clear distinction between political and administrative levels' (Naumescu, 2010, p. 57). These three levels of the executive power are also reflected in the field of foreign policy and diplomacy, each of them having responsibilities in the diplomatic process. From accreditation of ambassadors (the Crown) to major decisions in foreign policy (the Prime Minister) or conducting day-to-day diplomatic duties (DFAIT, that is the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, and diplomatic missions abroad), all three executive structures have their own responsibilities. Despite a largely spread distrust in diplomacy, positive approaches are not completely missing. Canadian authors suggest 'Ottawa should learn to love the Department of Foreign Affairs' (Heinbecker, 2007, p. A21). More confidence in their national diplomatic service is thus deserved for the merits in strengthening the security and good international reputation of Canada, considers Paul Heinbecker.

The tremendous expansion of the Welfare State model in postwar Western Europe changed the classical, Weberian model of bureaucracy that used to be valid a hundred years ago. A growing public service is not limiting itself to implement political deci-

sions, but also to influence them, as Yves Mény and Andrew Knapp remark. 'Nowadays, each of their bureaucracies [with reference to Western democracies] plays a role of crucial importance in public policy-making. According to Western tradition, and also to Cartesian view of the processes of decision-making, the role of administrations is to implement decisions taken elsewhere, usually by the political authorities. But, as many studies have shown, that view has not for some time corresponded to the real state of affairs. Nowadays, bureaucracies are involved at every stage in public policy-making.' (Mény and Knapp, 1998, p. 265). The two authors identify the following categories of intervention: shaping the political agenda, acting as gatekeepers of the State, determining the substance of political decisions by drafting bills, implementing government's policies (the original function), and pursuing and maintaining the policies to which they have committed themselves.

4. The U.S. diplomacy: ideology and politics before bureaucracy

One of the most notorious (recent) cases of 'ideologization' in foreign policy and diplomacy was the U.S. neoconservative administration of George W. Bush. The so-called 'hawks' use to designate in America a traditional liberal approach that supports the use of force and military intervention in order to promote universal liberal values. The liberal interventionism was assumed in the 1990s and 2000s by the neoconservatives. First in 1992 under the name 'Wolfowitz Doctrine' (authored by then-Under Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz), then under the umbrella of 'Bush-Cheney Doctrine' (after the return of the republicans in power in 2001), the hawkish foreign and security policy 'argued for a long-term lock-in against any possible emergent superpower-like military threat, to include the use of preemptive war and unilateralism when required' (Barnett, 2009, p. 12). The whole series of political, diplomatic and military actions of the 'Bush-Cheney-Rumsfeld-Rice' leading group had followed and respected the principles of this doctrine, at least in conceptualizing the Afghanistan and Iraq wars. In Zbigniew Brzezinski's words, 'strategically, the 'war on terror' thus reflected traditional imperial concerns over control of Persian Gulf resources as well as neoconservatives' desire to enhance Israel's security by eliminating Iraq as a threat' (Brzezinski, 2007, p. 136). Beyond ideological and strategic considerations, the U.S. diplomatic corps as an administrative service has participated in this costly operation meant to combat terrorism, paying an incredibly death toll as well as suffering tremendous individual and family sacrifices. To give just a well-known example, the assassination of the U.S. ambassador Christopher Stevens in Benghazi, Libya, in the 11 September 2012 attack, 'could have been prevented' (Mazzetti, Schmitt and Kirckpatrick, 2014), as shown in a US Senate Report. With only a few weeks before, ambassador Stevens sent two cables to Foggy Bottom in which he complained for insufficient security in Libya but seemingly his reports were neglected by the Department of State.

In 2010, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton launched a project of reform of two fundamental organizations of the American diplomatic system: the Department of State and the US Agency for International Development (USAID), wanting them 'more ef-

fective, accountable and efficient institutions' (Johnson, 2013, p. 7). With reference to that intended (but essentially failed) program of structural reforms in the realm of diplomacy, the President of the American Foreign Service Association, Susan R. Johnson believes that 'only the Foreign Service can bring to the conduct of diplomacy the agility, flexibility and suitability that come from worldwide availability, rotation and rank in person. [...] After all, a diplomat should be a skilled facilitator with broad perspective and experience – qualities that are also important for those responsible for leading the institution and inspiring the diplomatic service.' (Johnson, 2013, p. 7)

Concluding over the cleavage between doctrine and neutral bureaucracy within US diplomacy, we may find again Henry Kissinger, the self-declared enemy of the reluctant administrative machine of the government killing great ideas and high strategic actions, defining the 'new' US foreign policy: 'the United States need to design a diplomacy that prevents threat to fundamental American interests and values without designating a specific adversary in advance, and above all by a policy based on the widest possible international consensus on positive goals' (Kissinger, 2001, p. 318). Once more, diplomacy without ideology seems impossible.

The Central and Eastern European countries in their turn, now member-states of NATO and the EU, underwent a long and difficult post-communist transition starting with 1990s, with a considerable dimension in administration and public service. For many sections of their administrative systems, the guidelines came from Western institutions such as the European Union, NATO, the World Bank and International Monetary Fund, the Council of Europe etc. The strengthening of the administrative capacity of the countries in the region and the modernization of their public service were seen in different interpretations, from rigid 'best practices' to more flexible 'good fit' (Bondar, 2007, p. 106). It means that there was no absolute model to be assumed but a series of good practices from the West. According to historic and cultural influences of one country or another, there were some attempts of the great European powers to transfer their specific national system to the new Central and Eastern democracies, like France to Romania or Germany to the Czech Republic or Hungary.

Before concluding this theoretical section, it would be useful to review the main models of decisions in foreign policy, according to Breuning and Ciot, the respective key actors and the motivating factors. All of them are present on the vertical as well as the horizontal dimension of analysis.

The vertical dimension meets the three already mentioned models at different levels of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Within the diplomatic service, the organizational behavioral model prevails as in any other bureaucracy, while at the upper level of foreign policy's decisional process both the rational actor and the public policy models are present, according to the cultural pattern of the respective administration. As for the horizontal perspective, from one country to another, we can find the dominance of one of the three types of decisional mechanisms. In transitional countries as well as in the most ideological regimes, the rational actor (political) model is prevalent.

5. Case study: the reform of Romanian diplomacy in the years of pre- and post-EU accession period (2005-2014)

5.1. Pre-accession period (2005-2007)

The structural reform of public administration, both at central and local levels, has been one of the most disputed, controversial and long debated programs of reforms within the public sector, not only in Romania but in the whole region of Central and Eastern Europe, probably comparable in its difficulty only with the judicial reform. Under the influence and transfer of expertise from the European Union to candidate states, central and local administration underwent a process of reform with successive phases. In Romania, several Foreign Affairs ministers declaratively attempted to 'renew' and westernize the diplomatic system in terms of staff, norms and procedures, mainly because of the strong suspicion expressed by the civil society with regard to a consistent group of *Securitate* officers infiltrated in the diplomatic and consular corps before 1989. Referring to Romanian diplomacy, the reform of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (diplomatic service included) can be divided in at least two main distinct phases: pre-EU accession years (up to January 1st, 2007) and the post-accession period. The date of accession into the European Union is not only a symbolic moment that marks the passage from one chapter of national history to another, but in our case study a switch from a certain type of approaching the reforms to different political stakes and criteria. The major lines of the reforms in Romanian post-communist diplomacy referred to: human resources (basically rejuvenation and replacing the compromised diplomats), eliminating political influences and wrong practices in diplomats' selection and promotion, transparency and openness in terms of public diplomacy and improving relations with Romanian citizens living abroad, modernizing the management of embassies and consulates, reducing the waste of resources, and improving the distribution of human, financial and logistical resources etc.

Starting with the outstanding intellectual Andrei Pleșu (Foreign Minister between December 1997 and December 1999) and, to some extent, the young yet long serving career diplomat Mircea Geoană (Foreign Minister, December 2000 – December 2004), the idea of reforming the Ministry of Foreign Affairs as diplomatic service dominated the discourse of the heads of Romanian diplomacy during the entire period of pre-accession to NATO and the European Union, and to some extent after 2007. It is thus not surprising that the paramount institutional change occurred in the last two years before EU accession, namely 2005-2006.

We can hardly speak about real structural reforms and westernization in the Romanian diplomacy before 2005, although Foreign Ministers Pleșu and Geoană had (at least declaratively) a number of good intentions. A change in the discourse of the head of the institution is not necessarily a change of the department's deep habits and practices or of the diplomatic service's performances. For many years after 1989, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs remained one of the most ossified government structures in Romania, notwithstanding the intellectual capacities and some good intentions of the post-communist Foreign Ministers.

Mihai-Răzvan Ungureanu, who served as Liberal Foreign Minister between late December 2004 and March 2007, and his team of collaborators (secretaries of state, directors and the newly appointed chiefs of missions) implemented the most consistent program of rejuvenating the diplomatic and consular corps as well as of reorganizing the Ministry of Foreign Affairs before the moment of Romania's European integration. The first signs of 'fresh air' in the diplomatic system were noticed by Western media shortly after the change of the government, in December 2004. Important Romanian political analysts also saw in bright colors the contribution of then-new Foreign Minister to Romania's EU integration: 'Ungureanu was the right man in the right place, in the crucial years which preceded Romania's EU accession' (Hurezeanu, 2008, p. 12).

The personnel issue was from the beginning one of the thorniest on the ministry's agenda, due to the fact that in Romanian society pre-existed a long dissatisfaction with regard to the professional quality and moral integrity of the diplomatic corps. In February 2005, Deutsche Welle was appreciating that 'Foreign Minister Mihai-Răzvan Ungureanu has initiated the amplest reform since 1990. The purpose is to oust the ones formed in the communist period as well as those appointed by PSD only on political criteria [...] The entire leadership of the Ministry was refreshed, the newcomers being a warranty for the continuation of reforms. Ungureanu is assisted by Teodor Baconsky, Valentin Naumescu and Anton Niculescu, people with exceptional intellectual merits' (Pepine, 2005). The accelerated retiring process of long serving ambassadors and the reformation of the Romanian Diplomatic Academy were among the first mentioned decisions by Deutsche Welle. Restructuring the Central unit of the ministry and refreshing the human resources went hand in hand. The Foreign Minister himself explains the essential purposes of the strategy: 'our intention is that the new organization chart of the Ministry will allow achieving a real reform, a deep one, seen as an institutional modernization meeting the new exigencies of our foreign policy as well as a factor of increasing performances, both deriving from assuming a new role in international politics by Romania. We have already started the formation of a new category of diplomatic agents, particularly for NATO and the EU structures.' (Ungureanu, 2008, p. 198)

In the first year of reform, 2005, the statistics presented by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs reveal that 56% of the Romanian diplomats were under 35 years old, 52% of the diplomats sent to missions were under 40 (17% under 30), while 60% of the personnel recalled from missions were over 40 (Ungureanu, 2008, p. 198). Maybe for a Western diplomatic system these figures could indicate too young diplomatic corps, an exaggeration of the idea of rejuvenation and the risk of having an unexperienced diplomatic service overseas, but in those enthusiastic circumstances of preparing the EU accession the change had positive effects over the image and performances of both the Central Ministry and the Romanian diplomatic missions. It is also useful to mention that, because of high interest for a diplomatic career, for every session of admission to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs the number of candidates was about 10-20 per post, depending on the chosen department: European Affairs, Global Affairs, Public

Diplomacy, Overseas Romanians or Consular Affairs etc. Due to a 'historical' lack of trust in a fair competition for entering the diplomatic corps, all these contests had a number of litigations and a lot of suspicion. The candidates with poor results and their families sometimes tried to suggest a lack of objectivity and neutral evaluation. To give just an example, at the contest of November-December 2005 there were 639 candidates for 54 diplomatic and consular posts but even so at one department none of the candidates met the minimal requirements of getting a grade of at least 7 out of 10 and the seats remained unoccupied (Chiriță, 2006). Minister Ungureanu personally assumed in an interview the 'fair character of the competition' and gave total credit to the admission committee, from which the vast majority had 'academic background or spotless diplomatic records' (Chiriță, 2006).

The reform of the Romanian diplomacy in 2005-2007 was both politically and administratively oriented. Starting from a set of fundamental values and principles defining the strong western orientation of the government, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs tried (and, to some extent, succeeded) to become an agent of modernization and a model of new attitude within central public administration of Romania. In his farewell press conference in March 2007, Foreign Minister Ungureanu reviewed some of the major chapters of Romanian foreign policy in the pre-accession period as well as the key-issues of the administrative reform of the ministry. With regard to the diplomatic service, the theme of rejuvenation came almost as a leitmotif. In his words: 'you know the problem at the beginning of my term, how the Romanian diplomatic and consular representation looked like [...]. Today, the largest age category of diplomatic agents is between 25 and 35 – they represent 40% of the ministry, compared to 25% in 2004' (Ungureanu, 2008, p. 23). In the same context, the departing foreign minister was mentioning among his achievements the rise in salary both in the central ministry and the diplomatic missions. A good financial motivation, believed Ungureanu, is positive for attracting young valuable professionals to a diplomatic career. Then-head of diplomacy also mentioned that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was the only department of the government which asked the CNSAS (The National Council for the Study of the Communist Archives) to check the whole list of ambassadors, secretaries of state and directors in order to identify the ones who collaborated with *Securitate* as secret political police, according to the law. The political and moral meaning of this screening was to transmit the signal of a new, 'lustrated' diplomacy, having no personal connections with the instruments of ideological oppression from the past.

The ambitious program of the diplomatic service's reform in 2005-2007 was not unmolested by virulent rivals, from outside and from inside the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. It is thus not surprising to observe that most of the criticism came from some senior ambassadors who suddenly saw themselves ousted from the diplomatic corps (retired) or from former ambassadors criticizing the actions of the new leadership, under the roof of political parties to which they were recently affiliated. As an example, the PRM senator Eugen Mihăescu, former Romanian Ambassador to UNESCO, impugned several times the reform and the foreign minister, in his updated capacity of

Deputy Chair of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Senate. Senator Mihăescu considered the reform as an 'earthquake in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' and wondered if the new team will be able 'to replace the old generation with a new one, capable enough to cope with the exigencies of diplomacy' (Damian, 2005). The pre-accession period of 2005-2006 was benchmarked in Romania both by major achievements (political, economic, administrative) culminating with joining the European Union, and domestic political conflicts. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, as part of the government and central administration, implemented a program of reforms with recognized but also controversial outcomes. As I have presented, the political and emotional 'atmosphere' in which a reform is conducted is essential for the general public perception. The same managerial measures could be seen in positive or negative terms, depending on the political image of the respective cabinet, party or politician. A pure administrative analysis is almost impossible for the term of a government or minister, although any attempt to put decisions and consequences under technical criteria may be useful.

Concluding this section, there are a number of reasons for which we can affirm that reforms of the diplomatic service in Romania were conducted based primarily on the rational actor model. The organizational behavioral and public policy models were not of a significant role. Moreover, the bureaucracy of the department acted rather as a drag for reforms. The political will of the Foreign Minister and the second line leadership of the department pushed things in the right direction of change, sometimes paying the unpleasant price of making older diplomats angry. Though it is hardly to be demonstrated, the fact that Ungureanu was not a career diplomat but first of all an academic with a solid international experience made him more committed and prepared to assume courageous measures. Being an 'outsider' as a basic profession (professor at the University of Iași) and having no 'complicity' with the system, but also being a former secretary of state in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (1998-2001), Ungureanu had both advantages of bureaucratic independence and know-how.

5.2. Post-accession period (2007-2014)

The post-accession period of reference in this article covers synthetically the first seven years of Romania's EU membership, until the beginning of 2014. As a general observation, political instability and relative frequent changes of governments or just reshuffles made very difficult any continuity of public policies or government strategies. A continuous climate of political tension moved real focuses from policy to politics in an extremely imbalanced proportion. Beyond political confrontations and virulent rhetoric just a little attention was paid to real public policies and institutional reforms. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs was both a privileged and vulnerable institution in this period of political tensions. It was a privileged one because, unlike other departments and agencies, the foreign policy did not suffer substantial alterations. The main directions of Romania's external strategy remained essentially the same, with strong and clear emphasis on EU and NATO memberships, and that was the good news. The bad news for Romanian diplomacy was the fact that the leadership

of the ministry, between 2007 and 2013, counted as many as ten ministers! Sworn-in ministers (eight of them) or just acting ministers (two ad interim foreign ministers, in 2007 and 2009), covering the whole spectrum of mainstream parties (liberals, liberal-democrats and social-democrats) but also non-partisan career diplomats, the ten chiefs of Romanian diplomacy in seven years could not properly develop long-lasting programs of reform. Some of them did not even intend to start a reorganization or institutional review. Most of them did not have eventually enough time to develop a strategy, 'surviving' in office for just a few months and usually being under tough political pressure.

The ministerial terms were quite different as duration (except for interims, from a minimum of three months to more than two years) as well as notable performances. As always after a new minister investiture, the first two or three months are 'dedicated' to accommodation and replacing some key officials in the ministry's apparatus, such as the chief of staff, the spokesperson and the political director, and also to re-making the chart of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. It is however still to be clarified why each new foreign minister wants to reorganize the chart of the ministry, since the updated formula does not necessarily means visible benefits. The only realistic answer refers to this method as a convenient procedure to replace directors general and directors, according to the minister's preferences. The period between 2009 and 2011 has been profoundly marked by the economic crisis and budgetary cuts suffered by all ministries. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs was not an exception to the rule. Not only salaries have been diminished with 25% for diplomats serving in the central and external missions (as everywhere else in the public sector) but the staff was shrunk dramatically in embassies and consulates. It is therefore not a surprise to remark that diplomats and other professionals in the country were quite reluctant to support the austerity measures taken during the liberal-democrat government, despite efforts to explain the gravity of the crisis and the need of austerity, plunged to historic low levels of popularity.

In December 2010, the Foreign Minister Teodor Baconschi declared that 'the reorganization of the Foreign Ministry has ended, with a loss of 473 positions [out of 2,300] in total (including unoccupied positions), from which 155 represented effective lost jobs and fired people, both from central and diplomatic missions' (Cotidianul, 2010). With the same occasion, Baconschi mentioned that, in the context of a severe financial austerity, he would prefer to close the 'unprofitable diplomatic and consular missions' than to affect the functionality of the embassies and consulates in the most politically important capitals and economic centers. Unofficially, a short list with a few diplomatic missions (especially consulates outside Europe) proposed for shutdown was circulated in media but eventually none of them was closed. Many embassies and consulates lost one or two positions (diplomatic, administrative or both) so that in 2010-2012 the level of staffing in Romanian diplomacy reached a minimum of the post-communist period. A number of embassies in Central Asia and Africa worked with one single diplomat that is the ambassador. As a reaction to the announced layoff

of diplomatic and especially non-diplomatic staffers, the union leader Valeriu Sma-du threatened with the possibility of suing the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and also 'going on strike to defend employees' rights' (Evenimentul Zilei, 2010). The idea of closing some inconsistent diplomatic missions did not get enough political support at the government and presidency level and it was not implemented, mainly because the counter-argument of high costs of reopening a diplomatic mission after years of suspension was prevalent. In 2011, consistent with the Foreign Minister Baconschi's prior statement, the reorganization of the Foreign Affairs department stopped and that was considered good news because of the relative end of the crisis. We learn that there were '2,077 employees envisaged for 2012, only one less than in 2011' (Razi, 2011). Beyond obsessive quantitative dimension regarding spending cuts, it is almost self-evident that there was no time and energy for further serious qualitative discussions, while between the political leadership of the ministry and the diplomatic corps has already emerged a gap. An important political and administrative task with which the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was charged by the Government in the period of 2009-2011 was related to the objective of Romania's admission into the 'Schengen Area' Agreement. From the administrative perspective, the program assigned to the department of Foreign Affairs referred to the technical preparation of Romanian consulates and consular sections (the ones outside of the Schengen Area) in order to meet the list of the so-called 'Schengen criteria'. In March 2011, the European institutions (European Commission, European Parliament) concluded that Romania fully meets the technical criteria to join the Schengen Area, but the European Council eventually postponed the decision. One final observation with regard to Romanian diplomatic service addresses the issue of specific legislation. Although several Foreign ministers attempted to make an essential reform of diplomacy as administrative public service, the dedicated law remained unchanged over the past decade. The so-called 'Statute of the diplomatic and consular corps of Romania' dates back to 2003. It is, in fact, one of the last pre-EU laws in the realm of public administration and government in the country. The fact that the key legislation regulating the diplomatic service did not suffer any change for more than eleven years (2003-2014) has two possible explanations: either the diplomats are satisfied with the law in terms of regulations and benefits or a new law would require a political and social consensus in relation to this profession which is unlikely to be achieved in the midst of a long economic decline.

It is quite difficult to find a key-idea to define the post-accession period in the Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Stagnation? Fatigue of reforms? Lack of vision? Demotivation? Definitely it was not one of substantial progresses and reforms. The economic crisis that affected Romania from 2009 to 2011 pushed inevitably the department and diplomatic missions in severe budgetary constraints. Due to the 25% general cut of salaries in 2010, it was even more difficult if not impossible for the leadership of the ministry to ask home or dispatched diplomats for more efforts or improved performances. A kind of 'survival strategy' has installed in diplomacy and the organizational behavioral model returned in the ministry, after years of reforms.

5.3. Romania's diplomacy reform:

a mixed case of the rational actor vs bureaucratic inertia

Concluding the case study, both the pre and post-EU accession periods of Romanian diplomacy were based on the rational actor model (mainly), with the Foreign Minister's political will in center stage, but also on the reluctance and inertia of the bureaucracy, as part of the organizational behavior. The one which actually missed and, to some extent is still missing, is the public policy model, involving a mix of voices and opinions from civil society and based on openness and consultation with non-ministry actors. The lack of experience for real public policy models of decision is in fact a general observation which can be extended for the whole range of public services in Romania, not only and perhaps less in diplomacy than in other sections of the government. Looking to the ambitious program of the Romanian diplomatic system's reform, mentioned at the beginning of this section, one can conclude that part of it has been achieved even from the pre-accession period, while other issues remained unsolved. First of all, the selection of permanent diplomatic personnel has been regulated and the general rule is the public contest. Secondly, a new generation of diplomats got a chance in the mid-2000s, before the financial crisis severely reduced the opportunities for newly established positions. Public and cultural diplomacy was massively used for foreign policy purposes in 2005-2006, before the EU accession moment of January 1st, 2007. A general feeling of openness and transparency appeared after 2005. The hard-core of the financial administration of diplomacy remained nevertheless unchanged. Old rules, rigidity and bureaucracy, slow procedures and an excessive caution in approving funds for diplomatic missions could not be very much relieved by the successive Foreign Ministers, because of the resistance of other government departments, especially of the Ministry of Public Finance.

6. General conclusion

Analyzing diplomatic services in modern politics is a matter related to the general theory of public policy analysis but also an issue of foreign policy assessment. One can hardly separate today diplomacy as bureaucracy from diplomacy as foreign policy results. From this perspective, the American approach is even more flexible: foreign policy is diplomacy and diplomacy is foreign policy. When speaking about diplomacy, Henry Kissinger is actually having in mind what here in Europe we name foreign policy. More than everywhere in the world, because of its superpower status and leading role, the US diplomacy is associated with a set of fundamental values, principles and an ideological creed that are 'coloring' the performance of the Department of State.

The European rigid taxonomy with regard to the conceptual distinction between political decision and diplomatic service comes basically from the French tradition. More recently, analytical framework of diplomacy was enriched by the English school, as Jönsson and Hall explain: 'diplomacy, in this perspective, is about dynamic relations that help differentiate political space. We have lamented the fact that no dynamic term, based on a verb, can be derived from the word 'diplomacy', but we will

pay special attention to such processes as the reproduction of particular international societies and the institutionalization and ritualization of diplomacy' (Jönsson and Hall, 2005, pp. 24-25). Undoubtedly, diplomacy and diplomatic service are endowed with norms, rules and roles. Some of them may be neutral or pure technical, we admit, but the ones which actually make the difference between countries are loaded with political, ideological and, in a large sense, with a cultural pattern. More than any other public policy (education, health-care, transportation, environment etc.) foreign policy is inseparably bound to political processes, while diplomatic service seems to be less administrative and more political. Despite many attempts of reformation and professionalization, meant to get diplomatic service away from politics and party influence, with some notable results in the postwar age, the activities of the ministries of foreign affairs remain captive in the political paradigm. The bureaucratic dimension of diplomacy resides not only in procedures, forms of communication and protocol, but mostly in the way human resources are managed and financial resources for administering missions are spent. Even these aspects may be under political control in some countries, but generally speaking the advanced systems allow top bureaucrats from the ministry (secretary general, directors general) or heads of mission (ambassadors, consuls general) to take decisions, based on a limited mandate.

As a macro-trend in governance and world affairs, valid for all categories of public policies, diversifying and increasing number of actors (state and non-state actors) have had an impact also for diplomacy. Andrew F. Cooper, John English and Ramesh Thakur offered, under the auspices of the United Nations University, a pretty comprehensive view on enhancing global governance and the nascent diplomacy. According to this approach, governments are no longer single players in the field of diplomacy. They are still the most important voices but they lost the monopoly of representing interests. Brian Hocking and Dominic Kelly define the way old and new stakeholders inter-relate in the diplomatic arena: 'in the case of governments, it is reflected in the reform of diplomatic services to enhance their interaction with civil society and reinforce and redefine the 'public diplomacy' function. In the case of NGOs, it is reflected in debates about purpose, strategies, and engagement with both business and government and, for multilateral organizations, in reaching out beyond the realm of states in a search for funds, expertise, and legitimacy' (Hocking and Kelly, 2002, p. 207).

The mix of government and non-government actors could act as a constraining factor for the ministry of foreign affairs, in the sense that reaching a consensus in the specialized circles should be followed and respected by the diplomatic service. James Reed explains this seemingly surprising phenomenon in which the government seems 'captive' in its political and diplomatic actions, in a mechanism of consultation and partnership reflecting in fact the natural consequence of a profoundly democratic society. In his words: 'the policy-maker who would defy the consensus of opinion within the foreign policy public and among its opinion elites is running a considerable risk. In America, the foreign affairs bureaucracy is so politically vulnerable – and the American political class so transient – that foreign policy ideas generally trickle up,

as it were, into the state apparatus from the vigorous and always opinionated institutions and organs of America's independent foreign policy community. Hence the extraordinary collective influence of the think-tanks and academic research institutes, the Council on Foreign Relations and the World Affairs Councils, and the journals *Foreign Policy* and *Foreign Affairs*' (Reed, 2002, p. 60).

Taking into consideration all changes and adjustments of the diplomatic services in the past decades, following globalization and diversification of stakeholders in world politics and diplomacy (international organizations, corporates, academia, civil society, media) we can conclude that analyzing the bureaucracy of diplomacy is more and more like peering a small part of a large mechanism. It could be technically an interesting exercise of administrative analysis but eventually it's not enough to get a clear image. In order to get a full understanding of diplomatic processes we need the whole picture. Even for a small/medium country like Romania, not to mention the great powers, as I have presented in the previous sections, decision making process in foreign policy and diplomacy involves more than the ministries of foreign affairs and top officials. However, the road to a real public policy process is still long in Romania, where decision making relies too much on political will of leaders and governments. The lack of an effective institutional culture makes the hard-core of the public institutions to act most frequently against rather in favor of the projects of reforms. On a long run, the ideal is to replace strong leaders with strong institutions, but with institutions that have incorporated the culture of public interest. The first steps have been already made in order to develop institutional reflexes towards accountability and respect for citizens and law. Diplomacy is obviously part of this state modernization effort.

Alongside with politics and ideology of political actors, it becomes a self-evident truth that the civil society, including non-governmental sector, academic opinions, media and the business sphere have begun to influence diplomacy even in the countries that underwent a transition from totalitarian to democratic and pluralist regimes.

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