BETWEEN HAMMERS AND ANVILS
THE SOCIALIZATION OF EUROPEAN PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVES:
ROMANIA AND BULGARIA - A COMPARATIVE CASE STUDY

Neculai-Cristian Şurubaru*

Abstract**: The question of administrative governance in the European Union reflects the links between the decision-making process and the national Member States. The Permanent Representations are the key institutions translating Brussels policies into the national sphere. This article contradicts the constructivist/ Europeanization arguments for thick socialization of permanent representatives and focuses on Romania and Bulgaria, in the institutional medium of the Political and Security Committee. The author claims that the adaptation - thin socialization - of the permanent representatives can be measured differently, within a theoretical framework based on intergovernmentalism, institutionalism and "Brusselization". Specific for the Bulgarian representatives is their slow pace in acquiring the formal and informal procedures of the committee, while the Romanian diplomats have a different relation with their Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Both countries are similar in terms of networking and their logic is driven by national interests. It is important to look at these countries as a potential model of comparison between Member States, in how they integrate in the multi-level diplomatic layers in Brussels.

Keywords: Permanent Representations, Political and Security Committee, intergovernmentalism, institutionalism, "Brusselization", Romania, Bulgaria

In 2002 the European Council officially started negotiations to welcome Romania and Bulgaria to the European Union. The accession treaty for both countries was signed in April 2005, establishing as membership date 1 January 2007. Nevertheless, there were many critics of the accession of the two. For example, in an article symbolically titled "Two new entrants into the EU", Romania and Bulgaria were seen as "the new kids on the block, characterized by economic and political backwardness" (The Economist, January 2007), a view which expressed a typical and generally negative opinion on the two new members. In terms of foreign policy after 1989, the two post-communist countries have had quite a similar course. EU accession has been a major objective in terms of foreign policy. Their foreign policy discourses, both before and after 2007, were based on the idea of returning to and integrating into Europe. Thus, NATO membership and EU accession were seen as a major breakthrough, in

* **Neculai-Cristian Şurubaru** is currently following an MA in European Studies at Maastricht University, and has finished his BA in Political Science at Bucharest University, and an MA in International Relations and European Studies at Central European University (CEU) in 2009. E-mail: cristi_986@yahoo.com

the sense of getting back on the tracks of history, for the first time after the 1989 revolutions.

The multitude of theories explaining the accession process of new Member States has scarcely touched upon the question of administrative governance. This is an important question in terms of how the inside decision-making process of the EU takes place. Moreover, the lack of individual studies which address the question of how the new member states have integrated in the EU institutional medium accounts for an actual literature gap. Therefore, this article seeks to bring in new theoretical perspectives and to facilitate a theory-based explanation- on the one hand, more generally, of the EU's administrative governance, and, on the other hand, more specifically, of the Council working groups such as the Political and Security Committee (PSC), in relation to the Permanent Representations of the newest members, Bulgaria and Romania.

It is important to permanently link the EU literature with the possible effects of enlargement over inner institutional changes. Therefore, it is extremely puzzling that the branch of European Studies that looks at administrative governance has not examined so far the accommodation of the new Member States in the Council framework. In this light, the aim of the present research is (1) to link the theoretical framework drawn in the first chapter with the institutional environment of the Council of the European Union, especially the Political and Security Committee (PSC),

in relation to Romania and Bulgaria; (2) to criticize the concept of socialization used mainly by constructivist/Europeanization scholars such as Jeffrey Checkel, as a central explanation for the adaptation of the Permanent Representatives, and to advance a theoretical and research scheme based on a combination of intergovernmentalism, institutionalism and "Brusselization"; (3) to reveal the adaptation/socialization profiles of Romania and Bulgaria, inside the PSC.[1] The overall goal is to approximate the differences between the two countries, in terms of how they fitted into the Brussels institutional environment. Subsequently, the main research questions of this article are:

1. To what extent does socialization play a role in the case of the Bulgarian and Romanian Permanent Representations, after 2007?

2. How do Bulgaria and Romania interact with one another, and the other Member States in the working groups of the Council, more exactly inside the PSC?

3. Is there any notable difference in the process of adaptation between Romania and Bulgaria?

The main existing research scrutinizes the accession of the two countries, concentrating on the process of negotiations, implementation of the *acquis*, or drawing cost-benefit analysis of the integration. In this sense, it is important to grasp the newcomer's involvement in the Council medium, as a way to analyze the efficiency of the European institutions, and the links that

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[1] Throughout this study the author uses adaptation not as synonym of socialization, but more as a thin concept which can reflect the effect over the two Representations, implicitly the dependent variable. Although the two are juxtaposed, the second is closer to the idea of a means of adaptation, a process, and an independent variable.

they create between Member States, a reason for which the article deals with the cases of Bulgaria and Romania. Without differences, the already existing studies generalize and miss out the point of each country's specificity. In order to criticize the concept of socialization, the present article presents the author's personal hypotheses on socialization (see table 1).

The dependent variable of the present research relates to the overall process of adaptation of the Permanent Representatives, particularly inside the PSC, after Romania's and Bulgaria's accession period. Setting out the measurements of this adaptation process is challenging. Therefore, the independent variables seize the concept of socialization, in different relations, and constitute the dimensions at which this study looks empirically. The indicators are drawn out from the author's alternative hypotheses (see table 1) which form the independent variables used to differentiate between the two countries: relation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA), national interest, speed of adjustment to formal and informal procedures, coalition formation and networking.

The above-mentioned items make up the methodological toolkit, used in examining the two Representations. In the present article, the author has employed a qualitative analysis, based on semi-structured interviews with the Romanian and Bulgarian officials from the Permanent Representations. Similar, but slightly different questions were addressed to third party Representatives, in order to obtain their perspective on the adaptation/socialization of the first two entities inside the PSC. The data collected as well as the indicators are

subject to a scheme of evaluation and are tested through the method of difference. The purpose of the this latter method is that of depicting what differentiates Romania and Bulgaria, on the level of EU diplomacy, revealed from the activities of their representatives in the PSC working group.

The first part of the article looks at the concept of socialization as presented in the constructivist and Europeanization literature, and criticizes its assumptions by putting forth a different theoretical model based on: intergovernmentalism, institutionalism and "Brusselization". The second part broadly focuses on the institutional environment of the Council, especially the PSC. Finally, the third part evaluates the differences between Bulgaria and Romania in terms of their adaptation to the PSC and the Brussels institutional spectrum.

I: Examining the Brussels Permanent Representations – A Theoretical Model

The nature of the EU bureaucratic system is both administrative and regulatory. This division has been fused inside the EU administrative system. The bureaucratic machinery of the EU and most of its regulative nature involves the Council working groups. This first part sets an alternative to the theoretical framework developed by constructivist scholars, such as Jeffrey Checkel, by challenging the concept of *socialization*, which is too *thick* in order to explain the diplomatic interaction between the national representatives. The alternative presented in this paper is based on a combination of three theoretical elements, which can accurately portray these relationships: Intergovernmentalism, Institutionalism and "Brusselization".

I.1 Socialization- the Constructivist turn:

The concept of Socialization has been seen by Alastair Johnston as a "neglected source of cooperation in International Relations theory". (Johnston, 2001, p.458) Constructivism highlights the "inseparability of a social ontology and epistemology, which accepts the possibility of reality being constructed". (Fierke, 2007, p.174) One of its main premises is that the material world is socially constructed, and that concepts presume a large degree of inter-subjectiveness. Jeffrey Checkel emphasizes that in relation to IR theory, the concept of socialization is paradoxically used, meaning that it loses its sociological significance and gets closer to the idea of soft power. Checkel has been classified as a conventional constructivist scholar, which seeks a middle ground for constructivism as an approach and the discipline of International Relations. (Adler, 1997, p.319)

The question that underpins the definition of socialization from Checkel's perspective is: "In what times, under what conditions and through what mechanisms can socialization be understood"? (Checkel, Moravcsik, 2001, p.225) However, before reaching his point, there has to be a clear difference in how socialization is understood in different contextual and theoretical frameworks. On the one hand, socialization is seen as an effect, as a dependent variable, with a teleological meaning, a factor which evokes a concrete pathway, a process with clear consequences as regards the actors. On the other hand, socialization presumes a constant process of institutional formulation and other socialization agents which are continuously driven by sentiments.

Extending the reflections on social learning, Checkel argues that "agents may behave appropriately, by learning a role, acquiring knowledge that enables them to act in accordance with expectations- irrespective of whether they like the role or agree with it. The key is the agents knowing what is socially accepted in a given setting or community" (Checkel, 2005, p.804). Type I of socialization is defined through the logic of appropriateness as "a shift from a conscious instrumental calculation to a conscious role playing", and a transformation towards a logic of consequence (Ibid, p.805-806). A type two of socialization "requires the actors to go beyond role playing and implies that agents accept community or organizational norms, as a normative stance, taking for granted the idea that this is the right thing to do" (Ibidem). Constructivists suggest that the EU institutions have *thick* socializing effects on actors. Checkel's argumentation on socialization is that of a process of social learning, deeply rooted in the phenomenon of social interaction.

In the present article, the author contends that the theoretical framework created by literature leaves room for improvement, in accounting the administrative governance of the EU, as a distinct part, without considering the specific polity and governmental apparatus that is formed inside the Communities. The interpretation of the constructivist approach presumes that the staff working in the Permanent Representations is usually alienated from the demands of their capitals, and socially tends to act inside the supranational framework, allegedly being loyal to it. In this context, "a prolonged exposure

to the EU environment causes many diplomats to acquire a certain sense of We-ness" (Beyers, 2005, p.899). In day-to-day activities, the EU bureaucrats are exposed to a type of official discourse which makes it hard for any of them to go beyond. Adopting the official EU "language", rhetoric or dress code, has inherently psychological effects and establishes a certain sense of positive vanity among the EU staff, which may be interpreted in terms of adopting a social role. The effects of socialization are more a matter of prestige, and, concurrently, there can be no place for an empty/senseless socialization.

I.2 The Alternative: Intergovernmentalism, Institutionalization, "Brusselization"

The aim of this section is to depart from the traditional approach of socialization in regards to the European Union, by presenting an adequate theoretical alternative model to the above underlined socialization debate. Consequently, the author draws his assumptions on the concepts of intergovernmentalism, institutionalism and "Brusselization", as a way of drafting a different perspective on how Brussels has developed a common administrative and institutional culture.

(A) Intergovernmentalism - One of the oldest debates regarding the formation of the European Communities is centered on the concept of intergovernmentalism, which emphasizes the centrality of nationalities and the importance that the European project had to achieve for the interest of the states (Rosamond, 2000, p.76). Andrew Moravcsik claims that integration is not due to supranational institutions but to national preferences which choose them through

bargaining. The question now is how can socialization be instrumentalized into acquiring rational features? Is there a certain degree of rationalization in assuming an identity? Are the actors conscious of the role they have to play, and do they internalize its norms and rules in a rational fashion? In this respect, the intergovernmental account of actors maximizing their own profit and using the European pathway as leeway for pursuing their interests, serves as a more comprehensive explanation of the rationale behind the Permanent Representations in Brussels. However, intergovernmentalism alone cannot provide the necessary background for reflection and action inside these representations.

(B) Institutionalism - There are several accounts of institutionalist paradigms. The main idea they zoom in is that institutions play a cultural part in which individuals are socialized in having certain roles, and, in addition to this, institutions do not only shape preferences but also create identities. In relation to the EU foreign policy, this is what Michael Smith calls *institutionalization* (Smith, 2004, p.26). He covers a rationalist perspective of institutionalization, as a process which relies on assumptions of economic incentives and on the idea that "actors have a fixed set of preferences and their behavior is driven towards maximizing gains through strategies and calculations" (Ibidem). However, the focus in this article lies with the pressure that the EU exerts on the Permanent Representation in Brussels, especially the newcomers, having as assumption the fact that the process of institutionalization began before their accession period.

(C) "Brusselization" - The concept of "Brusselization" reveals a different perception of the Brussels social milieu, other than through socialization. In this article, the concept is enclosed in three different approaches. The first approach looks at "Brusselization" in respect to the development of the EU as an international actor, and its attempts to develop an individual foreign policy apart from that of its member states. David Allen claims that there is more than one foreign policy making culture in Brussels. The "Brusselization" of foreign policy is translated in "the steady enhancement of Brussels based decision making bodies that show no signs of abating" (Allen, 1998, p.42). The main idea behind this is that Brussels tends to become a center of power which to a certain extent constrains the national foreign policies. The "Brusselization" process is synonym with "a gradual transfer in the name of consistency of foreign policy, shifting authority away from the national capitals to Brussels" (Ibid, p.53). This transfer is made through a Brussels based machinery and institutional framework. Thus, the meaning behind the first interpretation is that of a power transfer from the capitals to Brussels, at least at a symbolical level.

Secondly, the concept of "Brusselization" is embedded in what Chris Shore defines as "engrenage"- as a mechanism of institutional and ideological incorporation, or "agent of European consciousness", because its functions are to integrate and socialize national subjects into the structures, norms and values of the EU (Shore, 2000, p. 149). Brussels reflects a phenomenon of "ghettoisation" in which bureaucrats are characterized by quasi-diplomatic identity and a multilingual working environment, in which they have separate schools for their children and financial and bureaucratic immunities offered by the Belgian state (Ibidem).

Finally, deriving from the second approach, the concept of "Brusselization", presumes a negative meaning in the sense that the Brussels-based institutions are criticized for being too bureaucratic, and suffering from a democratic deficit. Implicitly, the representations focus and follow their activities in this medium, being influenced by it institutionally, strategically and culturally. Consequently, the term "Brusselization" better reflects the socialization process, starting from an agent A- in our case EU institutions such as the Council and the Commission, to an agent B- the Permanent Representations. "Brusselization" entails a form of specific governance which reunites the supranational Institutionalist features of the Commission and of the Council, in an effort to condensate the national policies, and to provide the adequate framework, in which 27 national interests are mixed.

I.3 Socialization: concluding remarks

It is rather difficult to set out specific patterns of socialization outcomes, but the literature does not present any diplomatic profile, and tends to focus specifically on the decision-making process, the interaction between the diplomats and socialization mechanisms, such as *consultation-reflex*. This being the case, socialization is reduced in the literature only to its internalizing features, with reference to factors such as prestige or a strong sense of *We-ness*. However, it is hard to measure the existence of such of feeling among Permanent Representatives. The author of the present article inclines more

towards the rationality emphasized by Juncos and Pomoroska in the decision making of the Representatives, and less towards the internalization of norms and values, in the sense of an identity formation, stressed by Checkel's *thick* description of socialization. (Juncos, Pomoroska, 2007). *Thin* socialization is more effective in revealing the differences between adaptations of member states, a dimension not taken into account so far by the literature, and with which my study deals in the third chapter. Finally, there is the idea that that intergovernmentalism, combined with Institutionalist features and the *"Brusselization"* framework, succeeds in portraying a more accurate theoretical stance towards understanding the nature of the Permanent Representations. A mix between all the three, driven particularly by the intergovernmentalist logic, is more prolific in exposing the process faced by Representatives, in contrast to the *thick* concept of socialization, which entails a certain degree of supranationalization.

II: The Political and Security Committee - Socialization or intergovernmental agent?

In order to maintain the theoretical perspective of this paper, and, more importantly, to underline its accuracy, this section examines the exact institutional environment from which the hypotheses described in this article are derived. There are two reasons for which the PSC was chosen. First, the PSC is a relatively new institution, which gained important prerogatives during its short existence, especially in the field of European Security and Defense Policy (ESDP). Second, and most importantly, the purpose of examining the PSC is linked with the overall aim of the present

research, and provides the institutional background to which the author's empirical assessments are attached. The question raised so far is to what extent the PSC can represent a factor of socialization or a neutral medium driven by an intergovernmental logic? Thus, the PSC depicts the adequate diplomatic environment which can portray whether or not there is a top-down socialization process affecting the Permanent Representatives.

In this respect, the historical evolution of the Committee is tackled in the following instance. The institutional landscape of the European Union became richer after 2000, with the appearance of new working groups, which had the aim of providing expertise on the political level for the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and the ESDP frameworks. One of the main assumptions in the specialized literature is that the PSC working group acts as a "government in the shadow" (Juncos, Reynolds, 2007, p.142).

It has to be noted that the PSC did not develop from institutional scratch but it is rather the case of a historical evolution. Its predecessor, the Political Committee (PoCo), dates back 1970, the time of the establishment of the European Defense Community (1950-1952) and the Fouchet Plan. Due to the CFSP, during the 90's, the European Union started to develop its own identity in terms of foreign policy.

II.1: The PSC - features and prerogatives

The decisive moment in developing the actual functional PSC was the Nice Council of 2000, and the framework of the Nice Treaty. The PSC is seen as the main administrative body of the new ESDP,

responsible mainly for implementing its military and political aspects. The Committee's main prerogatives are:

remains an intergovernmental type of institution, with a vague trend towards supranationalization, but which does

(a) **"keep track of the international situation**
(b) **examine the areas of GAC draft conclusions**
(c) **provide guidelines for other Committees**
(d) **maintain a privileged link with the Secretary-General/High Representative (SG/HR)**
(e) **send guidelines to the Military Committee**
(f) **receive information, recommendations and opinions from the Committee for Civilian Aspects**
(g) **coordinate, supervise and monitor discussions on CFSP issues**
(h) **lead the political dialogue**
(i) **provide a privileged forum for dialogue on the ESDP**
(j) **under the auspices of the Council, take responsibility for the political direction of the development of military capabilities"**[2]

In order to understand the relations between the PSC and the other institutional structures of the Council, figure 1 is illustrative. It presents the complex linkages between the PSC apparatus, the Council working groups, and the source of mainly all of its members, the Permanent Representations.

II.2: PSC- the nature of interaction

Does the PSC have the capacity of socialization over its members, or is it just an intergovernmental forum? Does the nature of the meetings presume a socialization pattern, in terms of its members internalizing certain values, norms, rules and procedures? These are two questions that have to be asked at this point. My assumption is that the PSC

not have any consequences at the level of decision-making. In terms of loyalty, the Permanent Representatives, the PSC ambassadors implicitly are still there to represent the interests of their states. This gives the intergovernmental flavor of the negotiations, which is still the main logic, reflecting the national positions. It is however a multi-level diplomatic game, which does not constrain its actors, in terms of socialization, but offers them the choice of a "different logic of diplomatic appropriateness with important repercussions over the traditional sense of diplomacy" (Batora, 2005, p.61-62).

Officially, the PSC constitutes the key strategic actor leading the formulation and implementation of the ESDP operations

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[2] Council of the European Union, *Council Decision of 22 January 2001, setting up the Political and Security Committee, 2001/78/CFSP*, available at http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cmsUpload/l_02720010130en00010003.pdf

Figure 1[3]
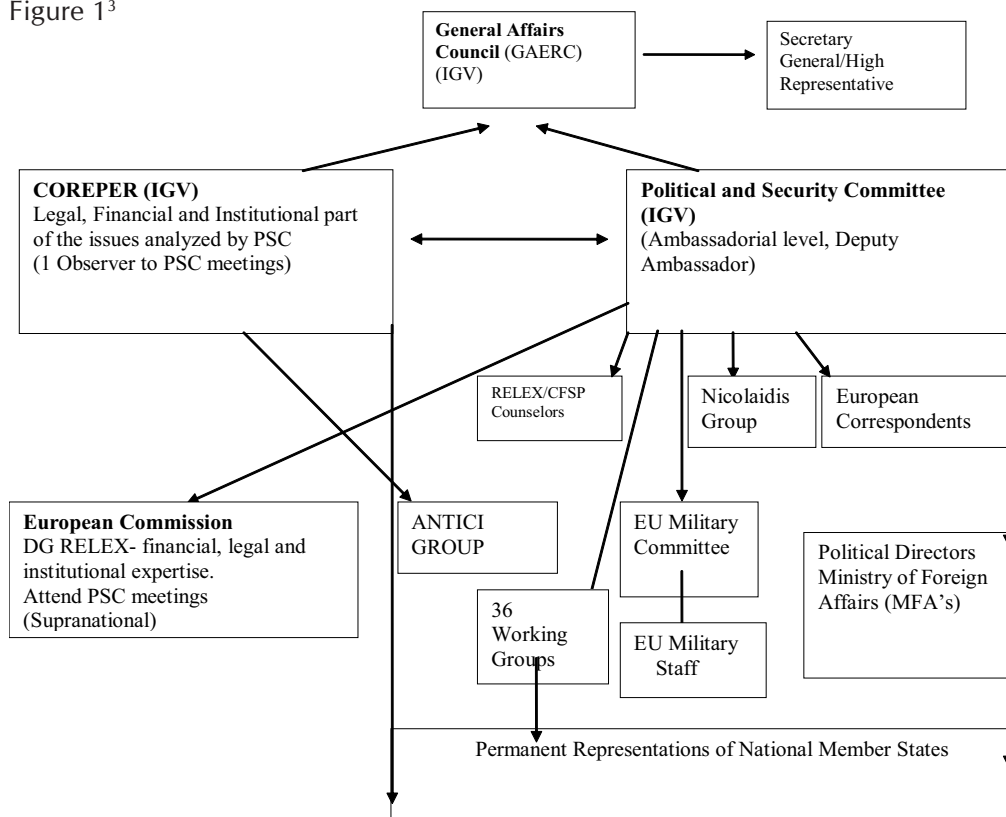
(Nice European Council, 2000). Thus, the diplomatic responsibilities of its representatives are extremely important. Keen observers of Brussels have come to the conclusion that there is a certain familiarity inside the working groups, which entails a certain *esprit de corps*, a club spirit "which does not necessarily imply that actors, the diplomats of the new member states internalize certain norms" (Juncos, Pomoroska, 2007, p. 8). An interesting detail of the PSC gatherings is that there are no available translations, all of the meeting workings being conducted either in English or in French. Moreover, another part which supports the idea of familiarity is that the Ambassadors do not address themselves with the delegation name, but through their first name (Juncos, Reynolds, 2007, p.137).

Thus, the PSC represents an interaction forum with its own set of prerogatives, norms and pre-defined informal rules. Among the informal processes that take place within the PSC, the "coordination reflex" and "consensus-building" are most important. The first one is defined by Tonra as a process in which the "policy-makers see themselves not as

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[3] The figure represents the relation between the PSC and other Committees, and aims at showing exactly the source from which most of them draw their staff: the Permanent Representations of the member states.

emissaries of pre-defined positions but as policy arbiters, seeking to internalize the identity ambitions of colleagues so as thereby to see that their own positions are at least complementary" (Tonra, 2001, p.12). The coordination reflex built inside the Committee and outside its walls is constantly maintained through e-mails, mobile phones and frequent meetings with other colleagues in the corridors, and most importantly during lunch (Juncos, Pomoroska, p.7).

The goal of the informal meetings is double-edged. On the one hand, during these meetings there is a massive exchange of information, on the positions of their governments, which leads to the fact that almost up to 90% of the issues are negotiated outside the formal meetings (Ibidem). On the other hand, the exchange of information leads to the formation of "like-minded groups", which approach issues having the same position, most likely around the old member states (Ibidem). At the same time, consensus building is an important informal mechanism of interaction inside the PSC. It is characterized by the overall search for consensus in taking decisions; and as one diplomat noticed: "compromise is the king in Brussels" (Relex Councilor, 2009). The mechanism of "coordination reflex" deliberately influences the development of "consensus-building", because the exchange of information implicitly transforms the relations between the diplomats. Nevertheless, the present contribution seeks to disconfirm the possibility of *thick socialization* in the PSC, and analyze, in its third section, whether such a process affected, and how could it differentiate between, the newest Member States: Romania and Bulgaria.

III. Romania and Bulgaria - The Socialization of Permanent Representatives

III.1: Bulgaria

Before 1989, Bulgaria was under the soviet sphere of influence. After the collapse of its communist regime, the discourse adopted by Sofia moved towards the EU. Bulgaria now sees its relations with the European Communities as an "essential partnership", and a gateway towards development (Bulgarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2009). Its diplomatic relations and all the day-to-day necessary coordination is directed from the Permanent Representation in Brussels. After the country's accession, the Representation suffered two major changes: logistical and strategic. First, the number of its personnel increased up to 106 members, which turned it into one of the largest Representations in Brussels (Nicolaidis Group, 2009). Strategically, and at the internal level, the Representation has adopted a few action plans in order to deal with its priorities in the CFSP, mainly concerning the Western Balkans, and to "coordinate through different channels of communication with the Presidency, Council and the Commission" (Ibidem).

In terms of third party opinions on Bulgaria, the Dutch and Hungarian representatives interviewed stated that the Bulgarian representatives demonstrated a lack of cooperation in the case of the "Evro" dispute, when they threatened to block the EU financial initiatives towards Montenegro (Western Balkan Group, 2009). At the same time, they see Bulgaria's CFSP approach limited only to Macedonia and Serbia. Also, the Bulgarian representatives were sometimes portrayed as having "a lack

of practical knowledge and that they are not up to the standards" (PSC Counselor, 2009).

In the light of these statements a preliminary profile can be outlined for the Bulgarian Representatives, drawing on possible specificities. The Bulgarian representatives are friendly towards other countries, willing to learn and self-aware of their technical errors and slow pace adaptation, and with a complicated foreign policy orientation. They see Romania as a close partner, admired for its active approach. Inside the PSC, the Bulgarian Representatives rely on the "personal-qualities of the PSC ambassador". At the same time, the Bulgarian Representatives are nursed by their MFA, with specific instructions.

III.2: Romania

Two issues were problematic in Romania's accession period: its system of agricultural subsidies, which was not clearly developed, and secondly, the high-level corruption cases that involved figures like former Prime Minister Adrian Năstase and many former MPs. With all this, starting with February 2005, Romania received the status of active observer in the EU Council working groups and in the Commission. This was an important step in the future adaptation in the Council working groups, particularly in the PSC.

After the accession period, the Romanian representation became the "main channel of communication between the EU institutions and the Romanian authorities", and faced two major changes. First, it had to shift from its pre-accession strategy, focused mainly on implementing the *acquis communautaire*, towards a high-degree of specialization. Secondly, the

Representation was specialized through a division of labor and an increase of its personnel, which reached up to 80 people, recruited mainly from the home Ministry (Deputy Permanent Representative, 2009). One of the main challenges, pointed out by the diplomats, was to organize and prioritize the massive flow of information, which was send to the capital, in order to receive specific information on different issues (Relex Counselor, 2009).

The view of third party representatives over their Romanian colleagues was useful in initially creating a profile for their representatives. The Romanian representatives are seen as open and vivid, flexible on compromise making, and in the full process of acquiring the formal and informal procedures (PSC First Secretary, 2009). At the same time, what was highlighted in their case is the value of their diplomats, and most importantly their "good command of language" (PSC Counselor, 2009). These skills have helped the Romanian representatives to focus sharply on their interests and to participate actively in the PSC meeting, by forming alliances. An initial profile of the Romanian Representatives in the PSC shows that they are practical, realistic, topic and policy oriented. In comparison to the Bulgarian case, the Romanian representatives are seen as depicting a more proud foreign policy tradition. Although the Representatives have a greater autonomy, their relation with the MFA reveals a special case, a first flaw. This concerns the need to translate the EU policies into expertise and to send an input to Bucharest, so that the MFA will follow the procedures admitted in Brussels. Even if at a first glance this looks like a socialization mechanism, it is however more an institutional

problem, where the MFA has the last word in taking decisions in the case of sensitive issues, and having the ability to periodically shift the personnel based in Brussels (Ibidem).

III.3: Socialization hypotheses

Furthermore, the present analysis first discredits the possibility of *thick* socialization occurring inside the PSC, and secondly looks at the differences of adaptation between Romania and Bulgaria, inside this institutional framework. Initially, the author did not expect any differences between the two countries, due to the similar process undertaken, the roadmaps and verification mechanisms that they had to face. Several testable hypotheses are present in this article, constructed by the author using indicators that oppose Jeffrey Checkel's main causal mechanisms of socialization- social learning: 1) "Social learning is more likely in groups where individuals share common professional backgrounds. 2) Social learning is more likely where the group feels itself in a crisis or is faced with clear and incontrovertible evidence of policy failure. 3) Social learning is more likely where a group meets repeatedly and there is high density of interaction among participants. 4) Social learning is more likely when a group is

Table 1 - Alternative hypotheses

1: The closer the relation between the PSC ambassador and his home ministry, the likely that he will receive specific instructions.
2: The smaller the amount of time spent in the PSC by the new ambassadors the less likely they had time to adapt to the formal and informal procedures.
3: The sharper the notion of national interest of the PSC ambassador, the less likely he has been socialized.
4: The bigger the Representation, the less likely that they adapt fast and easily to the procedures of the assembly.
5: The smaller the country the more likely that the Representatives will ask the MFA for specific instructions.[4]
6: Coalitions in the PSC are based on pre-existent foreign policy views, geopolitical and economic ties, between two countries.
6a: Coalitions in the PSC are mainly based on security and geographical ties, influenced by each country's interest.
7: The bigger the country's foreign policy tradition, the more likely MFA will send and rely on an experienced ambassador in the PSC.

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[4] This hypothesis contradicts Juncos and Pomoroska's claim that the bigger the country, for example: Germany or France, the likely that they receive specific instructions. The smaller the country is, the most likely the representatives will be closely monitored by their Ministry, due to the importance attributed to diplomatic relations with the EU.

insulated from direct political pressure and exposure" (Checkel, 1999, p.549).

These hypotheses are irrelevant to the idea of socialization inside the Permanent Representations, because they provide a *thick* and general account of its processes, which cannot explain the differences in adaptation/socialization of two countries to the same institutional environment. For example, in the case of the PSC, all the staff has diplomatic background- thus common professional backgrounds. It is therefore not the case of any policy failure but more the issue of coordination between the representatives. All in all, the author argues that representatives adapt - *thin socialization* - to the Brussels environment, but the purpose of the analysis is to see exactly how this process occurs.

III.4: Evaluation: Bulgaria versus Romania[5]
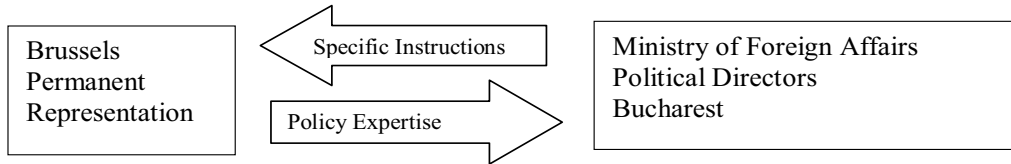
A. The relation with the MFA and Networking

The relation between their Representatives and their Ministry of Foreign Affairs is crucial in understanding the function of the Representation and the activity of the PSC ambassador. This relates to three of my hypotheses: H1, H5 and H7. For example, the Bulgarian Representatives receive the general instructions- "red lines"- but usually ask for specific instructions (Nicolaidis Group, 2009). A two-way relationship may be identified: Sofia sends in the specific instructions, which are demanded by the Representatives, in an effort to present precisely the country's

national interest, leaving however the impression that the Ministry exerts a strict control over the Representation. A proof in this sense is the permanent phone contacts with the Ministry during the meetings.

At the same time, the diplomats noted the important relation between the Political Director of the MFA and the PSC ambassador, seen as the key mechanism of coordination between Sofia and Brussels, in terms of sending and receiving instructions (PSC First Secretary, 2009). In the same manner, the Romanian counterparts point out in that the Political Directors "contribute very much in the decisions taken by the Representation" (Deputy Permanent Representative, 2009). Similarly, the MFA provides the general mandates, the documents that provide the general framework through which the Representatives act, and when sensitive issues are discussed in the PSC, "the instructions are specific and read out loud" (Relex Counselor, 2009). This validates the first hypothesis (H1), stated above. However, in contrast to the Bulgarian representatives, Bucharest expects expertise from Brussels, allowing it a certain maneuvering room in formulating policies (Political Director of MFA, 2009). (See figure 2) Thus, in the case of Romania, "the nuances are given by the Representation, which has its intellectual autonomy" (Ibidem). Nevertheless, the safety measure taken up by the MFA is to shift periodically the personal of the Representation, as a means of control over the Representation. This validates only partially the fifth hypothesis above.

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[5] This subchapter correlates the empirical findings with the above indicators, in an attempt to form a more exact profile of the countries aforementioned.

Figure 2

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┌─────────────────┐     ◁─────────────────────    ┌──────────────────────────────┐
│ Brussels        │       Specific Instructions    │ Ministry of Foreign Affairs  │
│ Permanent       │                                │ Political Directors          │
│ Representation  │     Policy Expertise  ────▷     │ Bucharest                    │
└─────────────────┘                                 └──────────────────────────────┘
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Networking as a means of adapting mostly to informal rules is seen by the Bulgarian representatives as "normal and rather good between the members of the Committee" (PSC First Secretary, 2009). The Bulgarian Representatives noted that social events have a strictly professional orientation, and in this sense they "rely on the capacities and personal qualities of the PSC ambassador to carry out these social duties" (Ibidem). The Bulgarian diplomats envision networking as a process coordinated from Sofia. The Romanian counterparts depicted more pride in addressing informal settings. Luncheons were portrayed by them as the key moments of the day, when problems are clarified before the meetings. These "informal meetings" set the agenda of the formal meetings, and reflect the moments when diplomats agree on the topics of interest and tend to form alliances (Relex Counselor, 2009). This shows that the Representatives see these events as crucial in terms of socializing, but it does not necessarily validate the seventh hypothesis, although the Bulgarian representatives emphasized that they rely on the personal qualities of the ambassador to deal with these events.

B. Speed of Adjustment to formal and informal rules

In terms of acquisition and compliance with formal rules, the diplomats have argued that it is normal to play by the rules of the game, although Representatives admitted that not complying with these rules would most probably affect their credibility (Ibidem). Compliance is too general an indicator. To differentiate between two countries it is important to see how fast they processed the formal and informal rules.

The Bulgarian representatives stated that this adaptation has been "smooth and progressive so far" (PSC First Secretary, 2009). However, they admitted that the process of adaptation has not ended yet, and that they are working on a mechanism of coordination inside the PSC (Ibidem). Thus, a full grasp of informal procedures has yet to be fulfilled: "we are still in the process of learning these procedures" (Ibidem). At the same time, informal procedures such as "consultation-reflex" or "consensus-building" are still being learned, through practice (Ibidem). A partial explanation for this could be the large size of the Representation, correlated to the small amount of time they had to integrate.

Differently, the Romanian representatives suggested that the process of adjustment and compliance to the formal rules occurred mainly during the observer status. Thus, from 2005 to 2007, the Representatives have learned the basic procedures of their working groups, transmitted to the newcomers. Without knowing these procedures, one diplomat noticed that they would have been "sitting ducks" (Deputy Permanent

Representative, 2009). At the same time, the formal rules of the PSC are constant subject for lawyers which provide legal counseling (Relex Counselor, 2009).

However, in terms of adapting to the informal procedures of the PSC, the Romanian diplomats expressed that this is still "learned by doing", interestingly due to the fact that these change along with the shift of the Presidency, making it an "evolving challenge" (Ibidem). The Romanian representatives seemed aware of the "consultation-reflex" and when a new issue arises, the tendency is to speculate and to find as fast as possible the position of the other 26 member states, which is why "90 % of the energy is focused on the position of the others" (Ibidem). "Consensus-building" is seen as the prime mechanism of cooperation inside the PSC, because it deals with sensitive issues and it is more political, thus being more prone to reach consensus, in contrast to lower level working groups, where the atmosphere is more relaxed, but where the Representatives simply state their positions. Consequently, one Representative noted that the PSC is in this sense a "Council of Wisdom" (Ibidem).

Thus, the Romanian representatives differentiate in this dimension, because they took an active approach during the observer status, in familiarizing with the formal rules, and constantly employing legal consultancy in order to better understand these rules. At the same time, they emphasized the importance of compromise for adapting in the group. However, the view from Bucharest seems to incline to the Bulgarian case. The Political Director claims that it will take Romanian representatives at least five years to fully integrate and learn the procedures (Political Director

MFA, 2009). Thus, the variables of time and size of the Representation validate hypotheses H2 to H4 and reflect a main difference between Romania and Bulgaria. The first started the adaptation process sooner, and its Representation is smaller in size than the latter one, while the second has the impression that it still is in the learning process.

C. National Interest

Due to its discrete political nature, the PSC is seen as a forum in which states juggle their national interests, and focus on tactics in an attempt to speculate the other countries position. Tactics are important in the sense because they presume a certain strategy adopted by Representatives, which confines them in different alliances. Inside the PSC negotiations are guided by brute national interest and competition is seen as the mechanism underlining the general struggle.

However, when the new 2007 members entered the PSC structures, "they felt a certain inferiority complex felt by the new member states in relation to the experienced ones" (Political Director MFA, 2009). The author's argument is that this feeling derived from the limits of the country's own national interest. As one Bulgarian diplomat stated, in CFSP matters, their national interest revolves mainly around the Western Balkans, leading him to declare that: "We cannot be concerned with African issues. That would not make us look serious" (Nicolaidis Group, 2009). At the same time, the Romanian diplomats noted that still, inside the PSC, "you speak in the name of your government" (Relex Counselor, 2009). There are two implications deriving from this. The first comes from the question of who defines

the national interest, and as previously shown, the input of the home ministry is essential. Second, the clearer the national interest of a representative is, the clearer their position is going to be in the PSC. Consequently, in relation to hypothesis H3, there are fewer chances of the ambassadors to be socialized in a supranational fashion. However, this hypothesis applies only partially, because smaller states, such as Bulgaria, are considered to have complicated and unsure foreign policy views, therefore they are more likely to be influenced by other states in fixing policy preferences.

D. Coalition formation and Bulgarian-Romanian Interaction

In constructing alliances, the Bulgarian representatives emphasized two major factors. The first is given by the weight of economic ties. Bulgarian representatives are more prone to ally with countries with which they have strong economic ties, mostly Germany. (Nicolaidis Group, 2009). Secondly, the design of the alliances is thematic and geographical. These variables interrelate, as Bulgaria pursues its main interest dossier in the PSC, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (PSC Counselor, 2009).

For the Romanian representatives, alliance formation is a feature which reflects a full integration: "it is not good to remain isolated" (Deputy Minister, 2009). Thus, it is critical to undertake different tactics and to seize the most suitable coalition, as to "fault other states" (Political Director MFA, 2009). Romania emphasizes the geopolitical and economic weight of the alliances, being most likely to join a group where the French portray their interests (Ibidem). This relates to the

sixth hypothesis, and to the idea that pre-existent traditional alliances on the on hand, and geographical ties, on the other, have an important bearing on the formation of alliances. This contradicts the assumption of Juncos and Pomoroska that new member states tend to act as a block (Juncos, Pomoroska, 2007, p.12).

However, when it comes to the interaction between Romania and Bulgaria in the Committee, H6 is partially validated, because one would presume that geopolitical and geographical ties are important, and the two countries should have a special relation due to their geographical proximity. The Bulgarians consider that there is a certain "synergy" between them and Romania, by having for example "the same language" in the dossier that concerns the visa regime for the United States. However, on a technical level, and in foreign policy choices, there is a certain disagreement between the two, for example in "different analysis of the Middle East dossiers" (Ibidem). Also, the two have a different position on the issue of recognizing Kosovo's independence, which the Bulgarian representatives stated that they "perfectly understand- as a matter of tactics" (Nicolaidis Group, 2009). The Romanian representatives have different perspectives on their contact with Bulgaria. The dominant one is that between the two there is an ongoing "healthy competition" in which disagreements are seen as a normal feature of the PSC (Relex Counselor, 2009). The only regional topic, in which they fully cooperate, is the *Black Sea Synergy*, in which Romania "is considered to hold up the flag" (Ibidem). However, third parties noticed a weak normative bond between the two, due to "close historical ties and their similar

accession process" (PSC Counselor, 2009). This disconfirms the sub-H6 in the sense that relationships are always built in the name of geographical linkages.

III.5 Method of Difference

The evaluation above showed that there is a difference in adaptation between countries in general, and Bulgaria and Romania in particular. After their evaluation, a simple-qualitative differentiation has been drawn (see figure 3) while the Method of Difference is employed in order to contrast the two countries.

This method is based on the assumption that the two countries are similar systems, differentiating only on one issue. All the variables are the same, except one- in this case the speed and the overall compliance with formal and informal rules. It is the author's assertion that in the Romanian case this has been done faster, and eventually this is what differentiates between the two representatives in the PSC, based on the Bulgarian representative's recognition of the fact and on the third party opinions.

However, in the real case other indicators point out to some differences as well. In their relation with the MFA, the Romanian representatives have a larger room for maneuver and are expected to send expertise back to Bucharest,

Figure 3 - Evaluation scheme

Criteria	Relation with the MFA	Networking	Speed of Adjustment	National Interest	Coalition Formation	Interaction (between the two)
Bulgaria	+ + + + +	+ + + - -	+ + - - -	+ + - - -	+ + + - -	+ + + - -
Romania	+ + + + -	+ + + + +	+ + + - -	+ + + + -	+ + + - -	+ + + - -

Method of Difference

Romania

IVa Relation MFA	IVb Networking	IVc Speed Adjust.	IVd National Interest	IVe Coalition Formation	IVf Interaction
YES	YES	(YES)	YES	YES	YES

Bulgaria

IVa Relation MFA	IVb Networking	IVc Speed Adjust.	IVd National Interest	IVe Coalition Formation	IVf Interaction
YES	YES	(NO)	YES	YES	YES

DV: Differences in Adaptation- RO-BG

while the Bulgarian representatives ask and receive specific information from Sofia. In terms of Networking there are no major discrepancies, while both of the PSC representatives use every informal event as a means to involve and strengthen their position. It is clear to both parts that their mission is to pursue their national interests, although the Bulgarian side has been accused of having complicated foreign policy views, while their counterparts are more confident in their approach. In terms of coalition formation, what is interesting is that both of them have emphasized that besides thematic alliances, most of the alliances that form are based on pre-existent geopolitical and economic ties; Germany is favored by Bulgaria, while France is preferred by Romania. However, their interaction is not special although they had similar accession roads and close regional ties. Without any further explanation, the conclusions touch upon these points as well.

Conclusions

The present article has aimed at achieving three main goals. First, the author has criticized the *thick* meaning of socialization, assessed by authors such as Jeffrey Checkel, exemplified by actors which internalize norms, rules and values and are socialized in an institutional setting based on normative judgments. The possibility of *thick* socialization occurring in the PSC is rather obsolete. There is a certain group-feeling, which arises as a normal feature and in the context of these people spending more time with their colleagues than with their families (Deputy Minister, 2009). However, this sentiment does not have any impact on the decision-making of the

Representatives. This argument relies on a *thin* version of the concept, which sees the adaptation of new Member States as a process with different degrees, described by a combination of three alternative theories: Intergovernmentalism- the rationale behind the decision-making process, Institutionalism- the setting in which Representatives act, and finally, "Brusselization"- as a symbolical transfer of power, without effects on the intergovernmental power of the Representations. The representatives only use Brussels as the medium in which they promote their views and national interests, translated into policies at the domestic level, and do not emphasize on the European dimension of problems.

Secondly, the author has investigated the institutional milieu of the socialization/adaptation process. Socialization in the PSC is not a rule. Basically, the degree of supranationalization of the Council working groups, especially the PSC, is relatively small. The Committee is seen as a forum of interaction, between the member states, characterized by a game of political tactics. As Jan Beyers noticed, national representatives as diplomats are not "structural idiots" (Beyers, 2005, p.903). Socialization in the Brussels environment comes as a complementary identity, and the possibility of these diplomats to shift their allegiances towards the Community, is more a problem of "fundamentals" as one of them stated. However, socialization as envisioned by constructivist scholars is a concept which presumes more substantively the acquisition of European values. On the contrary, diplomats are aware of the Communities goals and principles, but they hold that their primary function is to serve their countries. All in all, the

system is characterized by a multi-level diplomatic game, different from the bilateral settings.

Thirdly and most importantly, testing the hypotheses in Table 1 provided the possibility of differentiating between two countries that integrated recently in the PSC medium. The main discrepancies between the adaptations of Romania and Bulgaria regard the speed of adjustment and compliance to formal and informal rules, the capacity to formulate a coherent national interest. At the same time they involve in different coalitions, based on pre-existent economic ties. Similarly, they are close to their MFA, which excludes the option of them being socialized. In terms of how they interact, there is no special relation between the two. The Bulgarian diplomats are more institutionally shy, while their counterparts are more active and outspoken. From this perspective, they have not been socialized by the overall structure, but have brought with them their own way of socializing.

However, the possibility of Bulgaria and Romania influencing through their accession the framework of the PSC is slightly unrealistic because upon their arrival, the procedures and norms were already established. Even the previous wave of Enlargement, when ten new members joined the Union, did not manage to change, but only to affect its dynamics (Juncos, Pomoroska, 2007, p.29). This has not been the case with the 2007 members. The Romanian and Bulgarian diplomats are more or less half-way through, self-aware of their need to adapt more to this competitive institutional environment. All things considered, this study opens the question of research that would scrutinize more the implications of EU administrative governance.

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