University of Tennessee, Knoxville
Trace: Tennessee Research and Creative Exchange

Masters Theses | Graduate School

5-2011

U.S. MEDIATED PUBLIC DIPLOMACY IN A CRISIS: ROMANIAN CASE ANALYSIS OF ROMANIAN MEDIA VERSUS U.S. EMBASSY FRAMING

Ioana Alexandra Coman
icoman@utk.edu

Recommended Citation
Coman, Ioana Alexandra, "U.S. MEDIATED PUBLIC DIPLOMACY IN A CRISIS: ROMANIAN CASE ANALYSIS OF ROMANIAN MEDIA VERSUS U.S. EMBASSY FRAMING. " Master's Thesis, University of Tennessee, 2011.
http://trace.tennessee.edu/utk_gradthes/865

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Graduate School at Trace: Tennessee Research and Creative Exchange. It has been accepted for inclusion in Masters Theses by an authorized administrator of Trace: Tennessee Research and Creative Exchange. For more information, please contact trace@utk.edu.

To the Graduate Council:

I am submitting herewith a thesis written by Ioana Alexandra Coman entitled "U.S. MEDIATED PUBLIC DIPLOMACY IN A CRISIS: ROMANIAN CASE ANALYSIS OF ROMANIAN MEDIA VERSUS U.S. EMBASSY FRAMING." I have examined the final electronic copy of this thesis for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science, with a major in Communication and Information.

Peter Gross, Major Professor

We have read this thesis and recommend its acceptance:

Catherine A. Luther, Michael R. Fitzgerald

Accepted for the Council:
Carolyn R. Hodges

Vice Provost and Dean of the Graduate School

(Original signatures are on file with official student records.)

U.S. MEDIATED PUBLIC DIPLOMACY IN A CRISIS: ROMANIAN CASE
ANALYSIS OF ROMANIAN MEDIA VERSUS U.S. EMBASSY FRAMING

A Thesis Presented for the
Master of Science
Degree
The University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Ioana Alexandra Coman
May 2011

Copyright © 2011 by Ioana Alexandra Coman.
All rights reserved.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank the faculty members of the University of Tennessee who helped and inspired me during my two years at UT:

- Dr. Peter Gross, for his extraordinary ability to stimulate my thinking and his wise guidance
- Dr. Catherine Luther, for opening new horizons for me, outstanding support and belief in me
- Dr. Mike Fitzgerald, for his deep interest and support of my work
- Most importantly, I would like to thank my family for their unconditional emotional and intellectual support, and for being here (even from far away) for me every step of my journey.

ABSTRACT

This thesis studies a case of U.S. mediated public diplomacy in Romania by analyzing the Romanian media framing as compared to the U.S. embassy's framing of a public diplomacy crisis. It seeks to participate in the discussion about public diplomacy in general and mediated public diplomacy in particular. The case, from 2004, concerns the death of Romanian rock star, Teo Peter, in a car accident caused by an American marine serving in the U.S. embassy. A public diplomacy crisis situation focuses on the U.S. mediated public diplomacy efforts to prevent damaging its image; and also intensifies media's interest on writing about the subject. The analysis in this study is based on the investigation of the similarities and differences in the frames used in the press releases and news articles to construct the image of the same event. The thesis employs Entman's concept of U.S. mediated public diplomacy when analyzing the framing process of two of the major actors presented in his model: the target nation media and the U.S. public and media diplomacy (U.S. officials in that country). Benoit's model is used to better explain the press releases' framing. Framing analysis was chosen as a qualitative research method, as this study aims to explore the images created by mass media or by public diplomacy efforts (through the press releases) when they construct a specific reality for the same public diplomacy crisis. Three major Romanian national, daily newspapers and the U.S. embassy's press releases were analyzed. The findings revealed that the Romanian media framed the public diplomacy crisis in a different way than the U.S. officials framed it. It seems that the U.S. failed in promoting its framing of the public diplomacy crisis to the Romanian media and therefore the public.

This work is dedicated to the memory of my beloved Grandparents, Elena and Constantin

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION TO THE SUBJECT 1
Thesis statement and purpose of the study 1
Thesis statement 1
Purpose of the study 1
Theoretical background 1
Brief history of Romanian – U.S. diplomatic relations 3
Background of the analyzed case 4
Teo Peter accident– December 4, 2004 4
THEORETICAL BACKGROUND AND LITERATURE REVIEW 6
Public diplomacy theories 6
The concept of public diplomacy 6
Media scholars' perspective on public diplomacy 7
Mediated public diplomacy and the Cascading Network Activation Model 8
Public relations approach on public diplomacy scholarship 11
Figure 4. Typology of baseline conditions for mediated U.S. public diplomacy (Entman, 2008) 13
Framing – theory & typology 14
Frame typology 16
Identifying the frames 17
The concept of image and image restoration during crisis - strategies 18
The image restoration during crisis - strategies 19
RESEARCH QUESTIONS 21
METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH 22
THESIS RATIONALE 24
FINDINGS 25
Newspapers articles 25
U.S. as responsible / U.S. to blame 25
Disappointment / U.S. as the fallen angel or icon 26
U.S. as superior / above the law 27
Injustice 27
The big cover up 28
Romanian Outrage: "We want justice" 29
U.S. Contempt of Romania 31
Christopher VanGoetehem as the worst possible human vs. Teo Peter as defenseless victim, almost a saint 31
U.S. trying to be sympathetic / diplomatic and U.S. -Ro collaborating (or trying to) 33
Press releases 34
U.S. as sympathetic 34
U.S. as collaborating with Romania 35
U.S. investigation as real / thorough 35
DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS 37
Conclusions 39

Limitations 41
LIST OF REFERENCES 42
Online resources: 46
APPENDIX 47
Vita 49

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1. Cascading Network Activation Model …….. 9
Figure 2. U.S. mediated public diplomacy Cascading Activation Model ……..…10
Figure 3. Frame contestation in mediated public diplomacy ……....12
Figure 4. Typology of baseline conditions for mediated U.S. public diplomacy……....13

INTRODUCTION TO THE SUBJECT

Thesis statement and purpose of the study

Thesis statement

This thesis studies a case of U.S. mediated public diplomacy in Romania by analyzing the Romanian media framing as compared to the U.S. embassy's framing of a public diplomacy crisis – Teo Peter's death case

Purpose of the study

This thesis seeks to participate in the discussion about public diplomacy in general and mediated public diplomacy in particular. It employs Entman's concept of U.S. mediated public diplomacy when analyzing the framing process of two of the major actors presented in his model: the target nation media and the U.S. public and media diplomacy (U.S. officials in that country). More specifically, how do foreign media frame the same event as compared to official U.S. government statements and frames? U.S. officials communicate with the media, through either official press releases, press interviews or briefings. Consequently, one way to compare the two framings is to compare press releases with news articles. Therefore, the analysis in this study is based on the investigation of the similarities and differences in the frames used in the press releases and news articles to construct the image of the same event.

Theoretical background

Following the September 11th terrorist attacks, and the failure of the "war on terror", the concept of public diplomacy has not only been brought back to the American and international policy agenda but also surfaced in university programs and scholarship. Moreover, U.S. government engages in communicating directly with other countries' publics, targeting them in an attempt to improve relations and bring about a positive change in the foreign public's and government's opinions and attitudes towards the U.S[1]. Different scholars have approached the subject from a variety of perspectives. Each specialist in communications, journalism, public relations, and public policy as well as other fields, presents arguments supporting the specifics their disciplines bring to public diplomacy theory and practice. Gilboa (2008) asserts a lack of a "sufficiently systematic theoretical research" in the field of public diplomacy.

[1] Public Diplomacy: Strengthening U.S. Engagement with the World. A strategic approach for the 21st century. Office of the Under Secretary of State for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs

Even if different approaches highlight different presumptions or theories, the majority of them agree on the importance of media for public diplomacy (Entman, 2008; Gilboa, 2005; Manheim, 1994; Riordan, 2005; Sheafer, 2009; Smith, 2001; Wang & Chang, 2004; Zhang, 2006). It has been shown that media is one of the factors with most substantial impact on determining the success of U.S. public diplomacy efforts.

The goal of public diplomacy is to influence foreign target audiences. According to Smyth (2001), public diplomacy influences foreign target audiences through different areas, including what she calls media diplomacy. Gilboa (2002) describes and differentiates the concepts of public diplomacy and media diplomacy. Public diplomacy refers to the way the state and non-state actors use the media and other channels of communication to influence public opinion in foreign societies whereas in media diplomacy the media is used by officials to investigate and promote mutual interest, negotiations or conflict resolution. Entman (2008) brings the concept of mediated public diplomacy into the spotlight. He distinguishes this concept from Gilboa's description. He defines the U.S. mediated public diplomacy as the "organized attempts by a president and his foreign policy apparatus to exert as much control as possible over the framing of U.S. policy in foreign media" and proposes a model, known as the *Cascading Network Activation Model* (Entman, 2008, p.89). Part of his model is the concept that the U.S. public and media diplomacy set a frame that influences the targeted nation's media framing. Of course other forces could influence the framing process such as dominant frames in the U.S. media and other foreign media, the targeted nation's ruling leaders, the opposition and so forth. Mediated public diplomacy involves shorter term and more targeted efforts using mass communication to increase support (Entman, 2008, p. 88). All in all, mediated public diplomacy is considered to be an important part of a country's public diplomacy strategy.

This thesis compares the way the Romanian media framed a U.S. public diplomacy crisis case versus the U.S. officials' framing given by the U.S. embassy in Romania press releases. The case, from 2004, concerns the death of Romanian rock star, Teo Peter, in a car accident caused by an American marine serving in the U.S. embassy. This author chose a public diplomacy crisis situation because it focuses on the U.S. mediated public diplomacy efforts to prevent damaging its image; and also intensifies media's interest on writing about the subject. The other idea was to catch a glimpse mediated public diplomacy in a crisis situation and if a public relations model can help explain the press releases' framing. A next step would be finding a connection with the success or failure of mediated public diplomacy. Since, the chosen case constituted a crisis, and the press releases are related to the public relations field, Benoit's crisis response strategies model was considered when analyzing the press releases' framing.

This study could serve as a basis for future research: the results could be compared to opinion polls to see if the Romanian public actually changed its opinion about the U.S. following the coverage (especially if negative). Also, it

could prove the need for an interdisciplinary analysis and a better application of Entman's and public relations models to mediated public diplomacy in a crisis situation.

Brief history of Romanian – U.S. diplomatic relations

Romania is located in south-east Central Europe, bordering the Black Sea, between Bulgaria and Ukraine, and with a population of around 21 million. The state is organized according to the principle of separation and balance of powers – the Legislative, the Executive and the Judiciary, in the framework of constitutional democracy, guaranteed by political pluralism. Romania is a member of the UN, of NATO, and as of January 1, 2007, a full member of the European Union.[2]

Romania and U.S. have had established diplomatic relations for 130 years, starting in 1880 with the appointment of Eugene Schuyle, as the first American diplomatic representative to Romania. [3] Romania's declaration of war on the United States in 1941, in the context of the World War II, led to a break in diplomatic relations. They were resumed again in 1946 when the U.S. formally recognized the Romanian government led by Petru Groza. However, Romania's assimilation in the Soviet bloc once again led to the deterioration in the bilateral relationship as it was followed by an imposed totalitarian system which included strict limits of any contact with the U.S. or of any Western countries. After the fall of Communism in 1989 and particularly after Romania embraced democracy in 1990, U.S. – Romania relations broadened and deepened.[4] Romanians have always seen America as a role model country and have tried to gain America's friendship in the hope of getting to their level of development at some point. Harrington studied U.S.-Romanian relations and noted that "in return, although after years of uncertainty, America has found a future, longtime partner in Romania" (Harrington, 2005, pp. 17- 18).

Also, following the 9/11 events, Romania offered its full support to the U.S. in its "war on terror". Consequently, U.S. gave full support for Romania's entry into NATO and, thus, in a way set the stage for Romania's complete integration in Europe. Romania was invited to join NATO in November 2002, a moment that fulminated with President Bush's visit to Bucharest. Since then the U.S. – Romanian bilateral relationship has evolved into a strategic partnership with a range of political, military, economic and cultural ties. Romania became "a strong ally working together to build democracy, fight terrorism and promote regional security and stability, as described by the U.S. embassy in Romania."[5]

---

[2] Romanian Embassy at Washington - http://washington.mae.ro/index.php?lang=en&id=209
[3] Romanian Embassy at Washington - http://washington.mae.ro/index.php?lang=en&id=22639
[4] http://romania.usembassy.gov/root/pdfs/125years_ro-am_relations.pdf
[5] idem

The highly developed diplomatic relations between the two countries were described in a letter from Foreign Minister Ungureanu to Secretary of State Rice (August, 31, 2005): "During the Cold War years, when Romania was locked up behind the Iron Curtain by a dictatorial regime, the friendship and deeply shared aspirations between our two peoples, hidden as they were at times, did not fade away. It is a partnership built on dialogue between our countries, political, military and business establishments, between our peoples and our elites. It is the expression of a joint commitment to defend common interests and common values."[6]

Romanian diplomats and officials perceived style of always agreeing with U.S. policy has often attracted Romanian media criticism. Furthermore, this Romanian extreme fascination with America often finds itself the subject of many popular sarcastic movies and commercials[7]. However official diplomatic relations as well as Romanian public opinion regarding the U.S. remain favorable. As Harrington (2005, p. 17) noted, "Washington gained a friend, a country that looked to America for leadership and support, at a time when much of the world was questioning America's goals. Despite the Communist political regime and the economic hardship that overwhelmed Romanians, the image that Romanians have of United States remained strong over time."

Background of the analyzed case

Teo Peter accident– December 4, 2004

On December 4, 2004, Teofil Peter, a beloved local rock star, often described as a Romanian Bruce Springsteen, died in a car accident. The cab that he was riding in was hit by an U.S. government-owned SUV. The driver was S/Sgt. Christopher Van Goethem, a U.S. Marine serving as the commander of the U.S. Embassy security detail. He had been drinking that night and did not stop at the red light; Van Goethem's blood alcohol content was estimated at 0.09 from a breathalyzer test. However, pleading diplomatic immunity, he refused to give a blood sample for further testing and[8] was brought back to the U.S. before any charges were filed in Romania. The Romanian government requested that

---

[6] http://romania.usembassy.gov/root/pdfs/125years_ro-am_relations.pdf

[7] California Dreaming was a very successful movie in Europe. It was based on exactly the idea of Romanian hope in Americans during WWII, and in the disappointment. Also the movie presents a sarcastic yet funny look at American vs. Romanian stereotypes. Regarding the commercials, the best example is the recent advertising campaign for Chocolate Rom – a brand with a traditional Romanian image and advertising strategy. The latest campaign however, made consumers think that the product was being rebranded to fit the American Dream, and to be more American. After a period of confusion and controversy the company announced it was just a joke, and to prove that Romanians still did not lose their identity and the brand supports that.

[8] The Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations (1961)

the American government suspend his diplomatic immunity, however, that was refused. He was tried by the military court at Quantico. According to a Quantico Marine Corps Base's press release[9], VanGoethem was charged not only with negligent homicide, but also with adultery (it seems that although married he had an affair with a diplomat's daughter), false official statements and obstruction of justice. In 2006, the Marine was cleared by the military court of manslaughter but was convicted for obstruction of justice and making false statements. Considerable controversy surrounded Peter's death and the subsequent Van Goethem verdict. At the 2008 NATO summit the subject was still a hot topic. In 2009, after futile protest and petitions, the artist's son gave up on the idea of getting justice.

[9] The release can be found in the Appendix section of the thesis

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND AND LITERATURE REVIEW

There are two main topics in the existing literature that are closely related to the proposed study: mediated public diplomacy as a main strategy for public diplomacy, and framing as construction of reality and as a research method. In addition, there are several other concepts and theories useful when analyzing this case and that would better explain the press releases' particular framing: the concept of crisis response and the concept of image importance. The approaches that inform this dissertation are described below.

Public diplomacy theories

There are three main scholarly approaches to the study of public diplomacy: international relations scholars and public diplomacy practitioner focus on the nature and role of public diplomacy practices; journalism and media scholars attempt to understand the ways communication technology has revolutionized the practice of diplomacy and public relations scholars are interested in the long-term approach to public diplomacy, focusing on dialogue and mutuality as key elements necessary for building, maintaining, and improving relationships with foreign publics.

The concept of public diplomacy

Following the events of 9/11 the concept of public diplomacy has experienced new interest by both scholars and public officials. The basic premise of public diplomacy was that "by engaging in a country's political and social debates, you can create the intellectual and political climate in which your specific policies can flourish", and so when an embassy would come up with specific policies the political elite and policy makers of that country would already be on the same page and think along the same lines (Riordan, 2005, 122). In theory, public diplomacy assessed the importance of publics. As Zaharna (2010, p.1) acknowledges, only "since 9/11, 2001, U.S. public diplomacy has experienced a steep learning curve. The realization that foreign perceptions had domestic consequence quickly made public diplomacy a national security issue. When the US launched the war on terrorism, public diplomacy was second only to the military offensive and was the lead instrument in the battle for hearts and minds". Following the same direction, Riordan (2005, 123) argues that on one hand, governments at whatever level, have to win support and legitimacy from domestic publics for their foreign-policy positions and on the other hand, governments also have to win over foreign publics if they want to secure the agreement to policy positions from their governments. Snow (2008, p.7) notes that since 9/11 the government has not defined much of a role or function for its

own public when it comes to public diplomacy. More often than not, citizens have been spectators to the process. Publics became more skeptical of governments and of what public diplomacy meant.

Therefore, referring specifically to the effort of U.S. government to change the negative images, the understanding of public diplomacy only emphasized the concept of one government communicating directly with the foreign public in order to advance its interest and extend its values in order to improve its image and relations with the foreign public (Melissen 2004; Gilboa 2006 and so on).

As Gilboa (2008, p.57) notes, "scholars and practitioners have employed a variety of confusing, incomplete, or problematic definitions of public diplomacy." He critically analyses the attempts to conceptualize and theorize public diplomacy in several disciplines including public relations, communication, and international relations. His multidisciplinary study also brings into discussion the different research methods used in the investigation of public diplomacy (case studies, comparative analysis, models, and paradigms) and further describes the strong points of all these attempts as well as the gaps and weaknesses. Gilboa's conclusion is to urge a systematic multidisciplinary effort between researchers that would lead to a coherent theory of public diplomacy.

Media scholars' perspective on public diplomacy

Media scholars try to comprehend media's role in international relations. They felt the need for a theoretical model that would be able to explain the influence that media coverage exerts on foreign public opinion about American foreign policy.

Journalism scholars look at public diplomacy by analyzing the consequences of the communication technologies on the practice of public diplomacy on one hand, and on the other hand, they examine mass communication's effects on the foreign publics (Entman 2008, Gilboa, 2005; Sheafer, 2009; Sheafer & Shenhav, 2009). In the past, scholars focused on the role of international broadcasting as the main tool for mediated public diplomacy (Entman 2008; Gilboa 2004, 2005; Soroka 2003). This approach on public diplomacy developed mainly during the Cold War period. The main purpose was to motivate the authoritarian regimes countries' foreign publics to take a stand (Fortner 1994; Laqueur 1994; Rawnsley, 1996). It was during this period that Voice of America, Deutsche Welle as well as other influential international broadcasters increased their influence in the Communist states by their promotion and dissemination of Western news, information and values to the public from those countries. Scholars identified several different goals of these international broadcasters: replacing communism with democracy and exposing those publics to the American values (Clune, 2004) as well as maintaining their roles as foreign policy instruments and influencers. Although, their role diminished after the fall of Communism in those states and the transition to democracy of those countries, the international broadcasters are still being used in the new war against authoritarian regimes like Iraq, Iran or Afghanistan.

Public opinion is another factor shown to influence public diplomacy. Following this direction, several scholars underscore the importance of the correlation between media framing and public opinion (Clune 2004; Gilboa 2005; Entman 2005; Nisbet, Nisbet, Schenfele & Shanahan, 2004).

Mediated public diplomacy and the Cascading Network Activation Model

Media is one of the factors having high impact on determining the success of public diplomacy efforts, through the use of media, especially in countering existing perceptions of foreign publics (Nisbet et al. 2004). Public opinion is another impact factor. Following this rationale, a connection between public opinion, media and foreign policy is described by Entman (2008) through his proposed Cascading Network Activation Model.

Entman (2004) labeled the media used to change foreign publics' negative existing perceptions of United States - mediated public diplomacy. The term "mediated public diplomacy" defines "the success of U.S. government's efforts to promote favorable framing of its policies in foreign news media" (Entman, 2008, p. 87). Moreover, mediated public diplomacy "depends most importantly on political cultural congruency between the United States and the targeted nation, as well as on the strategy, power and motivations of foreign elites to promote positive news of the United States in their own media" (Entman, 2008, 87).

So, mediated public diplomacy occurs through a process of passing information from the authorities to the publics. It is a step by step process acting like a waterfall, where each level of actors adds new frames or ideas (Figure 1). Therefore, according to Entman, several actors (presidents, chief foreign advisers, elites and the media) are trying to win over the frames that reach the public through the media and greatly influence the formation of public opinion. Some actors would have more power than others to push frames to the public. Top government officials would have more power to push their own view or frame to the public. At the same time, journalists and news organizations could have more power to control the information presented to the public. This model which helped explain the spread and dominance of different framings of U.S. foreign policy in the American media was labeled as the Cascading Network Activation Model (Figure 1).

The same lines, Entman (2008) extended his previous model to the international communication process to help explain the US government's successes and failures in its efforts to promote favorable framing of its policies in foreign news media.

The original presumption was that favorable framing of U.S. policy in the media of foreign countries is the specific goal of mediated public diplomacy, to which some external influencing factors were added: private communications between U.S. leaders and the foreign country's elites; coverage of U.S. policy by global media, and US long term public diplomacy (Figure 2).

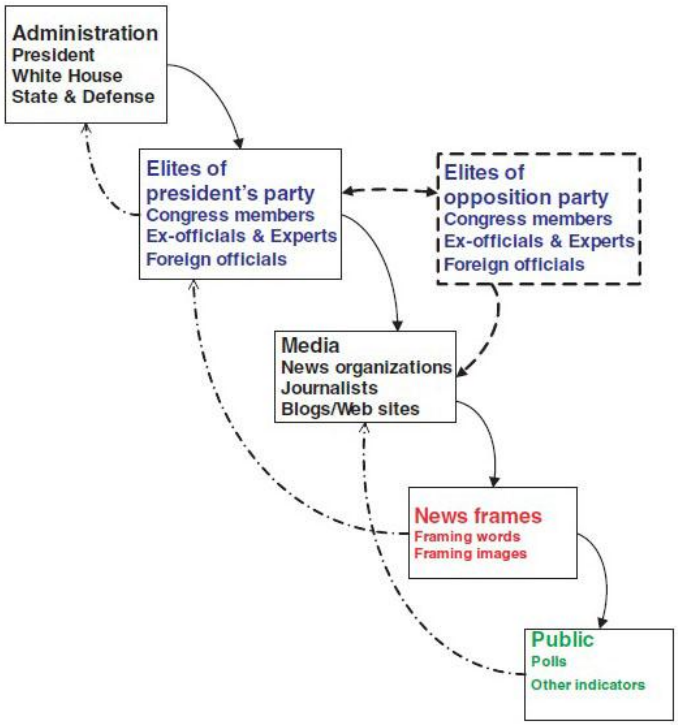

Figure 1. Cascading Network Activation Model (Entman, 2008)

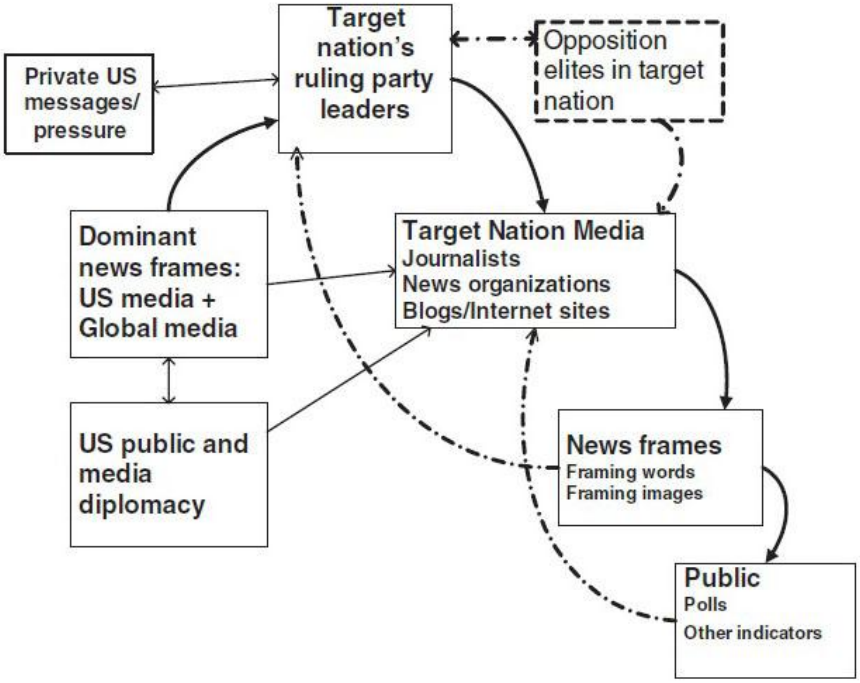

Figure 2. U.S. mediated public diplomacy Cascading Activation Model Entman (2008)

The cultural factor is extremely important in this case. Activation and spreading of pro-U.S. frames in the targeted nations' media, according to Entman (2008, p.94) depends on the degree of congruence between the targeted nation's dominant political culture and the U.S. position. The activation of favorable frames for the U.S. in foreign media is limited to media and those nations that have a positive degree of cultural congruency with U.S. political culture (Figure 3).

Moreover, it follows that the conditions of a political culture generally favorable to neutral toward U.S. and its foreign policy, and a pluralistic media system the U.S. mediated public diplomacy has more chances for success (Figure 4).

Since Entman's model as an application to the mediated public diplomacy, two articles highlighted the concept. Sheafer & Shenhav (2009) discuss the concept of public diplomacy, focusing on mediated public diplomacy in the context of changing strategic, social and cultural environment, namely a new age of warfare. The authors emphasize the importance of the cultural resonance factor in mediated public diplomacy, elaborating on the tensions between the three main factors: cultural resonance, needs of public and mediated public diplomacy. Sheafer (2009) also approaches the mediated public diplomacy processes through the perspective of the competition over international agenda building and frame building as the central strategic public diplomacy activity.

Public relations approach on public diplomacy scholarship

Public relations scholars applied public relations theories and practices to public diplomacy that could advance the field of public diplomacy (e.g. Dutta-Bergman, 2006; Fitzpatrick, 2007, 2010; L"Etang, 1996; Signitzer & Coombs, 1992; Wang & Chang, 2004; Wang, 2006; Yun, 2006).

Public diplomacy is analyzed by accounting the image-building function of governmental activities in the international arena. Also, the scholars noticed the transformation of public diplomacy from a mere tool of foreign policy into a strategic management function that revolves around the fundamental idea of building long-term relationships with targeted foreign publics (Fitzpatrick, 2007; Manheim, 1994; Melissen, 2005; Riordan, 2004). So, the new goal for public diplomacy practitioners becomes the attempt to build a dialogic-based public diplomacy, essential in building mutual understanding (Cowan & Arsenault, 2008, Malone, 1988; Riordan, 2004).

Melissen (2005) warned about the downside of using media as a tool for foreign policy, since it can damage a country's credibility in communicating with foreign publics. If public diplomacy is used as a foreign policy tool, "it exposes public diplomacy to the contradictions, discontinuities, fads and fancies of foreign policy" (Melissen, 2005, p. 15).

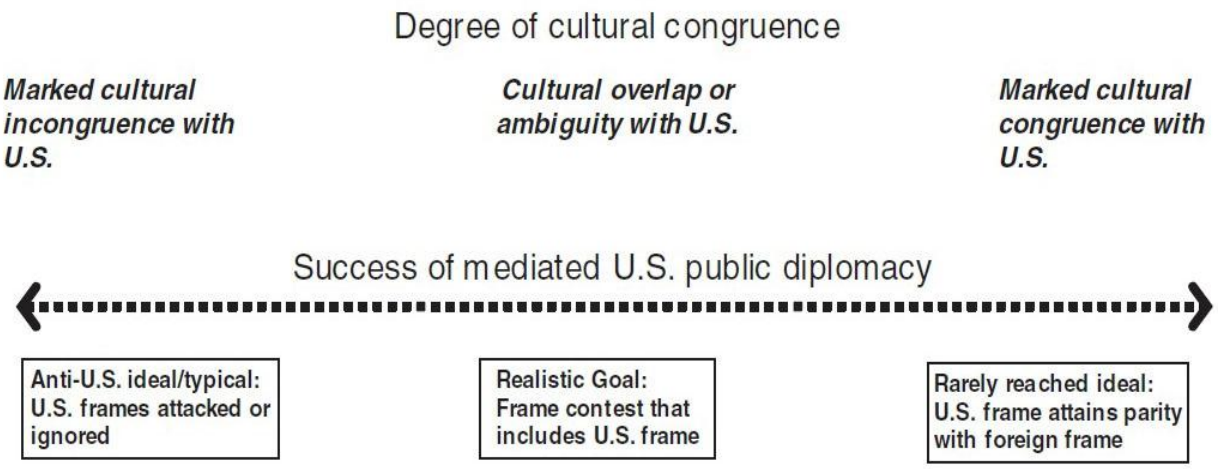

Figure 3. Frame contestation in mediated public diplomacy (Entman, 2008)

	Media system pluralistic and relatively free from central controls	Media system government or centrally controlled
Political culture generally favorable to neutral toward US and its foreign policy	II. Promising conditions	I. Most promising conditions
Political culture generally neutral to hostile toward US and its foreign policy	III. Less promising conditions	IV. Least promising conditions

Figure 4. Typology of baseline conditions for mediated U.S. public diplomacy (Entman, 2008)

Framing – theory & typology

Scholars state that journalists create an artificial reality by reproducing their own realities (Gitlin, 2003; Reese, 2001). This new reality is believed to reflect the social, political, and ideological boundaries in which journalists live and work. In other words, it has been acknowledged that news making is a socially constructed process (see Gamson & Modigliani, 1989; Gitlin, 2003), and it is possible to single out patterns that are embedded in news messages.

The concept of “frame” was first introduced by the anthropologist Gregory Bateson, and defined as a metacommunicative device that set parameters for "what is going on". Erwin Goffman (1974; 1981) was first to introduce frame analysis to the sociological research field, by exploring different types and levels of framing activity. He underlines the fact that as our thoughts and actions are influenced by the way messages are organized; framing involves information organizing and packaging. Also Goffman (1981) marked the changes in interpretative frames. Events are interpreted according to one of the following frameworks: natural, social or institutional. The ones interpreted according to the natural frameworks are not subject to moral judgment as they are perceived as unguided (something like a natural disaster). On the other hand, the events interpreted according to the social frames are “guided doings” and can be socially evaluated. (VanGorp, p. 60-78).

Entman (1993, p. 52) notes that framing means “selecting some aspects of a perceived reality and making them more salient in a communication context, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, casual interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation for the item described.” Moreover, the frames are defined as “information-processing schemata that that operates by selecting and highlighting some features of reality while omitting others” (Entman, 1993, p. 53).

For McGrath (2002, p. 390) the framing devices are operative (consciously or unconsciously) in the media covering/reporting subjects such as feminism, environmental issues, fighting against racism, or anti-globalization protests.

Next, frames come from journalists’ practice of highlighting, obscuring, and excluding facets of an event or issue (Entman, 1993). Framing is further seen as media selection, exclusion of, and emphasis on certain issues and approaches to promote a particular definition, interpretation, moral evaluation, or a solution (Gilboa, 2008). Moreover, Gilboa (2008, p. 64) highlights the fact that contrary to popular myth, the media represents only one actor in the framing process. Politicians, policy makers, elites, interest groups and foreign leaders all try to win public acceptance with their framing.

Other scholars find that five basic frames are consistently present in news texts: human interest, responsibility, economic consequences, conflict, and morality and could be considered “generic frames” (Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000; de Vreese, Peter, & Semetko, 2001). Generic frames would also be

different than issue – specific frames – more detail oriented, and focused on particular news events or topics (Vreese, Peter & Semetko, 2001).

Gamson and Modigliani (1987) consider frames to be the central organizing idea to make sense of an event or an issue. (Gamson and Modigliani, 1987, p. 43) Thus, a frame can be seen as an omnipresent discursive instrument that guides the audience while constructing a meaning for particular communication acts.

Nelson, Clawson and Oxley (1997) offer one of the most complete definitions of framing: the process through which a source defines the main problem, underlying a political or social problem and draws a set of relevant considerations for that problem. Therefore, framing is the process through which a source defines and constructs a public controversy or a political nature problem.

Gerstle (in Dragan, 2007, p. 512) distinguishes two aspects of the frame:

1. Retrospective aspect – media orientation, causes and responsibilities attribution for the negative situations and unsolved problems
2. Prospective aspect – indicates from where and from who may be possible to get credible solutions

For Reese, framing is essentially "an exercise of power" (Reese, 2001, p. 10). Gitlin (2003) sees the elite's control of media frames as an essential hegemonic function of media content. For Entman frames are indicators of power: "the imprint of power" (Entman, 1993, p. 55).

Saleem (2002) describes frames as principles of selecting, highlighting, and presenting, made of or consisting of theories about what it is, what happens and what matters. Saleem (p.134-135) also notes that according to the literature on framing, media frames:

- Can play a vital role in stimulating opposition to or support for an event or issue;
- Provide moral judgment, causal interpretation and remedy/solution for media-focused problems;
- Generally represent specific ideology;
- Media frames including attractive words, metaphors, phrases etc also help to determine the "tone" of media coverage of an event or issue.

Entman (1993) identifies selection and highlight as the key concepts of framing. Frames define problems, diagnose causes (by identifying the forces creating the problem), evaluate (by expressing moral opinions) and prescribe solutions.

Ghanem and McCombs (in Reese, 2001, p. 71) identify four dimensions of media framing: the news subject, its presentation (space and placement), cognitive attributes (details of what it is included in the frame), and affective attributes (tone).

Framing a problem involves not only the cause but also the effect, the framing responsibility or attribution of a cause to a certain actor, object or entity.

This led to the attribution theory: analyzing and understanding the way people try to understand the events or actions' causes. In crisis situations, instead of accepting that situation as a result of fate, people tend to search for the cause and to find someone to blame it on. This should help public relations professionals in developing more efficient crisis communication plans. These could include how everything is displayed including titles, leads, reference quotes, with larger fonts, or highlighted phrases and key paragraphs that tell the subject of the story. So media can define certain problems, make moral judgments and can suggest remedies/solutions, and all these frames are related to the cultural values specific to that moment in time (Nelson, 2000, p.100). The framing theory helps organizations and their publics develop common reference frames. The attribution theory assumes that the message producers as well as the receivers are involved in constructing the social reality and that the messages' meanings are only negotiated and not absolute.
The concept that is at the base of framing is contextualization. It assumes that information is arranged or set in a certain situational or cultural context that would shape the way people evaluate and understand the information and the way they act.

Frame typology

In the European Journal of Communication and Research, Scheufele (2004) writes that the framing theory can be identified at two levels:

1. Horizontal – through Entman (1993), Tuchman (1978), Scheufele & Brosius (1999): journalists/media; receivers/society and actors/the political,economical, cultural organizations. In other words each of them frames the same event in different ways.
2. Vertical – a frame can be identified in three ways: as a cognitive combination of a scheme composed by elements like events, causes, consequences; in public or media discourses; and as a textual structure of the discursive products (press releases for example).

Vreese, Semetko and Valkenberg together with Peter (2000) identify five frames:

1. Responsibility – presents a problem or event in such way that its cause / solution is attributed to either the government, a person, or a group. In other words it encompasses the discussion of individuals or establishments responsible for certain actions or events.
2. Conflict – emphasizes clashes between individuals, groups, institutions or nations in order to attract the audience, and increase rating or readership. Often, rhetoric related to the competition or war is also presented.
3. Human interest – the angle is more emotional, the human side of the problem is being presented and the lives of individuals are often featured

to personalize the news story. Drama and emotions accentuate the affective dimensions of the story.

4. Economic consequences – presents an event by depicting its economic consequences for an individual, group, institution, region or country.

Morality – presents a problem from the point of view of a religious dogma. Also the moral frames can be used indirectly by citing certain sources.

These five frames are considered "generic frames" (Semetko & Valkenberg, 2000; Vreese, Peter & Semetko, 2001). The generic news frames can be distinguished from the "issue-specific" ones. While generic frames describe a wide range of news topics applicable in various cultural or social contexts, the issue-specific ones are more detail oriented and refer to particular news events or topics.

Ruigrok, van Atteveldt and Takens divide the frames into equivalency frames and emphasis frames. The first frames present a subject in different ways, using different but logical words or equivalent phrases that modify the public's preferences, as well as saving ones versus sacrificing others. The emphasis frames underline the potentially relevant considerations.

This separation of news frames proved to be helpful for international studies (when American news frames were compared to international ones – e.g. Rojecki, 2008).

Identifying the frames

Semetko and Valkenberg (2007, p.7-8) propose two ways to identify frames in the journalistic materials:

1. Deductive method: assumes predefining certain frames as analytical variables in order to verify to which extent these frames exist in the analyzed news materials. This method involves the need to clearly identify the frames that might exist in those materials, as they are not defined before being analyzed.
2. Inductive method: involves an overall in-depth analysis of a story in order to enunciate the possible frames.

The two researchers used their method when studying the European policies and found the most used frames to be responsibility, conflict, economic consequences

and moral. The novelty was the finding that the frames' use varies depending on the story angle (serious or sensational) and on the subject type.

The concept of image and image restoration during crisis - strategies

Scholars state that journalists create an artificial reality by reproducing their own realities (Gitlin, 2003; Reese, 2001). This new reality is believed to reflect the social, political, and ideological boundaries in which journalists live and work. In other words, it has been acknowledged that news making is a socially constructed process (see Gamson & Modigliani, 1989; Gitlin, 2003), and it is possible to single out patterns that are embedded in news messages.

In public relations theory the concept of image refers to the public's perceptions / impressions about a specific organization (Cutlip, Center & Broom, 1985; Grunig, 1993; Wan & Schell, 2007, etc.) Moreover, construction of a certain image is a continuous process, involving past, present and future aspects and it is often qualified by evaluative terms –good, poor, positive or negative (Boulding, 1956; Meech 2006; Williams 1976).

Moving forward and relating the image concept to the field of international public relations, Kuznick (2003, p.413) notes that the main goal in international public relations is to "establish and maintain positive image of one's own nation, or to appear trustworthy to other actors in the world system". Kuznick's approach to the importance of image in international public relations is very similar to the public diplomacy approach (where the government makes efforts to gain and maintain a positive perception and reaction to its policies among the foreign public). Consequently, image projection plays an essential role in this process of persuading the foreign public through public diplomacy (Mor, 2007) as public diplomacy involves "the effort of a nation-state to build an image with the public of another state" (Dutta-Bergman,2006).

Furthermore, Hertz observed in 1982, that "today half of power politics consists of image making. With the rising importance of publics in foreign affairs, image making has steadily increased" and has become more of a reality nowadays. Therefore, public diplomacy tries to create long-lasting, complex, multi-dimensional impressions aimed to counterbalance the ones promoted at one particular moment in time through the international media (Brown, 2002). So, media is thought to play an important role in the practice of public diplomacy, especially when it comes to the creation of a state's image for a foreign public (Manheim, 1994; Wang & Chang, 2004; Zhang, 2006). Manheim (1994) and Wang & Chang (2004) argued for the benefits that come from media events created through head-of-state visits in foreign countries. Properly planned and done these media events can "transform a nation's image, smooth differences and dispel distrust between nations and peoples" (Wang & Chang, 2004, p. 11-13). On the other hand, what happens when the media events are negative and the image/reputation declines?

The image of an organization depends on public opinion; the trust of its public depends on the way the organization is perceived in society. According to

Muchielli (1970) the concept of image refers to the idea or representation that the public gets after receiving specific information about what he calls a “social object”.

The image restoration during crisis - strategies

For an organization, experiencing a crisis situation is the easiest way for it to lose its positive image and its public’s trust. When not handled properly, a crisis can destroy an organization and the people involved with it. With the rapid growth of technology, the existence of a global marketplace, and increased activism among stakeholders, the importance of successful crisis management is evident now more than ever (Coombs, 2007; Ulmer, Sellnow & Seeger, 2007). According to public relation theory, when it comes to crisis management, there are several strategy models employed by organizations in order to restore their image. Coman (2003) presents a classical model: the Benoit Model. The image restoring strategies according to the model are the following:

a. Denial strategy – denying any involvement/fault and just stating that the organization did not perform the act in question
b. Evading responsibility strategy – when the organization avoids or reduces blame through:
- *Provocation*, or scapegoating - claiming that the action was provoked by the actions of another person or organization
- *Defeasibility* - claiming that the action was provoked by lack of information or misinformation.
- *Accident* - claim that the crisis was the result of an accident
- *Good intentions* – claiming that the crisis was the result of the organization acting under good intentions.

c. Reducing offensiveness strategy through:
- *Bolstering* - stressing the positive traits of the organization in order to mitigate the negative perception
- *Minimization* - claiming that the crisis is not as serious as the public or the media claims
- *Differentiation* - making the act seem less offensive than the public perceives
- *Transcendence* - places the crisis in a more favorable context
- *Attack* to the accuser
- *Compensate* the victims of the crisis

d. Corrective action strategy - promising to correct the problem through two types of action: restoring the situation to its state before the crisis and/or promising to prevent the recurrence of the crisis
e. Mortification strategy - admitting the crisis was its fault and asking for forgiveness.

This thesis starts with the media scholars’ perspective on public diplomacy, specifically from Entman’s mediated public diplomacy concept. Regarding the framing theories, the study subscribes to the idea that framing is

the process through which a source defines and constructs a public controversy or a social or political nature problem and draws a set of relevant considerations (Nelson, Clawson & Oxley, 1997). Pertaining to media framing the thesis is in line with the idea that through its framing media offers a certain moral evaluation, that local, and foreign leaders try to win the frame (Gilboa, 2008) and that media framing guides the audience when interpreting an event (Gamson and Modigliani, 1987). Given the fact that the analyzed case is a public diplomacy crisis, the concepts of creation of the state's image by the foreign media for the foreign public (Manheim, 1994; Wang & Chang, 2004; Zhang, 2006) and of crisis management (Coombs, 2007; Ulmer, Sellnow & Seeger, 2007) also are relevant. Last but not least, Benoit's crisis response strategy model is useful in better explaining the press releases' framing.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Starting from Entman's concept of mediated public diplomacy, and the importance of framing as an essential factor, this study aims to analyze how the Romanian media framed an important US public diplomacy's crisis (reactions to the Teo Peter incident) as compared to how the U.S. officials framed it, through the embassy's press releases.

The following research questions were posed:

RQ 1: Will the dominant frames and themes in the Romanian media be similar to the ones presented by the U.S. press releases?

RQ 2: What are the sources used by the Romania media? Are they using more Romanian ones or more American ones from the releases?

RQ 3: Will the Romanian newspapers frame the events in a more positive manner when using local official sources that have congruent declarations or positions with the U.S. officials presented in the press releases?

RQ 4: What crisis response strategy was employed and how does it explain the press releases framing?

These specific research questions might be important for the purpose of the thesis. They might help to get a better understanding on success or failure of the U.S. mediated public diplomacy as well as on the framing process. First three research questions were inspired by Entman's study on mediated public diplomacy and his cascading model (the start point of this study). Mediated public diplomacy involves the attempts of the U.S. officials to pass their frame to the targeted nation media. RQ1 would help to see to which extent do the U.S. public officials influenced the Romanian media in the analyzed case. The second question would help to better understand media framing and find out if it varies depending on the sources used. The third question brings Entman's idea of cultural congruence as one of the factors for successful mediated public diplomacy. In this case it would be interesting to find out what happens when there is a public, cultural congruence and also a political congruence as noted in the background section of the thesis. The last question brings up Benoit's crisis response model as it might help discover if the strategy employed, gives the specific framing for the press releases.

METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

As this thesis employs Entman's concept of U.S. mediated public diplomacy and tries to analyze the framing process of two major actors presented in the model: the target nation media and the U.S. public and media diplomacy (U.S. officials in that country), the framing analysis is used as a main research method. The study uses a qualitative research method as it aims to explore the images created by mass media or by public diplomacy efforts (through the press releases) when they construct a specific reality for the same public diplomacy crisis. In order to achieve this objective quantitative methods would be irrelevant. Three major Romanian national, daily newspapers were examined: Adevarul, Jurnalul National, and Evenimentul Zilei. Also, the U.S. embassy's press releases were analyzed. These newspapers were chosen for two reasons: circulation and variety. In terms of circulation, Adevarul, Jurnalul National, and Evenimentul Zilei are in the top five.[10] Regarding the second argument, using Sparks's (2000, p. 13-16) classification Adevarul can be considered as semi-serious press and Evenimentul Zilei and Jurnalul National as serious popular press. From this point of view the newspapers were chosen to see how different press frames the same event.

To access the news stories related to Teo Peter's case, the websites of the newspapers were searched using key words such as "Teo Peter", "Christopher VanGoethem" or "Teo Peter's accident". In order to ensure accuracy the archives of the newspapers' websites were also browsed and searched for the articles. Only articles dealing mainly with Teo Peter's case (and not just brief mentions of his name or case) were chosen for analysis. The press releases were obtained from the Media Relations department of the U.S. embassy (since the website archive did not go that far back). The timeframe used was December 2004 (month of the accident) through February 2006 (month of the Military Court's verdict).

In order to study the Romanian media attitude toward U.S. and to see the difference in framing between Romanian media and U.S. embassy's press releases, the types of frames were examined through textual analysis. The generic frames were categorized following the classification offered by de Vreese, Peter, and Semetko (2001): human interest, responsibility, morality, economic consequences, and conflict. Also it was accounted that a story may contain more than one frame. Moreover, the articles and press releases were searched for issue-specific frames. For more in-depth analysis of coverage and conveyed meaning, general frames were broken down into underlying themes. In deciding the frames and themes the inductive method was used as it involves an overall in-depth analysis of a story in order to outline the possible frames,

[10] According to the Romanian Desk of Circulation Audit: www.bratt.ro. The data was obtained for the years 2004-2007, in order to be more relevant.

therefore permitting the researcher to better observe and outline the frames and themes.

Additionally, each of the relevant theories, models and concepts discussed above (mediated public diplomacy, crisis response and journalistic versus public relations framing) are reflected in the questions that guided the textual analysis. Here are some sample questions that guided textual analysis when analyzing both press releases and articles:

- What words are included in headlines? How are the headlines (what style)?
- What descriptive words are used both in the stories and press releases?
- What information is emphasized or understated both in the stories and press releases?
- What are the sources used in the story?
- How are the people/entities characterized in the stories and press releases?
- Are there any assessments in the story or in the press release? If so, are they negative, positive, neutral or balanced? For the stories, who gives these assessments: journalist, expert, state official, etc?
- Is there any proof that one side is being supported more?

Which crisis response strategy is being used in the press releases?

THESIS RATIONALE

The present study analyzes the way a public diplomacy crisis is being framed by two major actors: the media and the public officials. Employing Entman's mediated public diplomacy concept, and the framing theory, as well as the crisis strategy response model, the present study tries to analyze and compare the Romanian news framing of this important U.S. public diplomacy crisis with the U.S. official press releases as given by the U.S. embassy. There are not many studies, especially in Romania, that compare press releases with news articles when doing framing analyses. The case also reflects a public diplomacy response to an event that damaged the U.S. image in Romania[11]. The results of this study could therefore constitute a basis for a future more in-depth study that could actually apply Entman's model and try to find a connection with Benoit's model.

The research method was a qualitative one. The goal was to find out what are the images created by mass media or by public diplomacy efforts (through the press releases) to construct a specific reality. In order to achieve this objective the quantitative methods would be irrelevant. For the moment, the study could serve as a pilot one. A further step could be taken by comparing the results to opinion polls to see if the Romanian public actually changed its opinion about the U.S. following the coverage (especially when negative). Also other actors could be analyzed such as the American media or other foreign media. Finally, similar cases from other countries could also be analyzed in order to see if the phenomenon can be generalized.

Why Romania?

There are two main reasons for choosing Romania. First, although a former communist country, Romania is now part of NATO and a U.S. trustworthy ally. Romania joined NATO just a few months before the accident. Romania supported U.S. war efforts in Iraq, refraining from requesting the U.S. to withdraw until late in the war effort. Even after it joined the European Union, Romania kept its troops in Iraq (unlike the other EU members like Hungary, and Bulgaria). So, Romanian public opinion was very favorable toward the U.S. Also, historically Romanians had a fascination for the U.S. and regarded it as a model for democracy. Therefore, following Entman's argument, Romania is the perfect case of a high degree of congruence between the target nation's dominant political culture (which favors US and its policies) and U.S. policy.

The other reason has to do with the fact that Romanian is the researcher's native language. So the textual analysis as well as the translations will be coherent. As a native speaker, the researcher is able to understand all of the language's nuances and thus use them appropriately.

---

[11] At least theoretically, as presented by the Romanian media

FINDINGS

Newspapers articles

49 articles from Adevarul, 22 from Evenimentul Zilei, and 31 from Jurnalul National were analyzed. The sources used vary depending on the moment of the analyzed case. At the beginning, right after the accident, more Romanian sources are used: Romanian officials, Bucharest police, prosecutors, Peter's family, friends, colleagues, protesters, and so on. American sources are used as well but to a lesser degree. Even if some articles allocate more space to an American source, usually after the quotes a negative judgment either from the journalist or another cited source would follow. Mainly the press releases are cited. After the investigation moved to the U.S. and the trial started, fewer Romanian sources are used. The most interesting and intriguing finding is that the main source becomes "Stars and Stripes", the U.S. army's official publication. The following general frames were found: conflict, responsibility, and human interest. Also, more issue-specific frames were present: irresponsibility (as the U.S. does not assume any responsibility in the crisis) and U.S. non-transparency (referring to the lack of information received by the Romanian media from U.S. officials).

After the textual analysis, the general themes were broken down into themes. At a deeper level several common main themes were identified among the three newspapers. The major themes found are: the U.S. as the responsible entity; the U.S. as the fallen angel/icon; the U.S. as superior / above the law, accompanied or followed by the theme of injustice; the big cover up; Romanian outrage / request for justice; U.S. contempt of Romania; Christopher VanGoetehem as the worst human vs. Teo Peter as a defenseless victim / almost a saint. Differences in the presentation of themes were subtle: there were slight variations on the degree of expressed criticism toward the U.S. or toward Romanian officials. Also, to a lesser degree the following themes were present in some articles: the U.S. trying to be sympathetic or/and diplomatic; the U.S. trying to collaborate with Romania; and Romanian officials as guilty as the American ones. The analysis of the themes is presented below.

U.S. as responsible / U.S. to blame

This theme appeared in the majority of the analyzed articles, especially in the beginning of the incident. Starting from the titles, journalists are vehement about who is to blame: "*Their villains are worse than ours"* (Evenimentul Zilei), *"Killer in the U.S. embassy*" (Jurnalul National), "*Killer the Sailor running over Romania*" (Adevarul), or "*Romanian authorities stand by their conclusion: the American is guilty*" (Adevarul).

In an article untitled "*The hearse and the jeep*" Evenimentul Zilei writes: "*it's clear that the Americans from Bucharest drive like in their lamest movies. And it's not the Americans escaped from the nuts hospital or from Iraq but about the diplomatic personnel or anyways about the beneficiary of an abused immunity*." Adevarul calls the situation a "*peace crime*", and goes further in saying that "*it seems we are in the war with the United States… an American student killed an old lady and ran*" or "*in just two days, two Americans killed two Romanians and ran away*."

The American ambassador, Jack Dyer Crouch is also blamed. He is presented as responsible for the decision to take the marine out of Romania. He was characterized with attributes like: "*Jack Cross Dyer Crouch*", "*a robot with the vulture stamped on his forehead*", or "*the one who favored the killer*" (Adevarul).

Disappointment / U.S. as the fallen angel or icon

The analyzed articles pinpoint a shattered U.S. image. The Romanian trust in the model of democracy and justice is described to be gone immediately after the accident, and even more after the Military Court verdict:

- "*What difference is now between White House and our parliamentary lice, who for so many years used their immunity as a pass to commit any crime and not be punished*?" (Adevarul)
- "*In a NATO state, a state always a US ally, the American officials refused to make the killer submit himself to the Medical-Legal Romanian Institute's test*."(Adevarul)
- "*America has fully proved it is the country of all possibilities: they say Teo Peter's killer is not guilty*" (Jurnalul National)
- "*The marine fleeing the country may not be a penal deed, but it represents a moral crime in the way that the Romanian laws and authorities were ignored by a member of a diplomatic mission from the country that stands for, as least in the Romanian people's eyes, the model of democracy and justice and legality.*" (Adevarul)
- "*<<Fair>> trial*" – Jurnalul National subtitle – is followed by: "*with a single strike the seven members of the jury shattered Romanians' trust in the American justice*."

Journalists expressed and strengthened the idea of the U.S. disappointing Romanians and not only, through its acts, decisions and policies. Information about other killings or accidents that U.S. citizens (army or not) committed in Romania or other countries was emphasized in a number of articles. They would show the U.S. crimes antecedents and the Romanian / European disappointment that almost all of the guilty Americans got away unpunished (e.g. an American student who killed an old Romanian woman just two days after the Teo Peter's accident and tried to run away from the police; or in Italy an American killed 20 Italians and got away, the families got nothing in return).

Moreover, NATO is also being portrayed as fake and a disappointment. One of the most interesting and long descriptions of NATO as a scam is found in an Adevarul article:

"*Years and years we hoped to be in NATO. And now that we are part of NATO what happens? A poor Romanian reporter is imprisoned because he was filming corrupted Bulgarian customs officers, regardless the Romanian protests, but an American soldier that killed a Romanian in the middle of Bucharest, walks away unimpeded to Washington, while the U.S. ambassador mocks us. Years we thought NATO is a defense wall that can protect us and the truth is that U.S. runs over Romania with its wheels. How to ever hope that NATO will protect us from anyone*?"

U.S. as superior / above the law

This theme was widely present in Adevarul newspaper. The U.S. soldiers were depicted as being above the rest of soldiers and rest of humans: "*The U.S. soldier is <u>above</u> all the other human beings from the European continent. U.S. proved an <u>imperial occupant mentality</u>, well known in history, from the roman legions to Hitler's troops. A soldier from <u>the superior race</u> can kill how many natives he wants; he will never be subject to any local or international justice!*" (Adevarul) The same idea was present in Evenimentul Zilei through their titles: "*American soldier – <u>the most immune</u> among the human race*" or "*American soldiers – the most immune human beings*." Even the marine is described as "*Crouch's <u>superior gorilla</u>*." (Adevarul) In antithesis, the rest of people, especially Romanians are described as being inferior, and not even allowed to see the guilty marine's face (referring to the fact that VanGoethem was immediately taken out of Romania): "*Us, Teo Peter's co-nationals, friends and family we are not even allowed to see the Marine killer's face, <u>we can't spoil with our natives' looks such a private first class USA's superior fa</u>ce*" (Adevarul).

Injustice

This theme is persistent in the analyzed news articles from the beginning of the crisis until the end. Initially it was used to describe the U.S.'s decision to remove VanGoethem from Romania. It is present in titles, subtitles as well as in the body of the news. "*U.S. ambassador at Bucharest soldier-bodyguard – hurriedly taken out of country*" (Adevarul); "*A Romanian artist dead, an American marine free*" (Evenimentul Zilei); "*American marine kills famous Romanian rocker and goes free*" (Jurnalul National); "*Kill and run*" (Jurnalul National); "*The death of the famous artist Teo Peter crushed in a taxi by a U.S. soldier, was followed by the quick transfer of the killer to Washington*" (Evenimentul Zilei), are just a few examples of titles and subtitles used. Moreover, in an article titled "*Why they took him out of the country*?" Jurnalul National wrote: "*Teo Peter died in a stupid car accident and the guilty one was taken out the country and sent to an American military base in Europe, far away from Romanian laws*."

After the U.S. military court verdict on the VanGoethem case, there was a second wave of titles and subtitles that were very critical, and openly expressed the idea of injustice: "*Teo Peter case: justice made in U.S.A.*" (Jurnalul National); "*Injustice – VanGoethem doesn't go to jail*" (Evenimentul Zilei); "*Free as a bird*" (Jurnalul National) or "*Equals in law's view?*" (Jurnalul National).

The theme also clearly stands out from the text of the news articles. For example, Evenimentul Zilei wrote: "*INJUSTICE. Just a scolding and no time in jail was the sentence for Christopher VanGoethem. The American lawyer claimed that the Romanian artist was not even in the taxi.*" Also very critical and sarcastic Jurnalul National wrote, *"<<I gave everything to Marines for the past 15 years>, VanGotethem told the seven jurors that would save him from "dishonor", and they did not disappoint him, proving to be loyal to their motto Semper Fidelis*" in an article titled "*VanGoethem carefree among the marines for another year*."

The big cover up

After the accident, starting from the beginning of the U.S. investigation, all through the trial and after the verdict, the cover up theme was present in the analyzed Romanian articles. The titles and subtitles were chosen by the journalists to express the Romanian skepticism and the feeling that the investigation and trial were a scam:

- "*The American marine is not yet being investigated in U.S.*" (Evenimentul Zilei)
- "*Teo Peter's killer is freely doing administrative duties*" (Adevarul)
- "*VanGoethem's defense attorney requested evidence that the Romanian artist was in the taxi*" (subtitle in Adevarul)
- "*Teo Peter didn't die due to the accident*?" (Evenimentul Zilei)
- "*More witnesses depositions to wash Teo Peter's killer's sins*" (Adevarul)
- "*An American investigator claims that the tangled traffic is the main cause of the tragedy*" (Adevarul) and the subtitle "*The alcohol consumed by marine VanGoethem is a detail*"
- "*COVER UP. The marine accused of Teo Peter's murder acquittal is condemned by the entire Romania*" (Evenimentul Zilei subtitle)
- "*Teo Peter killed the second time"* (Evenimentul Zilei) and same title in Jurnalul National: *"They killed him the second time*" - referring to the verdict
- "*U.S. tries to wash their hands/sins by organizing a Teo Peter commemorative program*" (Adevarul)
- "*The American investigator concluded that the marine was not drunk and that the taxi driver is guilty for the accident" and the next news article titled "Teo Peter's killer drank five beers and a glass of wine*" (Evenimentul Zilei)

The same theme was depicted by the journalists by the way they described or referred to the American decisions and investigation:

- "*They took him back to Washington, to have the investigation there. So an accident causing death, that took place on Dacia corner with Polona, will be investigated on Pennsylvania Avenue*?" (Adevarul)
- "*On a discordant note, the U.S. embassy sent a stupefying press release that claimed that the investigation that led to acquittal was a thorough / in-depth one*" (Evenimentul Zilei)
- "*The way this investigation is going, it seems that their conclusion is that the dead is guilty*" (Adevarul)
- "*The American justice decided that Teo Peter didn't die in the accident. The martial court did not seem interested at any moment to establish the truth and sanction the guilty one, but instead it seemed more interested to find the ways to save the killer*" (Jurnalul National)
- "*The American investigators were very thorough in not gathering proofs*" (Evenimentul Zilei)

The ambassador is also being blamed, and the media attacked his argument for sending the guilty marine away from Romania, as being part of the cover up. One of the harshest articles was in Adevarul: "*His excellency Jack Dyer Crouch has a face resembling a cyborg's plastic mask. He expressed his regret and assured us that the decision to take out the Marine from Romania was taken <<in the interest of all the involved parties in this tragic event, in order to protect them>>. Who are you protecting Jack the Cross Dyer? That is what you just did, you are staining Teo Peter's cross, his mangled body, his ruined family, his friends stoned of pain. Or, you want to say that the killer was about to kill some more native Romanians and you thought to stop him?*"

Also the U.S. argument of the Vienna Treaty as the excuse of getting the marine out of the country so fast was harshly criticized by the analyzed media. Jurnalul National writes: "*VanGoethem benefits from penal jurisdictional immunity according to the Vienna Treaty regarding diplomats' status, but the marine was part of the administrative personnel, being a member of the ambassador's personal guards, which means that his immunity should only protect him in the case of a penal deed committed during official missions, not when he was driving drunk and speeding on the Bucharest's streets*."

All the articles underline the idea that VanGoethem is not "under arrest" or even "detained", and described the verdict as being "inadmissible" especially as the arguments were "contradicting each other."

Romanian Outrage: "We want justice"

The Romanian outrage and demand of justice is a theme present in all the analyzed articles. It's also a theme that brings the sensational to the news stories and so journalists wrote extensively about the Romanian protests, the citizens' indignation and demands of justice and a fair ending to this tragedy. Titles and subtitles express exactly these ideas, in two distinct time periods. Initally, after the accident, when Romanians were still in mourning, in shock and angry at the

U.S. decision to remove the guilty one from Romania: "*Teo Peter's friends asked the Americans for justice*" (Adevarul); "*Protest in front of the U.S. embassy. Teo Peter's friends demand justice*" (Jurnalul National); "*Teo Peter's mournful fellows and colleagues are protesting in front of the American Embassy*" (Adevarul); "*Cancel his diplomatic immunity now!*" (Jurnalul National) or "*Adrian Nasatase asks President Bush to cancel Teo Peter's killer diplomatic immunity*" (Adevarul). The second period occured after the verdict was given, when the Romanians again reacted negatively and yet another wave of protests was born: "*Romania condemns the American verdict*" (Adevarul); "*Let's not leave out head down*" (Evenimentul Zilei); "*The verdict shocked the entire Romania*" (Evenimentul Zilei) or "*Romania outraged by the sentence given to Teo Peter's killer*" (Jurnalul National).

Moreover, the analyzed articles underline the idea that every Romanian, from the average Mr. Ionescu (Smith) to the Romanian officials and even the journalists, is angry and demands justice:

- "*Beyond the loss pain, the musicians, actors and journalists feel something else: outrage. Outrage vis a vis to the way the authorities chose to handle and "manage" the artist's death.*" (Adevarul)
- "*The death of the artist started a real anti-American hysteria*" (Evenimentul Zilei)
- "*His friends swore that they will not rest until justice will be done*" (Adevarul)
- "*The Romanian prime minister underlines the fact that the immediate leave of the American citizen from our country outraged the Romanian public opinion*" (Adevarul)
- "*Cristopher was a step close to being lynched by the crowd that gathered to the accident's place*" (Jurnalul National)
- "*The no conviction of the American marine considered to be a slap on our national dignity cheek*" (Evenimentul Zilei)
- "*American justice practically denied any guilt for the marine that killed Teo Peter. The verdict stirred a wave of outrage in Romania*" (Jurnalul National)

It is also interesting to note the angle chosen to depict the protest. For example in Adevarul, the protest almost becomes a magical event, in that not only is everyone united, but also music can be heard:
"*On the sidewalk in front of the American embassy, the police are on stand-by. On the sidewalk across the street, the protesters hold bilingual signs with <<kill and run imunity>>, <<respect us as we respect U.S. >>, <<bring the criminal to justice in Romania>>, <<condoleante diplomatiei americane* (condolences to American diplomacy)*>>. The protesters are using the media: "they are holding photos, and newspapers pages from the articles about Teo Peter's murder." Even the highschoolers are protesting: "an injustice was made, and they are protesting against the policies and practices that reduce us to a second hand*

nation condition." There is no violence, only music and the request of justice: "The word injustice is the word heard more often from the protesters. Not howls, not violent phrases, nor hisses / jeers. The people chose to show their outrage in silence, peace. All of the sudden the street is filled with the sounds of Teo Peter's songs. It's the most beautiful audio protest. The police interfere and stop the music."

Articles underline the outrage also by almost over-citing angry quotes: "*I can't conceive in my country someone to think that we are a category IV nation and to mock us and Teo's memory*!" (the organizer of the protest, in Adevarul). Even when writing about Crouch expressing his regrets to Teo Peter's, Adevarul underlines: "*The high diplomat, accused of helping the marine that killed Teo Peter when driving drunk his job car escape from Romania, wanted to send his condolences to the artist's family*."

U.S. Contempt of Romania

The theme of contempt and the idea that Romanians are despised by U.S. also appear in the analyzed articles. However, in Adevarul the theme is clearer, and an overuse of the word contempt can be noticed:

- "*In an absolute <u>contempt</u> of Romanian authorities, in the contempt of all Romanian people, the American killer, was rapidly taken out of country, by plane, by the Washington's express order*"
- "*Even worse, after just few hours after the crime, in total <u>contempt</u> of Romanian laws and authorities, the American jumped in the plane and left the country*"
- "*Romanian people's dignity was stepped on by the U.S. verdict*"
- "This version that my father was not in the taxi is beyond imagination. It's shameful that something like this can happen" Teo Peter's son

Again a very visual description referring to how much U.S. despises Romania and Romanians: "Ambassador Crouch expresses his regret. Marine Christopher is probably sipping his ice Coke in Washington, and probably resentfully asking himself <why the heck didn't that bastard local move out of my way?>" (Adevarul)

Christopher VanGoetehem as the worst possible human vs. Teo Peter as defenseless victim, almost a saint

The image that the analyzed media constructs about Christopher VanGoethem is as one of the worst human beings. VanGothem name is almost always accompanied by the attribute "killer" (there is a variation when it comes to "American" / "Marine" or "Road"). He is further described as "a *drowned in alcohol* marine"/"a marine *unawaken* from his *drunkness*" or "*alcholized American marine*" (Evenimentul Zilei).

Moreover, in Adevarul, VanGoethem is being portrayed as a coldblooded murderer, that wasn't at his first crime or attempt to cover up:

- a "tank-man"; "the American ambassador Crouch's gorillas' boss"
- "*Killer marine – recidivist in car crashes on Bucharest's roads*" (title)
- "*Just several months before killing Teo Peter, the marine hit another car. No one was hurt, but he waited 24 hours before going to the police, and he refused then too to be tested for alcohol levels*"

Another way the media presented VanGoethem as a cold blooded murderer was by the impressive negative visual descriptions about Christopher and the accident:

- "*Christopher drove the embassy's Ford through Bucharest as a tank-man through desert or jungle. The Romanian people, cars, houses probably seemed to him just dunes from the tropical forest over which the senile USA steps indifferent*" (Adevarul)
- "*The taxi Teo Peter was in was fully crashed by a 4x4 vehicle driven by an American soldier, who was drunk and ignored the green light. The musician died at the impact*" (Evenimentul Zilei)
- "*TRAGEDY. The death cab where Teo Peter was in was transformed into a pile of steel by the Jeep driven by the American marine*" (Jurnalul National)
- "*The American was driving high speed. Not only that the marine didn't stop, but he did not even try to avoid collision, completely smashing the taxi where Teo Peter was*." (Adevarul)
- "*The impact was so strong that the taxi driver was projected into an electrical pole*" (Evenimentul Zilei)
- "*The car Teo Peter was in was violently smashed by a 4x4 vehicle*" (Adevarul)

At the trial, and after the verdict was given, the marine became a "coward", referring to VanGoethem crying along his mother and sisters to impress the jury:

- "*The brave marine hid under the women's skirts*" (Evenimentul Zilei)
- "*The marine, American army's pride, ran like a coward from the country where he killed a man, and he hid from justice under the tears and skirts of three women, while the brave menly jurors of the American army were impressed by those tears and forgot about those of the victim's family*" (Evenimentul Zilei)

Last, VanGoethem is portrayed as a cheater, a man without principles, and several stories were written about the accusation of adultery.
In antithesis, Teo Peter is praised, and almost sanctified by the media. The most present attributes in his case are: "good man", "loved by everyone", "musician in

love with his job", "well known artist". He is described as a defenseless victim of the cruel American marine:

- "*The giant Teo Peter was killed like a chicken. His heart, beating for "Rock my Heart" festival organized and animated by him, was smashed. Not by a rock, but by a meteor driven by a marine unawaken from his drunkenness*." (Adevarul)
- "*The artist – a mountain suffered multiple cranial injuries, and died on the spot*" (Evenimentul Zilei)

His funeral was mythicized - people came in pilgrimage as for a saint: "*Hundreds of persons, friends, colleagues and people that loved and admired Teo Peter*" were at the funeral. "*They were all stoned by pain. The atmosphere was sad and impressive*" (Jurnalul National).

U.S. trying to be sympathetic / diplomatic and U.S. -Ro collaborating (or trying to)

The analyzed media wrote about ambassador Crouch sending his condolences to Teo Peter's son (information taken from the embassy's official press release). But also Adevarul presented a more interesting approach: "*The U.S. ambassador came to Teo Peter's funeral guarded by only one bodyguard*" (the Adevarul article's title). The story's angle focused on the fact that even if the ambassador had many reasons to be afraid of the angry Romanian crowd he decided to only bring one bodyguard to protect him: "*even though the people participating at the funeral, would have all the reasons to get even in a vehement way, Dyer Crouch was escorted by only one bodyguard*" (Adevarul)
Also, other regrets appeared in the media: "*The NATO troop's commander from Europe transmitted his condolences to Teo Peter's family*" (title in Adevarul) or "*U.S. ambassador regrets Teo Peter's death*" (Evenimentul Zilei about Taubeman).

The media wrote about the U.S. investigating teams that came to try to solve the case and collaborate with the Romanian authorities: "*The Romanian authorities discussed two hours with the American investigators sent to collaborate on the issue*." Or the source cited, Marius Iacob (Romanian prosecuter on the case) said that "*our American collaborators are researching the accident site, examining the traffic conditions …*" (Adevarul)

However, the downside is that even if the journalists mentioned the U.S. regrets or the attempts of being sympathetic, they almost always would be followed by criticism and the final idea transmitted was still the one of fake regrets, or a cover-up.

Press releases

There were three official U.S. embassy press releases and one from Quantico. The one from Quantico was not too helpful for this research as it was not framed in a certain way nor presented certain themes; it was purely informative and contained an enumeration of the charges brought against the marine.

Regarding the generic frames, only the responsibility one appears in the press releases. As specific frames the following were found: transparency frame (each press release would assure and reassure the media that U.S. officials are at their service and that they will be well informed at every step) and the U.S. officials as taking responsibility (getting involved, assuming the crisis, and doing what is right).

The themes present in the press releases were: U.S. as sympathetic, U.S. as collaborating with Romania, and U.S. investigation as real / thorough.

U.S. as sympathetic

In all the press releases, U.S. officials (ambassador) express condolences and regret:

- "*In addition, Ambassador Crouch was able to speak to Mr. Peter's son earlier today and express his and the American Government's condolences for their loss*" (December 4, 2004)
- "*We deeply regret the death of Mr. Peter and the injuries to Mr. Chiru*." (April 20, 2005)
- "*I want to express once again the profound regret that we feel over the tragic car accident that took the life of Mr. Teo Peter – to Mr. Peter's family, to his many fans, and to the Romanian people. The accident was a terrible event and on behalf of the U.S. government, I cannot stress enough how sorry we are that it ever occurred*." (February 1, 2006)

However, a very interesting intriguing finding in this case is the place in the press releases' body, where these paragraphs were situated. In the first press release (the initial one released immediately after the accident) the phrase was the last paragraph. Then, in the second press release it moved up on the page to the paragraph before the last one. Finally, the last press release actually starts with it, and stresses even more the idea of sympathy. This may explain why the media was so critical and skeptical about the U.S.'s sincerity.

U.S. as collaborating with Romania

This theme appears in all the press releases as well. Words as “together”, “close”, “partners”. Just few examples: “we have remained in close contact with Romanian authorities concerning the investigation into the accident” (December 6, 2004); or “The U.S. Government remains committed to cooperating with the Romanian government in this matter” (April 20, 2005).

Again, as in the previous case, the media did not react well to this theme. Even if they took parts from the releases and cited them, they were almost always accompanied or followed by criticisms. Also the theme of U.S. contempt for Romania is stressed more than the theme of a collaborating one.

U.S. investigation as real / thorough

In total opposition with the media theme, the press releases present U.S. investigation as being a very serious and in-depth one. Romanians were being assured that the N.C.I.S. team is seriously investigating the case in Romania, and afterwards when the charges were brought the press release explained all the steps in the investigation still to be made. The most explicit example is from the last press release, after the verdict was given and Romanians were again revolted, and the media blamed the U.S.: “*Ever since December 2004, we have said that the accident would be thoroughly investigated. That is exactly what happened. Investigators spent hundreds of hours in Bucharest interviewing witnesses and examining physical evidence. The prosecuting and defense attorneys also came to Bucharest to speak to witnesses and examine the accident scene. The trial featured the testimony of both Romanian and American witnesses*.” (February 1, 2006)

Benoit’s crisis response strategies used by the U.S. embassy

Regarding the crisis response strategies used, several can be identified after analyzing the press releases. According to Benoit’s model, the U.S. embassy used:

- Evading responsibility strategy as the organization avoided or reduced blame through claiming that the crisis was the result of an accident.
- Reducing offensiveness strategy through: *bolstering* by stressing the positive traits of the organization in order to mitigate the negative perception; *minimization* by claiming that the crisis is not as serious as the public or the media is claims; and *transcendence* by placing the crisis in a more favorable context
- Corrective action strategy by promising to correct the problem through two types of action: restoring the situation to its state before the crisis (when promising that justice will be done) and promising to prevent the recurrence of the crisis (especially in the last press release when the

ambassador promised that he will make sure nothing similar will happen in the future).

The American strategy for mediated public diplomacy

The press releases framing reveals an interesting and intriguing finding. The initial framing of the case was as an accident: an individual who happened to be an American and employed by the U.S. embassy in Romania, happened to be involved in a traffic accident. As he is the beneficiary of diplomatic immunity the responsibility of the case is passed to the Military Court and the U.S. embassy is doing everything they can and deeply regrets the incident. The last press release presents the ambassador's promise to make steps to make sure that a similar case would not happen again. If it was just an unfortunate traffic accident there is no way to predict or prevent future one from happening. In the same time, it does not clearly state that the ambassador admits that the American was in fact guilty (when the court found him not guilty) nor does he promise to waive the diplomatic immunity in the case of another similar incident.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

This thesis was conceptualized to compare how Romanian newspapers and the U.S. embassy's press releases framed a public diplomacy crisis: a U.S. marine driving a SUV struck a taxi and passenger, Teo Peter, a Romanian musician, was killed. Textual analysis was used to examine the generic and specific frames as well as the major underlying themes in the related news articles from the four major daily newspapers and the U.S. embassy's press releases. The findings were then compared and contrasted.

The **first research question** asked if the dominant frames and themes from the Romanian news articles would be similar to the ones from the U.S. press releases. The findings showed that this was not the case. Although some common frames and themes were found (responsibility, the U.S. as sympathetic and the U.S. as collaborating) the dissimilarities were far more obvious. Also, in the case of the U.S. portrayed as sympathetic or collaborative, even if the theme from the press releases was present to some extent in the Romanian media framing, by citing the U.S. officials from the press releases, it was not enough and was almost always followed by the journalists or other sources' criticism. One explanation for this could be a bad crisis response strategy. The idea of sympathy was poorly expressed in the releases. The first release and the most important one since it was came immediately after the incident only mentioned sympathy and condolences in the last phrase. Only the final press release clearly expressed these sentiments at the beginning of the release. This led the media to evaluate the press releases as being "dry" and "fake" and that the U.S. was not sincere in caring for the family's loss.

Moreover, the findings revealed that the majority of themes and specific frames found in the news articles were actually in antithesis to the ones in the press releases. The U.S. transparency major specific frame from the press releases finds its opposite frame in the media. The releases emphasize the idea of continuous information from U.S. officials to the Romanian media. However, the media rarely cited these releases, and wrote about the lack of transparency. This could also be observed by the fact that the only U.S. source cited, when the releases stopped, was the U.S. military news source Stars and Stripes , used basically as a secondary source for citing the U.S. sources.

The releases tried to emphasize the idea that the U.S. was making a thorough investigation and that the American military judicial system was bringing justice. The journalists not only that did not accept these themes, but they mocked them or, even harshly criticized them. To make it worse, as the findings demonstrated, some journalists actually explicitly presented the quotes from the releases and proved the opposite. In the end the U.S. investigation was depicted as a fake, a cover-up and the theme of injustice was present in almost all the articles. The other persistent themes that enhanced this one were about Romanian outrage and the perceived U.S. contempt of Romanians.

The **second research question** asked what sources were used by the Romanian media and which ones were predominant, U.S. sources or local ones, and then the findings were divided by the moment in time of the case development. Initially, following the accident the sources used were more local ones, while the U.S. press releases were either ignored or ridiculed.

An interesting finding was that once the case moved to the U.S., the Romanian news articles started exclusively citing the Stars and Stripes. This could be explained by the fact that locally based Romanian sources became useless and also probably by the lack of press releases or other available information coming directly from U.S. officials. As Evenimentul Zilei noted in one of its articles, when asked to give more information about the case and verdict, "the U.S. embassy reacted weirdly by avoiding the subject." However, this raises the following questions:

- Did the magazine Stars and Stripe's framing of the story influence the Romanian media framing?
- Did the Romanian journalists just translate the articles from the American magazine? This idea was slightly suggested by the findings, when a quote from Teo Peter's son appeared in several analyzed news articles referring to the marine's trial and was actually cited from the Stars and Stripes magazine. Which poses the question why did not the Romanian journalists just call the Romanian to get his quote directly?
- More important, was the translation correct? Did any elements get lost in translation?

The **third research question** also had a negative answer in the findings. The Romanian newspapers did not frame the events more positively when using local sources with declarations or positions congruent to the positions found in the U.S. releases. The framing remained negative. Moreover, in some newspapers the Romanian officials were also criticized for agreeing too much with the U.S. position and were called "lap-dogs". At the same time, the media used more local official sources that, at least for the media purposes, condemned the U.S. position or verdict. I defined it for media purposes, because it was more at declarative level. For example, President Traian Basescu made it a presidential campaign point to bring up Teo Peter's case, and make sure the guilty party was punished. However, at a diplomatic action level he actually did not pursue the matter further.

The **last research question** asked if the crisis response strategy can explain the press release's framing. The use of the evading responsibility strategy could explain why the press releases emphasized the accident element of the case and tried avoiding any specific details or explanations – especially after the case was brought to the Quantico military court. Reducing offensiveness strategy could explain why the press releases tried to minimalize the dramatic element of the case as condolences were minimally presented and the positive elements were emphasized (like US doing a thorough investigation of the case).

Lastly, corrective action strategy seems to especially apply to the last press release and could explain the emphasis on the ambassador's promise to prevent the recurrence of a similar crisis.

The media frames not only are different than the press releases, but also in opposition to them. One explanation could be inappropriate utilization of the crisis response strategies and limited number of press releases. In theory, through their press releases, public relations specialists can influence the type of the articles, can organize the facts and involved actors in a way that could protect their organization. This was not the case here. The strategies used may not have been the right ones. Perhaps if the involved U.S. officials would have assumed responsibility for the incident, kept an ongoing media relationship by generating more press releases, and used what Benoit calls the mortification strategy, admitting the crisis was their fault and asking for forgiveness which would have touch the empathy and emotional media buttons their framing would have been more closely followed and accepted. However the current research cannot ascertain the specific connection. Moving forward it would be interesting for a future study to employ a more in-depth analysis and show the connection between the use of certain crisis response strategies and the success or failure of public diplomacy.

Conclusions

This thesis started from Entman's concept of U.S. mediated public diplomacy; analyzed and compared the framing of two major actors presented in his model: the target nation media (Romanian media) and the U.S. public and media diplomacy (U.S. officials). Two of Entman's arguments for a possible successful mediated public diplomacy were present in the Romanian case: there is a cultural congruency; the political leaders always supported U.S. positions. A public diplomacy crisis situation was chosen because in theory it should intensify the U.S. mediated public diplomacy efforts (in order to prevent damage to its image) and also intensifies media's interest on writing about the subject. The other idea was to catch a glimpse of mediated public diplomacy functions in a crisis situation. Also, That Benoit's crisis response strategies model better explained the press releases' framing.

The findings revealed that the Romanian media framed the public diplomacy crisis in a different way than the U.S. officials framed it. It seems that the U.S. failed in promoting its framing of the public diplomacy crisis to the Romanian media and therefore the public. As previously mentioned, according to Entman, the success of mediated public diplomacy is easier to achieve when the degree of cultural congruence of the targeted nation with the U.S. is high, and when the foreign elites have the same framing as the U.S. Romania is an U.S. ally, Romanian elites always promoted the U.S. policies, the cultural congruence is high, and there is little anti-Americanism in Romania, as compared, for example, to France. Moreover, Romanians have proved over the years to have a

fascination with the U.S. They always perceived the U.S. as a role model. That is why the U.S. public diplomacy's failure in this case angered and disappointed the Romanians. As a result: the theme of outrage was displayed in the newspaper articles. On the other hand, in this case, the Romanian public officials were against the U.S.'s position for the media purposes. This is what they declared to the Romanian media, but not in their diplomatic overall position. As for the officials agreeing with the U.S. position or staying neutral, they were then criticized by the media as well.

However, in a crisis situation and especially in this particular case, the differences in perception and the different definitions of the problems of the two involved actors become important. There is no congruence in the way Romanians perceived what happened and the problem as compared to how the U.S. saw it. Judging from the press releases framing the U.S. position, it was claimed that an awful accident occurred, justice prevailed in the end and there was actually no longer a problem. Judging from the Romanian media framing, the Romanians saw the same accident as a case of abuse of the international privilege of immunity and the refusal to apply justice just because the U.S. is a superior state and a major power while Romania is a small country that can easily be disregarded without any consequences. Therefore, the difference in framing could be explained by the concept of asymmetrical power relationship and consequently by the difference in perceptions.

Benoit's crisis response model could offer another possible explanation for the U.S. mediated public diplomacy failure. Mediated public diplomacy is closely related to and dependent on the U.S. officials. In general, and especially in a crisis situation, their point of view is passed on to the media through the public relations specialists and so the press releases are a first step. Consequently, one of the main possible factors that led to such different media framings as compared to the U.S. position could be the wrong crisis response strategy was applied. According to Benoit, the strategy that would influence media in a more positive way is the mortification strategy, where the organization shows repeatedly remorse, empathy and asks for forgiveness. Another explanation for the difference in framing could be the U.S.'s lack of sufficient, official two-way communication with the Romanian media. Three press releases in three years were simply not enough and this fact widely criticized by the Romanian media. However, the current research could not prove a direct influence or connection.

Overall, the goal of this thesis was attained. The findings revealed what the images created by mass media are as compared to the ones created by public diplomacy efforts using the press releases when they try to construct a specific reality. A greater understanding of the complicated process of foreign media framing a U.S. public diplomacy crisis was gained. The study also accounted for Gilboa's suggestion that the media represents only one actor in the framing process and that politicians, policy makers, elites, interest groups and foreign leaders all try to win public acceptance with their framing. In this case, the Romanian media represented Teo Peter and the Romanians and the U.S. officials did not seem to try influence the media that much, and so they failed to

win the support of the Romanian media and public. Finally, the study shows that a more interdisciplinary approach might help develop a better, more conceptually refined model and theory for mediated public diplomacy.

However, the results of this study could only constitute a basis, or a source for future research, or an argument for Gilboa's call for a substantial multidisciplinary effort. The limitations of this thesis are stated below.

Limitations

This study remains a pilot study that started from Entman's concept of mediated public diplomacy and analyzed only two actors: Romanian media and then U.S. official position stated through their press releases. The present study could not account for or analyze the following factors which are presented in Entman's model which include: the opposition elites, U.S. media, foreign media, and public opinion. The interviews, if any existed, given by the ambassador were also not analyzed. Another area to further explore could be to compare the results of opinion polls to see if the Romanian public actually changed its opinion about U.S. following the coverage especially when it was negative. This could also bring more information to Entman's model applicability. Pursuing Gilboa's approach, further research could provide additional clarification by examining the connections between public opinion, the media and government.

Also, another limitation was the limited access to the Stars and Stripes archives. Since it was the main source cited by the Romanian media during the trial, it would be interesting and useful to analyze the American publication's articles and examine their framing. Did the Romanian media use their framing by just translating their articles or did the Romanian media just take the information and the quotes and simply reframed the stories? If they directly translated an article, was the translation accurate or did an incorrect translation corrupt any meanings. Indeed, this issue of translation is significant regardless of whether only portions of the Stars and Stripes articles were used or if an entire article was directly translated.

Regarding the Benoit communication model, future research could more closely examine the connection between the crisis response strategy used and the success or failure of mediated public diplomacy.

In conclusion, significant contributions could be made to the area of mediated public diplomacy in the future, if this study was expanded with a wider interdisciplinary analysis and an application of Entman's model as well as public relations models addressing mediated public diplomacy in a crisis situation.ones.

The analysis of the themes

LIST OF REFERENCES

- Boulding, K. E. (1956). The image. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press.
- Coman, C. (2003). *Comunicarea de criză, Tehnici şi strategii*. Polirom, Iaşi
- Cowan, G., & Arsenault, A. (2008). Moving from Monologue to Dialogue to Collaboration: The Three Layers of Public Diplomacy. *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, *616*(1), 10-30.
- Cutlip, S. M., Center, A. H., & Broom, G. M. (1985). *Effective public relations.* (6th ed.). Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.
- Drăgan, I. (2007). *Comunicarea, Paradigme şi Teorii*, vol. 2, ed. Rao, Bucureşti
- Dutta-Bergman, M. J. (2006). U.S. public diplomacy in the Middle East: A critical cultural approach. *Journal of Communication Inquiry*, *30*(2), 102-124
- Gamson, W. & Modigliani, A. (1989). Media Discourse and Public Opinion on Nuclear Power: A Constructionist Approach. *The American Journal of Sociology*, 95(1), 1-37
- Gilboa, E. (2004). Diplomacy in the media age: three models of uses and effects. In Jonsson, C., & Langhorne, R. (Eds.), *Diplomacy*, III (pp. 96-119). London: Sage Publications.
- Gilboa, E. (2005). Effects of global television news on U.S. policy in international conflict. In Seib, P.. (Ed.) *Media and Conflict in the Twenty-First Century* (pp. 1-31). New York: McMillan Palgrave
- Gilboa, E. (2006). Public Diplomacy: The Missing Component in Israel's Foreign Policy. *Israel Affairs*, *12*(4), 715–747
- Gilboa, Eytan (2008). Searching for a Theory of Public Diplomacy. *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 616: 55 -77
- Gitlin, T. (2003). *The Whole World Is Watching*. Lost Angeles, CA: University of California Press
- Goffman, E. (2007). *Viaţa cotidiană ca spectacol*. Comunicare.ro, Bucureşti
- Gross, Peter (2001). *Entangled Evolutions. Media and Democratization in Eastern Europe.* Woodrow Wilson Center Press. Washington DC.
- Grunig, J. E. (1993). Image and substance: From Symbolic to behavioral relationships. Public Relations Review, 19(2), 121-139.
- Entman, R. (1993). Framing: Toward a Clarification of a Fractured Paradigm. *Journal of Communication*, 43(4), 51-58
- Entman, R. (2004). *Projections of Power: Framing News, Public Opinion, and U.S. Foreign Policy*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Entman, R. (2005). *Projections of power: framing news, public opinion, and U.S. foreign policy*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press
- Entman, R. (2008). Theorizing Mediated Public Diplomacy: The U.S. Case. *The International Journal of Press/Politics* 13; 87

- Fitzpatrick, K. (2007). Advancing the New Public Diplomacy: A Public Relations Perspective. *The Hague Journal of Diplomacy 2*(3), 187-211.
- Fitzpatrick, K. (2010). *The future of public diplomacy: an uncertain fate. Diplomatic studies* V. 4. The Netherlands Institute of International Relations "Clingendael" Leiden: The Netherlands
- Fortner, R. S. (1994). *Public diplomacy and international politics: the symbolic constructs of summits and international radio news.* Westport, CT: Praeger.
- Laqueur, W. (1994). Save Public Diplomacy. *Foreign Affairs*, 73(5), 19-24.
- L'Etang, J. (1996). Public Relations as Public Diplomacy. In J. L"Etang & M. Piecza (Eds.). *Critical Perspectives in Public Relations* (pp. 14-34). London: International Thomson Business Press.
- Malone, G. D. (1988a). *Organizing the nation's public diplomacy*. Lanham, MD: University Press of America.
- Manheim, J. B. (1994). *Strategic public diplomacy and American foreign policy: The evolution of influence.* Oxford: Oxford University Press
- Meech, P. (2006). Corporate identity and corporate image. In J. L'Etang & M. Piecza, (Eds.) Public Relations: Critical Debates and Contemporary Practice (pp. 389-404). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlabumn Associates, Publishers.
- Melissen, J. (2004). Public diplomacy in contemporary diplomatic practice. Public diplomacy and media, Paper presented at the *Diplomatic Academy, Ministry of Foreign Affairs International Conference*, Dubrovnik, Croatia, November.
- Melissen, J. (2005). The new public diplomacy: between theory and practice. In J. Melissen (Ed.). *The new public diplomacy: soft power in international relations* (pp. 3-27). Basingstoke Hampshire England: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Mucchiellli, A. (2006) *Teoria proceselor de comunicare*. Institutul European, Iaşi.
- Nisbet, E.C., Nisbet, D.A. Scheufele, James, E.S. (2004). *Public Diplomacy, Television News, and Muslim Opinion*. International Journal of Press/Politics, 9(2): 11-37
- Rawnsley, G. (1996). *Radio Diplomacy and Propaganda: The BBC and VOA in International Politics* (pp.1956-64). New York, NY: St. Martin"s Press.
- Reese, S. D.; O. H. Gandly Jr. & A.E. Grant. (Eds.). (2001). *Framing public life: Perspective on media and our understanding of social world*. Mahwah: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Riordan (2005). *The New Public Diplomacy: Soft Power in International Relations.* Palgrave Macmillan. Palgrave Connect. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Salem, N. 2002. U.S. Media Framing of Foreign Countries Image: An Analytical Perspective *Canadian Journal of Media Studies*, Vol. 2(1), 130-162.

- Semetko, H.A., & Valkenburg, P.M. (2000). Framing European Politics: A Content Analysis of Press and Television News. *Journal of Communication* 50 (2), 93-100.
- Sheafer, Tamir; Gabay, Itay (2009). Mediated Public Diplomacy: A Strategic Contest over International Agenda Building and Frame Building. *Political Communication* 26:4, 447 – 467
- Sheafer, Tamir; Shenhav, Shaul R. (2009). Mediated Public Diplomacy in a New Era of Warfare. *The Communication Review* 12:3; 272 – 283
- Signitzer, B. H. & Coombs, T. W. (1992). Public relations and public diplomacy: conceptual convergences, *Public Relations Review*, *18*(2), 137-148.
- Snow, N. & P. M. Taylor (2006). The Revival of the Propaganda State. *International Communication Gazette,* 68(5/6). 389-407.
- Snow, Nancy (ed). (2008). The Routledge Handbook of Public Diplomacy.
- Sparks, C. (2000). Introduction. The Panic over News, in Sparks C, Tulloch T. *Tabloid Tales. Global Debates over Media Standards*. London, Sage
- Steinberg, D. I. (2005). *Korean Attitudes toward the United States: Changing Dynamics.* Armonk, N.Y.: M.E. Sharpe.
- Vreese, C.H., Peter, J., & Semetko, H.A., (2001). Framing Politics at the Launch of the Euro: A Cross-national Comparative Study of Frames in the News. *Political Communication* 18(2), 107-122
- Wan, H. & Schell, R. (2007). Reassessing Corporate Image – An Examination of How Image Bridges Symbolic Relationships with Behavioral Relationships. Journal of Public Relations Research, 19 (1), 25-45.
- Wang, J. & Chang, T. K. (2004). Strategic public diplomacy and local press: How a high profile “head-of state” visit was covered in America’s heartland. *Public Relations Review*, *30*(1), 11-24.
- Wang, J. (2006). Managing national reputation and international relations in the global era: Public diplomacy revisited. *Public Relations Review*, *32*(2), 91-96
- Zaharna, R.S. (2010). *Battles to Bridges. U.S. Strategic Communication and Public Diplomacy after 9/11*. London, UK: Palgrave Macmillan
- Zhang, J. (2006). Public diplomacy as symbolic interactions: a case study of Asian tsunami relief campaigns. Public Relations Review, 32(1), 26-32.
- Yun, S. -H. (2006). Toward public relations theory-based study of public diplomacy: Testing the applicability of the excellence study. *Journal of Public Relations Research*, *18*(4), 287-312.

Online resources:

- Romanian embassy in U.S.: http://washington.mae.ro/index.php?lang=en&id=22639 In Celebration of 125 Years of U.S. – Romanian Diplomatic Relations (special pamphlet of the U.S. embassy in Romania): http://romania.usembassy.gov/root/pdfs/125years_ro-am_relations.pdf
- Public Diplomacy: Strengthening U.S. Engagement with the World. A strategic approach for the 21st century. Office of the Under Secretary of State for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs: http://www.carlisle.army.mil/DIME/documents/Public%20Diplomacy%20US%20World%20Engagement.pdf

APPENDIX

Public Affairs Office
Office B058
3250 Catlin Ave
Quantico, VA 22134-5001

For more information call
(703) 784-2741/42
Fax 784-0065

ADVISORY 08-05 July 19, 2005

MEDIA ADVISORY

Article 32 hearing for Bucharest MSG Detachment Commander to be held July 25-29

Marine Corps Base, QUANTICO, Va. – The Commanding Officer, Marine Security Guard Battalion, has convened an Article 32 pretrial investigation to consider allegations made in connection with a traffic accident resulting in the death of a Romanian national in Bucharest, Romania, last winter. Staff Sgt. Christopher R. VanGoethem was accused April 18 of several violations of the Uniform Code of Military Justice for his involvement in the death of Teofil Peter Dec. 4, 2004.

VanGoethem is charged with violating several articles of the Uniform Code of Military Justice, including Article 111, for reckless operation of a vehicle; Article 107, for false official statements; and Article 134, for negligent homicide and obstruction of justice. Charges unrelated to the Dec. 4 traffic accident include alleged violations of Article 92, for failure to obey an order or regulation; Article 111, for operation of a vehicle while impaired by alcohol; and Article 134, for adultery and drunk and disorderly conduct. It is important to note the accused is presumed innocent until proven guilty.

The case will be considered by a commissioned officer in a pretrial investigation conducted pursuant to Article 32 of the Uniform Code of Military Justice. This procedure is similar to a criminal grand jury; however, in an Article 32 hearing, the accused retains the right to have an attorney present.

The Article 32 hearing has been scheduled for July 25-29, 2005, at Marine Corps Base Quantico, Va. Media interested in attending should contact 2nd Lt. Brian Donnelly (brian.p.donnelly@usmc.mil, 703-784-3255) by Thursday, July 21, 2005, at 4 p.m.

VITA

Ioana Alexandra Coman was born in Bucharest, Romania in 1986. She got two BAs: one in Public Relations at the School of Journalism and Communication Sciences, University of Bucharest in Romania; and one in Political Sciences and International Relations at the National School of Political and Administration Studies, also in Romania. In 2011 graduated from the School of Journalism and electronic Media, College of Communication and Information at the University of Tennessee in Knoxville as a Master of Science in Communication and Information.