

Forgetting and Re-Discovering the United Nations: Understanding the International Roles and Practices of Post-Yugoslav Small States

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Abstract: In the history of Yugoslav foreign policy, the United Nations was the key international organization that largely co-constituted its state identity and provided a site for the enactment of various roles, 1945-1992. The later period after the breakup of the former, middle-power Yugoslavia has seen the emergence of a host of small states with redefined strategic and identity aspects of their relationship with the UN, constituted by their new positions in the international society. Looking at foreign policy discourses of the post-Yugoslav states, this paper explores the place of the United Nations in their self-understandings and role conceptions post-Cold War. By engaging the literature on Constructivist IR, small states, and role theory, I develop an interpretative framework for understanding of the interactions between national and international identity elements in the role dynamics, related to practices such as state-building, counter-secession, or peacekeeping. The concepts of role change, learning and socialization are thematized with a view of the agency-structure problematique in the context of the post-Yugoslav rediscovery of UN policies. This shall help us rethink the logics of constructing identities of small states and their roles within the specific spatial and temporal context, which also may offer some feedback for conversation with the scholarship on role theory and international organizations.

Keywords: Constructivism, Identity, United Nations (UN), Foreign Policy, International Relations Theory, Statebuilding, Discourse Analysis, Yugoslavia

Introduction

To what degree are the international organizations, and the formal international institutions in particular relevant for understanding roles and identities in foreign policies of small states? This paper addresses this rather underexplored question by focusing on the cases of Serbia and Croatia, and their foreign policies in the post-Yugoslav period (1992-2017). Namely, their relationship and enactment of foreign policy identities and roles within the United Nations system is an interesting and, yet puzzling case, for exploring and understanding of situations and reasons why states put premium on the United Nations in their foreign policy sets among other

international organizations, or the lack thereof. In particular, the practices in which the UN is given the prominent position in the role set are explored by engaging role theory, and developing an interpretive framework that probes into the identity-role discourses that connect to the broader positioning of states within the international society.

This paper puts forward a theoretical claim that the salience of the UN component in a foreign policy role sets of small states depends on the strategic nature of the topics and mandates of international organizations, and in particular is relevant for the matters of state identity and entry of states in international society. In other words, small states are likely to prioritize the UN and global themes in their role sets in cases when they are either beneficiaries of its direct engagement (logic of consequences) or in the situations that its themes complement their status building efforts (logic of appropriateness).

Empirically, the paper engages with the cases of Serbia and Croatia after the breakup of the former Yugoslavia, to show how they used the United Nations institutions to present their claims and positions and foreign policy preferences on the global level, and discursively uphold their state identities and other roles in the international context vis-a-vis the norms of the international society.

Those variable positions of the UN in role sets of those two states in the post-Yugoslav context can be characterized as “forgetting” and “re-discovering”, given their discursive presence or relative activity within this universal international organization. As part of the contextualization, the paper tries to explore reasons behind these two positions. From the 1990s onwards, a myriad of different actors, from states to international organizations and NGOs got engaged in the conflict and post-conflict setting, claiming various roles and relevance in the post-Yugoslav policies and role sets. Compared to the period of the Cold War, when the UN was regarded as the most important international organization for the socialist Yugoslavia and its standing in international relations, the past quarter century was marked by the change of relevance of IOs for its former republics: increasing presence and strategic relevance of the EU and NATO relative to the UN.

The theoretical argument, and a possible contribution to the literature concerns the logics of constructing identities and their meanings that are given to certain roles that are dependent on or

enacted within the UN (as a multilateral forum and a unique place to negotiate one's international identity and status). This is illustrated by the research on those two particular post-Yugoslav role sets and their representations within the speeches of Serbian and Croat officials before the UN General Assembly. Following some of the recent advances in exploring the UN voting records and UN GA speeches (Voeten 2000, Baturo, Dasandi and Mikhaylov 2017), this paper is developed in the following way:

In the first section, the argument for the relevance of role theory and its compatibility with the discursive research programme is presented. An analytical framework that takes cues from the existing role literature (e.g. Thies 2009, Harnich et al. 2011) is offered, examining how foreign policy roles within international organizations are constructed and enacted, as well as their relationships with the broader state identity, and its meanings those roles provide¹.

In the second part, this approach is applied to map out the respective foreign policy role conceptions in the UN context, and further analyze their dynamics and implications by engaging relevant theoretical concepts. This is done in two ways: First, the UNGA speeches are analyzed for representations of roles as active/passive, and with relation to the of peace, security and development that matter for the notion of state identity. This is in particular related to policies such as state-building, counter-secession or peacekeeping.

Second, the nature and character of those roles are then examined with regards to the relevance of particular UN and global concepts for particular foreign policies of Serbia and Croatia. The salience of those concepts or their lack is, this paper suggests, can be traced in logics of identity that informs the discursive role conceptions that can be accessed through careful analysis of textual reality. Within their role dynamics are examined markers of role change, and questioned the relative weight of the UN as policy signifier and actor for those states and their role concepts.

In the conclusion, the two role sets are discussed in the comparative perspective, and a basis for possible theorization of those two cases in the context of the contemporary discussions in FPA and role theorizing in international relations.

¹ For theorizing on identities as meaning provider for roles of states, see for example in Nabers 2011.

Theoretical perspectives

IR theory, the big picture

The theorizing and empirical research on small states and international organizations shall be understood within several theoretical traditions and research programmes within International Relations. Those are generally known as Realist, Institutional and Constructivist, and they in various ways implicate on the study and analysis of foreign policy. Studying foreign policy would conventionally imply that we start from the state as the level of analysis and observe international organizations as some sort of environment in which states interact.²

The traditional realist and liberal approaches to IR would in various ways address the relationships between states and IOs, giving the primacy to states as the key units of analysis, but starting from different premises why states join IOs and to what degree states can affect international organizations.³ The first are relying on power and self-interest, while the second group of approaches seeks to understand the spillover effects of interdependence, giving a more prominent role to the study of IOs. The third group are constructivists who seek to understand what happens *between* states and IOs, not only on the material level but, to explore both state- and IO- ends constitutive of this relationship. It is the study of institutions, and ideas and identities that uphold the man-made structures that constructivism does.⁴

Study of Foreign Policy

What is the relationship of these three approaches to the study of foreign policy? It is common to start from state as unit of analysis or actor in international relations and can take it as unified or unpacked, depending on whether we are rationalists or constructivists. For example, in Foreign Policy Analysis, the focus is on the level of “agent” in actual politics that is concerned with concrete “political choice and decision” instead of often impenetrable “national interest” (Hill

² However, the environment is much more complex today to include just states, and it is both national, international and transnational actors that co-shape this environment in which they interact.

³ See Abbot and Snidal 1998, among others for this.

⁴ See Keohane 1988 for the differentiation between rationalist and reflectivist approaches, that is also relevant for the study of international institutions.

2016, 2, 3) – a level that arguably has been often neglected in International Relations.⁵ In other words, states take actions and they do act through its decision makers and other agents in foreign policy that we seek to explain, or, else we can observe specific policies and practices in foreign policy, and then seek to understand how and why they came into being as they are. Therefore the critiques that more general, “big picture” studies in International Relations neglect the context can be justified, so FPA approach and its focus on decision-making has its place and can be seen in tandem with other more abstract theories, by, what Christopher Hill (2016, 2) terms as “relating agency to structure”, and “insisting on seeing the internal and the external as intimately connected.”⁶ This paper takes this delicate relationship into consideration.

Explaining synergy between identities and roles

The explanations in the latter approaches differ, and they may look for mechanisms and processes that are causal or constitutive. Today the nature of international relations and their problems is rather complex, so different factors, such as identities and roles, in various degrees affect actions, processes, and mechanisms. The identities and roles are seen as part of the structural argumentation in International Relations, but via their correspondence with FPA that careful link between agency and structure can be always maintained in the analysis.

In the literature roles are usually understood as: “social positions (as well as a socially recognized category of actors) that are constituted by ego and alter expectations regarding the purpose of an actor in an organized group (cf. Thies 2010b: 6336; Andrews 1975: 529). The position’s function in the group is limited in time and scope and it is dependent on the group’s structure and purpose. Whereas some roles are constitutive to the group as such, e.g. recognized member of the international community, other roles or role sets are functionally specific, e.g. balancer, initiator” (Harnisch et al. 2011, 8).

⁵ On this, see Christopher Hill (2016, 1): “Academic International Relations has tended to neglect the idea of foreign policy not only because of doubts about the independence of states, but also through a preoccupation with explaining the dynamics of the international system as a whole. This focus on structures – as with power balances for neorealists, international regimes for liberals and markets for the gurus of globalization – goes hand in hand with ignoring the question of agency, as if in embarrassment at having to grapple with actual politics.”

⁶ Hill (2016) positions the study of foreign policy within the IR the following way: “The central argument of this book is that foreign policy is key to our understanding of international relations. It plays a major part in filling the hole in accounts of international relations with respect to ‘agency’, which is much discussed at the epistemological level but insufficiently operationalized” (Hill 2016, 29).

The literature on FPA and Role theory sometimes come at disagreement on which shall have precedence, and both can work well together, despite their differences in the subject of analysis, be it decision (FPA) or a more generalized concept of role (RT). A view on this could be summed up that: “FPA offers the tools to investigate the presence of role consensus and conflict, and complements the NRC literature, making it more empirically and theoretically robust. In addition, national role conceptions say much about a country’s identity, its priorities and policies, and how it relates to other states” (Cantir and Kaarbo 2012, 19).

In this paper, I seek to develop a theoretically sound “compatibilist” (Mouritzen 2017) framework that is based on small states’ literature, role theory and FPA, in order to explore the dynamics and character of identity-role processes of post-Yugoslav small states within the United Nations.

This sort of compatibilist venture is a novel step in the small states’ literature, and brings together in the view a more traditional FPA understanding of (state) action together with identity (identification) processes - that are jointly involved in role conceptions of states⁷. In the literature some authors have asked whether foreign policy is guided by identity or roles, and their responses differ. However, there is an emerging middle ground position in the literature that conceptualizes identities (and discourses) giving meaning to roles (Nabers 2011). More generally, authors take those two concepts as mutually reinforcing, while giving role-theoretical approach greater explanatory force compared to FPA (e.g. Breuning 2011). In this paper, I try to seize this middle ground, and advance what I term *identity-role complex* that can work well in theoretical synergy.⁸

Also, on a theoretical level, it is interesting to examine the cross-fertilization and pluralistic efforts already taking place within an well-developed research program of role theory (that has been also informed by constructivism and discursive analysis lately), and see how this connects

⁷ For example, Brommesson (2015, 530), defines role conceptions as “the more fundamental subjective understanding of [Sweden’s] role in foreign policy... at both the elite and mass level.”

⁸ For example, McCourt (2011, 1599) examines the reasons why Britain invaded the Falklands in 1982. He suggests that “a solely identity-based explanation is incomplete and ultimately unpersuasive since identities are affirmed by playing social roles, which give identity meaning.”

with the more traditionally informed and FPA oriented small state research.⁹ This is also supported by the need to address the concern voiced by some authors that roles are not sufficiently explored within the constructivist IR (e.g. McCourt 2012). This paper, therefore, wishes to theorize identity-role relationship in foreign policy, and thematize it in the analysis of this *complex* within the discourse of small states in the United Nations General Assembly annual debate.

Despite some differences among role theory and FPA scholars, we can agree to proceed toward a more integrative and compatibilist approach that gives way to the explanation that best suits the situation at hand. For example, when it comes to decisions, one can be guided by FPA, or when it comes to the analysis of identity or other more complex factors underlying those decisions, then Role theory or constructivist IR may help. This, in my view, can enable best treatment of complex processes and phenomena in foreign policy.

This paper studies identities and roles, and takes that the former are in the background of the possibility for action and behavior. Thus, their mutual understanding is possible and they are reinforcing each other. The study of national role conceptions was the beginning of this research programme by Holsti (1970), and this paper tends to explore the role dynamics, and its change. Holsti in his seminal article “National Role Conceptions in the Study of Foreign Policy” elaborates on the relationship between foreign policy determinants and foreign policy roles. For Holsti, to “enact roles” means to “make certain type of commitments” (p. 234). Holsti also sees roles as related to “national attributes” or “system attributes”, (p. 234), which is not far away from the Wendtian understanding of state identity.

Theoretical framework: discursive approach to roles and identities of small states in the United Nations General Assembly

The theoretical framework in this paper shall address the role dynamics, their more general types, diversity, interaction, and change, within the role-identity complex as an overarching

⁹ Some work has been done with respect to explaining the viability of FPA and role theory argumentation and its application on the understanding of small state foreign policy variation. See, for example, Gingleux 2016.

concept that captures ideational lenses of constructivism and materialist and more objectivist views of other approaches integrated within role theory. First, we need to provisionally model the role construction and role enacting of small states via discourse¹⁰ in UN political institutions such as the General Assembly. The salience of UNGA for research of foreign policy preferences has been subject of the study of voting records for several decades (Russett 1966, Kim and Russett 1996, Voeten 2000), while more recently, some authors have argued for a complimentary study of “UN General Debate Corpus” as a way of understanding “single and multiple dimensions of government preferences” by a combined analysis of the official statements (Baturu, Dasandi and Mikhaylov 2017). This paper takes the relevance of the latter approach, but proceeds in a qualitative manner by means of interpretive, discourse oriented approach (Hansen 2006, Stritzel 2007, Kovačević 2016).

By exploring the textual reality of small state foreign policy (statements, voting records, and some practices), I want to examine material and ideational basis for conceptualization of their foreign policy roles that are informed by their state identities (Wendt 1999). That textual reality is a narrative that can be traced in the UNGA statements of Serbia and Croatia, and in this paper we are going to analyze those delivered between 2000 and 2017 due to comparative and contextual relevance.¹¹

This enables us to access to narratives of those countries at the UN, and understanding the way they “see” world politics at different levels. These narratives are rich textual source of identity representations, and role conceptions that are invoked by the key decision-makers (agents) in a forum that constitutes for the international society. If traced in a longer period of time, these narratives can be analyzed for specific themes, their evolution and change/continuity of identity and role representations. This can be useful to get a more complete picture of role dynamics, which can be compared with other strategic documents or actual practices in order to assess the meanings of those roles or probing into the logic of certain foreign policy preferences and their

¹⁰ By relying on discursive nature of identity, and sense of belonging that is expressed through language [and consequently, via UN General Assembly speeches], this paper claims that small state foreign policy discourse in international organization reflects some sort or degree of belonging to a mutually constructed identity of the organization.

¹¹ In the period between 1992 and 2000, Federative Republic of Yugoslavia, was not able to continue the membership of the former Yugoslavia in the UN, but has to apply for membership (A/Res/47/1). The FRY formally was admitted to the UN membership on 1 November 2000. Croatia was admitted to the membership of the UN on 22 May 1992 (A/RES/46/238; A/56/767).

relationship with identity discourses. For this reason, role sets and particular roles found at the UN are juxtaposed to “traditional” roles suggested in the literature (Archer, Bailes, and Wivel 2014) to look for their compatibility. Any similarities or differences with the expected roles would require discussion, and possible cues for further theoretical work. On an empirical level, it is expected that the international roles of Serbia and Croatia are classified and put in the context of their foreign policy role sets, while understanding the dynamics and logics of their change and continuity in relation to the encounter that happens between their stated and performed “ego” (state identity) and received “alter” (relational self) in the international society represented at the UN. This deserves further clarification of the key theoretical concepts found in the literature.

Key concepts

The role change is related to identity, and, here we agree with Dirk Nabers that identity provide roles, as social positions, with their meaning. Namely, “Identity supplies an actor with an angle through which to interpret his or her social situation and the expectations of appropriate behavior that come with it. In this perspective, an identity is a set of meanings that characterizes an actor in a role.” (Nabers 2011, 74). Also, identity-based explanations, as notes David McCourt (2011, 1605) cannot provide explanation why some action is “socially meaningful,” and need to be supplemented by “recourse to social roles”. Changes in roles or whole role sets is underlined in the work of Sebastian Harnisch (2011, 9).

“Changes in roles or role sets are important determinants for both *role enactment* and *identity formation*. Role enactment, often taken as the dependent variable in role scholarship, refers to the behavior of an actor when performing a role. Role performances regularly differ considerably from role expectations, both ego and alter, and role enactment may also differ in its constitutive effect for the role beholder and the respective social group.”

Role change can be seen as role adaptation being “changes of strategies and instruments in performing a role”, whereas the purpose of that role remains fixed.”¹²

¹² Harnich et al. 2011, 9. Also, it is further explained the link to FPA and adaptation. “Within the FPA literature, adaptation as defined here is similar to the first three levels of foreign policy change in Hermann’s typology (1990, 2007): (1) increasing or decreasing the use of certain instruments; (2) changing how and in what order certain instruments are used (tactics); and (3) changing the way the problem is perceived (strategy). In the scholarship on foreign policy learning, adaptation, in this sense, resembles simple learning – that is, shifts in behavior prompted by failure in which neither the values nor the goals of an actor are subject to reassessment (Levy 1994; Ziegler 1993: 6)” (Harnisch 2011, 10).

Roles can have regulative and constitutive effects in international institutions. This means that “international institutions tend to stabilize national role conceptions, but they may trigger role change if and when functionally differentiated roles within institutions increase or shift, thus becoming incompatible with complementary institutional roles or contending national roles,” argue Harnisch, Frank and Maull (2011, 2). For example, the UN’s constitutive role is related to the notions of statehood, conflict resolution and international status, among other things. Similarly, the influence of EU on its member states has been a subject of great interest among the scholars of normative socialization, and these are regulative effects that affect the behavior of member states.

After understanding the roles as social positions that are given meaning by identities, we need to proceed toward a theoretical and analytical framework for understanding how small states see their roles and identities in the international organizations. In this sense, exploration of the constitutive role of the United Nations, or any other international organization is relevant, and depending on the area of research and thematic focus of international organization in its work, such effects can be theorized and analyzed. How does the UN affect its member states? Here it is argued that it has both regulative and constitutive effects, and this underexplored question on the relative position of both requires further theorization and empirical work.

Toward the role-identity complex

Roles and identities in international organizations need to be subject to some sort of common typology. K.J. Holsti’s (1970, 306) pioneering work on national role conceptions (NRCs) can offer some guidance and inspiration. NRCs are defined as “orientations toward the external environment and commitments to certain tasks or functions within various sets of international relationships.” Such relationships are bilateral and multilateral, thus can be realized between two states and within international organizations, among states. Holsti has managed to single out 17 specific NRCs for the period of 1965-1967¹³, and given all the subsequent critiques that can be found of such approach (e.g. Cantir and Kaarbo 2012).

¹³ Those 17 NRCs are: Bastion of revolution-liberator, regional leader, regional protector, active independent, liberation supporter, anti-imperialist agent, defender of the faith, mediator-integrat, Regional-subsystem collaborator, developer, bridge, faithful ally, independent, example, internal development., isolate, and protectee (Holsti 1970, 260–273).

In this paper I take Holsti's roles that are most applicable to small states, or are relevant for the Yugoslav and post-Yugoslav context, and use them as focusing device for understanding the character and dynamics of contemporary post-Yugoslav role conceptions. Those conceptions are readily available in the strategic documents such as national security or foreign policy strategies, but they can also be distilled from a more systematic analysis of the UN General Assembly speeches of Serbia and Croatia. It is the subject of analysis to isolate the key themes as discursive representations, and relating them to any master discourses (national identity, civilizational, great power or some more universal values). It can be expected that Holsti's typology can cover most of the small state options in foreign policy, but the space is open for the possibility of additional horizontal and vertical upgrade of the classification, if the need be.. The typology is also informed by and compared with the extant Role Theory literature (e.g. Aggestam 1999, Harnisch, Frank and Maull 2011), and related to compatible small state's strategic foreign policy options (Archer, Bailes and Wivel 2014, Smed and Wivel 2017).¹⁴

What roles and logics for small states?

. In the paper within its conceptualization of *role-identity complex*, it is examined how those established roles within IOs or more general FP setting, are given meaning by the use of state identities, or some of their particular narratives. Identities are constantly reconstructed and are usually used for the explanation of some foreign policy choices. States in their identity narratives can emphasize certain dimensions of their identity, for example, national, regional, European, international, etc.¹⁵ Those identity constructions inform small state's outlook and positioning in the international society, as well as their "default" options that can be understood as part of some typical identity (e.g. small state identity).¹⁶

In the literature on small states, authors mostly agree that their foreign policy activity is reserved primarily for the regional level. While the literature agrees with the conclusion that much of the

¹⁴ An evolving research programme on the foreign and security policies of small states has increasingly emphasised the strategic opportunities of small states. But so far this literature has mainly focused on how small states may exploit their strategic action space in highly institutionalised international environments such as the EU (Björkdahl 2008, Jakobsen 2009, Howard Grøn and Wivel 2011, Panke 2011, Bailes and Thorhallsson 2013). We explore if the assumptions of this literature are applicable to an international security environment characterised by complex security challenges and weak international institutions, and to which extent the findings of the literature are relevant to small state strategies in such an environment." Smed and Wivel 2017, 81.

¹⁵ For this, compare with Brommesson 2015 on the Europeanization of Swedish foreign policy.

¹⁶ For this, see in Kovačević 2016.

history of small states has been marked by fear and survival issues, the period after the Cold War also brings new opportunities for small states and moves beyond traditional security concerns and existential threats. To Wivel, Bailes, and Archer, small states in international security can be summed up in four basic arguments: (a) lack of autonomy in face of power, (b) narrow range of action, (c) ‘have little to say about which games are played, and how’, (d) small stake in the system and inability to act for the system. Depending on the context, some small states are concerned about their survival, while others keep thinking about the ways to gain influence, and usually apply four strategies that are known as ‘binding’, ‘hiding’, ‘shelter’, and ‘quietism.’ The states that want to maximize their influence are looking for ‘smart strategies,’ and the best position for such states is not to be closely aligned with other powers’ interests but act as ‘honest brokers.’¹⁷ It can thus be said that small states either try to adapt to the environment shaped by great powers, or, seek influence within the reasonable and smart ways of acting in world politics. That way of action is what roles are about – while the environment and system constraints usually limit the reach of some role. Those roles are usually taken, and it is more rare for a relatively small, and weak state, to find its own role and way. On the other hand, small and strong Nordic states are known for their “niche” roles in international relations. Although strong small states can lead by example and normative power (Ingebritsen 2002), it is more difficult and challenging to assess the roles and possibilities for action among weaker small states.

How is that role perceived internally or externally? How specific discursive representations are related to some collective or state identity? In a longer period of time, can certain discursive shifts be located and how they relate to some state identity? This requires the assessment of the nature of possible use of those identities, and here I argue there are three ways for such use. First is “strategic”, the second is “performative”, and the third is “habdaptive”.¹⁸ While identities can be used “strategically” to explain some policy action and put it into some bigger narrative, sometimes those identities, I argue, can be used to produce some sort of environment conducive

¹⁷ Wivel 2014 and Jović 2011, cf. Kovačević 2016, 113-114.

¹⁸ “Habits both evoke and suppress actions. They imply actions by giving us ready-made responses to the world that we execute without thinking... One ready-made response habits offer are stereotypes (Wheeler and Fiske, 2005). Habits permit rapid, not necessarily accurate, categorizations of people and events (Aarts and Dijksterhuis, 2000: 60; Macrae et al., 1994; Wegner and Bargh, 1998: 472–473). Like schemas and scripts, stereotypes fill in information about the other actor that is missing from her actual behavior and make ambiguous evidence unambiguously supportive of the habitual categorization (Srull and Wyer, 1979; Winter and Uleman, 1984)”, Hopf 2010, 541; Rosenau 1990 for habdaptivity.

to future actions (active performativity), or to frame the action in a reflexive manner that balances between the power of habitual (practices rooted in identity) and adaptation to external environment (habdaptive mode).

From the literature we found that authors usually deal with the themes such as activity and influence of small states at the United Nations, and most notably in negotiation and decision-making as key practices states enact.¹⁹ If small states face structural and situational constraints for their influence, there have been also attempts to address the ways this can be overcome (e.g. Thorhallsson 2012, 2017, Suillebhain 2014). On the other hand there needs to be assessed to what degree a state can achieve in a given context and what the links are between activity and influence. Small states usually prioritize, join blocs and alliances, but their influence and achievements within the UN still remain limited.

An argument by Thorhallsson (2017, 50 - 59) on the ways for small states to “overcome their weakness” at the UN would be to: 1) have political will to play active roles, mostly thanks to values, ideological basis, decision makers’ worldviews, and linking status and influence through IOs, 2) diplomatic skills and knowledge connected to invitations to attend meetings of UNSC, 3) image and reputation – enable some sort of small states’ roles at UNSC, and thus influence, 4) prioritization and effective management of resources, and preparatory work for membership in the UNSC, 5) flexible small administrations, 6) taking initiative, 7) coalition building and networking.

A framework of small state role-identity complexes

The typology of small state positions in international organizations in this dissertation is worked out through several criteria and dimensions of states and their foreign policy strategy, behavior, and actions. The concept of state is taken from Buzan (1991), and Buzan and Waever (2003) based on the dimensions of state and its socioeconomic and institutional component. Thus states can be strong and weak. In terms of power they can be small, middle (regional) and great powers (+ superpowers). And in terms of activity within international organization they can be active, somewhat active, and inactive. These criteria will be supplemented by typical, conventional small state strategies and selected NRCs from Holsti’s typology to get a working analytical

¹⁹ Cf. Keohane 1967; Panke 2012, 2014; Thorhallsson 2017;

framework for understanding small state role-types. The framework is adaptive and flexible, so it can be upgraded based on the empirical analysis of post-Yugoslav discourses at the UN GA.

State - sociopolitical cohesion: weak, strong

State size/status in international system (state identity): small state, middle power (regional power), great power

Activity: active, passive

Small state strategy: 'binding', 'hiding', 'shelter', 'quietism'. (Wivel 2014 and Jović 2011, cf. Kovačević 2016, 113-114).

*Small state commonly expected NRCs = identity (Breuning 2011, 22) (drawn from Holsti 1970 overall NRC typology): active independent, developer, regional subsystem collaborator, example, mediator-integrator, bridge, faithful ally, internal development, protectee.

Roles – geographic and issue specific (Breuning 2011, 26). Role performance is foreign policy behavior.

*SFR Yugoslavia NRCs, 1965-1967 (Holsti 1970, 277): active independent, liberator supporter, mediator/integrator, developer.

Typology of Small state roles in the UN: combination of identity predisposition, activity, strategy, strength/vs. Holsti's NRC.

*Institutionalized (Harnisch 2011) and regular

*role prescription and role performance

Figure 1: analytical table of small state foreign policy roles and strategies

An additional value of this framework is in its possibility to capture the positions of the UN themes in the specific NRCs, which enables us to draw some conclusions about the relative “weight” (salience) of the UN in the overall role set, among competing roles that can be realized in multiple multilateral arenas. This salience is marked on a scale as very important, important,

somewhat important, not important, based on the relative frequency of UN specific themes and mentions of the UN specific references in the speeches. In role theory, the salience of some entity for the self's conception can be explained via significant and generalized others (Harnisch 2011, 11), and in this sense one can make an argument for why or why not UN matters much in some role conceptions. Symbolic interactionism tells us that roles cannot be made without "others" (Harnisch 2011, 11). The difference between the generalized and significant other is the matter of concretization of the entity, since getting from general category to specific entity suggests some sort of interaction with the other, and not with general category. Applied to IR, this may be useful in differentiating between different subjects of international relations, be it states, IOs, or other agents, that can be significant to different degree.

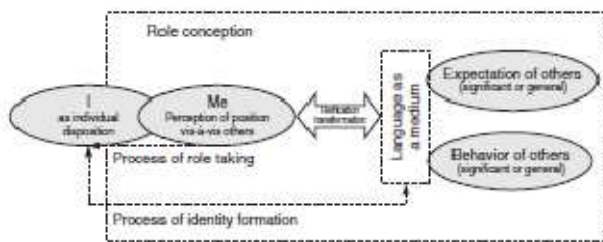


Figure 1.2 Role and identity in later role theory: Endogenization of corporate identity (I-part).

Figure 2: Role and identity in later role theory (taken from Harnisch 2011, 11).

All this, combined with the standard theoretical insights from FPA and small state literature (e.g. small state strategy and diplomacy of small states²⁰) is produced in a relatively coherent analytical framework for small states the UN. The notion of role change is here particularly important, and how norms are either “ascribed” or “achieved”, or learned through socialization.²¹ States usually face challenge when their conception of self is clashing with the role expectations of significant others, and in that sense small states usually encounter the change of role or the change of behavior. The UN as an embodiment of international society is a convenient place for studying how small states function within a more complex social environment, and how they

²⁰ For small state diplomacies, see Cooper and Shaw 2009.

²¹ See for this Harnisch 2011, 12.

construct and present their role sets in that context.²² Also, this requires the differentiation between “institutionalized” and regular roles, as Harnisch notes (2011, 14). Within the UNGA speeches, we find references both to institutionalized and regular roles, which will be noted in the analysis ahead.

The last step that we have to do is spell out the analytical model that is based on the compatibilist view of the role theory and constructivist FPA orientations, that takes into consideration the multilateral organizations as places where identity is made sense through some roles. This “UN” policy of the post-Yugoslav small states is an interesting and under-explored field that, I argue here, gives us cues that connect with ideas, beliefs and norms that are usually addressed in the UN. There have been studies for other international organizations such as the EU and NATO and post-Yugoslav discourses on those, but the UN has for some reason avoided at least in some of its thematic areas from the FPA perspective. What can be one of the values for further comparative research is comparing these different IO roles of small states within the overall identity-role FP sets, and tracing different dynamics, continuities and changes, and their implications on policies – thus shedding light both on the structural and agential part of the research spectrum.

In the further sections of the paper, we are going to apply this previous identity-role complex and extant typologies on the empirical material in order to contextualize analytical framework, and explain the logics of the identity-role dynamics as well as the implications of their particular foreign policy actions for understanding why roles and identities change or remain constant over some time, and how this fits within the expectations of typical small state foreign policy options.

Analysis of post-Yugoslav identity-role complexes in the United Nations

Setting the stage

The year 2000 is considered “anno mirabilis” for Croatia and Serbia. Both countries managed to get the democratically elected presidents after the decade of authoritarian-styled and nationalist rule by Franjo Tudman (Croatia) and Slobodan Milošević (Serbia). In November 2000, the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, composed of Serbia and Montenegro, was accepted to the

²² Harnisch (2011, 14) references Holsti's (1970, 299) observation that small and new states usually have fewer roles, since they need in a way to build their social relationships first.

membership of the United Nations, eight years after the other former Yugoslav republic. This period was marked by a thorough reorientation in foreign policy of Serbia and its aspiration to re-join the international society, while Croatia has embarked strongly in its bid to become a member of the European Union and NATO.

The United Nations traditionally played an important role for Yugoslav foreign policy that was actively independent during the Cold War, and it was the key forum for its activities together with the membership in the Non-Aligned movement. In the 1990s with the dissolution of Yugoslavia, and the wars 1991-1999, became beneficiary of the UN activities, mostly peacekeeping, and object of its permanent attention – as opposed to the previous decades in which the socialist Yugoslavia was one of the leaders of the NAM and a well renowned actor in development efforts throughout the world. In the 1990s Serbia was under the UN sanctions, and suffered in the non-UN sanctioned NATO intervention (1999), while not being the UN member. On the other hand, the other former Yugoslav republics, including Croatia, saw in the UN the key actor to recognize their statehood, statebuilding, and international status. The narratives and orientations of Serbia and Croatia toward the UN, therefore, diverged significantly during this decade. In the early 2000s, situation changed, but still shows significant differences as to activity, preferences and roles they take within the Organization. This is the subject of our discussion ahead.

The following section utilizes the previous discussion about role identity-complex and takes on to explore the textual reality expressed via the UN General Assembly addresses, made by Serbia and Croatia in the period between 2000 and 2017. Some of the questions that, in a pick and choose manner shall shed light on their respective UN discourses are the following: how countries represent their identity and roles? How are their speeches before the General Assembly structured, and how they frame and present the values, traditions, and achievements? In what terms states frame and express their perceived position within the UN? In what ways states express the sense of “we-ness” within the UNGA? What roles states think they play? How states relate to other states in their speeches, and what are the most common significant and generalized others they refer to (and, as to role prescription)? How those representations of others relate to their stated roles and themes they attach particular importance to? Answers to these questions shall make help us to contextualize the role-identity complexes of Serbia and Croatia, as well as

comparative insights into their role dynamics – their role orientations, role prescriptions (external), and role change, in particular.²³

What place for roles and identities in the UN General Assembly?

Departing from 2000, we find the following picture: Serbia has just shackled off Milošević's authoritarian rule and embraced the opportunity to rejoin the international society, via the UN membership for Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, and its pro-democratic turn was saluted within the UN and around the world. This enthusiasm lasted for several years, while Serbia's relationship with much of the Western countries has been burdened by their decision to recognize Kosovo as independent state in 2008, which has been governed under the UN Security Council Resolution 1244 since 1999.²⁴ Its security policy is commonly termed as „neutral“ , while it negotiates the membership with the EU, and cooperates with NATO under the Partnership for Peace without interest shown in membership. On the other hand, after hosting several UN peacekeeping missions during the 1990s, Croatia has completed its efforts on 'reintegration' of the territories in the east of the country in 1997 (under UNTAES mission that ended in 1998).²⁵ In the 2000, the foreign policy orientation of Croatia has been on the Euro-Atlantic integration, which culminated with memberships in NATO (2009), and the EU (2013)²⁶. In the following section, a total of 35 speeches (17 for Serbia and 18 for Croatia)²⁷ available on the United Nations website have been analyzed in accordance with the questions proposed above.

In the context of our analytical framework, those themes resonate with *sociopolitical cohesion, size of the state and scope of its foreign policy (mostly regional), and views about global themes that are relative to state's activity and path-dependency within the UN system.*

²³ Holsti (1970, 240) summarizes the key role theory concepts as follows: “Thus far, we have four concepts that will help us analyze foreign policy: (1) role performance, which encompasses the attitudes, decisions, and actions governments take to implement (2) their self-defined national role conceptions or (3) the role prescriptions emanating, under varying circumstances, from the alter or external environment. Action always takes place within (4) a position, that is, a system of role prescriptions.”

²⁴ For more on this see Kovačević 2014, Kovačević 2016a (ISA 2016 paper).

²⁵ Šelo Šabić 2014, 74.

²⁶ For the logic and character of Serbia's and Croatia's process of Europeanization, see for example, in Subotić 2011.

²⁷ Federal Republic of Yugoslavia was not a member of the UN in the time between 48th and 55th session of the General Assembly.

Serbia at the UN General Assembly, 2001 – 2017

Serbia's speeches in the UN General Assembly show a rather consistent stylistical and thematic development. The style resembles of the speeches of Socialist Yugoslavia, as to the courteous salutations and observation of the chairs and authority of the General Assembly, which is also noticed in Croatia's speeches. It is also consistent in those speeches that the values of the UN Charter are underlined, especially the principles of international law and sovereign equality of states.

The speeches usually start with the cordial introduction, then the second part reflects on the key global challenges, the third section focuses on presenting the regional context or statement of the results and positions of the country regarding the key global themes. States usually pick several themes, and those are related to their preferences in international relations.

In 2001, Serbian foreign minister Goran Svilanović addressed the re-entry of his country to the international community and the United Nations, via a clear reorientation of foreign policy from that of the Milošević era. Serbia presented itself as a democratic country that is ready to be a responsible member of the international community. Given the recent terrorist attacks of 9/11, Serbia showed solidarity and clear orientation in fighting such threats with other countries. Serbia in principle expressed its support to the United Nations, its reform, international rule of law, and the need for concerted action to address "grave challenges."²⁸ In the first couple of years, an important theme for Serbia was to reaffirm itself as ready to take commitments, and present its readiness to build democratic political institutions, and conduct reforms as part of the pro-European discourse.²⁹ During this whole period of 17 years, the theme that endures is regional cooperation and Serbia's role in "establishing trust and cooperation"³⁰, as part of the broader "regional stability" discourse.³¹ It is notable in the speeches that the theme of Kosovo shapes the discourse as the centre of gravity, or a focusing device – which suggests that Serbia's

²⁸ UNGA, Serbia 2001.

²⁹ UNGA, Serbia 2002.

³⁰ UNGA, Serbia 2002.

³¹ This discourse is common for Serbia and Croatia who attach significance to presenting themselves as „leaders“ of „factors“ or „anchors“ of stability in the region. However, there are differences in the particular concepts and how they represent those in speeches.

NRC can be largely equated with counter-secessionist discourse and focus on the challenges of domestic democratic transition post-2000.

In addition to that, the discourse of the key challenges, risks and threats such as global terrorism or fighting organized crime takes a prominent place in the speeches 2001 -2004. The speeches by foreign minister Vuk Drašković in 2004 and 2005 could be characterized as “single issue” oriented for their treatment of the Kosovo problem, reflecting on the ethnically motivated violence that Kosovo Albanians undertook on 17 March 2004. From 2006, Serbia has renewed independent statehood after Montenegro left the former State Union of Serbia and Montenegro, and the themes that figure strongly relate to Serbia’s role as “responsible state”, “part of the international community,” and factor of regional cooperation in the Balkans. From 2007 onwards, the United Nations is portrayed as more important for Serbia, especially with relation to the Kosovo problematique, and relating it to international law and emphasizing a potential threat to “international legal order”.³² The UN General Assembly has been seen as a place where some international achievements and leadership in international cooperation can be presented, as well as the overall call for UN reform.

The period from 2008 to 2017 has marked a new phase in Serbia’s diplomatic activity and its foreign policy discourse, that can be marked as what James Ker-Lindsay terms as “the foreign policy of countersecession”.³³ The references in Serbia’s speeches refer to the UN charter, sovereign equality, territorial integrity and sovereignty of states.³⁴ Kosovo’s “unilateral declaration of independence” is interpreted as undermining “the nature of international system,” which is a discourse that Serbia uses to securitize this problem on a global level referring to international law and foundations of international relations. The change in approach was notable, and Serbia raised its focus from regional to global level in order to try to act in face of the immediate risk posed to its formal notion of sovereignty and territorial integrity by seeking advisory opinion from the International Court of Justice. This countersecessionist discourse is notably present in the statement by Serbia’s president Boris Tadić who said that “Kosovo’s UDI is an attempt to impose a 19th century outcome to a 21st century challenge.”³⁵ This 2009 speech

³² UNGA, Serbia 2007.

³³ For a thorough analysis of such policies, see Ker-Lindsay 2012.

³⁴ UNGA, Serbia 2008.

³⁵ UNGA, Serbia 2009.

marks a discourse of Serbia's attempt at multivectoral foreign policy, which can be a challenge for small states. Namely, president Tadić spelled out that

“our [Serbia's] engagement with Brussels, Moscow, Washington, and Beijing – the four pillars of Serbia's foreign policy – will continue to be strengthened in the time ahead”.³⁶ This approach is present in the conception of foreign policy in 2017, although the scope and character of such engagement remains in question, and a challenge for policy implementation in an active foreign policy.³⁷

Also, a novelty from 2008 onwards is a reference to the Non-Aligned movement and engaging their membership not to recognize Kosovo's independence. Similar narrative is present in the speech by president Tomislav Nikolić in 2012, marking the continuity of this conception.

“Serbia is a peace-loving country which is open to East, West, North and South, and which has friends all over the world. It stands ready to discuss with everyone all outstanding issues and will make maximum efforts to have all its citizens live well, Kosovo and Metohija included.”³⁸

This move to support the international legal principles and hold to the values of the UN charter is best expressed in this statement by president Tadić:

“Our vision is simple: the universal application of the principles contained in the United Nations Charter, the strengthening of international law and human rights in an increasingly interdependent world; the equitable development of the global economy; and the sustainable management of the environment throughout the world.”³⁹

In the same document, worth noting is a normative reference to “proud nations”, where Serbia attached or ascribed a sort of role to other “non-recognizing UN Member States,” many of which are members of the NAM. In 2010 and 2011, the same narrative continued, with the focus on regional cooperation, further engagement of the NAM members through the 50th anniversary summit and the preparation for the OSCE presidency in 2014-2015. From 2012 to 2016 during the presidency of Tomislav Nikolić, the discourse on the international law and principles of the UN Charter was maintained, with a critical tone about the work of the international court for the

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ For example, this is evident regarding the conflict in Ukraine and the Russian annexation of Crimea, where Serbia balances not to support sanctions to Russia, and support the territorial integrity of UN member states, including Ukraine. On Serbia's geopolitical positioning between East and West and domestic politics, see, for example, Konitzer 2010.

³⁸ UNGA, Serbia 2012.

³⁹ UNGA, Serbia 2009. In 2013, president Tomislav Nikolić stated that „The Republic of Serbia attaches great importance to the United Nations and the activities and cooperation carried out within its framework. We remain true to the Charter of the United Nations and the purposes and principles enshrined therein. We will endeavour, to the extent of our possibilities, to make a contribution to their implementation.“ UNGA, Serbia 2013.

former Yugoslavia (ICTY). Serbia's roles within the UN were presented as contributor to UN peacekeeping, and supporter of UN reform. Among the themes that have been present in the role set are disarmament and arms control as traditional Yugoslav preferences, as well as international peacekeeping and membership in the EU as a strategic goal. Commitments have been met especially as it comes to peacekeeping operations and Serbia indicated preparedness to increase its contribution as peacekeeping nation.⁴⁰

Identity themes connected to the Kosovo problem for Serbia are figuring largely in the speeches, and is connected with the subject of protecting cultural heritage and monasteries of Serbia in Kosovo. This identity narrative that connects Serbian and universal heritage is well illustrated in this 2015 speech:

“Not only Serbian, but also European culture, the world's collective memory, are preserved in Kosovo and Metohija; an important civilizational stride of man on planet Earth is preserved in Kosovo and Metohija. It is therefore important that Serbia continues to be the keeper of its, and world's, cultural treasure, as full member of UNESCO.”⁴¹

In 2015, the notions of human rights and solidarity figured in the speech, relating to refugee and migration crisis and the developments on the so-called “Balkan route.” This was an opportunity to emphasize the positive experience Serbia has had with hosting refugees in the 1990s, and being the country with most IDPs in Europe.⁴² The focus on sustainable development goals has been notable in the discourse.

In 2016 and 2017, it is notable that in the speeches, Serbia's role conceptions were spelled out in less detail, with a notable orientations toward the themes of internal economic development and the problem of Kosovo's independence for Serbia. What is notable is that the discourse about small states is present, as well as references to re-entry of Serbia in international society.

This passage summarizes the previous position:

⁴⁰ UNGA, Serbia 2014, 2015. This peacekeeping narrative figures prominently among the top achievements of Serbia within the UN, together with its membership in the ECOSOC. Also, as a recurrent theme is the effort in countering terrorism at regional level, where Serbia „are seeking to contribute to global and regional efforts aimed at countering terrorism through regional cooperation. In this context, it is of vital importance to make progress on the adoption of a comprehensive convention on international terrorism.“ UNGA, Serbia 2015.

⁴¹ UNGA, Serbia 2015.

⁴² UNGA, Serbia 2015.

“Serbia believes and expresses its satisfaction for the more and more important role of the UN not only in keeping peace and stability, but because of much more important task the Organisation performs to the benefit of mankind today. Each UN reform leading to the strengthening of its role will be supported by Serbia, because it means more discussions, rare use of force and less arrogance in international relations. And therefore, our job is to do everything in order to enable more active role of the UN in processes worldwide.”⁴³

In the next section, we are going to present the key accents from the Croatian speeches at the UN General Assembly, and then conclude the paper with the comparative insights and attempt at possible theorization of these discourses and themes within the role-identity framework.

Croatia and the UN General Assembly, 2000 – 2017

Serbia’s speeches in the UN General Assembly also show a rather consistent stylistical and thematic development. The style resembles of the speeches of Socialist Yugoslavia, as to the courteous salutations and observation of the chairs and authority of the General Assembly, similar to speeches delivered by Serbia. In the speeches that have been delivered in 2000 and 2017, one can find a well elaborated foreign policy conception, that centers on EU and NATO membership for Croatia, as significant others that affect its preferences and roles in international relations. All the analyzed speeches are well focused on the key themes of the General Assembly for the given year, and offer the positions of Croatia on a range of international issues, which is in line with Holsti’s observation that new states tend to develop their relationships within the international society. The statements demonstrate continuity and gradual development of foreign policy positions, and one can trace the evolution of positions, commitments, and roles.

In the 2000 speech delivered by foreign minister Tonino Picula, the key determinants of Croatia’s position in international relations are spelled out with the focus on its “international responsibilities,” stability in Southeast Europe, democratization and reforms, as well as its transformation from “the object” of peacekeeping to “generator of peace and stability in South-East Europe”.⁴⁴ This reference to regional stability is common for both Croatia and Serbia, and it marks a considerable portion of their role set and positioning as small states that see their leading roles in the post-Yugoslav space. Croatia’s international position has been set within the coordinates of EU and NATO membership aspirations at that time. In the subsequent years, Croatia, as other states in the world, focused on the emerging threat from terrorism, after 9/11,

⁴³ UNGA, Serbia 2017, speech by Serbia’s president, Aleksandar Vučić.

⁴⁴ UNGA, Croatia 2000.

and the 2001 speech by its president Stjepan Mesić was rich in normative and “we-ness” approach to finding the common sentiment and orientation after the shocking events from September.⁴⁵ There are references to the work of the UN Counter-Terrorism Committee (UNSC Res 1373), as well as noting the efforts of the UN Secretary-General “to move from a culture of reaction to one of prevention.”⁴⁶ It seems that in 2003 speech Croatia presented its position on the reform of the UN Security Council, echoing what in principle was also mentioned in 2000. This theme has found its place in other speeches by 2017, and seems to be a normative position that Croatia took, as part of its successful candidacy for a non-permanent Security Council seat in 2008-2009. Noting its internal problems and the legacy of the Yugoslav wars, Croatia uses its “wealth of experience in post-war reconstruction” to seek a “donor” role in the aftermath of the US intervention in Iraq. This indicates the development of the conception of ally for which Croatia has been preparing as part of its bid for membership in NATO that was accepted in 2009. The international peacekeeping role is also pointed out, and it is a permanent reference in every speech of Croat representatives by 2017.

The normative orientation of Croatia and its readiness to take international roles that are conferred to it is expressed in this paragraph from 2003:

“Croatia will continue to actively participate in regional, European and worldwide initiatives and organizations, respecting all its international obligations. For us the United Nations remains a central point for resolving problems in international relations and for promoting the interests of mankind.”⁴⁷

The foreign policy narrative of Croatia in the forthcoming years indicated continuity, with gradual building up of the positions that have been marked in previous speeches. In 2004, the EU candidate status was granted, and the Euro-Atlantic discourse prevails in the statement. At regional level, the role of “model country in South-East Europe” was referred to, and “the prospect of EU membership has proved to be the best incentive for the countries of Central and southeast Europe to implement comprehensive political, economic, institutional and democratic reforms.”⁴⁸ Among the other global themes that Croatia refers to are disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation, as well as “Responsibility to Protect”. Also, Croatia sought a membership in

⁴⁵ UNGA, Croatia 2001.

⁴⁶ UNGA, Croatia 2002.

⁴⁷ UNGA, Croatia 2003.

⁴⁸ UNGA, Croatia 2004.

the Peacebuilding Commission, juxtaposed to its wartime and post-conflict experience.⁴⁹ In 2008, Croatia started serving its two-year term on the UN Security Council. References to transformation from peacekeeping beneficiary to peacekeeper are reaffirmed. In this sense, despite a small state identity, it is notable that Croatia has made an attempt at discursive status building, that is shown here:

“However, while Croatia increases its contribution to global progress and takes a more assertive role in the international arena, it also remains active in, and committed to, fostering stability in South-East Europe. Our membership in the Security Council and our advanced phase of integration in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the European Union has not led us to turn back on our neighbors. On the contrary, it has enabled us to redouble our efforts in preserving stability and maximizing the benefits of peace.”⁵⁰

The former can be seen as a statement of NRC conception in which the ego-component communicates with the significant others such as the NATO and EU through the UN forum. The values that are invoked in the speeches are usually “responsibility, solidarity and good faith.” On the other hand, the use of references to the Yugoslav legacy is almost nonexistent. A rare reference to the Yugoslav legacy in the UN was made, by mentioning a Croat who was the first president of the World Health Assembly in 1948.

The subsequent speeches were dealing with the global economic crisis (2009), and remind us on the speech from 2001 delivered by president Mesić, that appealed on global consciousness. The statements from 2010 point to the interest Croatia shows in women rights and commend the founding of UN Women. On the regional level, the bilateral border dispute with Slovenia is addressed. The discourse of economic crisis is echoed in 2011, as well as the renewed focus on Croatia’s role as “anchor of peace, security, and stability” in Southeast Europe. The reference to transformation from “donor-recipient” to “donor-provider”, together with the update on the commitment to peacekeeping, and membership in the PBC, ECOSOC, and other candidatures for UN posts.

The role of the regional leader, Croatia continues to shore up in 2012, stating that “we do not intend to assume a mentoring role in the region, but we stand ready to share our experience and contribute constructively to the reforms in the neighboring countries based on democracy and

⁴⁹ UNGA, Croatia 2005, 2006.

⁵⁰ UNGA, Croatia 2008.

European values”,⁵¹ which can be understood in the context of Croatia’s membership in the EU from 2013, and its attempt to symbolically leave the region of the Western Balkans, but still project its influence. In 2014, shows interest in the themes of Ukraine crisis, ISIS, NPT, and role of women in sustainable development and post-conflict setting. In the 2015 speech, the themes of refugee crisis and the utterances of “we-ness”, and framing the question as “multidimensional”, requiring “multilateral solutions,” and asking for “a consensus within the EU.”⁵² The themes such as peacekeeping, climate change, fighting ISIS, and disarmament (nuclear and cluster munitions) have been addressed. On the other hand, another affirmative use of small state discourse of ‘punching above one’s weight’ has been noted:

“Never judge a country or a person by its size. Do not look at the numbers, do not limit yourself by vocabulary or legal terms or boundaries or borders. Size wise, Croatia is at the 124th place in the world, but we are determined that our international presence and relevance go way beyond our size. We have a geographic location that keeps us at the global table, sometimes against our will but mostly by our choice.”⁵³

In 2016, the themes such as migration, demographic dynamics and youth unemployment have been put into fore by Croatia in the context of the Sustainable Development Goals. Disarmament, deradicalization, and R2P have been mentioned, together with a focus on Croatia’s candidacy for the Human Rights Council (2017-2019), which suggests the continuity in actively contributing to the work of the UN bodies. In 2017, Croatia mostly underlined and reviewed its positions within the UN in the context of the 25th anniversary of its membership in the UN, with regional stability and utilizing the membership in the EU and NATO as key leverage for this role through “transferring our knowledge and promoting the integration” of the countries in the EU.

In the following section, we are going to discuss the context and the analysis of the two cases and interpret them in light of the identity-role framework.

Conclusion

The exploration of roles and identities, and more precisely, their representations within the United General Assembly is a novel method, as suggested by some recent research, and this

⁵¹ UNGA, Croatia 2012.

⁵² UNGA, Croatia 2015.

⁵³ UNGA Croatia 2015, 7.

paper has built on that assumption and went to empirically check how foreign policy preferences are expressed within the role conceptions that are presented as texts leaders present in the UN General Assembly annual debate. Those preferences are here noted as themes, or specific policies or interests that are informed by certain identities and roles that provide for a more or less continuous foreign policy narratives. Those narratives have been explored on the cases of Serbia and Croatia, and their appearances in the General Debate. By studying the total of 35 speeches by their heads of state and government, and foreign ministers in the period between 2000 and 2017, this paper identified the markers of coherence, continuity, or changes in their narratives, as shown in more details in case studies. The UNGA discourse of those two states is probably the closest we can get to the systematic opportunity to research the roles of states in international society, and particularly when it comes to the roles that concern global-level themes. Small states have usually focused on their immediate, internal subjects, or themes that are of interest for their regional environment. However, their interest in the global themes is not lacking, but it can be expressed in a manner that is characterized as either active or passive policy approach.

In the language of role theory, small state activity can range from activist to neutral, to indifferent positions, and in the post-Yugoslav context we have examples of all these varieties. Serbia, for example, has led for most of the period after 2000 a policy that saw the UN as an arena for its countersecessionist policy vis-a-vis Kosovo, while Croatian narrative tells the story of gradual statebuilding and buildup of status that is presented through interest in engagement with the UN bodies. On the other hand, Serbia has started to catch up with these activities after 2008, in light of its Kosovo policy, and such activist diplomacy was also complemented with membership of ECOSOC, and presidency of the UN General Assembly by Vuk Jeremic, Serbia's former foreign minister. Croatia has been a member of the UNSC in 2008-2009, and thus confirmed its interest in peacekeeping, as well as by joining the Peacebuilding Commission. Similarly, Serbia has also reactivated its peacekeeping profile, and connected this with the former Yugoslav legacy. On the other hand, Croatia has shied away from the connections with the socialist Yugoslavia period.

Both states see themselves as small, but try to act to punch above their weight. The difference is in that Croatia keeps its policies in an integrationist mode by EU and NATO membership, while

Serbia is an EU candidate country that proclaimed military neutrality policy which keeps it between the EU/NATO nexus and its affectionate ties with Russia which provides support for Serbia's Kosovo policy at the UN Security Council.

When it comes to state identities of the two states, Serbia is a small state with a middle power mindset, if we take its sense of the continuity with the former Yugoslav state. This relationship is not completely clear, but it has been kept alive through its UN foreign policy narrative, especially in the period between 1992 and 2000. Today, there seem to be some specific issue-areas such as peacekeeping and the UN policies in general where this legacy can be useful, but it has to be rethought and repurposed for the changed power and identity constellations of the new post-Yugoslav reality, and the changing international relations. On the other hand, Croatia portrays a small state identity, aiming at status building within the EU/NATO framework, and the projection of such elevated status role toward the post-Yugoslav space, within the discourse of regional cooperation and stability. This discourse can sometimes cause clashes or competition between Serbia and Croatia, and this is mostly evident on the trope of the "leader of the region". However, Croatia's role is now somewhat liminal, given it has "left" the Western Balkans, but it seeks the leading role and influence by normative and experience-based sharing with the former Yugoslav states, including Serbia.

The UNGA narratives of the two states show similarity in some issue areas, such as peacekeeping and regional cooperation, but their role performances may differ. Croatia takes the institutional support and gives role ascription from the EU and NATO, and uses that capital to negotiate its place and influence in the region. On the other hand, Serbia's aspiration to regional leadership is based on its relative size and power, not that much on the internationally recognized status. Both states show roles of promoters of multilateralism through regional cooperation and initiatives, as well as supporters of the mainstream UN causes. Croatia's roles are now closely tied to the EU and NATO membership, as ally, while Serbia plays the role of active neutral, with its concept of "four pillars" which, however, may pose challenge of implementation and role performance for a small state, with its limitations. When it comes to significant others in role conceptions, Croatia now sees NATO, EU, and Serbia as its others, while in the case of Serbia, those are the EU, problems connected to Kosovo, as well as the regional situation in the Balkans which may link the dynamics with Croatia in this picture. Those roles are informed by some

deep seated identity constructions, and it is the matter of accentuation of some identity features that can give different meanings to those roles, and vice versa. It seems that in the case of Serbia, its present multidimensional and neutral approach to the dominant security alliances in Europe is partly inspired by the former Yugoslav policy of non-alignment, but it remains a doubt about its durability and sustainability in the context of multipolarization. In the case of Croatia, it has no external burdens, but its statebuilding process is connected with the class of people who fought for the country, which already hinders its democratic progress. Thus, one has also to look at sociopolitical cohesion of the two societies, and seek for possible grievances connected to national identity, and nationalism in order to understand the driving forces behind the contemporary processes of role formation, particularly in the regional setting. When it comes to the global level, both states show tendency to adopt the rhetoric of the key challenges, such as climate change and sustainable development, but it remains unclear to what degree those subjects can affect or change the conceptions that are still largely informed by nationalist set of ideas.

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