

Ukrainian State-Building Redux

Triangular Role Performance Under Kuchma

Vladislav Strnad, Nik Hynek

The article systematically analyses the Ukrainian behaviour within the EU-Ukraine-Russia triangle during the presidency of Leonid Kuchma (1994-2004). As it is shown, this was a period to which the origins of many recent, and tumultuous, developments can be traced. We utilise an interdisciplinary Foreign Policy Analysis role theoretical framework, and through the means of triangulated content analysis apply it to the empirical material containing, inter alia, primary data in the Ukrainian language. As we demonstrate empirically, Ukraine followed a certain behavioural pattern of roles based on its national characteristics, collective cognition, discursive uses of historical developments, and specific internal political, economic and social considerations. An extensive analysis of presidential speeches reveals that the prominent role of 'Internal Development' had fluctuating levels of intensity and multiple manifestations. Taking advantages of conceptual vocabulary and theoretical subtleties associated with role theory, we conclude that the performed research of these sets of behavioural norms and their dynamics allows for better understanding of Ukrainian collective identity and behaviour within this strategic complex.

Keywords: Ukraine, Russia, European Union, role theory, strategic balancing, foreign policy, content analysis.

Vladislav Strnad, Nik Hynek. Ukrainian State-Building Redux: Triangular Role Performance Under Kuchma. *Central European Journal of International and Security Studies* 13, no. 1: 12–36.



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Since the declaration of independence in 1991, Ukraine (UA) has built its statehood and national identity on a complex, and oft-contradictory, set of economic and political conditions.¹ Ever since, the country has sought a viable development strategy and geopolitical positionality. Largely, it has carried an image of a problematic entity in wider European politics, with a notably unstable domestic political scene.² Observers have pointed out that the Ukrainian society has not sufficiently consolidated around its identity, and that the external position of the country has been incoherent and inconsistent at best.³ In addition, the elite's attitude has evolved from nationalist romanticism to political pragmatism in oscillating between the two notable centres of geopolitical influence - the EU and Russia (RU).⁴

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Within this geopolitical triangle (EU-UA-RU), Ukraine – as an actor on the international scene – performs a certain set of roles based on its national characteristics, historical development, and specific internal political, economic and social situations. These roles represent social positions that provide a state with a perception of identity and selfhood which is crucial for its sense of purpose in the international community.⁵ Essentially, 'international social order is what states make of it, and thus what roles they play'.⁶

Through the application of the interdisciplinary role theoretical perspective, this article analyses foreign-political behaviour which Ukraine performed in the triangle EU-Ukraine-Russia during the Leonid Kuchma's presidency. The Foreign Policy Analysis role theoretical framework provides a meaningful analytical tool⁷ for understanding and explaining national foreign policies due to its rich language⁸ for a conceptualization of agent's 'socially recognized positions in the world and the normative structures of expectations'.⁹ In addition, this approach bridges the gap between agency and structure, and considers material and ideational factors as determinants of state's foreign policy behaviour.¹⁰ We argue that the systematic research of these sets of behavioural norms (roles) and their dynamics through an extensive empirical analysis enables us to better understand Ukrainian identity and behaviour within this strategic complex, the EU-Ukraine-Russia triangle.

Specifically, the article analyses the roles of Ukraine during the presidential period of the second President of independent Ukraine, Leonid Kuchma (1994-2004). This decade was selected due to its richness in far-reaching political and economic changes and reforms which

were accompanied by initial prospects of Ukrainian transition towards liberal democracy and democratization. However, democratic regression, patronage, growing corruption, and the strong authoritarian tendencies of Kuchma sabotaged this development. Therefore, by the end of his second term, it was possible to define Ukraine as a hybrid state with a competitive authoritarian regime.¹¹ In fact, many of the current internal and external problems of Ukraine have their origin in this decade, which makes such an analysis timely and important.

During Kuchma's presidency, Ukraine survived a severe economic crisis,¹² adopted a new constitution,¹³ and also established a political scene and a political opposition.¹⁴ Moreover, the country strived to enter the European Economic Area and actively participated in European security policy as well. It ambitiously endorsed membership in the EU and NATO,¹⁵ concurrently, it restored relations with Russia.¹⁶ However, due to the failure of meeting the agreed reforms, Ukraine was neither included on the candidate list of the EU or NATO.¹⁷ As a consequence, UA-EU relations had cooled down and were not intensified until after the Orange Revolution in 2004.

Kuchma's presidency was an era of passive foreign policy. He promoted a multi-vector foreign policy: (1) balancing between the strategic European integration course, while concurrently deepening its strategic partnership with Russia; and (2) balancing between neutrality policy and the wider Euro-Atlantic cooperation. Indeed, relative profit-seeking and the entrenchment of Kuchma and his collaborators in the position of power were important driving forces as well.¹⁸ For a long time, this policy served as an instrument for the protection of the state's independence. Furthermore, it had a significant impact on the country's development, on the foreign influence and the relations with other actors in the triangle of the EU-Ukraine-Russia.¹⁹

The analysis of roles performed by Ukraine during Kuchma's presidency is conducted through the application of a role theory framework developed by Kalevi Holsti.²⁰ Its essential assumption is that states are actors on the world stage that operate consistently in specific roles they identify with. Main creators and definers of these roles are leaders who are following subjective perceptions of their nations.²¹ By nature of the Ukrainian political system, which provides the President with substantial powers, as well for historical developments of this presidency, we consider Kuchma himself to be the main source of the roles produced and performed during the researched period. Holsti's take

on role theory puts emphasis on strong leaders as facilitators of countries' roles, which is more suitable for this researched case.²²

Our data set in the Ukrainian language consist of eleven crucial speeches by President Kuchma delivered in the Ukrainian parliament – the Verkhovna Rada. They represent his perspective on the situation in the country and the regional political, economic and strategic complex. These speeches address the internal and external situation of Ukraine and assess past domestic and foreign policy moves. Additionally, they offer key coordinates for the subsequent activities of the government and public administration. In other words, these documents related to problems of the state and society as well as the critical issues of the nation's life.²³

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Role dynamics were studied by means of systematic content analysis.²⁴ Using the combination of inductive and deductive coding, this research technique provides 'objective, systematic, and quantitative description of the manifest content of communication.'²⁵ Importantly, to make this research more robust, the analysis is triangulated by qualitative analysis of additional relevant primary text documents such as further political speeches, as well as texts of treaties and declarations.

Theoretical part

Role theory as a foreign policy framework

Roles are social positions which provide actors with a relatively stable sense of identity and selfhood. They are crucial for actors' perceptions of purpose in the international community²⁶ and define 'who does what, when, and how'.²⁷ Without them, states 'cannot order their environments and consequently find social behaviour intolerantly difficult to understand and manage'.²⁸ Roles are necessary for the creation of foreign policy preferences, as '[t]he articulation of a national role betrays preferences, operationalizes an image of the world, triggers expectations, and influences the definition of the situation and of the available options'.²⁹

These definitions follow the logic of role theory, which is an analytical framework developed by Kalevi Holsti. It does not represent an individual theory, but rather 'a family of theories, an approach, or perspective'.³⁰ It assumes that states are actors who operate consistently with specific roles with which they identify themselves.³¹ Unlike analytical and prescriptive foreign policy studies based on terms such as national preference and national interest, role theory uses national

role conceptions, which share some resemblance with concepts such as identity, self-image, and norms,³² nevertheless they are quite distinct.³³

The core part of role theory is national role conception (NRC) defining what 'we want and what we do as a result of who we think we are, want to be, and should be'.³⁴ It represents policymakers' perception of 'the appropriate orientations or functions of their state'.³⁵ Essentially, these are inherently shared beliefs and views regarding 'the proper role and purpose of one's own state as a social collectivity in the international area'.³⁶ Despite a considerable degree of elasticity in principle, these intersubjectively shared constructions indicate a degree of stability.³⁷

Actors have several different roles in the system and its subsystem³⁸ that vary in meaning and situation for which they are relevant.³⁹ Roles, as social positions, are constituted by internal (Ego) and external (Alter) expectations (prescriptions) which provide the actor with an identity, create an idea of the meaning and the purpose of its existence. A set of roles can create role sets⁴⁰ which can be defined as a 'web of mutual roles' in the system.⁴¹ Role sets especially entail a potential for conflict within a role (intra-role conflicts) and between roles (inter-role conflicts).⁴² An important part of role theory are role prescriptions, which Holsti defines 'as norms, beliefs and preferences concerning the performance of any individual in a social position relative to individuals occupying other positions'.⁴³ Prescriptions and conceptions affect role performance that reflects the actual foreign policy behaviour regarding decisions and actions.⁴⁴ A systematic analysis of presidential addresses and other speeches in a semi-presidential system is seen as a particularly suitable research strategy to ascertain role conceptions and their foreign-political significance.

The application of role theory on Kuchma's Ukraine

The positionality of Ukraine within the strategic triangle, EU-UA-RU, is related to the country's national role conceptions. These, in turn, were the results of a heterogeneous bundle of national(ist) ideas related to the internal and regional situation of the country (see Figure 1). This positionality began already in the period of the Ukrainian declaration of independence. Creating a consistent foreign policy strategy in the context of new geopolitical priorities was an important moment in the development of Ukrainian statehood.⁴

The nationalist vision of the role Ukraine should play and a nationalist concept of the Ukrainian position, which it 'deserved' from the

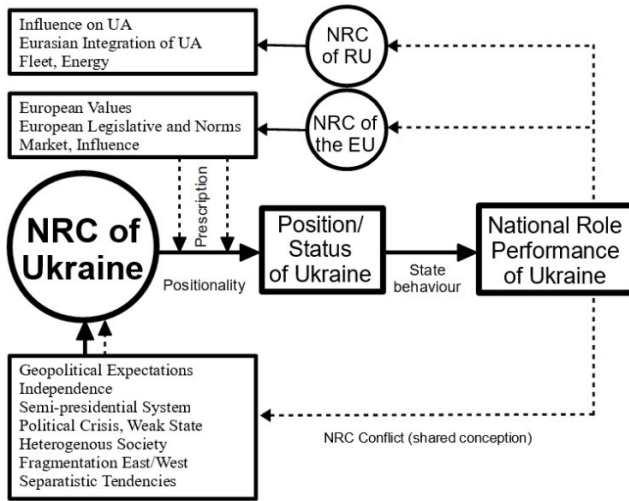


Fig 1 The forming of Ukrainian NRC and its positionality in the triangle EU-UA-RU.

geopolitical and historical point of view was strongly influenced by the newly received status of a sovereign entity. Therefore, the defence of Ukrainian independence became a priority. Closer integration or a membership of Ukraine in international structures was considered as a loss of sovereignty and ability to play an important role externally.⁴⁶ Important components of the Ukrainian NRC formation were internal political and social conditions. The development of Ukraine's NRC reflected the process of statehood formation. Imperfections in the semi-presidential model of the state with persistent elements of authoritarian control lead to corruption and the participation of economic elites (oligarchs) in the governmental structures.⁴⁷ Thus, political decisions were often based on personal interests and not pursued from the perspective of national interest factoring in wider and more universal public goods.⁴⁸

Another important source of the NRC's formation was the multi-ethnic composition of the Ukrainian society, and fragmentation of the country on the pro-European North-West, and pro-Russian South-East.⁴⁹ Every Ukrainian re-calibration of leanings, however temporary, towards the EU, or Russia, caused social unrest. Therefore, the Ukrainian leaders relied on the posture of strategic hedging, discursively referred to as neutrality (i.e. out-of-block approach) or multi-vector foreign policy.⁵⁰ Hence, to maintain the status of an

equal player between two rivals, primary entities, it was necessary for Ukraine to have an adequate economic and military potential, and room to manoeuvre. Simultaneously as the strategic hedging served the interests of the power elite, Ukraine's lack of focus on delivery of public goods to its society strongly contributed to undermining of its position, internally and externally alike.

The main document, which specifies this internal and external policy of Ukraine is the Constitution. In accordance with the then-new Constitution of Ukraine (28 June 1996), Article 18 describes the Ukrainian foreign policy as an activity 'aimed at ensuring national interests and security'. Cooperation with the international community should be 'peaceful', 'mutually beneficial' and based on 'generally accepted principles and norms of international law'.⁵¹ Equally important is Chapter V stating that the President has the dominant position in the country. The head of the state is a guarantor of sovereignty, territorial integrity, and respect for the Constitution, rights and freedoms of citizens. The President makes decisions in matters of national security and independence, represents the state in international relations, administers the foreign policy of the state, negotiates and concludes international agreements.⁵²

Based on the constitutionally and de facto strong position of the President in the researched period, what Wilson⁵³ even termed 'hyper-presidentialism', Kuchma is considered the source of Ukrainian national role conception guiding the roles performed by the state in the 1994-2004 period.

Methodological premises

Data collection

This article investigates role dynamics during the Kuchma presidency. Since Kuchma is considered to be the primary source of the roles during this period, it was necessary to choose primary data appropriately highlighting his beliefs, attitudes and perspectives and in turn leading to the formulation and performance of roles. Through purposive sampling, eleven speeches by the President were selected for the analysis of Ukrainian role dynamics through the decade.⁵⁴

These speeches represented official documents by the Head of State. They featured economic, political and social developments and Ukraine's domestic and foreign policy situation. Texts were either sent to the *Verkhovna Rada* of Ukraine or were personally delivered. Either

way, they became valid official documents and served as the main orientation for the work of the government, ministries and other central executive bodies. These addresses were accompanied by drafts of appropriate laws/projects preferentially discussed by the Parliament.⁵⁵ Specifically, the analysed sample contains two inaugural speeches, eight annual speeches and one speech devoted to the European selection of Ukraine. The introductory part of the speech (the speech of the President in the Parliament) and the section dealing with foreign policy and foreign economies were used for content analysis excavating the role dynamics. The analysis of the situation in the year 1995 is obtained from the repeated summary in the rest of the analysed speeches as this was the closest way to bringing it to the standard of the other examined years.

Data analysis

For successful analysis, it was necessary to select and conceptualize the researched roles. In 1970, Holsti outlined the use of the role theory concept, together with the roles of 71 countries during the Cold War period. By using content analysis, he processed 972 sources and derived 17 roles (e.g. Regional protector, Mediator-integrator, Bridge, Faithful ally) that various states performed. For the purposes of this article, the role of 'Internal Development' based on Holsti's conceptualisation was selected. This role suggests that 'most efforts of the government should be directed toward problems of internal development'.⁵⁶ The selection of the role is based on (1) preliminary abduction analysis of presidential speeches: we searched for role with the greatest relative salience; (2) the selected role is highly relevant for Ukrainian state-building and protection of narrowly defined power interests; (3) we prioritized an analytical depth and rigorousness of the analysis (the role is analysed in three steps, see below).

Dynamics of Internal Development was analysed through the application of content analysis. In general, content analysis can be used for 'making replicable and valid inferences from texts [...] to the contexts of their use'⁵⁷. It enables a systematic, objective and quantitative description of the manifest content of communication through inductively or deductively generated code lists. The frequency of a passage or a word can determine the importance of specific content.⁵⁸

Research design

The role of Internal Development was processed through a three-step analysis. Firstly, we conducted a chronological analysis of the researched documents. This enabled us to put the role into a context. Essentially, the first round of coding was ensured by this advancement as we inductively allocated keywords relevant to each of the roles. During the next round of coding, these keywords were differentiated into categories based on inductive reasoning, as well as in relation to the theoretical model.

In the second part, we applied content analysis by which we quantitatively processed the documents based on the codebook created in the first part. It was necessary to adjust the frequencies of keywords (see Equation 1) as the analysed documents differ significantly in their word count (analysed texts varied between 3,092 – 21,016 words). To obtain these adjusted frequencies for each of the conditions, we calculated adjustment scores, which represent conditions that characterize the internal or external activities of the state during performance of a particular role. This approach indicated how intensively a certain document deals with a particular condition.

$$\text{adjusted frequency (a)} = \frac{\text{role condition (r)}}{\text{adjustment score (x)}}$$

Equation 1

The final part of the analysis shows the dynamics of the role 'Internal Development'. Data for this part were drawn from the previous chronological and content analysis.

The role of 'Internal Development'

The role of 'Internal Development' includes domestic political, economic and social development of the state. Performance of this role entails that, in certain situations, the state has a priority to fulfil its core functions and to address internal problems.⁵⁹ Examples span functioning of the economy and state institutions, providing the necessary life minimum, ensuring safety and protection of its citizens. This role is fostered by the 1996 Ukrainian Constitution stating that 'a person's life and health, honour and dignity, inviolability and security' in Ukraine has 'the highest social value' (Article 3). Likewise, the state must ensure and guarantee the 'rights and freedoms' of citizens, must create conditions to guarantee everyone a 'right to work' (Article 43), 'social protec-

tion', 'state social insurance' to secure a 'living minimum' (Article 46), free 'healthcare' (Article 49) and 'education' (Article 53). In brief, the performance of Internal Development refers to internal political and economic activity of the state, which is generally a priority, and more so during the state-building phase.

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Chronological analysis of Kuchma's perspective towards the domestic political, economic and social development of Ukraine (1994-2004)

Leonid Kuchma became the President of Ukraine during a period of instability and uncertainty. Inflation in Ukraine was among the highest in the world, its foreign debt and unemployment were dramatically rising, and the technological and infrastructural conditions were dilapidating. The stagnating economy, combined with its social, scientific and technical underdevelopment, was slowing its recovery. Essentially, the country did not have 'real resources to improve the living standards of the people'.⁶⁰ During this period, Ukraine experienced transition 'from a centrally-planned to a market economy'.⁶¹ As Kuchma argued, this transition required a direction towards radical economic reforms. It was essential to stabilise and kick-start the economy, reform the banking system, start with economic privatisation, develop and nurture high-tech potential, and to adopt a new agrarian policy. Kuchma was committed to leading Ukraine into a new stage of development that either 'provide[d] a chance to survive and to ensure a dignified life' or would 'definitely throw the state far back', depriving it of the 'one last chance to keep up with modern civilisation'.⁶²

The majority of the Ukrainian citizens neither 'want[ed] a return to the old system of social values, nor did they support the political extremes'.⁶³ The nation was disappointed by the failures in the social sphere and by constant political conflicts between different levels of the government. For this reason, Kuchma argued that priorities of the Ukrainian development must match a 'broader spectrum of social interests' and reflect the 'historical experiences of the people, their mentality and traditions'.⁶⁴ Discursively, he presented market reforms, not as a self-goal, but rather a tool to increase the welfare of the people.

President Kuchma emphasised the hopelessness of rescuing the economy by the 'old methods'. Hence, Ukraine needed a new socio-economic and political strategy. The 1994 presidential program, 'The way of radical economic reforms', defined the basic logic of de-

velopment and mechanisms to overcome the crisis. Specifically, it outlined six basic directions of reforming the state: 1) stabilisation of the financial-monetary system (the establishment of the national currency Hryvnia); 2) reform of the property relationship (privatization); 3) economic liberalization; 4) agrarian reform; 5) maintenance of a hi-tech potential; and 6) support of the needed parts of society.⁶⁵

Furthermore, he assumed that political parties would support his policies; otherwise, Ukraine would not have a chance to rescue the economy, and, more dramatically, 'to preserve its statehood'. Equally important, he argued that the radical left-wing forces should not hope for the revival of the Soviet Union because the 'loss of statehood is equal to a civil war'. According to Kuchma, Ukraine was 'and remain[ed] a sovereign and independent state', however, the question was its democratic, social and legal extent.⁶⁶ The President defined social issues as the top priority, in particular, to stop the catastrophic decline of living standards, to prevent mass unemployment and the progressive decay of the social sphere. Likewise, he argued that Ukraine must urgently address the issue of growing corruption and crime. At the same time, various unified (language, learner, cultural) policies contributed to a further division of the nation into the West and the East.⁶⁷

The efforts of the first Ukrainian President to strengthen statehood and economic independence through 'the cardinal refocusing of politics from the East to the West' were considered by Kuchma as one of the reasons which led to the critical situation of Ukraine.⁶⁸ 'The anti-Russian actions in politics, usually lead to anti-Ukrainian economic consequences [...] It is necessary to negotiate [with Russia], steady and solidly', argued Kuchma,⁶⁹ with strategic-hedging considerations in mind. Indeed, there was a persistence of Ukrainian-Russian relations from the times of the common Union State economy. Ukrainian incomplete technological cycles, heavy industry or the military-industrial complex could not have functioned without the import of Russian raw materials and technology. This was deepened by strong scientific-technical, cultural and human ties between these two countries. Last but not least, there were unresolved questions about the division of the joint debt, common borders and armed forces, as well as the question of the (nature of) presence of the Russian Federation's (RF) Black Sea Fleet in Crimea.⁷⁰ The significance of this relationship was underlined by Ukraine's complete dependence on RF's energy resources.⁷¹

During the first term of Kuchma, Ukraine managed to form the main attributes of the national economy: monetary, financial, credit, taxation, customs as well as banking. In 1995, the reform of price liberalization was adopted, and the reform in 1996 relatively stabilized the exchange rates. Consequently, it led to some growth in industrial production and investments. The conditions of foreign trade activities improved, and the volume of exports increased. In addition, enterprises underwent re-structuralising and started to adapt to competitive market conditions. Given these developments, in June 1996, the EU recognised the status of Ukraine as a country with a transition economy.⁷²

According to Kuchma, the economic situation was ‘controllable’. Nevertheless, it remained ‘challenging’ due to the political conflicts, financial crisis, the loss of businesses and entire sectors, and increasing the budget deficit.⁷³ Consequently, Kuchma perceived the integration of Ukrainian economy into the ‘international economic space’ as vital. This signified the acceleration of ‘solving the essential priority tasks from the previous period of development’, evolution and innovation of the economy. According to the President, the 1998 economic situation showed ‘signs of a positive development’, and in 1999, there were even ‘signs of economic stabilisation’.⁷⁴ Nevertheless, Kuchma admitted that Ukraine had not reached the accepted model of the democracy yet. The ‘low responsiveness of the state’, imbalance and rivalry between the bodies of state power, lack of sense of belonging to the Ukrainian population, and separatist sentiment in some regions were some of the factors, which limited the development and democratisation of the state.⁷⁵

In 1998, Ukraine decided to follow the ‘European model of development’ and adopted the law on the Strategy of Ukrainian Integration into the European Union.⁷⁶ Therefore, the ‘European choice’ became the basis for all economic, political and social reforms. Based on this model of development, the country’s objective was to ‘socially reorient its economic policy’ and build an ‘effective socially-oriented market economy’.⁷⁷ This reform strategy for the period 2000-2004 was elaborated on in the 1999 presidential electoral programme. Stabilisation and sustainable growth of the economy, reforms of the state administration and emphasis on strong social policy counted among its priorities.⁷⁸

The positive impact of the reforms on the national economy was still seen as insufficient. The financial system was not robust enough

to be competitive and structurally reconstructed. Besides, the agricultural sector was in a critical state, the profitability of industry and labour productivity was poor, and the long decline in production made it impossible to achieve tangible improvements in social policy. From 1994 to 1999, the standard of living was on a decline.⁷⁹ To obtain resources, it was maintained that Ukraine needed to enhance its competitiveness. As a result, innovation and modernisation of its economy, development of information technology, reforms of the energy, transit and the agrarian sector were necessary. Kuchma argued that market mechanisms were insufficient, and the state would need to actively stimulate the key sectors. He argued for a 'strong state' activating its 'regulatory functions' while simultaneously maintaining the market vector.⁸⁰

Supposedly, at the end of the century, Ukraine established the foundations of a modern state system. State power was based on the principle of power division, parliamentarism, an independent judiciary and regional government. Ukraine also had the foundations of civil society, and its culture was discursively seen as the basis for national spiritual development.⁸¹ Even though the year 2000 neither became a turning point in social relations nor a year of a 'real improvement in the welfare of the population masses', Ukraine made progress in its development. In a relatively short time, the country was said to have transitioned from 'a fraction of the former Soviet Union' into a 'self-sufficient organism' with its functioning economy, financial and monetary system, armed forces, political and cultural-educational institutions.⁸²

From another perspective, wide-scale reforms represented obstacles of the unreformed political system. State power was neither coordinated/transparent nor controllable, and the judicial system was not in line with EU norms and standards. Adoption of laws in the Parliament was often blocked by conflicts and dissensions. Moreover, there was an apparent lack of legal basis for various civic associations, trade unions and organisations.⁸³ The lack of competitiveness of the economy prevailed as the key unresolved problem. There was a continuous lack of innovation, favourable investment and business climate. Kuchma proposed greater openness of the economy to the East and the West simultaneously, exactly in line with the strategy of hedging. He sought to stimulate competitiveness and profit from foreign investments.⁸⁴ Therefore, both presidential speeches from April and May 2002 were structured in this context.

The speech 'European Choice - Strategy of economic and social development in Ukraine until the year 2011' offered 'a complex of systemic reforms' to ensure the establishment of a 'socially oriented market economy of the European type'.⁸⁵ In the transition towards a market economy, Ukraine was struggling with a lack of experience and qualified personnel. Conditions for financial assistance from foreign countries according to Kuchma were not always adequate for objective circumstances and specifics of the ongoing transformation processes. The economy was prioritised at the expense of institutional and social reforms during the development.

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Conditions within the state provided the possibility of creating oligarchic capital, which penetrated into the state administration. Corruption remained a significant problem. There was a lack of political will to break the connections between oligarchic capital and the state bureaucracy, with an ostensible aim to restrict the grey economy and the outflow of the capital abroad.⁸⁶ The President reiterated the importance of the state's power and 'regulatory functions' while keeping the 'market vector'.⁸⁷ According to Kuchma, Ukraine became a 'fully-fledged entity of the international community' by 2002 and entered into the 'second phase of its development' modelled on the European social and political standard. 'Full and equal' membership of Ukraine in the EU was seen as crucial in this context. An important task identified for the second phase was to 'ensure the safety and protection of the state and its citizens', including protection of borders and national interests, environmental protection and public safety. Ukraine wanted to become 'a democratic constitutional state with a socially-oriented market economy'.⁸⁸

Economic growth continued to compensate for the losses caused by the crisis from previous years. Ukraine lacked a legal framework for an efficient and transparent management of enterprises and joint stock companies. However, stabilisation and economic growth did not bring an improvement of living standards. Shadow capital penetrated all spheres of social life and the state's apparatus - shadow politics, shadow lobbying, shadow elections and personnel policies, contracts, medical services.⁸⁹

Economically, the year 2003 was the most successful. GDP grew as well as industry, export and import, investment, competitiveness, macroeconomic stabilisation of the Ukrainian economy and innovative potential. This signified an 'entry into the community of devel-

oped countries'. Thus, European integration was conditional for the continuation of reforms. Its success was dependent on 'political will' and 'consolidation of the society'.⁹⁰ The dominant feature of the 2003 development was political reform and the changes in the Constitution. The new Constitution closed the period of nascent political system and a transitional period of societal development. In the first years of the state's independence, a presidential-parliamentary system played a major role. The concentration of power assisted in the implementation of complex systemic reforms in all spheres of public life and ensured the stability of society and the state. Later, this system became a drag of reforms, as there still existed a conflict of competences and powers between the President, the Parliament and the government.

Following the model of developed democratic countries, Ukraine was said to be preparing for the transition to a parliamentary-presidential model. According to the President, only a 'consolidated democracy' would unite the Ukrainian nation. It was recognised that the consolidation of the Ukrainian nation, the development of Ukrainian culture and spiritual traditions, as well as the development of ethnic and cultural identity of national minorities remained sensitive issues.⁹¹

Yet, Ukraine was not successful in its effort to achieve the status of a country with a market economy. The transition was incomplete; health care and education were under-funded, and the lack of state funding and the imperfections of law and justice dragged Ukraine into a state in which the property differentiation of the nation exceeded the 'critical level of social stability'. Ukraine was missing the middle class, i.e. the bedrock of political stability.⁹² A summary of the President's policies during his second term, his visions of reforming the state were presented in the study on the strategy for the economic and social development of Ukraine in 2004-2015 titled 'Towards European Integration' (May 28, 2004). This document was prepared in collaboration of the government, the President of the Academy of Sciences of Ukraine, and presented Kuchma's 'innovative model' of economic, political and social development.⁹³

Content analysis of domestic political, economic and social development of Ukraine (1994-2004)

Based on the initial familiarisation with documents and the chronological thematic analysis, three coding frames ('Crisis', 'Correction', 'Vigour') were created for the content analysis of the internal political

and economic situation, and the activities of Ukraine during Kuchma's presidency. Each of the categories includes keywords closely associated with the researched role. These words were identified in connection with the underpinning role theory, chronological analysis, as well as the authors' background knowledge of the topic. To illustrate, the coding frame 'Crisis' included keywords used to describe a situation of crisis and phenomena related to it (e.g. catastrophe, crisis, decline, destabilisation, corruption). The keywords from the frame 'Correction' reflected the objectives and measures that the state adopts to deal with the crisis (e.g. overcome, transformation, reforms, stabilisation), whereas the condition 'Vigour' focused on the radicalness of reforms and measures taken (e.g. necessity, restructuring, anti-crisis). In addition, to determine how intensively documents deal with the international situation in the state, we calculated the 'Adjustment' condition. It contains keywords such as 'situation, state, standard, it must'. Table 1 summarizes the results of the content analysis.

Conditions	Presidential speeches										
	(Σ of raw/adjusted frequencies in concrete years)										
	1994	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002/4	2002/5	2003	2004
Adjustment (x)	45	76	47	49	8	58	89	45	66	198	126
Crisis (r)	43	92	53	58	8	59	38	26	39	85	45
Crisis (a)	0,96	1,21	1,13	1,18	1	1,02	0,43	0,58	0,59	0,43	0,36
Correction (r)	273	497	367	325	152	617	985	504	580	1838	1396
Correction (a)	6,07	6,54	7,8	6,63	19	10,64	11,07	11,2	8,79	9,28	11,08
Vigour (r)	82	100	106	115	37	105	182	100	110	413	246
Vigour (a)	1,82	1,32	2,26	2,35	4,63	1,81	2,05	2,22	1,67	2,09	1,95

* Raw values (r); Adjusted values (a).

Table 1 Internal Development – role dynamics

The conducted content analysis of Kuchma's speeches indicates the temporal dynamics of crisis within the state. As shown in Table 1, there is a distinct difference between the development of 'Crisis' condition during the first and the second Presidential terms. While in 1994, there was a perception that the state suffered from an economic crisis, the speeches after the year 2000 laid emphasis on its management. This was corroborated by the fact that the year 2004 was economically the most successful out of the examined decade. The dynamics of the tasks and state's measures in dealing with internal economic and political problems ('Correction') shows the increasing volume of tasks where state involvement and resolve was seen and promised. The score in the

year 1999, which corresponds with the inaugural speech of the Presidential re-election, is extremely high. In contrast, scores from 2000-2004 indicate the perceived stabilisation of the Ukrainian economy. However, the pace of growth was not sufficient to compensate for the losses from previous years, and economic developments did not affect the living standards.

The President considered the end of 2003-2004 as a transitional period for the Ukrainian development and was ready to enter its next stage. Ukraine needed financial resources and political will -- without them it was impossible to reform and maintain sustainable growth. The economy needed modernisation and innovation. However, these plans remained mostly of declarative character until 2005. Scores of the third condition ('Vigour') indicate that, in the year 2000, the President was convinced about the crisis being solved and the economic situation improving. However, Ukraine was not able to execute more robust reforms, even when the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA) entered into force in 1998. An important step was Ukraine's declaration of entry to the EU. This strategic objective required significant activity - Ukraine had to, first and foremost, deal with internal conflicts.

Dynamics of the role 'Internal Development'

Based on the content analysis, it is possible to argue that 'Internal Development' represents an important role which Ukraine played continuously throughout the analysed period. According to the speeches of President Kuchma, this period can be divided into two segments. In the first part, this role overcame a profound economic crisis; in the second one, it represented an effort to stabilise the Ukrainian economy and to reform the Constitution.

During the period of crisis, Ukraine built its state institutions, political structures, consolidated the Ukrainian nation and addressed the transition to a market economy. Due to the complexity of such a task, the pace of transition did not keep up with the original expectations, as the duties were suspended and transferred to the next period. The process of economic development was thus inadequate and did not compensate for the losses from the previous period. The standard of living was in decline and the dissatisfaction of society was growing.

The Ukrainian choice of the 'European model of development' was a strong incentive for its own development. Ukraine wanted to

build an open and socially-oriented market economy and integrate it into the European area. For this reason, Ukraine and the EU signed the PCA agreement in 1998. Further, Ukraine adopted the Strategy of Ukrainian integration into the European Union (1998) and the Program of Ukrainian Integration into the EU (2000). The country's elite argued that it needed a promise of membership to the EU as a stimulus for development. Consequently, Ukraine idled away time and a chance to catch up with other countries of the post-communist bloc. Internal political disagreements were combined with the lack of consolidation of the Ukrainian nation. Prevailing energy and industrial dependence on Russia had slowed down the development of the state. The entry into the WTO and recognition of the status 'state with a market economy' was delayed. Ukraine was lagging behind in the democratisation process as well as in economic development.⁹⁴

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Until 2004, Ukraine remained the presidential-parliamentary system with elements of authoritarian rule. Kuchma argued that Ukraine must choose 'a presidential or parliamentary-presidential republic [...] The Russian or European variant'. While he personally believed that 'the second choice is better', he was not ready to fully pursue this objective. Additionally, the position of the President was enhanced in 1995 when the Constitutional Treaty between the Supreme Council of Ukraine and the President became approved and powers of the President were enshrined in the 1996 Constitution. According to Kuchma, the firm position of the President 'preserved the integrity of the State, overcame hyperinflation and lead the economy on a trajectory of a high and stable rate of growth' during times of deep crisis.⁹⁵

The internal environment of Ukraine, as a weak and non-operational country, led to a creation of an economic elite of oligarchs. Corruption had grown into all spheres of the society, public administration and justice.⁹⁶ The identically crucial problem was the inability of the state to consolidate the Ukrainian nation. As a result, the separation between the pro-Russian East and pro-European West had deepened.⁹⁷

Kuchma's internal policy was characterised by an effort to stabilise the economy and to reform its Constitution. The President proposed a new concept of development based on modernisation and innovation of the national economy, socially-oriented market economy, strengthening the state and its regulatory functions, political reforms and consolidation of the Ukrainian nation. Despite having nominated seven

prime ministers during his mandate, Kuchma was unable to resolve the constant conflicts between the legislative and executive power.

The second term of the President was associated with the suppression of press freedom, the murder of opposition journalist Georgiy Gongadze, and arms sales to Iraq. It was a period of a moderate development of the economy, high levels of corruption and the grey economy, as well as low reinvestments of capital into the Ukrainian economy. This development increased the impact of Ukrainian oligarchs within the state power.⁹⁸

The prominence of the 'Internal Development' role tips towards the second term of the President, marked, however, by his loss of support. Under the guidance of leaders of the Communist Party of Ukraine, the Socialist Party and the block BYuT (Yulia Tymoshenko Bloc), protest actions called 'Ukraine without Kuchma' and 'Arise, Ukraine!' were staged. These leaders demanded an early presidential election.⁹⁹ Consequently, the Supreme Council repeatedly initiated impeachment procedures against the President.¹⁰⁰ Instability, conflicts and social unrest placed Ukraine in the position of a state with potentially cumulating conflict.

In conclusion, the role of 'Internal Development' was filled during the economic crisis. Ukraine had to deal with its inner development while it lacked pace and vigour of reforms. The transition to a market economy had not been completed, and the reforms remained mostly declarative. Also, this role was affected by ego and alter factors, such as political disagreement, fragmentation of the nation, the complexity of the task and lack of experience and finance. The triangular strategic hedging between the EU and Russia, directly and indirectly, affected the performance of this role. Ukraine's domestic political strategies were directed towards European integration and the European model of development. To some extent, the EU engaged financially and methodically in the internal reforming of Ukraine. However, the interconnection of the Ukrainian and Russian economy, trade and energy co-dependence of Ukraine provided Russia with tools to wield influence in Ukrainian domestic affairs.

Conclusion

Building on the role theoretical perspective, this article analysed the role performed by Ukraine within the EU-Ukraine-Russia triangle during the presidency of Leonid Kuchma (1994-2004). Role theory was

chosen to highlight that the state, as a primary actor, follows a certain behavioural pattern of roles based on its national characteristics, collective cognition, discursive uses of historical developments, and specific internal political, economic and social considerations. In particular geopolitical and temporal confines, the role showed fluctuating levels of intensity and were either temporary or latent in given subperiods within the general research period of 1994-2004.

The analysed role of 'Internal Development' was performed by Ukraine through the entire Kuchma presidency. The enactment of this role correlated with the overcoming of a difficult economic crisis, an attempt to transition to a market economy model and the necessity of social and political reforms. Within the analysed period, persisting conflicts among the main pillars of state power hindered economic development and the implementation of needed political reforms. Economic stabilisation and slight growth did not translate into increased living standards; the ownership differences exceeded the critical threshold of social stability.

Additionally, the performance of this role was connected to the growth of the socio-ethnic and politico-ideological cleavages in the country. Disenchantments from the low, if any, moral qualities of the political elite became the fundamental reason for the escalation of social unrest, leading to the Orange Revolution. While it seemed to have helped to resolve many problems at first, a more nuanced examination shows that it managed to create a plethora of new ones. The role of 'Internal Development' had the primary importance for Ukraine and was tied to the external political orientation of the country.



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Acknowledgment

This work was supported by Metropolitan University Prague (Grant No: E10-53 and E15-53).

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