

# **Two-Level Role Theory and EU Migration**

Negotiations with the Visegrád Group

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# 3 Two-Level Role Theory

## A Synthesis of Putnam's Assumptions and Role Theory Concepts

### 3.1 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to present the results of theoretical synthesis combining the concepts of role theory and the assumptions of Putnam's two-level game framework. It is an example of exploiting the potential of theoretical pluralism that has been present in International Relations since the very beginning (Holsti, 1985, 1989). Currently, it leads to questions about the best ways of conducting research by the use of multiple theory paradigms simultaneously (Dunne et al., 2013; Ferguson, 2015; Leira, 2015; Levine & McCourt, 2018; Rengger, 2015; Sterling-Folker, 2015; van der Ree, 2014; Wight, 2019). And while it may seem the multiplicity of theories is beneficial to all researchers, IR scholars themselves have diverse approaches to pluralism and its use of it. While some suggest that the lack of attempts made to combine different theories and to engage in dialogue between them is a sign of the discipline's deep malaise (Brecher, 1999, p. 235), others believe that a synthesis combining diverse theories based on different philosophical assumptions is simply impossible (Smith, 2003, p. 143).

These two approaches are indicative of the problems created by pluralism. On one hand, they show the need for discipline development by the use of multiple theories, on the other, they show that theories developed within IR are often based on different ontological and epistemological assumptions, and therefore are incommensurable. Pluralism also refers to the philosophical foundations of theories and, although the importance of this issue increased during the so-called Fourth Debate (Biersteker, 1989; Herbut & Polus, 2022), the problem has not been solved yet (Hamilton, 2017; Herbut & Polus, 2022).

Although work which combines different theories based on different philosophical assumptions is sometimes difficult, I believe that the opportunities provided by theoretical pluralism outweigh the problems related to it. This is where my interest in combining different theories' elements stems from. Attempts at building a bridge between two different theories prove not only useful but also interesting and inspiring.

The rest of the chapter consists of four parts. To properly present the theoretical assumptions of this work, Putnam's propositions and role theory concepts are briefly discussed in the first two parts of the chapter. These two parts also elucidate the most relevant terms which are unique to each concept and which are central to the synthesis. The third part presents the results of the theoretical synthesis in the form of an additive theory—a two-level role theory that reveals its main assumptions might also be applied in other cases. The fourth part contains a brief summary that identifies opportunities for further application of the two-level role theory.

I understand the notion of theoretical synthesis as a combination of different theories that would offer researchers a better explanation or understanding of a given research problem. This understanding is close to the definition coined by James D. Fearon and Alexander Wendt, according to whom to create a theoretical synthesis is “to combine insights, cross boundaries and, if possible, synthesise specific arguments in hope of gaining more compelling answers and a better picture of reality” (2023, p. 69) and thus one should expect dialogue rather than disputes between the representatives of different theories (Bennett, 2013; Checkel, 2010; Dunne et al., 2013; Hellmann et al., 2003; Moravcsik, 2003; Sil & Katzenstein, 2010).

In order to create a theoretical synthesis, I have used one of the strategies defined by Joseph Jupille, Jeffrey T. Caporaso, and James A. Checkel, namely, subsumption strategy.<sup>1</sup> It assumes that two independent theories can offer a better explanation or understanding of a research problem after some of their elements are combined, but it also suggests a specific type of this combination—subsumption—and this is what makes the strategy quite unique. It is so, because the theories are being integrated in a hegemonic way which means that one theory absorbs the other. In this case, it is role theory that absorbs Putnam's framework in its entirety. This is an attractive approach for researchers, but might lead to a belief that one theory element is derivative of the other, and therefore does not have its own (separate) theoretical foundation (Jupille et al., 2003, p. 23). However, this is not the case here, as Putnam's concepts might also absorb other theories when used to analyse different cases.

### **3.2 Putnam's Two-Level Game**

Putnam's propositions are principally considered to be a general negotiation theory which is successfully used for the analysis of negotiations between two international relations actors. According to his model, these negotiations should be treated as a game taking place on two levels at the same time, as the main thesis points to a feedback loop between the negotiation process itself and the domestic political events. On the national level, internal groups pursue their own interests and put pressure on the government, while politicians strive to maintain power and form coalitions among these groups. At the international level,

governments of states try to act in a way that allows them to satisfy the demands formulated on the national level and reduce undesirable consequences from the development of the international situation (Putnam, 1988). Thus, one cannot separate the events that take place at the level of international relations from internal politics—these two processes determine each other (Putnam, 1988, p. 427).

The assumptions of the two-level game are of particular importance for IR scholars. Since the 1980s, the theoretical discourse has been dominated by system theories, which attempted to explain relations between states and other actors through events happening at the system level, without considering the remaining variables.<sup>2</sup> Nevertheless, as Putnam showed, it is not the level of analysis (system, state, or individual), but the way in which the variables are used or combined as well as the ability to express them systematically and apply them to multiple cases that determine their usefulness (Przeworski & Teune, 1974).

This idea constitutes an added value and brings forth “a new level of analysis”, i.e., the feedback loop between international relations and domestic politics. It assumes that events at the international and domestic levels take place simultaneously and including them both in a theoretical synthesis does not contradict the idea of a simple and abstract theoretic model (Alt & Eichengreen, 1989; Evans et al., 1993; Iida, 1993; Lohmann, 1993; Mayer, 1992; Milner, 1997; Mo, 1994, 1995; Tsebelis, 1990, 1995).

Each entity participating in international negotiations takes part in two games at the same time and each of these games takes place at a different level. Level I encompasses proper negotiations with foreign partners. During them, the players face negotiating parties from different states. Level II is a game within the internal politics of a given state. In this case, one must assume that the players are not only negotiators but also members of their political parties, opposition representatives, as well as interest groups members. Thus, players need to make sure that the agreement negotiated on Level I is accepted in their country—often not only opposition support have to be considered but also, for example, carrying out a referendum. Sometimes, strategies that prove good on one of them are not as effective on the other. Moreover, the events on one game board can be successfully used on the other. One may use international negotiations to improve their position at the national level, but it is also possible to use internal politics to improve one’s position in Level I negotiations, e.g., by pointing out that the proposed international agreement has no chance of being accepted in their country.

In the face of an unsatisfactory result, every player negotiating at the table of international affairs may upset the board at any moment. It is very easy to suggest that the negotiated agreement has no chance of being ratified in one’s country. Moreover, if a player playing at the international level does not meet the demands of their domestic co-players, they may be excluded from the game and lose power. Wise and clever players can learn to move on one board in a way

that causes regrouping on the other. It allows achieving objectives that would not be achieved with negotiations alone.

Apart from the two-level game concept, another important term of Putnam's theory which should be defined here, is the "win-set", i.e., the set of all possible Level I agreements that would "win"—that is, gain the necessary majority among the constituents—when simply voted up or down. This term is significant in particular due to the constant two-level game and the need to accept the agreement adopted at the international level (Putnam, 1988, p. 437). According to Putnam, three factors determine the win-set: preferences and coalitions from Level II, institutions and ratification procedures from Level II, and negotiators' strategies used on Level I (Putnam, 1988, pp. 441–442).

As these factors refer to domestic politics processes or the role of chief negotiators, Putnam argues that almost every two-level international negotiation theory should be based on domestic politics, which applies to the significance of preferences of diverse important Level II actors. The assumptions of the analysis presented here follow this trend, even though I am not using the theory of domestic politics, but role theory—usually associated with Foreign Policy Analysis (FPA). The role theory concepts will allow me to specify and operationalise processes taking place on Level II. Steps taken to create a theoretical synthesis stem from the assumption that the two-level game model is mostly a metaphor and to make it a theory, one has to specify three elements: the specificity of domestic politics (the nature of the "win-sets"), the international negotiating environment (the determinants of interstate bargaining outcomes), and the statesmen's preferences (Moravcsik, 1993, p. 23).

Putnam suggests that negotiators are trying to achieve two goals simultaneously and that is why all diplomatic and negotiation strategies are limited by two factors—what other negotiating states are willing to accept and what is acceptable at the national level in each of the two negotiating states. Diplomacy becomes the art of creating interactions in a way that allows both predicting negotiation partners' and national-level entities' actions as well as staying ahead of them. Negotiators try to influence both the situation in their countries and in the country of their partner. By controlling information flow, resources, and agenda setting in relation to their own domestic politics, negotiators may make an international agreement possible or gain a negotiating advantage. On the other hand, strategies used in negotiations may also be used to change domestic conditions and opportunities.

An international agreement or even just participation in negotiations may create for the politicians opportunities within internal politics that could not be envisaged otherwise (Putnam, 1988, pp. 442–448). This is why international negotiations can be seen not only as playing on two game boards but also as a double-edged sword. Thus, it is hard to explain them with theories of one type only, such as system theories or theories based on state-level factors. As negotiations are Janus-faced, a theory not limited to only one level is needed.

What is also interesting, both in system theories and in theories referring to the logic of internal limitations, politicians are only passive participants that react either to the system's pressure or to determinants of the domestic politics (Moravcsik, 1993). Thanks to Putnam's stance, they gain agency and become active negotiators swiftly manoeuvring between the international negotiations board and the domestic board and thus connecting the international and state levels.

Therefore, three elements differentiate Putnam's approach from other attempts at combining system and state factors. The first one is the fact that this is a negotiation theory, although successfully used by IR researchers. The second element draws attention to individuals, as politicians, decision-makers, and negotiators play the most important roles in the process. They are the players that have to manage playing on two boards. In this way, Putnam's propositions combine properties of liberalism and different versions of realism by giving agency back to political leaders (statesmen) and negotiators. Individuals are players making calculations either using the international level to achieve goals within domestic politics or the other way around—using internal situations to meet their objectives in international affairs. The third element is that the two levels are organised in a “layered” way due to the activity of the individuals—clever (or nifty) negotiators use the results of the game on one board to improve their positions on the other, even though this is not an easy task.

Putnam's concept has been and continues to be developed by many researchers. The studies based on two-level game referred to either empirical testing of his idea or to ways of developing the three sets of factors determining the win-set size, which will be discussed in more detail further in the monograph. Rigorous domestic ratification rules and procedures have been tested empirically in various studies to improve one's bargaining position (Milner & Rosendorff, 1996; Clark et al., 2000; Levenotoglu & Tarar, 2005). Mo (1995) explored a leader's ability to narrow their win-set by granting veto rights to domestic agents over an international treaty which, in turn, increased their Level I bargaining position. Additionally, some very interesting studies concerning the three factors determining the size of the win-set have been published. One has to mention the work of Lisowski (2002), who analysed President G.W. Bush's win-set before the ratification of the Kyoto climate protocol and referred to the first set of factors determining the win-set size. As the size of the win-set is also determined by the nature of the ratification process the case of the EU offers a great number of studies. As treaties must be ratified at the EU and the national level, the win-set configurations become increasingly complex (Hodson & Maher, 2014; Hug & Schultz, 2007). Finally, as the win set size depends on the political strategies leaders employ, there are also many publications on this issue (Boyer, 2000; Shamir & Shikaki, 2005). Moreover, some studies have extended the idea of Putnam by specifying factors influencing the size of win-set and by introducing new ones (Schoppa, 1993).

Therefore, the proposed monograph and its results will be part of studies improving and upgrading the two-level game framework. I do not explore other scholars' works based on Putnam's idea because I try to advance his original concept of showing two levels of analysis (domestic and international) interacting incessantly during negotiations and, at the same time, creating a new level of analysis described by Putnam as constant interactions between the two original ones. Here, a new added value emerged, and I want to focus on this specific value and advance it with my own ideas derived from role theory. Although some studies are developing Putnam's framework (and my idea is following this line), I want to use the original concept and not its iterations.

Putnam does not indicate specifically enough how to explain the negotiator's actions and strategies or the effects of particular internal limitations (Evans et al., 1993; Morin, 2010). When combining two-level game assumptions with role theory, therefore, I will be focusing concretely on actions of chief negotiators (in this case, from Visegrád Group [V4] states) aimed at their own societies or other political partners (like opposition parties) as well as at Level I negotiations parties (EU leaders in this case). Moreover, the stance of negotiating states' (the V4) societies will be used, but only with regard to the governments of their respective states. The proposed synthesis does not include transnational relations or the influence of the societies on politicians, or institutions as the negotiation partners, but they might be integrated in the future research on the issue. Role theory will be applied to indicate specific activities that ultimately determine the win-set, or in other words—the acceptable agreement(s).

### **3.3 Role Theory**

Role theory, increasingly popular among political scientists and IR scholars, is based on assumptions originating from sociology indicating that individuals in society carry out different goals and tasks based on the society members' expectations. Its ideas were "transferred" to IR, specifically to FPA (Harnisch, 2011, pp. 7–15; Walker, 2017b), thanks to the works of Kalevi Holsti in the 1970s (Holsti, 1970). Using the metaphor of a theatre, the theory assumes that states (similarly to people in the society) play specific roles in the international system that differ depending on their own conceptions and expectations of others—in this case, other actors of international relations. Even as theatre actors follow the screenplay and director's instructions, social actors (including participants in international relations) follow a set of norms and the expectations of other actors.

The latest studies using role theory focus also on role contestation processes that are both horizontal (among political leaders) (Walker et al., 2016) and vertical (between political elites and the general public) (Beasley et al., 2016, pp. 122–139; Foyle, 2004; Rathbun, 2004; Risse-Kappen, 1991). Current work

on roles that states can play on the international stage asks questions predominantly about the origins and expressions of particular roles.

The application of role theory in IR allows combining factors from the state and individual levels with those from the system structure level, just like Putnam's two-level assumptions. Role theory allows showing relations between *ego* (an actor in international relations) and others as *alter* in the international environment formulating concrete expectations towards the *ego*. Moreover, role theory allows combining material and ideational factors, as it refers to political leaders and elites' vision of the state's role, as well as to material limitations (regarding the role) resulting from the state's position within the international system. Contemporary works return to the assumptions of symbolic interactionism (serving as a basis for role theory in sociology and social psychology) and emphasise the significance of the way in which expectations towards particular roles emerge from interactions between the actor and the system (Goffman, 1961).

They also point to social processes of role "construction" highlighting that the society does not provide individuals with social roles in one final form. Instead, these roles are created and constantly modified through social interaction processes. As a result, a particular dynamic of role creation and definition processes comes to the fore. We are dealing with a sort of bargaining between one actor and the remaining actors collectively referred to as the "international audience" (*alter*). This is why role theory fits well with propositions that regard international negotiations, including the two-level game model.

Role theory has its own specific terminology, but in the present monograph only selected terms will be used, such as role, role conceptions, role perception, role contestation, role expectations, role selection, and role conflict. Their definitions are formulated for the purpose of this synthesis and should be considered neither exclusive nor ultimate. Finally, I will also elucidate the main assumptions of binary role theory, as this version of role theory and its elements will be then applied as a part of my research method.

The term "role" has various definitions in the literature (Beasley et al., 2016; Cantir & Kaarbo, 2012; Hall, 1999; Holsti, 1970, p. 245; Hopf, 1955; Hudson, 1999; Walker, 1992, p. 23; Wendt, 1999), but in the present monograph, after combining this term with two-level game assumptions, role will be understood as a set of social positions that are constituted as *ego*. This set of social positions, which are constituted as *ego*, is derived from others' expectations and one's own conceptions, selected at least partly in response to cues and demands (Walker, 1992). Consequently, *ego's* expectations of other actors regarding each actor's position in a social group or international system are defined as *alter*. This definition underlines an integrating nature of "role" as it includes both *ego's* own reflection regarding its role as well as a repertoire of behaviours deduced from the expectations of others (Thies, 2010, pp. 6335–6356). Role conceptions result from an actor's perception of their position towards the others (the *ego* part of



the role) and the perception of the role expectations of the others (the *alter* part of a role) signalled through language and particular actions (Deitelhoff, 2006; Kirste & Maull, 1996).

The essence of this definition is that one cannot define a role without identifying the others, among which one will identify also the *alter*. The role can only be constituted in a pair with *alter* that emerges from social expectations as Mead suggested (1934). Not only does *ego* define its role, but the role is also defined by *alter*, as roles are defined not only by social entities but also by society. This also clearly shows the process of socialisation of each role and its importance in the constitution of the role (Thies, 2013). A role can only exist within a pair—that is, for instance, a role of teacher and student or mother and child. If this second agent formulates suggestions regarding the role and its enactment—one may assume that it formulates role expectations. The latter are defined as sets of cues formulated by actors and the international community regarding the role that a given actor (*ego*) is to take and enact. More specifically, role expectations can be examined in terms of how international actors (*alter*) perceive the appropriate behaviour or foreign policy of a specific role actor. Thus, the role never emerges in a vacuum, as it is always related to a specific *alter's* expectations.

The present monograph describes migrants as *alter*. I assume that both the V4 states and the V4 as a group defined their roles in the crisis as a response to migrants' and refugees' attempts to enter Europe. Surely, the migrants cannot be considered as a traditional *alter* formulating specific role expectations. Nonetheless, the migration crisis with refugees coming to Europe created a very specific context in which various expectations emerged and a specific environment working as a generalised *alter*. This *alter* did not formulate specific and well-defined role expectations but generated a particular environment that finally led the V4 states to formulate their roles and, in some cases, triggered the role contestation processes.

Apart from these two actors (*ego* and *alter*), one may also identify all the third parties observing how the role is defined, prescribed, and enacted—these parties create an audience. Thus, as Thies (2013) pointed out—while an actor starts to enact a role and another actor responds to it—the actor responding could be considered an *alter* emerging from the audience.

The audience seems to be of great importance as it creates the environment in which a role can emerge. It is, however, not only a role's environment but also a space of role reception and perception. As Holsti (1970) and other role theorists underlined, political leaders or other state's actors may formulate diverse roles that the state may take and enact. But they also do not formulate role conceptions in a vacuum, but in diverse contexts and to different audiences. The roles defined for a state can vary depending on which audience the politician is speaking to—whether he is speaking to his own society or to the international community (Teles Fazeiro, 2021).

If the *ego's* role conception coincides with the expectations formulated by *alter*, there is a correspondence between the perception of expectations and the expectations themselves. By the term “perception” I understand how *ego* sees the *alter's* role expectations and *vice versa*. Conversely, if the perception of *ego's* expectations for *alter* does not correspond with *alter's* role conception, there is a low degree of congruence (DC) between expectations and their perceptions. An analogous situation occurs when comparing different role conceptions defined by different actors, like for instance member states and the EU regarding roles that the EU and its members might take and enact towards *alter* (in the analysed case, the migrants). When the EU as an organisation and its members have different role conceptions (or the conceptions are perceived in a way that does not correspond with the original conception), the role contestation process occurs and may be characterised by varied degrees of congruence between specific role conceptions.

A state or international organisation defines its role in relation to other actors (*alters*), thus role conceptions are naturally contested. They are social constructs—constantly changing and developing. Role contestation processes inside states occur horizontally when political elites cannot agree on an acceptable and achievable role for a given state, e.g., in foreign policy. Usually, three situations might lead to role contestation, namely: conflict regarding the role played by the state between the government and the opposition (it may be an official dispute or take place behind the scenes); disputes within the ruling coalition; disputes within small decision-making groups and different government agencies (Cantir & Kaarbo, 2012). Vertical contestation takes place when political leaders' opinions and decisions regarding foreign policy differ from those expressed by the society. The general public may express a different opinion than the government regarding the state's role in international relations. Moreover, politicians may use this fact when discussing and disputing the role (Gaskarth, 2016, pp. 105–121).

In the present monograph, vertical role contestation will be defined in a slightly different way, as the term is also relevant when considering multilayered *ego*—the EU. As mentioned, the EU's role might be contested at diverse levels. Considering the EU's institutional structure, I used the term “vertical”. Some authors defined it as horizontal contestation of a specific type—between EU's institutions and political elites of member states (Góra, 2023, p. 181; Koenig, 2016, p. 160). In the present monograph, these processes are described as vertical contestation, as they occur within a hierarchical structure. To make this picture even more clear, one might also characterise these processes as “external vertical contestation processes”.

Role expectations comprise both *ego* expectations, which are domestic (formulated horizontally by political elites and bureaucratic agencies as well as vertically by ruling elites and public opinion) expectations of what the role is and

what it implies, *alter* expectations, i.e., explicit or implicit demands of others, as well as other actors or partners' role conceptions for ego. These expectations or diverse role conceptions may lead to inter-role conflicts (between *ego* and *alter*) that take place when other actors (states or international organisations) have particular role expectations towards a given state that is contrary to its own vision. Moreover, a role conflict might also occur in a situation where diverse *alters* formulate different role expectations that a given actor cannot reconcile or realise simultaneously.

A role conflict may also occur when the ruling elites have a different vision of the state's role than the general public or when a role conflict takes place within the ruling elite or between the governing party and the opposition. Such conflicts are referred to as intra-role conflicts. What is important, an inter-role conflict may lead to an intra-role conflict by generating role contestation processes (Harnisch et al., 2011, p. 256).

In the present monograph, the focus is on the V4; which is considered an *ego*. Nonetheless, this *ego* is made up of four different states, therefore it should be defined as a generalised ego. In addition, the V4 is a part of the EU—a multilayered *ego* (Kaarbo & Cantir, 2016; Koenig, 2016). I am focusing then on the multilayered *ego* of the European Union, comprised of different countries that may have different conceptions about the role of: the EU as such, their role in the EU, and the role they may play in other contexts—outside the EU (Busch, 2023).

Thus, in the case of this monograph, one should consider three actors: the EU, the V4 as a whole, and individual member states—Poland, Hungary, Czech Republic, and Slovakia. Their relations can be illustrated by a diagram in the form of a concentric circle. The EU is an actor grouping member states, which can act (and play roles) as single actors, but they can also form other arrangements—such as the V4 or the Weimar Triangle. Therefore, the EU should be considered a multilayered *ego*, with all four states—*egos* and the V4—as a generalised *ego*. This is presented in Figure 3.1.

Consequently, role contestation processes might occur within the multilayered ego at different levels—between the EU and its member states, between diverse member states, between member states creating a generalised *ego* (here: the V4), or between different actors at the domestic level (here: between the government and opposition parties). This is shown in Figure 3.2. One might also add to this picture vertical role contestation processes occurring between the government and the state's public opinion, which are, however, not the focus of this book. Moreover, role contestation processes might refer to the EU's role or the role of the EU's member states.

These Figures also show that role theory is a relative framework and is usually dependent on how one applies it—which actor/agent is treated as *ego*. One may consider the EU as an *ego*, but also its member states can be defined as *egos*. What is more, after unpacking a state *ego*—one may focus on how the various agents (bureaucratic agencies or government departments) that

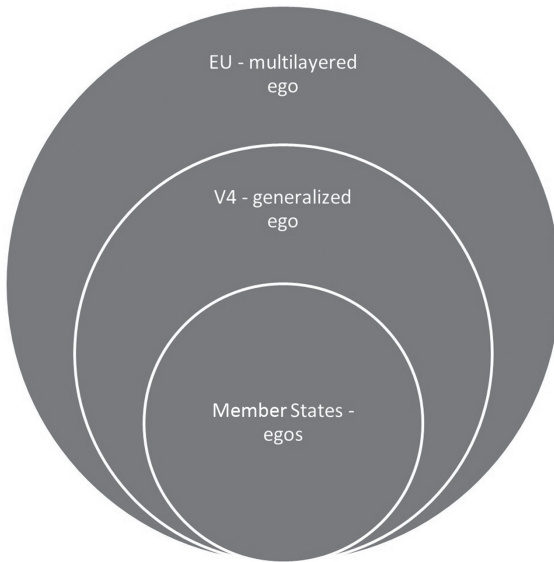


Figure 3.1 EU as a multilayered *ego*, V4 as a generalised *ego*, and member states as *egos*.

Source: Author's own elaboration.

ultimately constitute the *ego* define its roles. The way of applying role theory thus resembles the use of a microscope with which one can zoom in and out of the *ego*.

Role conception and its creation usually consist of two processes creating altogether a role location process. These two are: role selection and role enactment. The first one is related to what political leaders or public opinion are discussing when generating a role conception, whereas the second term is related to what a state is going to do after selecting a specific role. Thus, the first might be considered as focusing on words and the second—focusing on deeds. The present monograph concentrates on role selection processes and more specifically, on contestation processes of role selection, that is—all the debates regarding which roles should have been enacted by the V4 in the face of the migration crisis. The focus of the book is thus only on the first phase of role location. I am not interested in which role the EU and the V4 played but in what roles were contested during the analysed period. Consequently, specific policies applied by the V4 states or by the EU are not discussed. Instead, discourses regarding specific roles in the time of migration crisis are analysed.

The present monograph uses binary role theory to link roles to their respective strategies. Binary role theory was introduced into the role theory's assumptions

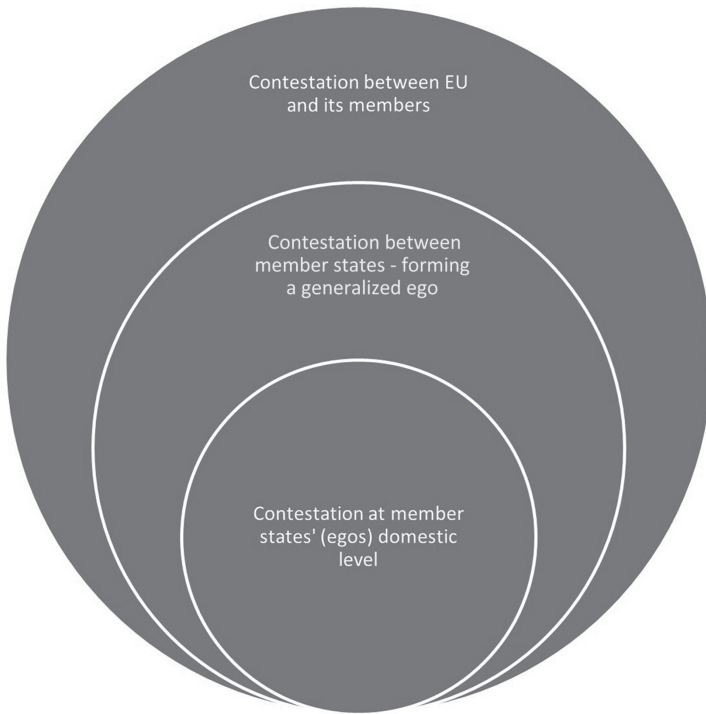


Figure 3.2 Multilayered role contestation processes.

Source: Author's own elaboration.

and later developed by Walker, whose idea was not only to name the specific roles defined for each actor but also to show them using the language of mathematics and game theory. Such a solution provides opportunities to juxtapose and compare specific roles (Walker, 2013). The assumptions of binary role theory were clearly presented in his book, which focuses on the British appeasement strategy applied before the Second World War.

Walker supposes that the two elements in the international system can be considered *ego* and *alter* (E,A)—thus, they are defined according to role theory vocabulary. The actors exchange actions of cooperation or conflict and these actions are represented with the symbols (+) for Cooperation and (−) for Conflict—this is described according to game theory assumptions. The possible states of interaction between the elements in this system are (+,+), (+,−), (−,+), and (−,−), in which either *ego* or *alter* may act to initiate the interaction and the other may act to complete the interaction. According to game theory, we should

also assume that each actor is rational and acts according to the results of profit and loss analysis (Walker, 2013). If *ego* chooses a cooperation strategy (+) and *alter* responds also with a cooperation strategy, we have a (+,+) result. If both choose a conflict strategy, the result will be (-,-). If *ego* chooses cooperation and *alter* responds with conflict, the result will be (+,-), and if *ego* starts with conflict and *alter* responds with cooperation, the result will be (-,+). All the possible results are shown in Figure 3.3.

The cells in this matrix represent the possible static patterns of interaction represented as states of the system formed by the actions of these two agents. What is more, one can also develop this table/matrix and show the sequence of interactions (shown in Figure 3.4), identifying patterns of escalation and de-escalation by each agent that emerge from the possible sequences. In that case, the theory is transformed into a theory of moves, which shows the dynamic actions of actors choosing and changing roles and strategies (Walker, 2013, 2017a, 2022).

The most important idea of binary role theory, which is also used in this monograph, is the assumption that a specific strategy can be ascribed to each role (previously coded and named). The latter results from two variables: the position of

Ego	Alter	
	Cooperation	Conflict
Cooperation	+,+	+,-
Conflict	-,+	-,-

Figure 3.3 Examples of strategies of conflict and cooperation.

Source: Walker (2013).

Ego	Alter	
	De-escalation	Escalation
De-escalation	+,+ (Settle, Settle) Appeasement	+,- (Submit, Dominate) Bandwagoning
Escalation	-,+ (Dominate, Submit) Hegemony	-,- (Deadlock) Balancing

Figure 3.4 General game with strategies and outcomes for each player.

Source: Walker (2013).

an actor in comparison to its partner (weak, equal, strong) and the nature of its interests (primary or secondary). Following this, one may identify actors acting as: friends, partners, rivals or enemies. Each of them values diverse strategies the most (Malici & Walker, 2017). For a friend, it is the unconditional cooperation strategy (+,-), for a partner—conditional cooperation strategy (+,+), for a rival—conditional conflict strategy (-,-), and for an enemy—unconditional conflict strategy (-,+). Friend is associated with bandwagoning strategy, partner with appeasement, rival with balancing, and enemy with hegemonic strategy (Walker, 2011, 2022, p. 65). Each of them will value a specific strategy the most and they are all clearly characterised by Walker (2022, p. 65).

In the present monograph, I will not focus on changing roles and strategies but will instead apply the first stage of binary role theory and specific strategies ascribe to particular roles. By using only this element of binary role theory, I will be able to juxtapose and compare diverse role conceptions—like the one identified by the V4 states and the one identified for them by the EU. For instance, the V4 may want to define for themselves the role of a hegemon, whereas the EU may want them to play the role of a partner or a friend. Whether they value a settle-down, submission, domination or deadlock situation depends on how they define their power relationship and how they exercise it. Hence, it will be easy with the application of this theory to link a specific role to the policy pursued, for example, the partner's strategy will be oriented towards the two actors' policy of cooperation, and the enemy's strategy towards the policy of conflict. Also, some roles may be easily associated with values, whereas others might be linked with interests. This assumption offers many possibilities for linking the selected roles with the ones that will be enacted in the future.

### **3.4 Results of Theoretical Synthesis—Two-Level Role Theory**

The theoretical synthesis of role theory and Putnam's two-level game framework is based on combining assumptions regarding role contestation and role conflicts with the main idea of Putnam's framework that presupposes that the win-set size depends on the size of the overlap between each side's acceptable maximum outcomes. The latter will be then supplemented by three groups of factors determining the win-set size described by Putnam. It is in line with an assumption that the two-level game metaphor needs developments and additions in order to become operationalisable (Moravcsik, 1993, p. 23; Putnam, 1988, p. 442) and it follows the current trends of combining independent variables (both material and ideational) from different levels of analysis (Thies & Breuning, 2012, pp. 1–4). Role theory analyses the process of negotiating the role identities of states (who they are) while Putnam's framework focuses on negotiating the allocation of material interests between states (what they want). In the migration crisis, the negotiations between the V-4 states and the EU occurred about both identities

and interests. Thus, the combination of these two theoretical sets seems to be relevant here.

The previous scholarly literature includes works attempting to incorporate role theory into the framework of the two-level game. Even though feedback loops between international relations and domestic politics have been discussed, no synthesis has been proposed. The authors have indicated that a state's role in the international system is formed or determined by *alter's* expectations, i.e., by actors referred to as significant others, simply by formulating different role conceptions towards them. Thus, they referred to different levels of analysis affecting the processes of role location or contestation but did not generate theoretical syntheses and did not show the way in which the interactions between the international and national level influence states' roles (Friedrichs, 2020; Grossman et al., 2022; Simon, 2019). One has to mention here also the proposition of "two-level game-role taking model" by Harnisch (2014).

The synthesis presented here goes beyond using two theories in the research process or combining different levels of analysis and ideational variables with the material ones. My goal is to fill the gaps in Putnam's framework with elements of role theory. I assume that role theory can operationalise what Putnam called the Level II game, i.e., all national powers affecting international negotiations. Although he did mention Level II (national) preferences, institutions, and negotiators' strategies, he did not clearly operationalise them. Putnam's metaphor will be thus supplemented with the identification of diverse processes of role contestation (both vertical and horizontal) and role conflict.

Following Putnam's analysis, the negotiator (individual) will bind these two groups of theoretical assumptions together, as negotiators are the ones to initiate role contestation processes (both horizontal and vertical) or suppress them (depending on their own plans and willingness to increase or decrease the win-set). They are also the ones to decide whether to use Level I negotiations to change the domestic politics or *vice versa*, to use Level II role contestation processes to improve their image at the international level. Moreover, they decide whether to acquaint the society with the negotiation partners' (*alter's*) requirements as demands to change the role, whether to emphasise role conflicts or stress that the state's role will remain unchanged.

Role theory assumptions will also be supplemented by the two-level game model defining the way *ego* and *alter* interact. However, it is still role theory which gives more to Putnam's framework. Role theory assumptions (although accurately describing negotiating partners' identities and attitudes towards the negotiated problem) are not enough to explain negotiations over interests, as identities or attitudes cannot be applied in negotiation processes without considering interests. Without the practices described by Putnam's game metaphors and win-set definition, role theory lacks precision in defining *ego-alter* relations or interactions between two actors, as it only indicates that *alter* and *ego*



(or two actors) interact. Thanks to supplementing role theory with Putnam's game metaphors, it is possible to indicate how *alter* affects *ego* and the other way around. Two-level game assumptions clearly present *ego–alter* relations regarding particular negotiated issues, e.g., how social groups or diverse state institutions perceive and define *alter*'s expectations or demands, and how role conceptions that they formulate determine *alter*'s attitudes. What is more, one might also suggest that two different role conceptions (like the one defined by the EU, and the second by its member states) can determine each other like two levels of Putnam's game. Thus, *alter* might be replaced by any actor defining role conceptions and participating in negotiations.

On the other hand, role theory can concretely explain how member states define their roles in the EU and what roles the organisation define for them to play. Role contestation processes and role conflicts can also be identified. Without role theory, Putnam's framework seems to be too general, as it only stresses that two levels of negotiations influence each other and identifies three factors determining the win-set size. Although Putnam's assumptions also supplement role theory, it is Putnam's ideas that are absorbed here in their entirety. Hence the name of the proposed synthesis: two-level role theory. Putnam's propositions gain much more significance in the synthesis than role theory does.

In his work, Putnam emphasises strategies used in particular negotiations that result in international agreements, but conclusions drawn from the two-level game's theory, as well as my theoretical synthesis, may be effectively used for all international agreements, not only treaties. Additionally, they can be used to analyse relations not only between states but also between states and international organisations, as shown by the analysed case of negotiations between the V4 states and the EU.

Putnam's idea assumes that the win-set size overlaps with the sum of acceptable versions of the agreement for both parties—it is the shared part of two sets (specific to the two sides of the negotiation). Supplementing this idea with role theory, one might assume that the negotiation process might be successfully ended if the final win-set is an overlap of role conceptions of the two negotiating partners. Thus, the win-set size is bigger (or the win-set is more acceptable) if the overlap is bigger, as shown in Figure 3.5. Conversely, if one role conception differs from the second one, it is much more difficult to reach a negotiation agreement. Sometimes the gap is so large that the two role conceptions do not overlap at all.

According to the proposed synthesis, I infer that if an agreement negotiated on Level I implies imposing on a state a new role that is not accepted on Level II (meaning that the agreement brings a change of the dominant role conception or even a conflict between role conceptions within *ego* and suggestions formulated by the negotiation's partner or by *alter*), the agreement becomes more difficult to negotiate and accept unless there is an overlap with the negotiation's partner conceptions or *alter*'s role expectations. Political decision-makers who are at

the same time negotiators will not accept such an agreement out of fear that an attempt to impose a new role will not be accepted and will in consequence lead to loss of power (in democracies). The bigger the difference between the role accepted by the electorate and the role implied by a Level I agreement, the smaller the win-set, as the overlap is smaller. However, this situation may improve a political leader's Level I negotiating position. They may argue that the international agreement will be not accepted in their country and use the Tying Hands strategy (Moravcsik, 1993; Putnam, 1988).

Putnam's idea uses the concept of a win-set, literally understood as a set of Level II acceptable victories (winnings) for each negotiating party. After applying and incorporating role theory into Putnam's ideas, the concept of win-set is replaced here by the term "overlap" which is measured by the DC. Consequently, both the concept of win-set itself is replaced by the vocabulary inherent in role theory and the three factors influencing agreement are operationalised by role theory. Therefore, the type of theoretical synthesis in this case is subsumption. The DC might be measured between the *ego's* role conception and the *alter's* expectations and vice versa, between the *alter's* (or *ego's*) expectations and the *ego's* (or *alter's*—respectively) perception of them, as well as between two different role conceptions defined by two actors (like the V4 and the EU) towards alter (in this case, the migrants). At the domestic level, it can be measured between different role conceptions identified by diverse actors. In the case analysed in the present monograph, the DC (and thereby the overlap) will be measured between role conceptions defined either by political parties (at the domestic level) or by the V4 states and the EU, because migrants are defined as *alter*. However, in the future research, the synthesis might be used in other cases where *alter* will be defined in different ways.

For example, if State A identifies its role conception as a client of State B and State B also formulates such expectations for State A and if State B formulates its role conception as a hegemon in relation to State A, then there is a full DC between these complementary roles. However, if the role conception of State A is different from the expectations of being a client of State B, then there is no congruence or the DC is lower (especially if there is more than one role conception for State A). Moreover, if the perception of State B's expectations

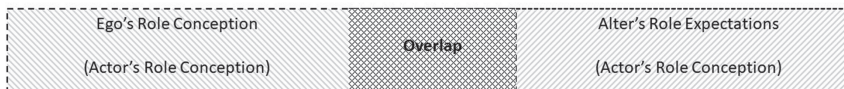


Figure 3.5 The size of the win-set resulting from the size of two role conceptions or role conception and role expectations overlap.

Source: Author's own elaboration.

does not resonate with the expectations themselves, the role conception of State A can be contested both horizontally as well as vertically and consequently, many diverse role conceptions might be identified by social groups or political parties. In such situations, the DC is getting lower, as it is difficult to indicate one set of role conceptions and expectations acceptable for all the groups taking part in the role contestation processes. If there is no congruence between role conceptions and role expectations (or no congruence between role expectations and the perceptions of *ego* and *alter*), the agreement is more difficult to achieve, because the overlap is smaller. State B expectations might be also defined as different role conceptions that both states might take and enact towards *alter*—the latter might be defined in different ways here.

According to the proposed synthesis, as in Putnam's assumptions, three factors determine the size of the win-set—and in this case—the DC. These are: (1) Level II preferences and coalitions, (2) Level II institutions, (3) Level I negotiators' strategies. For each of them, I will present propositions resulting from combining role theory and two-level game concepts. The propositions will show the effects of diverse role contestation processes (caused by the society or politicians) on the negotiation result and illustrate how international negotiations affect domestic politics through initiating role contestation processes between different role conceptions. These propositions are presented in Table 3.1. Each factor and the accompanying hypotheses will be discussed and illustrated on the following pages. They are also investigated in subsequent chapters with empirical studies of V4–EU relations and the internal processes in each V4 state. The size of the overlap depends on the DC between different role conceptions—it is larger if the DC index is higher.

*Table 3.1* Propositions integrating role theory and Putnam's two-level game framework

<i>Putnam's factors determining the win-set size</i>	<i>Two-level role theory assumptions</i>
<b>Level II Preferences and Coalitions</b>	The size of the win-set (overlap) depends on the vertical Role Contestation Index (1–DC).
<b>Level II Institutions</b>	The size of the win-set (overlap) depends on the horizontal and vertical Role Contestation Index (1–DC).
<b>Level I Negotiators' Strategies</b>	The size of the win-set depends on how high a role contestation index (RCI) the negotiator can trigger. The size of the win-set (overlap) depends on the international vertical <sup>5</sup> Role Contestation Index (1–DC).

*Source:* Author's own elaboration.

Moreover, the size of the overlap depends on domestic role contestation processes, both horizontal and vertical (measured by RCI), and on how high a role contestation index (RCI) the negotiator can trigger.

### 3.4.1 Level II Preferences and Coalitions

*The size of the win-set (overlap) depends on the vertical Role Contestation Index (1-DC).*

Each negotiated agreement requires acceptance by the society of a given country where diverse constituencies are active, so the negotiator has to convince at least some of them. Complementing this statement with role theory, I assume that each group could have a different vision of the state's role both in negotiation processes and in the entire international system. Negotiations may often lead to an agreement that changes the state's role in relations not only with its negotiation partner but also with other actors not participating in the negotiations, which increases the scope of role contestation processes between diverse social groups.

Thus, there could not only be a conflict (or lack of overlap) between role conception and role expectations (as well as between different role conceptions defined by negotiation partners), but also different social groups could advocate for different role conceptions. Thus, following the assumption of theoretical synthesis—the more roles identified by diverse social groups and the lower the DC between them, the more complex the role contestation process and the smaller the overlap (the size of the win-set). The complexity of role contestation is here defined in terms of the number of roles identified in the processes and the differences between them. The more roles identified and the more differences between them,<sup>3</sup> the smaller the win-set (the overlap). It is so, because the more roles (identified by diverse social groups) the chief negotiator must deal with and try to reconcile, the more difficult it is to formulate the one that will overlap with role expectations or role conceptions defined by negotiating partners.

In sum, if a state's role accepted by the society does not resonate with the role vision dictated by an international agreement, its chances of adoption are low due to role contestation processes between diverse social groups that make the overlap between state's role conception and role conceptions defined by the negotiating partner smaller and trigger role contestation processes at the international level.

The chief negotiators may also upset the game boards and point out to their internal support groups that their Level I negotiation partners (other states, allies, or international organisations) attempt to impose a role different from the one that they identify with. In this case, negotiators can build support on Level II using the Level I negotiations situation. Negotiators can show that a role conflict derives from the pressure on Level I. Moreover, they have the possibility to present themselves as defenders of the previous role, accepted in their country.

It allows them to build their position within domestic politics using the events from the level of negotiations.

In the cases presented in the following chapters, one can observe a conflict between role conceptions identified by the V4 states (mainly by their governments) and the conceptions defined for them by the EU. The V4 wanted to play the role of Defender of Western Civilization and Christian Values or Borders' Protector, whereas the EU wanted them to show solidarity not only with refugees but also with other EU members who were hit hardest by the migration wave. The EU wanted the V4 to take the role of Solidary State or Responsible State, nonetheless, even the idea of responsibility was understood differently by the EU and the V4. Thus, the overlap between these role conceptions was quite small and made the agreement difficult to achieve.

Moreover, different social groups or constituencies identifying with diverse political parties in the V4 tried to formulate numerous role conceptions making the role contestation process more complex and at the same time reducing the win-set size. Some of them supported the EU's role conceptions, whereas others tried to identify different ones. Thus, the range of roles identified by domestic voters was quite large, which will be presented in the second part of this book. Consequently, political leaders had to reconcile different role conceptions formulated by them to present a consistent position at the international negotiation level.

### **3.4.2 Level II Institutions**

*The size of the win-set (overlap) depends on the horizontal and vertical Role Contestation Index (I-DC).*

Putnam's win-set also depends significantly on Level II political institutions, i.e., diverse and sometimes complicated ratification procedures that also interact with role theory assumptions. In each ratification procedure, role contestation processes may occur both horizontally and vertically. Consequently, the more roles identified in the processes of horizontal and vertical role contestation and the lower the DC between them, the smaller the overlap between their role conceptions and conceptions defined by the negotiating partner as the complexity of domestic role contestation is greater.

When discussing institutional ratification procedures in democracies, one can consider three main situations that may affect the win-set. In the first one, the parliament accepts the negotiated agreement, which might be then rejected in a constitutionally required referendum. In the second one, the ruling party may not get the required majority in the parliament, e.g., three-quarters or three-fifths of votes. Finally, the third scenario assumes that the ruling party does not push the negotiated agreement through due to a lack of party discipline. If one supplements all these cases with role theory assumptions, the following cases may be distinguished.

In the first one, the negotiators must convince the general public (the society), because the ratification procedure requires a referendum. The chief negotiators may try to suppress vertical role contestation processes pointing out either to the fact that the state's role will not change after the treaty is accepted or the fact that the state's role will become more beneficial for the country and its citizens. Thus, the goal is to mute the contestation processes so that not too many role concepts are generated, because it would ultimately reduce the overlap. If the number of separate roles identified in the contestation process grows and the DC between them is lower, the possibility of reaching an agreement is smaller.

If negotiators do not agree with the negotiated agreement at Level I, they may use the Level II gameboard to present themselves as defenders of the old role that the allies or the international organisations want to change. Even as in the case of invoking the domestic constituencies' preferences, negotiators may use social resistance to strengthen their Level I position pointing out that they would accept the treaty if not for the society's disagreement that makes the ratification unlikely. But also in this case, the greater the number of roles formulated in the Level II contestation process, the smaller the overlap. By turning the game boards around, the negotiator can also trigger contestation processes to show at Level I that an agreement is unacceptable under national policy.

In the V4–EU cases, the chief negotiators of the V4 wanted mainly to show that roles expected by the EU were not acceptable at Level II. To make their message even clearer, some have triggered processes of vertical contestation by pointing out that it is the EU that requires the V4 countries to adopt an attitude that they do not accept. This move generated greater public reluctance and thus, by using the Level II game board, improved their negotiating position at the international level. As the processes of vertical contestation became more complex, different groups of constituents formulated different role conceptions contrary to the role conceptions defined by the EU, narrowing the overlap.

In the second scenario, the chief negotiator must persuade the opposition to accept the negotiated agreement, but at the same time, the opposing parties might also formulate different role conceptions making the agreement even more difficult to achieve, especially if the DC between these role conceptions is low. In this case, the negotiators can also use the Level I game to influence Level II events, for example by convincing the opposition and emphasising that the new role is expected or required by the international community (e.g., international organisations or allies). To do so, they may suggest that adopting the role required by the negotiation partner or the international community is the responsible thing to do<sup>4</sup>. In this case however, the opposition might formulate a different role conception which does not resonate with the conceptions of the chief negotiators (representing the government's stance). Thus, the more role conceptions identified and the lower the DC between them, the smaller the overlap.

This role scenario was the case in almost all the V4 states during the migration crisis. Some opposition parties in the V4 wanted to follow the EU's conceptions which were opposite to the governments' ones. The situation triggered horizontal role contestation processes and was conducive to the formulation of many role conceptions. One may also imagine an opposite scenario in which a negotiator does not agree with the treaty proposed on Level I and attempts to convince the opposition by suggesting that the requirements of the new role are unacceptable.

The third scenario refers to a situation in which negotiators have to persuade the members of their own party to accept the proposed agreement. They may refer to a new potential role that their state could play in the international or regional system after adopting (or not adopting) the treaty. Emphasising new Level I role conceptions or expectations, the negotiators may impact the state's *ego* and reformulate the role envisioned by the political elites. However, one may suggest that if the negotiators are able to convince the members of their own party to accept the agreement by pointing out to the new role (that they consider a better one) of the state in the international system and hence reduce the number of different role conceptions being formulated, the chances of implementing the agreement and the overlaps are bigger.

Therefore, the more suppressed the role contestation process and the fewer role conceptions identified by party members, the larger the overlap. In such cases, negotiators use Level I processes to change the governing elites' approach to the state's role. Moreover, a change on Level II (a new vision of the state's role) is used on Level I by emphasising the negotiator's efforts towards convincing their colleagues. The negotiator may then say: "Look how much I had to do to make my colleagues happy; they have accepted this new role even though part of the opposition and the society are not convinced".

It is worth mentioning cases in which the negotiator themselves along with their collaborators (and sometimes the opposition or the general public as well) do not agree with the negotiated agreement. The negotiator does not need to convince these groups, but the opportunity may nevertheless be used to strengthen the negotiator's position in the country. When presenting the agreement to their party, the negotiator can present themselves as a relentless politician that defends their own country and keeps their position at the level accepted by the government and the society. The negotiator opposes the conceptions of those who want to change such a role on Level I.

The negotiator may easily exaggerate their position of a protector of the role that politicians from different parties see fit for the state and a builder of unity and consensus among politicians across the spectrum. As a result, the negotiator has an opportunity to show that by rejecting the treaty, they defend not only the society's interests but also its view of the state's role in world politics. The metaphor of the two-level game and upsetting the boards in order to use the results of a game played on one level on the other illustrates it well.

### 3.4.3 Level I Negotiators' Strategies

*The size of the win-set depends on how high a role contestation index (RCI) the negotiator can trigger. The size of the win-set (overlap) depends on the international vertical Role Contestation Index (I-DC).*

A study of the chief negotiators' strategies and tactical dilemmas (Putnam, 1988, p. 450) may also be complemented by role theory. An agile negotiator can initiate or suppress role contestation processes by using diverse strategies and is also able to convince the society to change its attitude towards the role conception in line with the negotiated agreement.

The most obvious option for the negotiator is to use their position. A respected and well-known negotiator has a better chance of convincing the society to support the negotiated agreement than someone who is not well-known or popular. Their strong position affects not only the win-set but also the chances of its acceptance at the domestic level. One might assume that the position of Hungary's Prime Minister, Victor Orbán, is relevant here. As a strong political leader, he has tried to influence public opinion and indicate that it is the EU that is trying to impose roles on Hungary and the entire V4 that these countries do not support.

Moreover, the negotiator's position plays an important role also in the country of the negotiating partner. The citizens of State B are more likely to accept an agreement (even inspired by State A) if a politician from State A has a good international reputation. This is why it is important to make sure negotiators are reputable and trustworthy. It increases their chances in negotiations. If a negotiator is a good public speaker, and is popular and trusted, they are able to convince their electorate as well as other politicians to support the negotiated agreement and thus the new role of the state. They are also able to use their position to suppress role contestation processes and, as a result, improve their bargaining position—the improvement of their Level II position will allow them to achieve more on Level I as well.

Nevertheless, as in all other cases, a negotiator can upset the game boards. If they do not want to accept the agreement proposed on Level I, they may initiate or intensify Level II role contestation processes which decrease the overlap and the size of the win-set. That was the case in Hungary, where support for the ruling Fidesz party was falling in 2015, but the Prime Minister was able to use the crisis and negotiations with the EU to mobilise support for his party by highlighting the conflict between Hungary's role conception and EU conceptions for member states (including Hungary).

In such cases, one should emphasise not only the importance of role conception or role conflict but also role contestation processes amplified by negotiators' strategies. Thus, one may suggest that the better the negotiator is at convincing constituents to support a state's role change, the larger the overlap and the



win-set's size. Conversely, the more intense the role contestation process that the negotiator is able to initiate by negotiating the agreement, the smaller the win-set and the smaller the chances of its acceptance. The question of negotiator's strategies combines in itself the elements already discussed in the paragraph about the two remaining factors (institutional level and Level II preferences and coalitions). It is the negotiator who is a Level II political player able to use their skills to build the vision of role conflict between role conceptions defined domestically (at Level II) and internationally (Level I), and at the same time the one who initiates horizontal and vertical role contestation processes.

In this case, the win-set size also depends on the vertical role contestation process, which can be traditionally defined as contestation that occurs between the government and the state's public opinion. One should, however, assume that the contestation is also triggered by the chief negotiators. In the presented case, the vertical role contestation occurs between the V4 states and the EU, as the latter is defined as a multilayered *ego*. Therefore, if a group of states (here the V4) defines for themselves roles that are different than the roles defined for them by the EU, and at the same time the chief negotiators can trigger the contestation processes at the European level, then the size of the win-set is getting smaller.

These theoretical presumptions can also be successfully supplemented by diverse theories focusing on the negotiators' strategies and hence the proposed synthesis can be further extended. It is in fact the most important question that needs to be emphasised when discussing the essence of negotiators' strategies in two-level game. As long as they are able to engage media in their discursive strategies, they can more easily convince the society to accept the negotiated agreement or, on the contrary, block its ratification by emphasising roles as well as interests identified in the agreement.

### 3.5 Summary

The theoretical synthesis presented in this chapter, through merging Putnam's assumptions with elements of role theory, allows a more in-depth analysis of the domestic constraints in international negotiations. Following the idea of adding domestic politics components to the two-level game model (Moravcsik, 1993, pp. 3–42), I have focused on selected elements of role theory in order to emphasise not only institutional but also social constraints on international negotiations. It is possible because role theory covers not only expectations and demands of *alter* (or role conceptions of negotiating partners) and role conceptions of *ego* but also extends to role contestation processes within the *ego*. The latter processes show how these two gameboards identified by Putnam interact and influence each other.

The presented synthesis completes Putnam's metaphor which results in a theory explaining the influence of diverse domestic processes described using

role theory categories. They affect the scope of international negotiations or, in a broader sense, international relations. Role theory has operationalised processes and mechanisms that determine Level II international agreements, which Putnam presented rather briefly. By means of role theory, his framework gains content and transforms from an abstract formal concept into a concrete descriptive model.

The synthesis also supplemented the assumptions of role theory which is often considered theoretically rich but poor on the methodological level (Thies, 2010). Combining it with the two-level game assumptions, one can show the influence of role conception, role conflict, or role contestation processes on a state's foreign policy. Role theory talks more about identities that cannot be directly applied in the negotiation process between *ego* and *alter*.

Thus, role theory generates a more specific framework within which specific processes related to the state's role are presented as variables affecting decisions regarding foreign policy. The presented synthesis clearly shows how *alter* affects *ego* and how their relations determine a state's foreign policy. Two-level game assumptions explain how it happens by referring, among other things, to the preferences of different social groups or functioning institutions.

As a result, the proposed synthesis can be used to analyse international negotiations carried out by states (and international institutions) in which conflicts (between *ego* and *alter* as well as within *ego* itself the intra-role conflicts), changes of a state's role on the international level in the course of negotiations, or different perceptions of its role by other negotiating parties (allies and international organisations) can be observed. The synthesis may be used in all cases in which negotiators upset the board and use role postulates formulated on Level I to initiate role contestation processes on Level II, and *vice versa*—when domestic events (related to the role of a given actor) may be used on Level I.

What is more, it can be also used for many other cases involving not only negotiations *sensu stricto* but also conflicts that can be resolved by international agreements. It can also be used to analyse states' roles revisions (changes) in an international organisation with special reference to an internal role conception change or role conceptions expressed or demanded on the organisational level. The only limitation is that the proposed synthesis should be used to study cases of the states in which role contestation processes occur.

Surprisingly, as demonstrated by the case of Iran analysed in the subject literature (Hurst, 2016), it happens not only in democratic systems but in all systems in which the role of the general public or internal support groups is important. Moreover, one may also use other notions from role theory, such as role enactment, role strain, or role competition, to supplement Putnam's assumptions. In such cases, a scholar's creativity will be the only limit.

In the empirical analysis of the reaction of V4 states to the migration crisis of 2015 and the EU's policy of forced relocation of refugees, only the themes presented above will be used. I will be referring mostly to the second and third

sets of factors determining the overlap, i.e., to factors covering the role conflict between diverse role conceptions defined by the V4 and the EU for both the V4 and the EU. The factors determining the conflict are situated within horizontal and vertical role contestation processes. Horizontal role contestation occurs within specific states and between different political parties. Since the V4 states (that are considered generalised *ego*) are also considered as parts of the EU that altogether with its member states constitute a multilayered *ego*—the whole organisation, vertical role contestation will be defined as the process of agreeing on states and the EU's role that occurs on the European level. The possibility of reaching an agreement will be then determined by diverse processes of role contestation. The latter will be unpacked and as such will operationalise Putnam's framework.

## Notes

- 1 These scholars indicated four possible ways of contouring theoretical dialogues: subsumption strategy, competitive testing, domain of application, and sequencing (Jupille et al., 2003, pp. 1–2).
- 2 Not all theories that have been developed in IR since then were systemic in nature, but the systemic approach was dominant. Before Waltz's publication, in the 1960s and 1970s, IR scholars referred to variables from the levels of state or individual (Allison, 1971; Kolko, 1968; Rosenau, 1967; Snyder et al., 1954, 2002). Nevertheless, due to the popularity of structural realism, the last two decades of the 20th century were dominated by the development of system theories. Theories referring to state- or individual-level variables, such as Moravcsik's liberalism, were in the minority (Moravcsik, 1997; Waltz, 1979).
- 3 The differences between roles are defined according to the degree of congruence between them (see Chapter 4).
- 4 It is important to mention the international community here, because, as already explained, the negotiated agreement may change the role of the state not only in relation to the negotiation partner but also in relation to third parties not participating in the negotiations or within the entire international system.
- 5 In the analysed case the international vertical contestation process occurs between member states and the EU (see Chapter 8).

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