

Introducing motive micropatriology

The terms *simulationism* and *secessionism* are outdated and they need replacing. They have come to mean completely different things to different people, rendering them useless for clearly describing a particular way of doing micronationalism, and they are politically charged, with most micronationalists in the MicroWiki community going out of their way to have their nations considered secessionist rather than simulationist, which presents difficulties when a neutral judgement of a micronation makes it “simulationist” according to a particular definition. I also believe that the *simulationist–secessionist* axis is a narrow, limited mode of micropatriology that makes it more difficult to properly describe important ideas.

Some will take issue with the assertion that *simulationism* and *secessionism* have ‘come to mean’ different things to different people. I first argued in 2019 that these words had vague but broadly agreed-upon meanings before geofictionalists decided to claim from around 2005 onwards that so-called micronations with claims on fictional planets were simulationist and that micronations with claims in the real world were secessionist. This, I said, led to the MicroWiki community properly defining these terms in around 2012, creating classical secessionism, a relatively formal and coherent system where the two terms had clear meanings. This analysis was broadly correct but I feel that it now needs extending.

As I wrote in 2019, since around 2015, the MicroWiki community has treated secessionism as better than simulationism. Something I did not notice was that this applied to positions along the axis as well as to which side of the divide one fell on — it was better to be hard secessionist than soft secessionist, and so on. With the launch of MicroWiki@Discord in September 2018 and the influx of younger micronationalists, many micronations appeared in the MicroWiki sector which were soft classical secessionist (i.e. had the nominal commitment to achieving recognition but acted similarly to classical simulationists) or soft simulationist (who declared independence but openly admitted their projects had goals other than recognition), but the social pressure to be hard secessionist persisted. Rather than encouraging people to transform their micronations to better fit the old 2012 definitions, though, this pressure caused the definitions to shift. People started to use the term *simulationist* to describe what they considered non-serious behaviour, like going to war. It and *secessionist* have started to become terms that reflect a wide range of meaning that covers both the motives behind what a micronation actually does on a day to day basis (e.g. calling war ‘simmie’) and the motives behind what a micronation seeks to ultimately achieve (as in classical micropatriology). I call the individual understandings that people have developed of these terms in the “customary pseudoclassical definitions.” Broadening the scope of this arm of micropatriology to cover the motives behind the day to day activities of micronations as well as their ultimate goals is a good thing, but the current way of doing so is confused and muddles these two things up in a way that has undermined classical micropatriology without really creating a replacement. That is what I aim to do here.

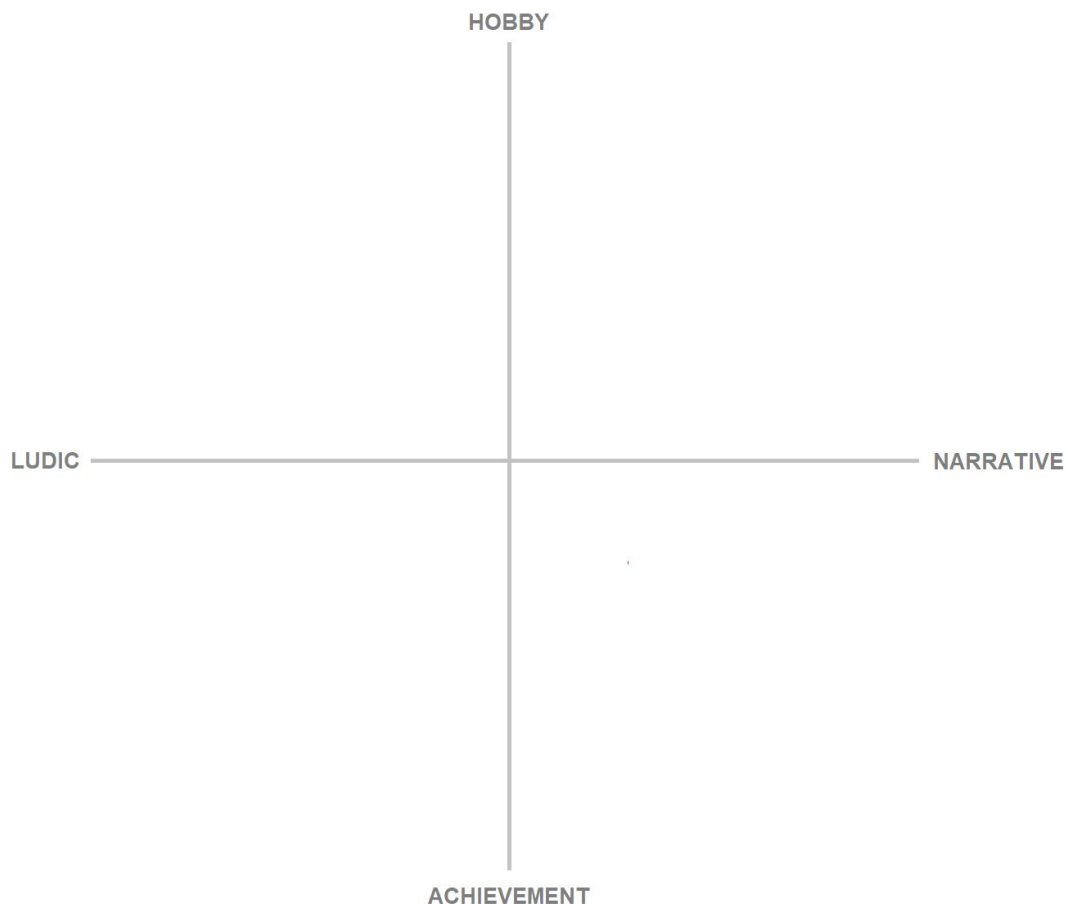
One other thing worth mentioning is “postclassical micropatriology”. Also since 2018, some ideas have emerged that start with classical micropatriology and try to extend it, and interestingly,

these ideas share two common themes — rehabilitating simulationism as a legitimate concept, and trying to distinguish somehow between different sources of inspiration for a micronation’s culture as a “second axis.” This is a topic I will probably cover in detail at another point, but it deserves two off-hand remarks here: one, things like New Secessionism or Brienovic’s System of Micronational Classification are not so much a challenge to the classical micropatriology of 2012 as to the classical secessionist ascendancy of 2015; and two, that the existence of postclassical perspectives alongside customary pseudoclassical definitions for simulationism and secessionism has contributed to the decline of classical micropatriology as an authoritative source for what people actually mean when they say the words *simulationism* and *secessionism*.

I’m feeling bold: I think the new system I explain here can and should completely replace the terms *simulationism* and *secessionism*, and classical micropatriology along with them. It considers both what motivates the day to day activities of the micronation, and what its ultimate goals are, using terms that I hope are value-neutral and clearly defined. It is also simple.

I have provisionally given it the name “motive micropatriology” but I welcome other suggestions.

Motive micropatriology has two axes: ludic vs narrative and hobby vs achievement. You could draw it as a compass or a diamond — below I’ve done a graph-looking one to demonstrate:



The **ludic vs narrative** axis measures the motive behind the micronation's day to day activities. In other contexts, *ludic* means 'game-related'. The **hobby vs achievement** narrative measures the motive behind the ultimate purpose of the micronation.

In ludic activities, the participants are sincerely trying to actually do something, with a genuine chance that it might not work. In a ludic election campaign, when candidates make posters or participate in debates, they do so because they actually want to win votes. In a ludic economy, when someone sells something for micronational currency, they do it because they actually want the micronational currency. In narrative activities, the participants are doing something because it is the proper thing for a country to do, even if redundant in the micronation. In a narrative election campaign, the candidates make posters because macronational election candidates make posters. In a narrative economy, people sell things for the micronational currency because they want to get the micronation's economy working.

Two particularly ludic micronations are Fesmar and [REDACTED]. In Fesmar, amusingly, its ludic nature can be seen in its infamous drama. To someone used to a wholly narrative micronation, the idea that talks to merge two splinter nations could break down over legislative concerns would seem ludicrous; surely the end goal matters more? But in Fesmar, when people argue over a new law, they are *actually* arguing, and they are sincerely invested in whether or not that law gets passed. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] Redacted — see footnote.'

[REDACTED] being ludic. It was the point at which laws were not just being debated because that is what countries do, but because the participants in the debate were genuinely invested in whether or not it was passed.

In contrast, whereas a ludic micronation is more like a game where the citizens are playing to win, a narrative micronation is more like a story the citizens are writing together. Two narrative micronations might be Brienia, and Sabia and Verona. In each case the constitution is somewhat decorative, in Brienia's case because whatever conversations might happen, Ivan decided what direction the country took and no-one ever tried to undermine his authority, and in Sabia and Verona because much of the political system was stocked with soft toys. My former micronation, Glastieve, was always more narrative than ludic. When someone wrote a law, we almost always passed it unanimously because we were happy and excited that they had passed a law, and the slightest debate or political 'controversy' was blown up to epic proportions in the press and the historical record because we treated it like an event in a real country.

The other axis, hobby vs achievement, considers a micronation's ultimate *raison d'être* rather than the nature of its day to day activity.

¹ Quotation from private forum redacted until permission received to use it.

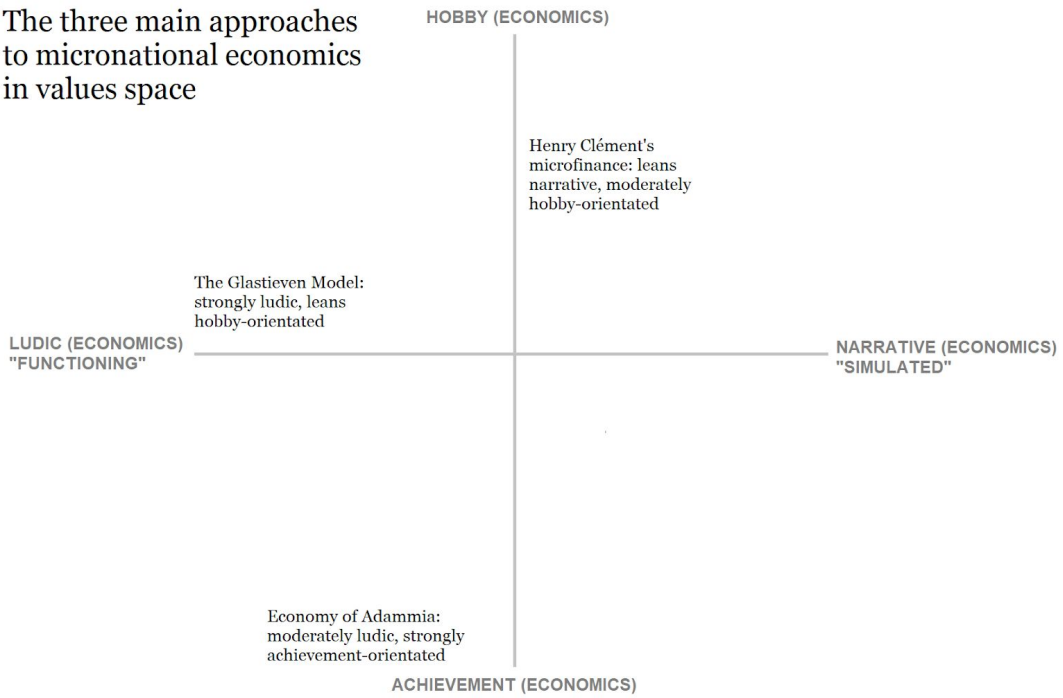
For a hobby micronation, it exists just to be a micronation. For many micronationalists, saying that the end goal of the project is to be recognised by the nations of the world is a massive part of the fun, and I have no desire to suck the fun out of that by walking around informing people that they're "simmies" who will never get recognised. I am not a misanthrope. In this system, a hobby micronation can still be one that aims to win international recognition and so forth, as its practical reason for being created was to be a micronation. Anyone who founds a secessionist movement without meaning to found a micronation who stumbles into MicroWiki will no doubt leave again soon afterwards. The defining feature of a hobby micronation is that it has no practical goal that it seeks to achieve and measures its success against (it has literally nothing to do with it whether or not the nation concedes that it will never be recognised internationally).

An achievement micronation does have some goal. This goal might be avoiding taxes (Hutt River Province), proving a political point (Liberland) or being a protest (Lesbian and Gay Republic), attracting attention to itself (Sealand), governing a friendship group (New Secessionist nations, such as the former Glastieve or the former Brienia), or providing an environment where weed can be smoked in peace (Freetown Christiania).

Many micronations will be an achievement micronation *to some extent*, and it is important to define what varying degrees of intensity along the axis mean here. Though the axis aims the motives behind the ultimate purpose of the micronation, just how achievement-orientated a micronation is depends on the day-to-day extent to which it focuses on that achievement rather than on just being a micronation for the sake of it. Liberland takes a lot more time to just be a micronation and do country-type things in addition to its political protest than the Lesbian and Gay Republic ever did (it stayed narrowly focused on achieving the political change it wanted), so Liberland would only be a moderately achievement micronation compared to the L&GR.

Lastly, to round this off, please enjoy two miscellaneous graphs I made for a talk I was going to give at that February 2021 online summit that got cancelled:

The three main approaches to micronational economics in values space



2020 customary pseudoclassical secessionism and simulationism definitions projected in values space

