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# National identities and socio-economic development in European Union

Cezar TECLEAN\*

## Abstract

*This paper analyses the relationship between identity and level of socio-economic development in the member states of the European Union. This work is an empirical study which uses original data on the number of national mottos and country logos, GDP/Capita and Human Development Index (HDI) for 2016 disaggregated by states of the EU28. Our findings suggest the existence of a symmetrical interdependence between the consistency of national identities and the degree of socio-economic development, between which there is a relative territorial overlap. We attempt to demonstrate that the symmetry of their arrangement with each other maps out a community-wide asymmetry, resulting in a territorial cohesion deficit and segregated segregation of the Union, generating an asymmetric European Union with more identity-development speeds.*

**Keywords:** national identities, development, identity indicators, national motto, country logo

**JEL Classification:** O52, O57

## Introduction

Identity issues stem from the fact that the need for identity is the most urgent social need at all levels of human organization, even if not all entities are openly recognizing this reality: from individual to group, society, state. Consequently, the poison of identity generates an attitude as competitive as the rush to access material, development or power. Hence, in the international system, there is a certain symbiotic mutualism between national identity and development. And the European Union is not reluctant to develop this mechanism, despite its high degree of integration.

The European Union has a wide variety of conceptual definitions. It is at the same time a regional body, a political organization, a customs union, economic, monetary, a single market. Each of these entities represents as many facets of the Union's supranational identity. But who is each member and with what contributes to the configuration of the community identity pantheon and especially what is symbolic? What are the identity brands? How does it define itself in the community concert and how is it perceived from the outside of its own niche? The answers to these questions are the essence of the concept of national identity that can be approached in a double manner: on the one

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hand, in the spatial matrix of a behavioural geography of identities and on the other in a way of interdependence between identity and the socioeconomic dimension. As the European Union knows economic and social convergence and divergences, it also knows differentiated identity convergence. Europe with more speed is undoubtedly not only an economic and social reality but also an identity one. The quench of the two realities does not always describe the model of perfect mimetism, but pan-European cohesion is undoubtedly dependent on the cohesion of the two plans.

To understand the importance of static identities, we must admit the prevalence of intergovernmental character in European decision-making. Indeed, two of the four leading institutions of the Union<sup>1</sup> are the projection of intergovernmentalism: the European Council and the Council of the Union. We do not evaluate here whether it is good or bad if there are more communitarianism and less intergovernmentalism. It is certain that this decision formula illustrates the existing relationships at the level of the subsequent national entities, which are reflected in their identity burden. So we focus on the role played by countries in the European nations' community. To this end, we will consider two benchmarks for the semiotic definition of national identities: national mottos and country logos. To quantify socio-economic development and spatial differences in development, we will use two specific indicators: Gross Domestic Product (GDP per Capita) and Human Development Index (HDI).

The main objective of the research is to assess the level of national identity at the scale of the community space based on the two identity indicators, namely the behavioural mapping of the perceptions and self-perceptions about the static self, conceived in the European public consciousness. A second objective is to assess the relationship between the national identity consistency expressed by the two items and the degree of social stability and economic development within the EU.

The envisaged working hypothesis emphasizes that the level of national identity, social stability, and economic development are interdependent sizes in the architecture of post-war European construction. The thesis we propose is the spatial convergence/superposition of the distribution of identity consistency and the distribution of the degree of social stability and economic development.

The paper is structured modularly, comprising the following parts: the introductory part, the evaluation of the knowledge stage and the epistemic framing in the field, the exposition of the used

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<sup>1</sup> The European Council, the Council of the European Union, the European Commission and the European Parliament.

methodology, the presentation of the results obtained, the discussions and comments on the results, the interpretation of the conclusions and the bibliographic references.

### **1. Knowledge and critical thinking in the study of identities**

The enlargement of the European Union in recent years has been inevitably accompanied not only by the multiplication of socio-economic issues but also of cultural identity issues. The latter, however, should not be seen only by the Huntingtonian lens, but rather in a combined, neo-realistic and constructivist manner, resulting from the ambitions of each new member of the Union to be as visible as possible in the community concert to the purpose of legitimizing his position and claims. In this context, knowing the identity phenomenon is a keystone in ensuring predictability, legitimacy and ultimately stability on the continent. It is the argument that studying the issue of European identities has become a genuine "must have" in the past decades in the academic environments in Europe, but also in North America or Asia.

Studies in the field of identities and imaginary identity in the European space, although of an old tradition in the literature, have gained a great deal after the destruction of the communist system in Central Eastern Europe and the accession of ex-communist states to the great family of the European Union. The interest for this field of investigation was and is determined by the impact of the identity factor in the configuration of the formats of some ongoing actions and initiatives, including the catalysis or attenuation of the EU enlargement process.

The approach to the theme of European identities responds to a dual, theoretical and practical interest. The theoretical argument comes from the desire to know the phenomena of identity effusively erupting in Europe in the post-communist stage before accession and immediately post-accession to the EU of the Eastern countries. But even in the "old Europe", tense situations have been recorded on the grounds of ethnolinguistic and/or confessional identity cleavages (inter-communal faults in Belgium, Spain, Northern Ireland). That is why understanding the way in which the identities imagined by the different communities (national, regional, ethnic, confessional, etc.) are essential for designing the future European architecture and responding to the ultimate goal of properly managing the common cohabitation in a E.U. of freedom, justice, stability, and equity.

The problem of identities associated with the European nations has been treated plurivalently in the literature: the size of the nationalism-nationalist syncretism, the configuration of the political communities associated with the national phenomenon, the identity dimensions related to the contemporary reconfigurations in the European Union.

However, under the conditions of accelerated globalization, Linklater feels that there is now a continuous transformation of political communities with inevitable repercussions on national communities and implicitly on their identities (Linklater, 2011).

With regard to the strengthening of nation-states in Europe, Armstrong believes that nationalism has always manifested itself after the actual creation of nations, being their identity corollary (Armstrong, 1982, p. 36). From this point of view, Rumford tells us that we have witnessed a continuous multiplication of facets of the national phenomenon in Europe over the last two centuries (Rumford and Buhari, 2014, p. 121). These transformations and their identifying accents are seen by Holsinger and Kobrin in the light of the theory of neo-Médevism, in which the current national states would represent the next phase of the Westphalian stalemate (Holsinger, 2007, p. 72; Kobrin, 1998, p. 20).

Other paradigms privilege the identity-national explanations from the perspective of political-historical imagination. For more than a century, the representatives of the French school have considered that nations are entities and identities whose existence is unilaterally proclaimed by the elites at a certain time (Renan, 1947, p. 41; Thiesse, 2000, p. 114). Girardet and Mach appreciate that the political mythologist is called upon to contribute rigorously to the genesis of identity. Myths and associated symbols are mandatory ingredients of national identity constructions and their political phenomena (Mach, 1993, p. 58; Girardet, 1997, p. 16). Evolution of E.U. requires a gradual rethinking of European identities (Morin, 1987, p. 47); according to Mattera, the crystallization of our own identities within the common Europeans must be seen in a consolidated historicist conception over the last two and a half millennia (Mattera, 2008, p. 32-33). Wolton believes that Europe needs to build its own identity formation, in which national identities mingle in the community crucible in the form of a "European globalization," as Europe itself is a piece in the "global globalization" (Wolton, 2003, p. 94).

Eastern Europe is inaugurating its own ambitions of identity only from the century of lights (Wolff, 2000, p. 56), but the composition of its identities seems to follow the same subordination conditioned by its size as its historical trajectory. Thus, in the historical-virtual sense of Ferguson, Central-Eastern Europe, in any historical situation, would have been in the orbit of predominantly German influence (the "Kaiser Empire"), which is still happening today in the E.U. (Ferguson, 2013). One of the most adhering currents of current thinking in the sphere of international relations identifies a bizarre relationship between the formation of collective identities and recognition of the "other". Greenhill, however, believes that in the absence of a rational and credible process mechanism, even for a well-integrated body like the EU, recognition may not necessarily imply the guarantee of

identities in a nonconflictual way (Greenhill, 2008, p. 344). Another instrument for the consolidation of identities used in literature is the recourse to the emotional and emotional memory of the events experienced, but Ross believes that the constructivist manner of approaching this subject does not bring all the necessary clarifications even in the case of internal identities in the United States (Ross, 2006, p. 199).

European national identities can be highlighted through functional differences in the international system, derived from Waltz's realistic conception. In this context, differences in power in the European system can explain the concept of Europe with more speeds currently being circulated and which would associate identity differentiations accordingly. Starting from the Waltzian assumption, Buzan and Albert accept political differentiation in the system as an explanatory source for stratified differentiation (Buzan and Albert, 2010, pp. 316-317), which we consider responsible for the identities generated by the multi-level governing system E.U. At the same time, stratified identities are valued by Ruggie in a neo-medieval manner, admitting a similarity between the medieval and current differences in the E.U. (Ruggie, 1993). But identities prove to be plastic and undergo transformations as a result of interactions and the transfer of ideas (Legro, 2009); in E.U. this is reflected in the many legislative, political, economic and social adaptations at Member State level imposed by the need to comply with the Community acquis; all these systemic adjustments continuously alter and reconfigure national identities.

In the context of the ubiquitous Europeanization that takes place amid the prevalence of intergovernmentalism, Anholt states that we are witnessing a synchronous identity competition with a socio-economic competition where competitive national identities come together with government social responsibility (Anholt, 2011, p. 4). Berens believes that identities' competitiveness can be ensured by standardizing them through measurable country brands (Berens *et al.*, 2011). These brands/identity brands are called upon to provide a national good reputation derived from the development of events with a desirable imaging effect in many areas: large-scale sports events (Schreiner and Go, 2011), historical events that load the identities of certain places, cities (Braun, 2011; Magala, 2011) or create a certain identity topophilia on the basis of hedonistic perceptions (Tjøstheim and Go, 2011).

Linking the issue of national identities to the state security dilemma occupies an important part of contemporary analyses. Mitzen believes that tensions between states themselves (derived from competition between them) provide them with the desired security status, as competition reinforces identity or identities (Mitzen, 2006, pp. 342-343). This paradigm is able to explain the difficulties of E.U. to organize a coherent community security and defence system.

A series of recent Romanian research evaluates the political-identity and socio-identity patterns in the European Union. Boia believes that the assertion of European identities must be projected on other coordinates nowadays, given the diminishing of the weight of the West in the global society (Boia, 2013b, p.33-34), and national identities should result from the synthesis of particularities through an effort essentialization and abstraction (Boia, 2013a, p. 10), for which the proposed indicators (national motto and country logos) represent the elements of a semiotic-identity abstraction. Current analyses identify the different components of European identities: Bărbulescu views the specific institutional model of the E.U. as the main ingredient of the European identity matrix (Bărbulescu, 2015, p. 340, 578). Relationships of European common identity with national identities can also be interpreted in a critical register, as Pricopie does, showing that E.U. can alter national identities, local traditions and cultures, and bear a certain responsibility for labour market imbalances in each member state (Pricopie, 2012, p. 113), while Ivan attributes the levels resulting from the multi-layered organogram of the EU, so many associated levels of identity (Ivan, 2009).

## **2. Methodology, data and the epistemic of research**

We must recognize that it is very difficult to quantify national identities in an objective and rational manner, through quantitative indices that give interpretations issued the rigor necessary to position them above all contestability. At the same time, it is equally difficult to evaluate single-country identity without resorting to a comparative analysis by contextualizing identifying approaches within a wider spatial-temporal framework. For this reason, we will radiograph in a qualitative manner the relationships between the two identity components (self-claimed identity and externally perceived identity) through two qualitative reference indicators, namely the category of *national mottos* and the category of *country logos*. In short, we will use the national motto as an indicator for assessing the identity seen inside the nations (the self-constructed and self-identified identity of each national entity), while for assessing the perceived external identity we will use the country logos as an assessment parameter as labels/visible from the outside).

The mottos are a currency that a country has self-proclaimed and assumes, and which is supposed to be a super-concise summary of what the nation's elites want to present to their own compatriots as well as to the outside world. Therefore, a national motto has a double valence, as it is a mobilizing and uplifting message for its own citizens, but at the same time, it wants to convey to the outside world the self-designed image of the nation in question. Like most contemporary and contemporary representations, national mottoes promote national / state-style features/realities in a



symbolic-partisan manner, according to the theses and fundamental values that will be propagated by states. They emphasize those beliefs of the national ethos, considered favourable to those states since their espousing is a deliberate and deliberate process. How from the age of Lights, the translation of the sacred from the religious to the new sacred laity of the nation (the "new religion" of national patriotism, the rule of law, freedom and democracy) from the age of the Luminaries, the national mottoes somehow reserved the role of labels of the new contemporary sacrality. In a profane and pejorative way, however, country mottoes seem to be propaganda national slogans, often unwieldy and only partially realistic, made by elites who have built up modern nations, in order to tabulate new national constructions in public and foreign public consciousness.

In addition to the national self-identifying mottoes in the process of identifying, most of the world's states, and even the dependent or special-status territories, still have a currency, a kind of nickname, a pseudonym associated with the country, reflecting in a very concise summary one or several of the basic features that define the country. We allow our approach to allocating our own license of expression, whose terminological paternities we claim, namely the country logo or the identity logo, for the definition of the national currency mentioned. The "nicknames" attributed to the Netherlands as "The Land of the Windmills", "The Tulips Country" or "Country of the Channels", those attributed to France - "Hexagon" or "Country of Wines" etc.

Country logos identify, customize and legitimate the represented identities, highlighting their alterities and plotting their semiotic-imaginary borders on mental maps; they come to mark the national definitions, to give them a representation label in the window of the international system. But as any key value, identity logos capture only certain aspects of national entities, putting others in a favourable or inconvenient penumbra, as the case may be, for those states. As a rule, it expresses the desirable facets of the states' identity in the vast majority of situations, as is the case for all nations of the Western world. Very rarely and only for some non-EU countries, it expresses a neutral hue for the image of the country, as in the case of the Republic of Belarus ("White Russia") or Cameroon ("Axilla of Africa") and exceptionally a country logo is built in shades as a result of the hostile perception of that country, either politically (North Korea - "The Desolate Kingdom"), or because of the natural repulsive conditions (Mauritania - "Grand Vacuum", Chad - "Dead Heart of Africa", The Bermuda Islands - "The Devil's Islands").

However, the difference between a logo and a motto is due to the manifestation of the (self) attribution, which is obviously overwhelmed in the case of self-constructed mottoes, but much more moderate in the case of national logos with a significant dose of external input. If identity mottoes provide a relatively subjective side of identity because their messages are made inside state entities,



country logos are the exponents of a more objective dimension of identity, resulting predominantly as effects of external perception on national spaces in cause. There is, of course, a certain amount of internal input to the building of labels expressed through logos, but they are predominantly the perception of external perception. For national-state entities, external attributions come to legitimize their respective political and administrative constructions by providing an external, dissimilar, ubiquitous and non-personalized opinion of creditworthiness, which gives them the desired neutrality and equidistance, credibility. So, unlike a motto perceived as having a considerably partisan load, thus less credible, a country logo emanating mainly from the external perception seems to have a much greater convincing effect, respectively superior credibility.

The assessment of the correspondence between the identity configurations and the economic and socio-human development envisages the assumption of the principles of interdependence and functional integration; the main investigative method is the comparative interpolation of the requested identity resources (national motto and country logo) and the value of the two socio-economic parameters used (GDP / capita and HDI index). The values of these indicators were extracted from the databases and from the reports of the international institutions that manage the parameters in question. National mottoes and country logos have been taken from the list of World Heritage Encyclopaedia as part of the Gutenberg Project; GDP/capita values were collected from the World Bank database for 2016; HDI values were extracted from the United Nations Development Program Human Development Report for 2016 (Table 1).

For the comparative interpolation of the used indicators we set three value classes for each of the three indicators (Table 2). Depending on the identity resources, E.U. was divided into the following classes: 6 well-identified states holding at least one motto and logo, 21 states with an average degree of national identity holding a motto and/or logo and 1 weakly identifiable state without any motto or logo. Depending on GDP/capita, in the E.U. there are 11 economically well-developed economies (with a GDP level above \$ 40,000/capita), 14 states with average economic development (with GDP between 25,000 and 40,000/capita) and 3 poor developing countries a GDP below \$ 25,000/capita). According to the Human Development Index (HDI), we identified 19 states with the highest human development (HDI over 0.850), 8 medium human development (with HDI between 0.800 - 0.850) and 1 human development state relatively low (with HDI below 0.800).

We mention that the individualization of the specified classes within the limits of the values shown represents a proper methodological license assumed for practical reasons, adapted to the level of development in the E.U.; thus the thresholds of the asset classes differ from the usual values used in the standard statistics.

**Table 1. The national mottos, the country logos, the gross domestic product per capita and the human development index of the states of the European Union**

State	National motto	Country logo	GDP/capita (Int.\$)	Human Development Index (HDI)
Austria	<i>"Austria erit in orbe ultima"</i> (Austria will last until the end of time)	- The Waltz Country	50,078	0.893
Belgium	<i>"Unity is Strength"</i>	- The country of chocolates - The cockpit of Europe	46,383	0.896
Bulgaria	<i>"Unity makes Strength"</i>	–	19,199	0.794
Czech Rep.	<i>"Truth prevails"</i>	- The land of a hundred castles	34,711	0.878
Cyprus	–	- The Aphrodite's Island	32,580	0.848
Croatia	–	- The land of a thousand islands	23,596	0.827
Denmark	<i>"God's help, the love of the people, Denmark's strength"</i>	- The Hamlet's Kingdom - The land of little mermaid	49,496	0.925
Estonia	–	- The Baltic Tiger - St. Mary's Land	29,365	0.865
Finland	–	- The land of a thousand lakes	43,053	0.895
France	<i>"Liberty, Equality, Fraternity"</i>	- Hexagon - The land of wines	41,466	0.897
Germany	<i>"Unity and Justice and Freedom"</i>	–	48,730	0.926
Greece	<i>"Freedom or Death"</i>	- The cradle of democracy	26,783	0.866
Ireland	–	- The emerald's island	68,883	0.923
Italy	–	- The Boot	38,161	0.887
Latvia	<i>"Fatherland and Freedom"</i>	–	26,031	0.830
Lithuania	<i>"Freedom, Unity, Prosperity"</i>	–	29,966	0.848
Luxembourg	<i>"We wish to remain what we are"</i>	- The Country Steel	105,882	0.898
Malta	<i>"Virtute et constantia"</i>	- The honey island	37,899	0.856
United Kingdom	<i>"Dieu et mon droit"</i>	- Albionul - The land of hope and glory - The land of tulipes - The land of wind-mills - The land of canalls	42,609	0.909
Netherlands	<i>"I will maintain"</i>	- The land of amber - The European Tiger	50,898	0.924
Poland	–	- The land of amber - The European Tiger	27,811	0.855
Portugal	<i>"This is my Beloved Happy Motherland"</i>	- The land of three "F": Fado, Fatima, Football	30,624	0.843
Romania	–	–	23,626	0.802
Slovakia	–	- The heart of Europe	30,632	0.845
Slovenia	–	- The sun side of Alps	32,885	0.890
Spain	<i>"Plus Ultra"</i>	- The bull leather	36,310	0.892
Sweden	<i>"For Sweden, with the times"</i>	- Moder Svea (Mother Sweden) - The Beautiful and Prosperous Kingdom	49,175	0.913
Hungary	<i>"God bless the Hungarians"</i>	- The land of the Huns	26,681	0.836

Sources: World Heritage Encyclopedia, 2016; World Bank, 2016; United Nations Development Programme, 2016.

The national mottos and the country logos have the valency of codes that outline the definition of national identities, the context in which the evaluation of these parameters is actually a coding of the alterities. Indeed, each motto and country logo is a code that makes the country's structural and/or functional significance essential. This codified semiotics provides the nationally served entities with a triple identity: a semantic meaning, a syntactic meaning, and a pragmatic one (Wardhaugh, 2006).

**Table 2. Correspondence between identity and economic development and socio-human development**

1 motto and 2-3 logo		1 motto and/or 1 logo		No motto/ no logo	
Belgium, Denmark, France, United Kingdom, Netherlands, Sweden		Austria, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Rep., Croatia, Estonia, Finland, Greece, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Lithuania, Latvia, Malta, Luxembourg, Poland, Portugal, Spain, Slovakia, Slovenia		Bulgaria, Croatia Romania	
GDP/capita > 40,000 \$		GDP/capita: 25,000 - 40,000 \$		GDP/capita < 25,000 \$	
Belgium, France, Denmark, United Kingdom, Netherlands, Sweden		Austria, Finland, Germany, Ireland, Luxembourg Czech Rep., Cyprus, Estonia, Greece, Lithuania, Latvia, Italy, Malta, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Hungary		Romania Bulgaria, Croatia	
HDI > 0.850		HDI: 0.800 - 0.850		HDI < 0.800	
Belgium, Denmark, France, United Kingdom, Netherlands, Sweden		Austria, Czech Rep., Estonia, Finland, Malta, Germany, Greece, Italy, Ireland, Spain, Luxembourg, Poland, Slovenia Cyprus, Lithuania, Latvia, Portugal, Slovakia, Hungary		Romania Croatia Bulgaria	
Legend:		- the most solid identity and most prominent development areas; - predominantly well-identified spaces, but with different degrees of development; - areas with a low (Romania) or medium (Bulgaria, Croatia) identity levels and the lowest level of development.			

Source: Author's representation

Thus, the codes bring the stylized semantics of the factual realities that define the entity in question: Finland's identity logo ("The Land of the Thousand Lakes") is a geographic code defining the country's physical and territorial identity, while the Dutch national motto ("I'll support you") is a clue that summarizes the civic-national beliefs of its inhabitants. The syntax of identity parameters reveals the relationship between the encoded tokens; for example, the political symbols represented by the stable monarchy and the irreproachable bicameral parliamentarism in the United Kingdom are in perfect agreement with the British logo (the "Land of Hope and Glory") and the national motto ("God and my right"). From the point of view of pragmatic identity, the interpretation of the relation between the semiotic categories used reveals in many situations the correlation of the semiotic-identity elements with the existing reality (Netherlands - the "Country of Channels"), while others

have a purely symbolic, almost mythical load (the Czech Republic - the "Country of Hundreds of Castles", Denmark - "The Land of the Little Mermaid").

### 3. Results

The phenomenon of national identification within E.U. is far more than the global average, but the spatial distribution of semiotic identities marks, however, a polarized behavioural geography of national identities (Table 1).

Thus, 6 of the 28 EU countries have more than one motto and/or more than one logo, which gives them the best-consolidated identity on the continent: Belgium, Denmark, France, Great Britain, the Netherlands, Sweden. Another 21 national spaces have an average level of identity: 8 states are served by a single motto and logo, 4 have just a motto, and 9 states have only the logo. Some of these are new states born of the First World War crucible (Finland, Ireland), others have an even more recent identity (Cyprus, Croatia, Slovakia, Slovenia) and have not yet produced all the instruments of the national identity panoply, but others have abandoned their identities on the path of recent history for reasons of political exigencies.

Romania is in a similar situation. It is the only country in the EU which does not currently have any of the two semiotic-identity parameters, which brings it to the position of the country with the weakest visible identity in the Union! It is a somewhat strange thing since, until 1866, Romania had the motto "All in One" and until the monarchical form of the government was replaced on December 30, 1947, the Kingdom of Romania had the national motto "Nihil Sine Deo" (Nothing without God), cancelled by the communist republican regime installed at that time. After 1947, neither the communist or post-communist authorities after 1989 have restored another official national motto. This non-semantic and non-indigenous side has its relevance and tells a lot about the place and the (in)effective capacity of the respective national community in European architecture.

In a similar way, Italy has established since its establishment as a modern state (1861) the motto:

*"We remain together through understanding and religion", cancelled with the proclamation of the republic by the referendum of 1946, without being later established another. However, the so-called Italian Social Republic (with its capital at Saló), created with the support of Nazi Germany between 1943-1945 after the temporary recovery of leader Benito Mussolini, made his motto "For the Honor of Italy". Slovakia had until 1993, together with the Czech Republic (within Czechoslovakia), the motto "The Truth Above All", which it renounced after*

*independence on 1 January 1993, as a result of its maintenance by the Czech Republic; the Slovak pro-Nazi state, which operated between 1939 and 1945, had its own "belief in ourselves together". France's Vichy regime had the motto "Work, Family, Homeland". The Austro-Hungarian Empire established its national paradigm "Indivisible and inseparable", in which Austria postulated that "Austria's destiny is to lead the world." Prussia officially abolished under the 1947 Peace Treaty, has until now given the motto "Everyone, His Majesty". Spain's franchisee assigned the motto "One, Great and Free" and the Kingdom of Portugal until 1910: "In the name of this sign (of the Cross), you will conquer."*

Also, Romania, Germany, Lithuania, and Latvia do not have a country logo. If the absence of a country brand is somehow explainable for Lithuania and Latvia just a few years after their independence, for Germany and Romania it is harder to explain. For Germany, the opinion of the Germans themselves that say that Germany is simply Germany for everyone, and that is enough, can be accepted. In the case of Romania, however, it seems that the few punctual lands that are known in the world, such as Dracula, Ceausescu or Nadia Comăneci, are not enough to impress the perception of collective memory to be given a country brand. The existence of an identity logo may seem to be an irrelevant business in the end, but it essentially contributes to a stylized knowledge of a nation, its maintenance in the perceptual field of the world with subliminal, non-quantifiable mathematical consequences, but significant in terms of its imaginative acceptance in the global concert. For Germany, which has enough other tangible strengths, perhaps this identity gap is a minor inconvenience, instead for some countries that need stringent image and promotion capital such as Romania, Lithuania or Latvia, the absence of a national nickname is a rebound imaging considerably and denotes the reduced capacity of their anchoring in the international sensory field. It may be said that it is preferable to be perceived anyway, whether positive or negative, rather than being received in any way and not speaking at all about you.

The degree of identity consistency is directly correlated with the general level of economic and socio-human development. Diluted identity means a low visibility, which in turn generates a low credibility of the national project in the eyes of its own citizens, especially in the external arena. And the cancelled or diminished confidence is the main premise not only of the socio-moral crisis that haunts poorly identified nations but also of their poor socio-economic development.

The diagram outlined in Table 2 highlights the interdependent relationship between the consistency of national identities and socio-economic development. Interpretation of correlation reveals the existence of *bivalent law*, namely the symmetric interdependence between identity and

development. Thus, *the degree of socio-economic development of the E.U. is equivalent to or greater than their identity consistency*. Indeed, all 6 well-imprinted identity states are very well developed (with over \$ 40,000/capita and the HDI index above 0.850), and the weakest identified country (Romania) is among the weakest in the Union. Of the others 21 states, 14 countries have an average EU-wide development, 5 have a higher level of development, and 2 countries (*Bulgaria and Croatia*) are the exception to the rule of law outlined above, i.e. they are fit a lower category of socio-economic development than their identity standard. From the angle of this reasoning, three spatial identities-development classes can be established in E.U. (*colored in Table 2*):

- the most solid identity and most prominent development areas include the six mentioned countries (Belgium, Denmark, France, Great Britain, Netherlands, Sweden) (*colored in green*);
- predominantly well-identified spaces, but with different degrees of development. Some of which are very well developed (Germany, Austria, Finland, Ireland, Luxembourg) and other emerging ones in the E.U. (Czech Republic, Cyprus, Estonia, Greece, Lithuania, Latvia, Italy, Malta, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Hungary) (*colored in blue*);
- the areas with a low to medium level identity and the lowest level of development in the Union: Romania (*colored in red*) and the two exceptions to the aforementioned rule - Bulgaria and Croatia (*colored in pink*).

Therefore, we can recognize the validity of the working hypothesis, according to which in the E.U. there is a relative convergence of distribution of identity consistency and distribution of socio-economic development. At the same time, however, we must admit that the mental map resulting from the overlapping of the two magnitudes reveals the credibility of the community space and therefore the territorial cohesion deficit revealed by the spatial configuration of the binomial identity versus development. Basically, we're dealing with a situation where symmetry reveals an asymmetry. Indeed, the symmetrical mapping of national identities in relation to the degree of development raises and justifies assertions about an asymmetric, multi-speed, represented by the three categories of states identified above.

#### 4. Discussions and comments

The establishment of national entities in the international perceptual mind has varying levels of depth, estimated by the recognized mottos and logos, which give the degree of identification of the respective entities. In the E.U., ones of the best-depicted areas benefit from two logo; these spaces are among the most visible and present states on the political, economic and socio-cultural life of the

continent: Netherlands, Great Britain, France, Belgium, Sweden, Spain, Denmark, Portugal, Poland, Estonia. We would not have expected to see countries such as Portugal, Poland or Estonia on the list but have received a strong trust from the public opinion through the double labels as a result of rigorous attitudes on the European and international arena. Poland is not only the largest state of the "new Europe" ex-communist but also a solid outpost in the first line of the eastern periphery of the United States and N.A.T.O. with a firm commitment to the Western socio-cultural space. With a similar alignment, Estonia is also more fragile but defines its cultural identity, claiming its place in the Scandinavian civilization space and not in the Baltic, as its neighbours, Latvia and Lithuania, identify. Pettai and Kallas assert that, after gaining independence in 1991, the Estonian community perceives its national identity as a northern country rather than a Baltic country. This detail of identity imagery is responsible for creating a behavioural geography in which Estonia perceives a much leaner alterity over the Scandinavian neighbours on the other Baltic coast (Sweden, Finland) in relation to the gradient of alterity that is much higher than its sovereigns (Latvia and Lithuania) with which it is only perceived by the rest of the world as being in a common identity matrix (Pettai and Kallas, 2009, p. 110).

Unlike the national mottos associated predominantly with shared expectations and mobilizing desires, identity logos present a wider palette of the area of extraction of attached brands, which is natural given the spontaneous character of these brands as to the official character of the motto of representation. The mind and perception of people always work much freer than the narrow templates of official propaganda workshops.

Thus, free public imagination gave priority to identity marks that hyperbolise or paralyze some factual facts that are otherwise certain: Belgium has defined its seat as a seat of the European institutions through the pseudonym of "The Cockpit of Europe", and Portugal was originally attached to the triple "F" so as to make the national passions one of the most definitive - "Country of the Three F: Fado, Fatima, Football". Territorial-geographic styles make the most of the perceived national brands: France - "Hexagon", Italy - "Boot", Slovakia - "Heart of Europe". Some of them have legendary-metaphoric accents: Cyprus - "Aphrodite Island" or Czech Republic - "The Land of the Hundred Castles". Other identity logos summarize traditional cultural and artistic elements: Spain - "Bull Leather", Austria - "Waltz Country", Denmark - "The Kingdom of Hamlet". Some country brands highlight traditional economic essentials: Luxembourg - "Steel Country", Bulgaria - "Country of Roses", France - "Wine Country". The surprising economic development of recent years is also suggestively illustrated in the case of Poland - "European Tiger" and Estonia - "Baltic Tiger". Some of the country's crippled characters characterize certain traits of character perceived as representative



for the psycho-cultural or psychosomatic cliché of the man there: Great Britain - "Albion" and "Country of Hope and Glory". The historical identity element can become convergent with the country logo by a proper syntactic-semantic juxtaposition in the situation of Greece - "The Cradle of Democracy" or Hungary - "The Land of Huns", where the historical myth of origins had a strong public resonance in the public-mental field. Indeed, Greece is recognized as the alma mater of the current European civilization, and Hungary's status as the supposed descendant of those who at one point managed to give a lesson to Europe (Huns) and then to noble aura resulting from the association with Habsburgs, attributes on which it is possible to base many of the current permissive assessments of the two countries, even in situations where other states would be subjected to more drastic corrective measures. Thus, Greece was defeated by the defiant attitude of the economic crisis of 2008, giving generously the financial subsidies needed to survive in the Eurozone, and then overlooked the brazenness of financial claims to Germany as compensatory payments for the destruction during the Second World War. In a similar manner, the European Union reacted quite moderately to the authoritarian and anti-European spurt, self-declared illiberal, of the Hungarian government led by Victor Orban.

Identity items such as mottoes and country logos summarize the panoply of states' soft power resources: examples of good governance and self-government that bring welfare and internal social peace, unconditional promotion of exemplary values (tolerance, property, freedoms, and rights civil, etc.), the building of attractive social-cultural models. All these are instruments that attract external attention and sympathy, charm and produce cultural affinities, attract new followers from different geographical areas. Their coding through motto and logos catalyses their diffusion and enhances their role as agents of a pedagogy of mimetism, both within the E.U. and the Globe. Many other entities on the Globe will try to access Western stability by copying European models illustrated by the French label promising "Freedom, Equality, Fraternity" or the German promise of "Unity, Justice, and Freedom". Inside the United States, the newly integrated states of the East have been seduced by Western welfare encoded by the Swedish "Beautiful and Prosperous Kingdom" or by the Anglo-Saxon "Land of Hope and Glory". At the same time, in the competition between the new members of the community club, new target models of the most competitive ones are born: "The European Tiger" codifies the success of the integration of Poland and the "Baltic Tiger" identifies Estonia's successful roadmap on its way from Gulag to the Western mirage. Practically, the two logos validate and homologate the identity of the Polish and Estonian economic "miracle" of recent years.

The intensity and gradient of these empathic attitudes seem to be dependent on a certain cultural-behavioural sphere, which is related to the acceptance of seductive patterns, but especially to

their hinging. The Estonian "Baltic tiger" has gained stability and credibility through almost complete mimetism of landmark clichés, while the inability to achieve welfare wished by Bulgaria or Romania is highlighted by the lack of identity items to encode this.

## Conclusions

The consistency of national identities across the European Union is well above the global average, as well as the level of socio-human stability and economic development, as confirmed by the indicators used (national motto, country logo, GDP / capita index and HDI). The phenomenon of the preservation of national identities is due to a considerable extent to the premise of intergovernmental management at the EU level, and the high degree of economic and social development is due to the European managerial manner of European governance responsible for achieving economic, social and territorial cohesion in the Union.

Identity versus development relationships shows symmetric interdependence between the two sides, between which there is a relative territorial overlap. Nevertheless the symmetry of their arrangement with each other maps out a community-wide asymmetry resulting from the spatial layout of the binomial identity/development. The asymmetry in question materializes through a territorial cohesion deficit and segregation of the community space, generating an asymmetric European Union with several speeds of identity-developments: the most solid identity and most prominent area of "old Europe" (Belgium, Denmark, France, Great Britain, the Netherlands and Sweden) is characterized by a well-established identity status, surrounded by the rest of the community area of national spaces with different levels of identity consistency and development.

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