

RADOSŁAW BANIA

**The Question of Identity inside the EU and the GCC Areas as the
Factor Constructing the Process of Regional Integration**

Abstract

This paper analyzes the influence of such phenomenon as the regional identity concept on the process of the International Integration. The main argument is that existence of the common values, ideas, history etc. shared by the actors of the integration process is the important factor that can enable the beginning and the development of international institutions that may materialize in form of Regional Integration Organizations. This paper is focused on the European Union and the Gulf Cooperation Council. Those two organizations, each of them in its geographically determined area, might be treated as the most sophisticated forms of cooperation among states. They create a common sphere in which the citizens of the member countries are able to function. The existence of these organizations is conditioned not only by the will of the governments but also by the acceptance of the general directions of the integration process by the inhabitants of those areas. This problem is of a great importance especially in Europe. The developments regarding the acceptance of the ‘Reforming Treaty’ raised questions not only about the future of the next stages of the integration but also about the general basis of the EU. In that context the problem of identity gains in importance. It is open to discussion if the awareness of common identity can overcome any obstacles ahead of the European integration. When it comes to the GCC the problem of regional identity seems different. If despite many misconceptions the GCC states are able to introduce closer economic cooperation, the question remains if the real common political cooperation among them is possible. In that context, we may ask if the awareness of the common regional identity can overcome these obstacles. These problems will be also under the consideration of this paper.

Keywords: Identity, Europe, European Union, Gulf Cooperation Council, Arabs, politics, culture

Introduction

Nowadays, the term ‘identity’ is one of the most frequently used in social sciences. Numerous scholars, who represent such disciplines as cultural anthropology, sociology, social psychology, philosophy, history, and also international relations, are interested in the study of this phenomenon¹. Just a few decades ago ‘identity’ became one of the crucial issues in the contemporary social sciences². Till that time ‘identity’ had been a rather peripheral term and was used mainly as the subsidiary issue in the social studies. But in the contemporary research discourse ‘identity’ is one of the central and autonomous questions. It plays a crucial role in the explanation of many social processes of the contemporary world. It is not easy to establish the precise definition of this term. This difficulty derives from the character of social life as a research field. ‘Identity’ may be linked to personal as well as community life. In other words, this term may be important to describe and understand the nature of a single human being, as well as a number of human beings – social minorities, ethnic groups, nations etc. and of course states³.

The definition of ‘identity’ is not clear, especially when we think about one human being. We talk about ‘identity’ when we want to stress how people define themselves as human beings and members of the society in which they exist and what is important for them. There are a lot of definitions of the term ‘identity’ used by many researchers, especially in the social sciences. Generally, in sociology, ‘identity’ is described at the two levels. The first one is called ‘the social identity’ and the other one is called ‘the personal identity’⁴. Even though there is a clear tie between those two kinds of identity, they are treated as separate analytical units.

The term ‘personal (individual) identity’ is used when there is a need to describe the features used to distinguish one person from another. It is used when we want to stress our autonomy from other people. Personal identity is connected with the process of self-development that creates the feeling of existence as a unique person. Also, it is an expression of a unique relation with the surrounding world. It must be said that the personal identity explains our distinctiveness as a human being⁵.

There are more connotations to the term ‘social identity’ than to ‘personal identity’. It is strictly connected with features that are attributed to one person by other members of a broader social group⁶. Those features show relations of one person towards the other members of such a group. ‘Social identity’ may be multidimensional. It may show the multiplicity of levels of social life. One person may be not only a member of a professional

¹ P. Ścigaj, *Tożsamość narodowa. Zarys problematyki*, Kraków 2012, p. 51.

² R. Poole, *Nation and Identity*, London 1999, p. 40.

³ P. Ścigaj, op. cit., p. 17, passim.

⁴ A. Giddens, *Sociology*, 4th ed., Cambridge&Oxford 2004, p. 29.

⁵ P. Ścigaj, op. cit., p. 17, passim.

⁶ Gh. Sergiu, *Changing Borders, Stable Attitudes: The National and European Identity before and after the Most Recent EU Enlargements*, “Romanian Journal of European Affairs” 2012, Vol. 12, No. 2, <http://www.questia.com/read/1P3-2712884411/changing-borders-stable-attitudes-the-national-and> (28.08.2013).

group for example but also a member of another social unit⁷. But in many situations the pluralism of social identity is not fully acceptable and is a root of many conflicts in the life of numerous societies. Such a situation occurs when members of one group insist that their code of values, which is one of the leading elements of any identity, is in conflict with the other identities. They claim that social identity is unchangeable regardless of the time and place of social life. Social identity must be regarded as a collective one. As a collective identity, it is based on common features, values and experiences which are important for a specific social unit. The collective identity aims to show that one individual is the same as the other. In other words social identity shows the sameness of the social group⁸.

One of the main methodological and analytical problems regarding the conception of 'identity' is a dispute among researchers whether 'identity' should be described as a state or as a process⁹. It is not the aim of this paper to examine this question thoroughly. I would only like to raise that issue because it is very important for the proper understanding of all aspects of the phenomenon of identity. For example, 'Chicago School of Sociology' (A. Lindesmith, E.C. Hughes, H. Blumer et al.) claimed that the identity of an individual subject must be regarded as a process. This point of view was not fully accepted, therefore in the contemporary sociological thought, identity is treated both as a state and as a process, and those notions are inseparable when the phenomenon of identity is under research consideration¹⁰. This constation leads us to making an assumption that, in the contemporary world, especially when there are a lot of political, cultural and other changes in the process of globalization, the identity must be seen as a dynamic phenomenon. One of the leading Polish sociologists, professor Jazłowska, stressed in her works that identity must be regarded as a process rather than a result of this process¹¹. In such circumstances the identity is a phenomenon that may not be regarded as steady and unchangeable one¹². In the contemporary world the existing social identities may not only change but also new ones may come into existence in various situations. Another assumption is that there is always a possibility that the so-called 'shared identities' may be constructed in social relations. Members of one group with a clear sense of common identity may at the same time share the identity of a broader group, and by which they may be regarded as its inseparable part.

The question of identity must be also noticed when we study various phenomena existing in the IR¹³. When we think about one of them – international integration, it

⁷ N. Fligstein, *Who are the Europeans and how this matters for politics?* in: *European...*, pp. 134–135.

⁸ J. M. Delgado-Moreira, *European Politics of Citizenship*, "The Qualitative Report" 1997, Vol. 3, No. 3, <http://www.nova.edu/ssss/QR/QR3-3/delgado.html> (28.08.2013).

⁹ Z. Bokszański, *Tożsamości zbiorowe*, Warszawa 2005, p. 33.

¹⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 35.

¹¹ J. Jazłowska, *Wokół problemów tożsamości*, Warszawa 2001, p. 54.

¹² Gh. Sergiu, *op. cit.*

¹³ Every time when International Relations are written in capitals, it means that I refer to the research discipline that is aimed at studying international relations as an existing phenomenon in social life.

may be stressed that the problem of identity is an inseparable part of this phenomenon, especially when we want to explain the beginning, existence and development of the process of integration. If one of the characteristic aspects of the integration processes in the contemporary world is the tightening of ties between the states in many world's regions, it must be stressed that the existence of this process is conditioned not only by the common interests of member states of such an integration group, but also by the common set of values and common historical and cultural ties, which must be regarded as an inseparable part of any social identity¹⁴.

The problem of identity as a subject of interest of the theory of the International Relations was introduced to the research discourse by members of the constructivist school of IR. The Constructivism came into existence as an opposition to the traditional schools of thought in the IR, such as Realism (neo-Realism), Liberalism (neo-Liberalism) and Marxism, and it was also in opposition to works of the followers of rationalism and critical theory, the new approaches to the research of the IR¹⁵. Constructivism is characterized by putting an emphasis on the importance of normative as well as material structures, on the role of identity in shaping political action and on the mutually constitutive relationship between an agent and structures¹⁶. This school of thought emerged after the end of the Cold War when the traditional schools of the IR theory faced the challenge of explaining the situation after the fall of the bi-polar system¹⁷. Despite the fact that the confrontation between capitalist and socialist world was won by the western liberal system, the post-Cold World order did not stabilize the relations among states of the world. A liberal theory, 'the End of History' created by Francis Fukuyama, did not materialize in the contemporary world. Non-Western societies did not accept liberal democracy as a system which should rule the lives of many societies. The national conflicts on the territory of the Former Yugoslav Federation showed that even in Europe the vision of a stable system without any conflicts was far from becoming a reality. Such a situation caused a reaction in the IR theory. Namely S. Huntington suggested a new concept of the "clash of civilization". Nevertheless, his theory, was generally opposed because of its reductivism and an assumption that the line of conflict in the future world would be on the borders of civilizations. Even, the Toefflers's theory of 'the waves of development' was not helpful in explaining all processes in the contemporary system of the IR. So many researchers came to the conclusion that it was necessary to develop a new methodological perspective to study the IR. The main response to the methodological limits of the traditional schools of the IR theory was the emergence of the 'constructivism'¹⁸.

¹⁴ J. T. Checkel, P. J. Katzenstein, *The Politization of European Identities*, in: *European Identity*, ed. by J.T. Checkel, P.J. Katzenstein, Cambridge 2009, pp. 1–6.

¹⁵ M. Griffiths, T. O'Callaghan, *International Relations: The Key Concepts*, London-New York 2002, pp. 50–53.

¹⁶ M. Alexandrov, *The Concept of State Identity in International Relations: A Theoretical Analysis*, "Journal of International Development and Cooperation" 2003, Vol. 10, No. 1, p. 34.

¹⁷ M. Zehfuss, *Constructivism in International Relations*, Cambridge 2002, p. 38.

¹⁸ *Ibidem*.

The main concept of the Constructivism was applying the sociological instruments to study the behaviour of international actors. The Constructivist especially stressed the role of the social norm and ideal structures to analyze the international system and its actors. They claimed that normative and ideational structures are as important as material structures of the international order. The Constructivists also stressed the role of identity in shaping political action and mutually constitutive relationship between agents and structures of international relations. It must be said that only few adherents of this methodological approach to studying IR claimed that constructivism should be treated as an independent theory of international relations. This may be observed in the works of Alexander Wendt. His research is clearly in opposition to the neo-realistic theoretical works by K. Waltz¹⁹.

Many members of the constructivist school to studying international relations claimed that even if it was not a full-scale theory of the IR it gave useful explanatory tools to understand the processes that took place in relations between international actors. They were sure that it was impossible to understand the behavior of the members of the international relations and structures, which are a base of international systems, without the awareness of the cultural denotations that create the real substance of the international relations. They held that normative and ideational structures were as important as the material structures. This approach proves that the constructivists found a place for themselves in the discourse regarding the importance of the realm of material power or the realm of spiritual power in the international systems²⁰. In their explanation they were sure that the realm of ideas, beliefs and values was more important than material power to understand the nature of international relations. They were often in opposition to the Realists' conception of the state of anarchy in the international relations. The Realists held that the anarchy was a natural state of international system and the states, as the egoistic actors, were interested in the rivalry for power. The constructivists challenged that assumptions and held that anarchy was not an objective state of the international relations. Alexander Wendt even claimed that 'anarchy is only what states make of it'²¹. Consequently, there is no objective entity in the international relations and all aspects of this realm are the effect of the intellectual or cultural construction that is produced by the autonomous international actors. So, the existing structures are the emanation of the social and legal norms that are constructed by the members of the international system. From that point of view the Constructivists hold that not material power but the culture shared by the international actors influences the operation of the any international system. If we know the norm, believed values, and of course identities that are attributed to the actors' behavior, we may explain the processes that are visible in the international relations. They hold that no conflict in the contemporary world is caused by the clash

¹⁹ R. Jackson, G. Sorensen, *Wprowadzenie do stosunków międzynarodowych. Teorie i kierunki badawcze*, Kraków 2006, p. 271.

²⁰ M. Alexandrov, op. cit, p. 35.

²¹ A. Wendt, *Anarchy is what States Make of it: The Social Construction of Power Politics*, "International Organization", Vol. 46, No. 2 (Spring 1992), p. 424.

of interests or the conflict of power. They hold that any quarrel between the actors is a conflict of mind and will of the engaged parties²². The real source of any conflict is not the realm of matter but is connected with the intellectual lack of understanding. That is why there is a need to discover the ideational source of such situation.

The constructivist approach to the study of international relations was not totally accepted. It caused a large amount of criticism from the adherents of 'traditional' approaches to the study of the international relations. One of the strongest critiques of the constructivist came from Maja Zehfuss²³. Her arguments are clear and seem fully acceptable. It may be said that constructivism is the approach that may be regarded as a 'reversal reductionism'. Constructivists are against the realm of matter in international relations but it seems that they pay too much attention to the immaterial sphere in the field of international relation. Despite this fact, it cannot be said that constructivism should be ignored. The approach of the Constructivists may be seen as a methodologically productive and worthy of attention when we want to study numerous aspects of international relations. We may not treat international relations as a construction consisting of only material interests of its actors. The ideas, beliefs and values should be also under research discourse when we study relations among the international actors, and processes that take place in the contemporary world. So, the constructivists ideas may be regarded as a supplement of the classical school of thought in the IR. The ideas, values, norms, as well as identity often need to be taken into consideration when we want to find a possible, holistic picture of the numerous processes that are present in the international relations.

From this perspective, it is methodologically acceptable to study the process of international integration by means other than the traditional approaches to the IR. It is a general question what makes the integration possible and why this process continues. The other problem is if it is possible to explain the integration process only by stressing the role of the material interests of the involved countries as its basic determinants. This question is present in the 'theory of political integration'²⁴. Many researches who study international integrations hold that the constructivists' approach to studying international sociological phenomena gives new and useful research tools to understand the nature and directions of the international integration. Not only is it important to know the material sources which are behind the process of integration but it is equally significant to realize that what makes this process possible and acceptable for the members of the societies that are its subjects is common values. The integration should not be regarded as the economic or political process only but also as the process in which common spheres of ideas and beliefs exist. If we accept the assumption that integration, especially political, is possible when subjects engaged in this process share common values, beliefs and norms and generally common identity, some important questions arise. Those questions are aimed at deciding what role and on what level identity plays in the process of integration. First

²² R. Jackson, G. Sorensen, op. cit., p. 273.

²³ See: M. Zehfuss, op. cit., passim.

²⁴ P.J. Borkowski, *Polityczne teorie integracji międzynarodowej*, Warszawa 2007, p. 178.

of all we have to decide if such a phenomenon as regional identity really exists. Secondly, the set of values and beliefs shared by the participants of the integration process has to be defined. Thirdly, the moment when the regional identity appears in the integration process has to be determined. Is the existence of regional identity a prerequisite of the process? Is it one of the crucial determinants of the beginnings of this process? Or does it appear later in the integration process as a rather artificial construction intended to make ties between the participants of integration closer. And finally we have to answer if regional identity is necessary to ensure the duration and development of the integration process. All these questions will be under consideration in this paper. The main assumption of this paper is that regional identity concept is important factor that is need to beginning and continuation of any successful integration process. This article is aimed at analyzing this problems in connections with the European Union and the Gulf Cooperation Council.

Those two organizations, each of them in its geographically determined area, might be treated as the most sophisticated forms of cooperation among states. They possess special organs, which are focused on the realization of the common values. They are the organizations whose aim is not only to start cooperation in the field of economy, but also to initiate and develop a broader cooperation in political matters. They create a common sphere in which the citizens of the member countries are able to function. The existence of these organizations is conditioned not only by the will of the governments but also by the acceptance of the general directions of the integration process by the inhabitants of those areas. This problem is of a great importance especially in Europe. The latest developments regarding the acceptance of the 'Reforming Treaty' raise questions not only about the future of the next stages of the integration but also about the general basis of the EU. In that context the problem of identity gains in importance. It is open to discussion if the awareness of common identity can overcome any obstacles ahead of the European integration. When it comes to the GCC the problem of regional identity seems different. If despite many misconceptions the GCC states are able to introduce closer economic cooperation, the question remains if the real common political cooperation among them is possible. In that context, we may ask if the awareness of the common regional identity can overcome these obstacles. These problems will be also under the consideration of this paper.

The Regional Identity inside the EU Area

The contemporary process of integration is an extraordinary economical and political phenomenon in the history of Europe. Never in the European history did the idea of cooperation among all the states of this continent materialize. For centuries Europe was full of conflicts and rivalry among the states of the region²⁵. Taking this into account the existing tendency to unite not only the economies of the European countries but also

²⁵ J.T. Checkel, P.J. Katzenstein, op. cit., p. 4.

their internal, military, security policies may be perceived as an anomaly rather than a rule in the European international relations. In the history of Europe various ideas and conceptions of unity among the nations and states were born. They were presented by rulers, their advisors, political writers, clerks and researchers²⁶. The conception of the United States of Europe was seen in programs of such rulers and philosophers as Erasmus of Rotterdam, Henry IV, or Immanuel Kant²⁷. The conceptions of the European unity were also presented in the programs of many associations, political movements and most recently, especially since the 19th century, political parties. These appeals did not have a universal character only. In the discussion about the integrity we may observe also the tendency to introduce hegemonic aims. In the policy of Charles the Great, Napoleon or even Adolf Hitler, we may notice the tendency to unite some or all parts of the European continent. But their conceptions were not focused on the realization of the cooperation among states and nations, but on achieving domination of a political entity that was led by them²⁸.

Over centuries, the appeal for integration was mainly justified by the need to secure peace and to create the entity in which there would be no external danger to the existence of states. The unity among rulers and their states was caused by conflicts not only among the European political subjects, but also by the danger from the outside powers, especially Islamic in their origins. So, the conceptions of the unification of the European continent were mainly politically motivated. Obviously, the united element, the community of culture and civilization, played an important role in formulation of many conceptions, this problem will be discussed in the following parts of this paper. But in the 19th century a new element was introduced into the discourse about the need for integration. There was also an economically motivated appeal for greater cooperation among various parts of Europe. Especially the emergence of new global economic competitors, such as the United States and Japan, was treated as dangerous for the economic superiority of the European states in global dimension.

Despite the fact that new factors stressed the need for cooperation among the European states the existing revalidation among European powers prevented the realization of the integration concepts. In the first half of the 20th Century the two global wars destroyed the dominance of the European powers in the global system²⁹.

The process of the European cooperation began just 60 years ago. From the individual point of view it is a rather long period, but from the historical perspective this is only a flash in the history of Europe and mankind. At the beginning, integration was politically limited to only few Western European countries, not only because of the ongoing Cold War. The example of Great Britain showed that even in the area of Western Europe the process of integration limited to the economic cooperation was not acceptable to all

²⁶ K. Łastawski, *Historia integracji europejskiej*, Toruń 2006, p. 15.

²⁷ A. Marszałek, *Z historii idei integracji europejskiej*, in: *Integracja europejska*, ed. by A. Marszałek, Łódź 1997, p. 21.

²⁸ K. Łastawski, op. cit., p. 15.

²⁹ W. Wallace, *Regional Integration: The West European Experience*, Washington 1994, p. 13.

countries. The obvious economic success of the European Communities showed that the integration of the policies of the European countries is not only possible but also that it may be developed and moved on to more sophisticated stages.

When we think about the European Integration (EI) one of the most important questions is what conditions played an important role in the obvious success of the process of integration. Of course it must be said that among the so-called “founding Fathers” of the integration and other politicians engaged in those processes, there was a big disagreement regarding the aims and rules of the integration. This is reflected by the appearance of three different approaches, such as: federalism (neo-federalism), functionalism (neo-functionalism), and confederationism. The first two approaches were united in the assumption that the integration must lead to close cooperation among the European countries, or perhaps a Union, not only in economy, but also in the other fields such as security and foreign policies. But confederationism stressed that even though on the level of economy the European Communities were able to create the areas of cooperation among the Western European states³⁰, and overcome the shadows of the past, especially between France and Germany, the states should not be deprived of the opportunities to practice independent foreign and internal policy. Despite the fact that confederationists, like the President of the French Republic Charles de Gaulle, were reluctant to a closer political union, they stressed the need for overall cooperation in the European area. The French President was not against the political cooperation, but he was against the supranational tendencies in the Integration Process³¹. This assumption was closely connected with the question of social identity. Confederationism stressed that united Europe should be the ‘Europe of the Fatherlands’. That meant that despite the economic or even political unification, the European nations should not be deprived of their national identity. But at the same time they stressed that there is one Europe stretching from ‘The Atlantic Ocean to The Ural Mountains’³². That meant that even though Europe was divided by the iron curtain, there was a set of values and ideas, which created a common level of understanding, and could be used to strengthen the process of Integration. This situation showed that the matters of identity were important aspects of the Integration Processes.

To explain the beginning and the development of the EI we may point out the main motives, which played a crucial role in the whole process. A very useful and general classification of the motives for the Integration was proposed by Małachowski. He mentioned five main motives of the European Integration after the Second World War:

1. Internal-Political Motive – it was connected with the need to stop the internal forces that were interested in the radical social changes inside the capitalist countries of Western Europe.

³⁰ D. Urwin, *The Community of Europe: A History of European Integration Since 1945*, London-New York 1995, p. 102.

³¹ *Ibidem*, p. 103.

³² A. Marszałek, *op. cit.*, p. 35.

2. External-Political Motive – it was connected with the reduction of the influence of the Western European countries in the global international relations.
3. Strategic-Military Motive – it was connected with the development of the military technology which led to the cooperation with the USA that from the beginning, welcomed the idea of the unification of the military and economic forces in Western Europe.
4. Economical Motive – it was connected with the need to rebuild the economy after the end of the war, and to create conditions that would enable the economic development.
5. Ideological Motive – it was connected with the idea of federalism, as the form of preservation of the ‘European Style of Life’ or the ‘Western Europe Heritage’³³.

There are at least three reasons why the last motive is especially worthy of attention. Firstly, it stressed that the ideology played an important role in the EI. Secondly, the existence of this motive showed that the tendency to create one European identity was an important prerequisite for the unification of Europe. Thirdly, it proved that the European Identity was sub-regionally limited at the beginning of the integration process.

If we accept the assumption that in the contemporary Europe we may observe the discourse about the common social identity in the European Union, at the beginning we must answer some questions: First of all, what is Europe? Should this term be considered in geographical, political or cultural criteria? What are the main elements that constitute European Identity? What role does this phenomenon play in cooperation among states and nations? And what is the correlation between the European Identity and the concepts of the development of the EU? And finally is this phenomenon a rather artificial construction, like an ‘imaginary community’ or is it based on solid roots?

Europe may be defined by the using one of the many criteria. In geography especially the territorial borders are not very clear. In geographical sense, Europe is a huge peninsula of a vast stretch of land called Euro-Asia rather than a separate continent. The 18th century European geographers agreed that huge geographical barriers such as the Caucasus and the Ural Mountains may be used to separate Europe, as a continent, from other parts of Euro-Asia. Nevertheless, in the Ancient Times and even in the Middle Ages the line of distinction between Europe and Asia, in geographical terms, stretched from Hellespont, through the Don River, towards the North. Only at the beginning of the 18th century the eastern border of the continent was established on the Ural Mountains³⁴. If the geographical construction of Europe is not clear, it is even more difficult to show the historical and cultural concept of Europe, especially in the context of the unification. Europe as a political, historical and cultural, construction is relatively new. Through the Middle Ages the term Europe was used in religious rather than geographical sense. It was the ‘Christian World’³⁵. But even from the religious point of view the unity was not full. The events of the 11th century caused the split in the Christian World and the division

³³ W. Małachowski, *Republika Federalna Niemiec w EWG i NATO*, Warszawa 1992, pp. 15–16.

³⁴ N. Davies, *Europe. A History*, London 1996, p. 8.

³⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 31.

into Roman Catholic and the Greek Orthodox Church. This division was a starting point of creating two main civilization circles within the borders of Europe³⁶. But even the Western Church was not united. At the beginning of the 16th century a process of the separation inside the Christian World began. The Christendom was divided into the Catholic Church and numerous Protestant Churches. Since that time, the term Europe replaced the former term Christendom and started to be used to describe the historical, cultural and civilization commonwealth. During the Era of Enlightenment many philosophers and political writers tended to assume that there existed a united area, which shared common culture and history, called Europe. This area was inhabited by many nations but the pundits were sure that they may also be called ‘the Europeans’ because of the cultural and historical ties³⁷. But on the other hand there was also a tendency to make a distinction between Europe as such and the vast areas of the continent, such as Central and Eastern Europe. The division was made due to the fact that these areas were under the rule of the Russian Empire which in turn was under the influence of the Greek Orthodox confession³⁸. This distinction was still alive during the Cold War. But there were many people for whom the United Europe could not be limited to the European Communities only³⁹. They shared an opinion that the cultural and historical ties create the common area⁴⁰.

Nevertheless, despite the fact members of many nations shared the notion that the cultural and historical ties create a common ground, nationalistic ideas prevailed in the relations among many states and nations. Unfortunately, the outbreak of the Great War in 1914 showed that despite the ‘commonwealth of ideas’ the European nations were ready and able to fight each other in the unthinkable, gory conflict⁴¹.

After the end of the Great War there were attempts to create not only formal, but also moral roots to initiate such a cooperation among states which would be a dam against all conflicts. One of the most sophisticated initiatives was the creation of the Pan-European movement. The creator and advocate of this movement, Richard Coudenhove Calergi, claimed that despite the existence of many nations, there was one European nation. Till the outbreak of the Second World War, the units of the Pan-European movement were present in nearly all European countries. Although the Calergi’s initiative was not helpful in creating a peaceful cooperation among the European nations, it was a very interesting and important experience, especially in the context of the beginning of the EI after the post-war period. Many politicians who were active in the creation of the European Institutions were also former members of the Pan-European Movement⁴². The

³⁶ S.P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*, New York 1997, p. 158.

³⁷ N. Davies, op. cit., p. 8.

³⁸ F. Braudel, *A History of Civilizations*, New York 1995, pp. 531–535.

³⁹ Ibidem, pp. 415–423.

⁴⁰ D. Jacobs, R. Maier, *European identity: construct, facts and fiction*, in: *A United Europe. The Quest for a Multifaceted Identity* ed. by M. Gastelaars, A. de Ruijter, Maastricht 1998, p. 14.

⁴¹ W. Wallace, op. cit., p. 14.

⁴² A. Marszałek, op. cit., p. 28.

influence of the PEM was particularly visible among the supporters of the federationist conceptions of Integration.

Unfortunately, the first integration initiative, the creation of the Council of Europe, was not a success for the federation ideas. But the existence and the work of this organization must be seen as creating the basis for the common European identity as a group of rules and ideas shared by all European countries. Such fundamentals as the preservation of human rights, are undoubtedly the essential elements of the European identity.

However, despite the failure of the federationist ideas at the beginning of the integration process, the supporters of the European Integration saw the need to promote the common European identity as the main element of the whole process. During the first thirty years of the integration, after the conclusion of the Treaty of Rome, creating the European identity was perceived as a crucial political goal⁴³. The European identity was a very important tool for those politicians who were in favor of the transformation of the European Communities into supra-national political union. This problem was at the top of the agenda of the discussion about the future of the European Integration. Despite the fact that the debate about the next stages of the integration process was dominated mainly by the economy, the problem of identity did not vanish. It played an important role in the creation of the European Union. It may be said that at time of the enlargement of the cooperation area among the members of the integration process, the question of the promotion of the European identity gained its momentum. The Treaty of Maastricht, which created the European Union, is a document strictly connected with the question of identity. The Treaty stressed two kinds of identity in the integrated area. It stated that the European identity is a goal of the whole union. The Treaty of Maastricht also introduced the so-called European citizenship, a new kind of supra-national legal status. But at the same time, it stated that the national identity of the member states would be fully respected⁴⁴. The other important matter was also the introduction of the opportunity to create a monetary union of the member states, by using the same currency Euro.

Those matters were of extreme importance in creating a feeling of distinct European consciousness in the integration field. European pro-Maastricht politicians seeking public acceptance tried to find some tools which could help propagate the new concept of united Europe. To achieve such a goal, three strategies were applied. Firstly, efforts have been made to stress the existence of a common cultural heritage shared by all European nations. The set of symbols used inside the EU, such as the common flag, the common “anthem”, might be regarded as one way of strengthening the feeling of common identity⁴⁵. This strategy is also backed up by the many common European policies and programs. In the field of education, programs such as Socrates/Erasmus gave young people from EU and EU cooperation countries an opportunity to study in countries where standards of education are on a high level. Programs (such as Human Capital and Mobility, Training

⁴³ R. Jacobs, D. Maier, op. cit., p. 15.

⁴⁴ J.M. Delgado-Moreira, *Cultural Citizenship and the Creation of European Identity*, “Electronic Journal of Sociology” 1997, Vol. 2, <http://www.sociology.org/content/vol002.003/delgado.html> (28.08.2013).

⁴⁵ H. Kaelbe, *Identification with Europe and politicization of the EU since the 1980s*, in: *European...*, p. 206.

and Mobility for Researchers) must be also regarded as a useful tool for promotion of the collective unity among their participants. Common research programs may also be seen in similar perspective. Secondly, a supra-national legal system was built to enable the citizens of the EU to overcome the impotence of the legal system in their own states. This move may be seen as another important means of building closer ties between the citizens of many countries and the EU institution, as they are certain that their rights are indispensable, and may not be suspended at will by national governments. Thirdly, the citizens of the member states are also “the citizens of the European Union”. This means that residents of the EU countries gained a set of the privileges connected with the right to the free passage and living on the territory of the EU. The citizens of the European states are also allowed to take part in all political activities in the EU area. They have the right to elect members of the European Parliament, to appeal to the Euro deputies as well as to European ombudsmen in matters of their interest⁴⁶.

This practice, and especially the policy of introducing the Euro identity, as a basis of enlarging the EU, can be also seen in the Treaty of Lisbon. The Preamble of the Treaty in a very open manner stresses the basics of the identity of the EU. There we may see that the ‘the universal values of the inviolable and inalienable rights of the human person, freedom, democracy, equality and the rule of law’ are the values that create the core of the European identity⁴⁷. It must be stressed that the set of values that are regarded as a basis of the Integration, is emphasized in numerous Articles of the Reforming Treaty. So, we may assume that for the EU the question of creating the common identity is a matter of great importance. European identity is a socio-political instrument that is needed not only to give a new impetus to the integration but also to preserve the very existence of the whole Union, not only as an economic organization, but also as an institution that will be able to execute some forms of activity which have over the centuries been perceived as the prerogatives of the sovereign nation-state. In that sense the European identity is used, by the EU herself, as the official nationalism at the organizational level. So, at the time when the integration process in Europe has reached the beyond-economy level, the conception of promoting the European identity, may be regarded as one of the official ‘policies’ of the EU⁴⁸.

But having made this assumption, the main question is if this ‘policy’ may be regarded as successful. It is not easy to answer this question. First of all, we may claim that the concept of the European identity, was the means of achieving a popular acceptance, not only of the idea of integration, but also of the stage in which the supranational organization, not the nation-state, will be responsible for the realization of numerous policies that used to be realized on the state level. In such circumstances the whole concept may not be regarded as fully successful. It is useful to show the real level of acceptance of the

⁴⁶ J. Delgado-Moreira, *European Politics...*

⁴⁷ *Treaty of Lisbon amending the Treaty of European Union and the Treaty establishing the European Community, signed at Lisbon, 13 December 2007*, “Official Journal of the European Union”, Vol. 50, 17 December 2007, p. 10.

⁴⁸ *European values and identity*, 21 March 2011, <http://www.euractiv.com/culture/european-values-identity-linksdossier-188378?display=normal> (28.08.2013).

citizens of the EU countries to the concept of the common identity. The data presented in the Eurobarometer have shown that despite titanic efforts, the level of acceptance of the idea of the European identity by the citizens of the Union is relatively low. The polls show that there is a high level of acceptance of the EU membership among citizens of the European states. But at the same time scores of people stress that they feel a stronger connection with a higher level of unification with their own country than with the whole Union. In 2008, according to the Eurobarometer survey, 91% interviewees felt attachment to their nations and only 49% to the EU⁴⁹. In general, Europeans feel more attached to their country, region, and city than to Europe⁵⁰.

It is important to stress that for many Europeans the economic matters are more important than the political ones. For example answering the question what is important for the future of Europe, 51% stressed the comparable living standards, 26% the introduction of the Euro in all EU countries, but only 25% the common constitution⁵¹. So it must be said that the strategies for the promotion of the European identity have not been successful. The lack of acceptance of the Reforming Treaty, especially inside the countries of the 'older Union', showed it inevitably⁵². Despite the fact that many citizens of Europe are ready to stress that they are familiar with the so-called European values that does not mean that they are able to accept the concept of European identity. Even there may exist more danger situation. The more the European politicians, and Euro-clerks, stressed the need for supra-national unification, the more the citizens of Europe were against the deepening of the integration.

The Regional (Sub-regional) Identity and the GCC Area

The Middle East is one of the most defined regions in the contemporary international relations. According to the majority of analysts the Middle East region comprises the area and states located on the edge of the North-East Africa and Western Asia. There is a tendency to divide this geographically oriented region into two parts – that may be called sub-regions. A set of specific qualities formed over the years makes it possible to separate those two sub-regions from the structure of the whole Middle Eastern region. The first of these areas creates the central part of the whole region, and may be treated as the core. This area is called the sub-region of Levant. It consists of the states that are situated in the North-Eastern Africa and along the Eastern Mediterranean shore. The second, peripheral area (of course in the structure of the region, but not in the sense of political and economical power) is called the Arab Gulf sub-region. This sub-region consists of such states as Iraq, Iran and states that are located on the Arabian Peninsula (Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, the UAE, and Qatar). The latter states have

⁴⁹ Ibidem.

⁵⁰ Eurobarometer 68. *Public Opinion in the European Union*, May 2008, p. 69.

⁵¹ Special Eurobarometer 251. *The Future of Europe*, May 2006, p. 38.

⁵² H. Kaelbe, op. cit., p. 211.

become involved in the multifaceted cooperation after the establishment of the Gulf Cooperation Council⁵³. In the IR especially, those states must be regarded as a special analytical unit because of their unusual political development which in many aspects differs from the rest of the Arab states in the whole Middle East region. We must also remember that the countries have on their territories vast resources of raw materials, especially oil and natural gas. What is more, the resources are independently managed. Those two factors led to creating a huge difference in the development of the economy and national wealth between those two sub-regions. The GDP in the states of the Gulf sub-regions has reached a level that is not attainable for most states of the Sub-region of Levant. In just a few decades, the Arab Gulf states managed the transform from the old-fashioned sheikhdoms into the modern, efficient state organizations. It is worthy of attention that those processes, which are still ongoing, took place in the states with an established, conservative, monarchical system, in many situations of the authoritarian or even absolutist character⁵⁴.

Thanks to both its geographical location and natural resources, the Gulf Sub-region has become the area of the Middle East with the greatest geopolitical significance. And that is why many countries outside the Middle Eastern region are interested in close political and economic cooperation with the Gulf states.

Inside the Arab Gulf sub-region the process of international integration had different origins than in Europe. If the concept of the European integration has had a long tradition in the history of European thought, in the Gulf region this process must be regarded as relatively new. The Gulf Sub-region was the last part of the MER to gain independence and sovereignty. Till the beginning of the 70's the Arab states of the Gulf were under the British protection. Kuwait was the first of the British dependencies in the Gulf to be granted independence in 1961. The last of the British protectorates became independent one decade later. Since that time none of the states of the Gulf has been under foreign influence. However, political and social processes that took place in the whole MER, gave rise to a growing feeling of internal and external insecurity in the afore-mentioned countries. Events such as the Islamic Revolution in Iran, the Iraq-Iran war, and fluctuations on the international oil market at the end of 70's and 80's may be regarded as important and crucial factors that created an appeal for political and economical cooperation among the monarchies of the Gulf.

In 1981, the Arab states established The Gulf Cooperation Council. This international, sub-regional, organization became a platform for realizing a multileveled integration of the emirates and kingdoms of the Gulf. The stages of the integration among the GCC were defined by the founding document of this organization – the GCC Charter which consists of 22 Articles. The Charter established the aims, structure of the Organization

⁵³ R. Ożarowski, *Sytuacja polityczna w regionie Bliskiego Wschodu i perspektywy jej rozwoju*, „Gdańskie Studia Międzynarodowe” 2004, Vol. 3, No. 1, p. 37.

⁵⁴ A. Kapiszewski, *Ludność arabska i imigranci w monarchiach Zatoki Perskiej. Konsekwencje zderzenia kultur i religii*, in: *Dialog i akulturacja. Judaizm, chrześcijaństwo i islam*, ed. by A. Pankowicz, S. Bielański, Kraków 2007, p. 90.

and mechanisms of cooperation among the member states. The main aims of the GCC were describe as follows:

1. To affect coordination, integration and inter-connection between Member States in all fields in order to achieve unity between them.
2. To deepen and strengthen relations, links and areas of cooperation now prevailing among their peoples in various fields.
3. To formulate similar regulations in various fields including the following: economic and financial affairs, commerce, customs and communications, education and culture.
4. To stimulate scientific and technological progress in the fields of industry, mining, agriculture, water and animal resources; to establish scientific research; to establish joint ventures and encourage cooperation by with of the private sector for the good of their peoples⁵⁵.

These aims created the main areas of coordination among the member states. So, we can see that the cooperation among the member states is organized in the following areas: political, military, security, legal, and cultural. It shows that from the beginning of its existence the GCC focused not only on the economic cooperation. This allows a claim that the beginning of the integration process may start at higher level of cooperation. There is no need to start integration at the economy level. So, the beginning of such a process depends especially on local conditions that influence the decisions of interested states about the need of cooperation among them.

There is a very interesting difference between the integration processes inside the GCC and EU areas. While in the EU the beginning of the integration was mainly connected with the economic cooperation, the attention of the GCC was mainly focused on the security and political matters. In that region there was no tendency to unify the foreign policies of the GCC states, but only to resolve the matters of the common interest, especially in the context of the Iraq-Iran war⁵⁶. Also the two wars against Iraq, the problem of extremist terrorism, and the territorial disputes among the Sub-Region states, were the events that led to tightening of political contacts between the Gulf states and were areas of the great interest for the GCC⁵⁷. The GCC became the platform that was used to establish common procedures and policy to secure the whole area as well as the internal situation in the member states. But in the political matters the GCC states did not express any interest in developing integration towards the real unification of their foreign and security policies⁵⁸.

Many writers claim that the EU is a role model for the integration process in the GCC. We may agree with such an opinion only partially. When we take into account economic integration, it becomes obvious that the GCC is able to follow the same pattern

⁵⁵ *The GCC Charter*: <http://www.gcc-sg.org/eng/index.php?action=Sec-Show&ID=1> (12.08.2013).

⁵⁶ R.S. Zahlan, *The Making of the Modern Gulf States. Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates and Oman*, London 2002, pp. 182–183.

⁵⁷ *Political Affairs (GCC)*: <http://www.gcc-sg.org/eng/index.php?action=Sec-Show&ID=48> (12.08.2013).

⁵⁸ A.K. Abdulla, *The Gulf Cooperation Council: Nature Origin and Process*, in: *Middle East Dilemma: The Politics and Economies of Arab Integration*, ed. by. M.C. Hudson, Columbia 1999, p. 150.

as the EU. Especially, at the beginning of the 21st century the Gulf states showed that they were able to overcome the obstacles that prevented their closer cooperation in the field of economy. In 2002 in accordance with the GCC statutes the Customs Union was established. Six years later an agreement regarding matters of the Common Market was reached. There were also plans to establish a unified currency by 2010⁵⁹. Unfortunately, until now these plans have not been put in practice. The question is if taking such steps means that the integration process is the same in the GCC as in the EU. I assume that the answer to this question must be negative. That is mainly due to a huge difference that can be observed in the matter of the regional identity. In the United Europe there is a tendency to stress the importance of the supra-national regional identity as a means of strengthening the process of integration, but the question is whether there is a similar trend in the GCC region.

The GCC is a group of states that are very similar when we think in the categories of the political system, society organization to and the values that are important for the nationals. Ahmad al-Haddad pointed out the attributes that in his opinion constitute “the Gulf Personality”. Among them he listed – honoring one’s guest, cleaving steadfastly to the Islamic Law, and accepting the sheikhocracy⁶⁰. In that sense the above-mentioned factors make the Arab states of the Gulf the obvious partners for integration. We can observe the many ingredients that create the situation in which the Arab states of the Gulf were the obvious partners for the integration among them. However, the obvious sociopolitical similarities did not make it easy for the states of the Gulf to integrate their policies. During its existence the GCC concentrated on organizing summits which ended with the communiqués that were only the statements of the intention rather than on the real integration in accordance with the theory of regionalism.

The specific situation of the GCC region puts the problem of the regional identity in a different context than in Europe. The Arab states of the Gulf are more protective of their national sovereignty and its national symbols⁶¹. Having become independent individual states had to focus on strengthening and organizing state structures and they felt obliged to develop the national identity rather than to think about the regional ties⁶². For them the real problem is not to initiate the idea of the sub-regional identity as a mean to organize the popular acceptance of the idea of the integration. Due to the political systems of the Gulf states there is no need to use the idea in that manner. The problem of identity is of the other kind. The specific situation in the Gulf states is strictly connected with the structure of their societies which results from decades of the huge industrial and urban development. A serious transformation of their population was one part of this process.

⁵⁹ *Ghadfour*, January 1st 2008: <http://www.saudi-us-relations.org/articles/2008/loi/080101-common-market.html> (12.08.2013).

⁶⁰ P. Dresch, *Introduction: Societies, Identities and Global Issue*, in: *Monarchies and Nations. Globalization and Identity in the Arab States of the Gulf*, ed. by P. Dresch, London–New York 2005, p. 15.

⁶¹ A.K. Abdulla, *op. cit.*, p. 151.

⁶² C. Holes, *Dialect and National Identity. The Cultural Politics of Self-Representation in Bahraini Musalsalat*, in: *Monarchies and Nations...*, p. 32.

The population of the countries in the region is varied. Since the beginning of the 21st century Saudi Arabia with nearly 20 million inhabitants has been the most populated state in the region. The population of such countries as Kuwait, Oman and the UAE is between 3 and 4 million inhabitants. Bahrain and Qatar are inhabited by less than one million people. Interestingly enough, foreigners constitute a significant part of their population. In 2006 the nationals constituted 63% of the whole population of the GCC member states while foreigners constituted about 37%. But in countries such as Kuwait, Qatar and the UAE, the nationals are minorities in their own countries. During the first decades of the oil boom the Arab countries of the Middle East were the biggest source of immigrants. The Arabs were welcomed because of their professional experience and the help they could provide to create the governmental, industrial, and educational structures. They were also socially acceptable because of the common language, religion and culture. But at the same time the local monarchies were suspicious of them due to the political reasons. A lot of the immigrants were supporters of the leftist ideas and appealed for the dissolution of the monarchical rule in the Arab World. That is why the Gulf monarchies limited the immigration from the Arab states and accepted immigrants from other parts of world. Due to this policy the number of the Arab immigrants declined from 72% in 1972, to 30% two decades later. It must be said that this process is still ongoing⁶³. The political conflict in the Arab World also resulted in the expulsion of some Arab nationals from the territories of the Gulf States. The new immigrants mainly came from Asian countries, which has been seen as advantageous from both political and economic point of view. The cost of employing new labor force from Asia was much lower than that of employing Arab immigrants. At the same time Asians were regarded to be disciplined workers, without any political ambitions.

The characteristic feature of the Gulf states societies is a huge stratification and the policy of exclusion. According to the national laws, only nationals can enjoy privileges which means that such privileges are not accessible to immigrants especially from the Asian countries. In this system the naturalization of immigrants and granting them full civil rights is practically impossible. What is especially astonishing, despite such an obvious discrimination situation, there are nearly no conflicts in the relations among nationals and immigrants. We may mention three main reasons for that : the authoritarian system of power, huge structures of the secret police, and the fear of deportation were immigrants ready to initiate a local disorder⁶⁴. But on the other hand it must be mentioned that, despite the special, privileged status, nationals feel endanger by the presence of immigrants in their society. The awareness of the fact that the number of the immigrants is bigger than nationals, the feeling that they are better educated and job active are the main reason for the natives' growing concerns about the future. The above-mentioned situation influences the local culture, tradition and in a broader sense the local identity. Apart from the problem of relations with immigrant societies local societies face other dangers, too. The

⁶³ A. Kapiszewski, *op. cit.*, p. 93.

⁶⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 96.

main threats are the openness to the process of globalization and the westernization of culture. The local values such as – courage, self-efficiency, generosity, hospitality have been in many cases replaced the economically-oriented so-called western values. That is why many authors draw attention to the identity crisis in the highly industrialized societies of the Gulf. So, the reasons for the omnipresent in the Gulf countries critical voices toward the globalization and its price are beyond a shadow of a doubt obvious.

In such a situation a question about the role of the sub-regional identity inside the Gulf Area appears. As it was stated before it is possible to make a list of elements which create the a popular feeling of common space. However, despite the ongoing process of acculturation, the local societies are still attached to the values that create their identity. It can also be said that although the integration process has been initiated at the state level and not at the level of societies, there were some moves that were obviously intended to create the area of common understanding and cooperation not only among the governments but also among the societies. That may be observed in the field of education and media whose existence and activity create the common cultural sphere for the whole area⁶⁵. But despite the fact that the sociopolitical similarities create a space for the spiritual integration inside the Gulf, there are no tendencies to create the “local regional nationalism” or “nation”, as in Europe. The idea of the national identity is built not only on the local level, but also at supra-regional level. Even the founders of the GCC were did not perceive the matter of local identity as the main source of integration of the member countries. The identity of the Gulf states may be also described as supra-regional. The founding documents of the GCC show that the values on which it was based were not of the local origins only. If the founding monarchies were convinced of the utility of the creation of the Sub-regional organization, they had no intention to alienate it or themselves, from the structures of the whole Arab World. So they stress the need to preserve the values of the whole Arab Nation, not only those especially important for the Arab Gulf states. The Charter of GCC clearly states that “[...] integration between them serves the sublime objectives of the Arab Nation”⁶⁶.

Conclusion

When we think about the international or, in a narrower sense, regional integration, we can observe that not only the economic, political or strategic factors must be considered when we want to research the roots of this process, its continuation, and development. We cannot ignore the role of ideas or the existence of common identity which make the beginning and the continuation of the process of economic and political integration possible. I assume that the process of real integration can start and develop only when participants of this process share the same identity. So, there must exist the regional

⁶⁵ C. Holes, op. cit., p. 52.

⁶⁶ *The GCC Charter ...*

identity to assure the success of integration. But, when we think of such phenomenon we face a very important question, whether regional identity is one of the crucial conditions of integration or whether it is a result of this process and as such it is developing simultaneously with the advancement of the next stages of integration. This problem regards not only the phenomenon of regional identity, but also other kinds of identity as, for example, the national one.

It must be stressed that the regional identity was an important factor that enabled the process of integration in Europe but it was less significant in the Arabian Gulf Area. The phenomenon of regional (or sub-regional) identity did not play the same role in the EU and the GCC areas. First of all, despite the fact that both organizations have similar aims and functions, and that they formally have gone through similar forms of integration, the two organizations have different geographical and political character. The EU is a full regional organization that is still undergoing the process of the membership enlargement. On the other hand the GCC is an organization with a sub-regional character and with a completed membership development process. The GCC does not pretend to include all the Arab states⁶⁷. The afore-mentioned differences are of the utmost importance when we think about the role of the regional identity in the process of integration in the EU and GCC areas.

In the EU, regional identity had and still has many roles to play. Firstly, it proofs that there is a common sense of values among European nations which enables them to cooperate in order to achieve common goals. It is important phenomenon because at the beginning and during the development of the integration process there was the need to overcome the awareness of the historical conflicts among many European states that took place in their past. It is need to show that there can appear the co-existence among nations, and that the aim of the regional integration is not domination of the biggest states but the realization of the interest of all members of the integrative organization regardless their real power in the international relations. Secondly, the common European identity is a useful tool to achieve the support from the side of societies of the European state to the idea of integration. Thirdly, the conception of European identity is aimed to overcome the nationalist sentiments that could endanger the all process. Fourthly, it helps to organize the social support for the next stages of the integration process. I dare not claim that in all the above-mentioned situations the concept of European identity was successful. Nevertheless, many politicians and intellectuals stress the important role of this kind of identity as a one of the roots of integration process⁶⁸. Obviously, it may be said that the concept of European integration is an example of an 'imaginary community'. Richard Coudenhove-Calergi and his Pan-European movement especially may be regarded

⁶⁷ Contemporary there were signs that the GCC contemplated the acquisition of the other Arab monarchies, Morocco Jordan, and Republic of Yemen, but it must be only treated as a signal of solidarity with the monarchic states during the upheavals of the Arab Spring, but not the real politics of the enlargement (J. Lesware, *Welcome for 'enlarged GCC' that would include Morocco and Jordan*, May 12, 2011, "The National", <http://www.thenational.ae/news/world/middle-east/welcome-for-enlarged-gcc-that-would-include-morocco-and-jordan> (12.08.2013).

⁶⁸ G. Theborn, *Drogi do nowoczesnej Europy*, Warszawa-Kraków 1998, p. 351.

as the creators or inventors of the European identity as an artificial phenomenon. But it is only partially true. There are many values that are shared by European nations; there is also an awareness of common historical ties, not only conflicts; there is also a common cultural and civilization code, which creates a strong base for the European identity. In my opinion, the European identity is not in contradiction with the identity of any European nation. Regardless the opinion of many nationalists the two identities do not exclude each other but they supplement each other.

When we think about the GCC area, the problem of regional identity is different. I claim that the Arabian Gulf identity played a less important role in the creation and existence of the GCC. Of course there was a feeling that this body was created by the 'Arabs from the Gulf', but the feeling of geographical community does not implicate that there is a special and separate kind of identity. Especially that the causes of the creation of the GCC were of a rather economic, political and strategic nature. The set of common ideas played a marginal role, contrary to Europe. During the following years of the existence of GCC it was hard to observe any tendency to stress the importance of the 'Gulf identity' as a useful tool to strengthen the process of sub-regional integration. How to explain that assumption? It must be said that inside the Middle East area, which Arabian Gulf is a part of, there is a set of many identities. We may for example enumerate numerous identities: a tribal, religious (Muslim), local geographical, national (in a narrow sense, connected with the existence of the contemporary regional states), and also supra-national when we think in categories of the existence of one Arab nation⁶⁹. When we contemplate the sub-regional (Gulf) identity of the GCC, there is a danger that this identity will be in conflict with the broader Arab identity. It must be stressed that the GCC is limited to only one part of the Arab world. There is another organization of all Arab states – the League of Arab States, whose existence is connected with the supra-national Arab identity. In that sense, concentrating on the development of a local 'Gulf' identity may lead to accusations of breaking not only the national Arab solidarity but also the religious one. So, the sub-regional identity is not as important a part of the integration process in the GCC area as in the EU area or, in other words, it is not in the same state of exposition in the Gulf as in Europe. The other aspect of this problem is that, regardless the obvious success of economic cooperation, there is no clear tendency to move the integration process of the GCC towards a closer political union. All members of the GCC are rather interested in preserving their sovereignty in political matters and in contacts with the outer world. Even sociopolitical similarities of the Gulf states were not able to bring about their closer political integration⁷⁰. The existing regional (or rather sub-regional) identity does not create the field that enables the GCC states to co-operate with success in the political matters unlike in Europe. Another aspect is how this situation may be overcome, but this is a matter of a following discussion. Frankly speaking, the

⁶⁹ R. Hinnebusch, *The International Politics of the Middle East*, Manchester–New York 2003, p. 5.

⁷⁰ N. Janardahan, *Regionalisation and Omni-balacin in the Gulf*, in: *The Gulf States and the Arab Uprising*, ed. by A. Echagüe, FRIDE 2013, pp. 25–26.

crisis regarding the 'Reforming Treaty' in the EU showed that even the awareness of the common European identity cannot overcome all the reservations towards the deepening of the integration process that exist among citizens of many European states. This is a very important political lesson that must be also seen by the statesmen of the GCC when they have to face the problem of the next stages of the Gulf integration.