The Cosmopolitan Identity in the Era of the Knowledge Society and the Internet

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Abstract

The communication and internet revolution has had a great influence on time and space contraction, and virtual space has become a platform for intellectual encounters beyond borders. Nowadays, in the time of the knowledge-based society and new communication technologies, the opening of formerly closed borders between "us" and the "others," and, in consequence, the possibility of creating cosmopolitan identities in virtual space seem to be important problems. Ethical cosmopolitanism should become a determining condition for creation of such identities due to its claim that all people in the world should be treated as equals, regardless of their race, gender, set of beliefs, religion, or the place of their dwelling.

The aim of the paper is to present the recent discussion on cosmopolitan identity in the era of the knowledge society, as well as to introduce the concept of strangeness and depict the sociological background and the current evolution of creating the collective identities. The main scope of the article is the discussion of conditions for creating the cosmopolitan identity in the internet space.

Key words: Cosmopolitanism, identity, the internet, global justice

1. INTRODUCTION

According to Margaret Mead the situation in which we find ourselves today "has never occurred before in human history and, by its very nature, can never occur in this way again. It is because

the entire planet is accessible to us that we can know that there are no people anywhere about whom we might know but do not. One mystery has been resolved for us forever as it applies to earth, and future explorations must take place among the planets and the stars. We have the means of reaching all of earth's diverse peoples and we have the concepts that make it possible for us to understand them, and they now share in a world-wide, technologically propagated culture, within which they are able to listen as well as to talk to us. For the one-sided explorations of the early anthropologist who recorded the strange kinship systems of alien peoples, to whom he himself was utterly unintelligible, we now can substitute open-ended conversations, conducted under shared skies, when airplanes fly over the most remote mountains" (1970, p. xv). On the other hand, in Zygmunt Bauman's opinion "in our liquid modern times the world around us is sliced into poorly coordinated fragments while our individual lives are cut into a succession of ill connected episodes. Few if any of us avoid the passage through more than one genuine or putative, well integrated or ephemeral 'community of ideas and principles'" (2004, pp. 12-13).

Contrary to our ancestors during our lives we often slip between many communities, ideas, and principles, seamlessly changing our habits. Moreover, it does not seem to be a problem for us because it is an immanent feature of being human in our globalized world (Janikowska, 2011). The contemporary epoch should be called the age of space: "We are in the epoch of contemporaneity, coexistence, in the epoch of what is close and far away, what is scattered side by side" (Foucault after Waldenfels, 2006, p. 6).

Intense globalization processes have abolished the old sealed borders between what is "ours" and that what is "alien." The communication and internet revolution has contributed towards shrinking of time and space, which in turn has resulted in the occurrence of new conditions for building a transnational society detached from once necessary spatial rooting. In the times of the knowledge-based society, virtual space has become a platform of intercultural encounters beyond borders. On account of modern communication technologies, the mutual intertwining of the "familiar" and the "alien" worlds has happened. These events influenced the emergence of the "world in-between;" the world where thanks to the modern communicators we can be everywhere not being anywhere (Janikowska, 2012b). The approach towards and the notion of "strangeness" have changed drastically.

Currently "strangeness" does not have to mean, as it did for our ancestors, that someone is (spatially) distant. In consequence, "somewhere else" ceases to be alien. Strangeness has become *ex territorial* and possibilities to create cosmopolitan identities have grown more numerous. Moreover, the specificity of the current problems has brought about such an understanding of our global interdependence where the borders between what is "ours" and

"yours" have turned out to be liquid and transitory. There are conceptions of cosmopolitan democracy that has to be based on cosmopolitan identity (Archibugi, 1998; Archibugi, Held, 2011; Janikowska, 2012a). The goal of this paper is to analyze the conditions and context of creating and entrenching a cosmopolitan identity, which will determine further fate of humanity and the shape of civilization.

2. THE PROCESS OF CREATING COLLECTIVE IDENTITIES

The process of building a collective and constructing group identities has accompanied the human being since time immemorial. According to Shmuel Eisenstadt "creating a community and collective consciousness involves enlisting specific attributes of those communities in relation to a basic cosmological and ontological concepts – i.e. to a specific cultural program – and their concretization in a particular place and time. The construction of the collective identity or consciousness also pertains to (...) a differentiation between *sacrum* and *profanum* and various combinations of these two dimensions of social order. The attributes of similarity among the members of the community manifest in forming personal types and patterns of behavior, which seem to them proper (...). The construction of the "similarity" of the members of any community includes a pressure on defying everything what is foreign, on the differences separating them from other communities. That pressure on the community members' similarity secures the existence of (...) not contract-based elements of social life, the foundations of mechanical solidarity as well as solidarity and trust" [own transl.] (2009, p. 63). Posing the problem of the borderline between "one of one's own" and the "alien" puts forward the issue of trespassing that border, namely that how the alien may become one of our own and a member of the community.

In his considerations Shmuel Eisenstadt marks out three basic codes that shape the construction of the collective identity: primordiality, civility, and sacrality. He believes that the primordiality code focuses on factors like gender, generation, kinship, territory, race, and language. In his opinion, it is a natural border. The next code is civility, i.e., what is called by Shmuel Eisenstadt civil consciousness. This code "is constructed on the basis of familiarity with implicit and explicit rules of conduct, traditions, and social routines that define and demarcate the boundary of the collectivity" (Eisenstadt, 2003, p. 80). The sacral or transcendental code is related to delineating a borderline between "we" and "the other" on the basis of the relation of the collective subject with the domain of sublime and sacrum. It is a code that can be found in all societies. These codes are ideal that exist in various forms.

Creation and re-creation of collective identity comes into being because of the propagation and institutionalization of models of a socio-cultural order. "The promulgation of models of social and cultural orders and of the appropriate code-orientations takes place above all in several types of situations – especially socializing and communicative ones, in different rituals and ceremonies, and through various agencies of socialization and education institutions, 'mass media,' religious preaching and the like" (Eisenstadt, 2003, p. 82). At that time also the process of absorption of symbols and borders of a given community by its members takes place. In such a way elements of one's own identity are being created, and propagating the distinctiveness of a particular community is related to the patterns of cultural creativity. According to Robert K. Merton (Merton 1968, p. 339) "we may certainly insist on explicit criteria for the designation of a particular group as a membership group on the one instance and as a nonmembership group in the other." However, in the majority of sociological works they are left with no explanation. Merton writes: "it is generally understood that the *sociological* concept of a group refers to a number of people who interact with one another in accord with established patterns. This is sometimes phrased as a number of people having established and characteristic social relations.... A second criterion of a group ... is that the interacting persons *define themselves* as 'members,' i.e., that they have patterned expectations of forms of interaction which are morally binding on them and on other 'members,' but not on those regarded as 'outside' the group.... [The] third criterion is that the persons in interaction be *defined by others* as 'belonging to the group,' these others including fellow members and non-members. In the case of formal groups, these definitions tend to be explicit; in the case of informal groups, they are often tacit, being symbolized by behavior rather than expressed in so many words. To the extent that these three criteria – enduring and morally established forms of social interaction, self-definition as a member and the same definition by others – are fully met, those involved in the sustained interaction are clearly identifiable as comprising groups. Both the objective criterion of interaction and the subjective criteria of social definitions combine to effect relatively clear boundaries of membership and non-membership." (Merton, 1968, pp. 339-240). Furthermore, he emphasizes that the group borders are not unchangeable. The group borders are not fixed for good but dynamically change in response to particular situational contexts. It means that once set group borders should not be treated as unable to get worse, and regrouping is extremely important in the context of considerations of creating cosmopolitan identities.

The notion of one's own group and a foreign one was introduced to sociology by William G. Sumner who pointed out that "a differentiation arises between ourselves, the we-group, or in-group, and everybody else, or the other-groups, out-groups. The insiders in a we-group are in

relation of peace, order, law, government and industry, to each other. Their relation to all outsiders, or other-groups, is one of war and plunder, except as agreements have modified it" (after Merton, 1968, p. 351).

While discussing the notion of "the other" Georg Simmel evokes an example of a foreigner working in trade. The subject matter here is the possibility of buying products manufactured outside of one's own group. Let us assume that a foreign trader stops in the place of their activity and settles down for good there. "The stranger is by nature no 'owner of soil' soil not only in the physical, but also in the figurative sense of a life-substance which is fixed, if not in a point in space, at least in an ideal point of the social environment. Although in more intimate relations, he may develop all kinds of charm and significance, as long as he is considered a stranger in the eyes of the other, he is not an 'owner of soil'" (1950, p. 403). He believes that the attribute of mobility given to the "stranger" within the limited group represents a *synthesis of otherness and remoteness*. It determines the formal position of "stranger" because a mobile human being contacts with incidental people but does not establish stable, family-like, local or professional relations in an organic way. The "stranger" then is a "stranger in the group," a person who arrives today but may leave tomorrow, and when they do, they will not be a part of the group anymore.

According to Jan Grad,

> 'strangeness' may be conceived in terms of the 'other' as a person coming from a different geographical and cultural space; that understanding is related to the original and essential comprehension of the 'other' as the foreigner. Originally the *other* is a newcomer from other, not our homely and familiar, land. Our fellowman is a member of our indigenous local, regional or national community; the one who comes from 'this land' what is signalized by such denominations as: homie, compatriot, and countryman. We are emotionally connected to them for we are bound with a psychological ties stemming from shared existence on a certain territory and functioning in the same culture. A sense of strangeness towards foreigners is an awareness of differences in physical appearance and cultural differences manifesting themselves in clothing, the way of behavior and language between us and the people coming from 'other' often 'far away' places" [own transl.] (2011, pp. 148-149).

Georg Simmel claims that there is "a kind of 'strangeness' that rejects the very commonness based on something more general which embraces the parties. The relation of the Greeks to the Barbarians is perhaps typical here, as are all cases in which it is precisely general attributes, felt to be specifically and purely human, that are disallowed to the other. But 'stranger' here, has no positive meaning; the relation to him is a non-relation; he is not what is relevant here, a member of the group itself" (1950, p. 407). Łukasz Łotocki, on the other hand, proposes adopting the existence of the following fundamental features pertinent to "ethnic strangeness":

- "The existence of social distance towards the 'other' in the adopting society (the distance may manifest itself in a different form and scale);
- "*Quasi* 'objectivity' and the feeling of distance of the 'other' towards surrounding them adopting society stemming partially from 'the lack of full participation;'
- "The possibility of existence of separate value systems, i.e. 'our own' and the one of the foreigners;
- "The possibility of occurring the syndrome of the 'person from the margin' as a result of 'strangeness;'
- "The lack of ready interpretation schemata enabling the 'other' smooth dealing with everyday reality;
- "The possibility of sharing the present and the future with the adopting society with no possibility of sharing with them the past;
- "The possibility of occurring the syndrome of presumption of guilt the 'other' by the adopting society and the necessity of proving by the 'other' that 'they are not guilty;'
- "The feeling of 'permanent temporality' by the 'other' as well as 'the other's ambiguity and indeterminacy' that may be of concern for the adopting society;
- "The functionality of the 'other' for the existence of 'homeliness' – maintaining the identity;
- "The natural character of 'strangeness,' which is a feature of all social and political forms although it does not have to be identical with 'hostility'" [own transl.] (2009, p. 161).

Seeing people as culturally different in regular everyday contacts is determined mainly by dissimilarity of their visible features. It refers for example to the appearance, the "strangeness" and conspicuous differences in behavior in comparison to the ones that are typical, characteristic for a given society. They can be in particular ways of behaving that contravene established "good manners," required mainly in public spaces. As a group member the stranger is simultaneously is close and distant. However, it is always possible for a stranger to anchor in a given public space, which right now does not have to necessarily be a physical space but more and more often is a virtual space.

3. COSMOPOLITAN IDENTITIES IN THE TIMES OF THE KNOWLEDGE-BASED SOCIETY

The scope of understanding and the topography of "the other" have been changing over the years. Ruth Benedict claims that "primitive men never looked out over the world and saw 'mankind' as a group and felt his common cause with his species. From the beginning he was a provincial who raised the barriers high. Whether it was a question of choosing a wife or of taking a head, the first and important distinction was between his own human group and those beyond the pale. His own group, and all its ways of behaving, was unique" (2005, p. 7). Today, throughout a number of transformations and changes occurring in the surrounding reality, "a world in which communities are neatly hived off from one another seems no longer a serious

option, if it ever was. And the way of segregation and seclusion has always been anomalous in our perpetually voyaging species" (Appiah, 2007, p. xviii). It points out that the question of the possibility of building a cosmopolitan identity in virtual space becomes one of the key issues. Jürgen Habermas describes the essence of cosmopolitanism by claiming that "Equal respect for *everyone* is not limited to those who are like us; it extends to the person of the other in his or her otherness. And solidarity with the other as one of us refers to the flexible 'we' of a community that resists all substantive determinations and extends its permeable boundaries ever further" (1998, pp. xxxv-xxxvi). He further explains that inclusion of the other translates into opening the borders of the community for everybody – also those who are other to each other and want to remain such. It becomes clear then that the cosmopolitan does not have to necessarily renounce their local loyalty for the sake of the abstract that is humankind, but it is rather a friendly and responsible look in the direction of the other.

Gillian Brock regards the question of identity and responsibility as one of the most significant issues pertinent to cosmopolitism. She writes that being a cosmopolitan is based on a very basic assumption, namely that "one is a person who is marked or influenced by various cultures" (2009, p. 8). She further claims that, depending on the approach to this two-way relation of being influenced and simultaneous influencing, cosmopolitism can bring forth both positive and negative connotations. Negative connotations will be brought about by cosmopolitanism that treats the "otherness" as a threat for the community's cultural purity. Positive connotations, on the other hand, will be related to the perception of the person themselves. A cosmopolitan is a man of the world, a traveler, a sophisticated individual who with curiosity and respect discovers the "strangeness." Considering the problem of identity Gillian Brock points out that cosmopolitism gives us the option of choice. Furthermore, she noticed that the fact of belonging to a particular culture is not an essential element in the personal formation of identity. She writes: "one can pick and choose from the full smorgasbord on offer, or reject all in favor of other options" (Brock, 2009, p. 8).

According to David Miller, cosmopolitanism means "that human beings are all subject to the same moral laws: we should treat others in line with those laws irrespective of where in the universe they live; they should also treat us in the same way" (2007, p. 24). Therefore, cosmopolitanism demands that it is necessary to open the former tightly sealed borders between "us" and "others" and build that relation on respect for the other person and for their "otherness," with which we can become acquainted when we respect the "laws of hospitality." Within our newly built cosmopolitan identities we can, based on the already existing frames, build new "loose" communities and identities which will become links forming our global universe.

Today, thanks to modern communication technology, we are facing a world which has been radically reorganized. The former tightly sealed borders between "us" and "others" were opened, which allowed us to hear what the "others" have to say. Thanks to the invention of the World Wide Web, the world has shrunk even more: although we are seemingly distant from each other in terms of real space, in virtual space we continue growing closer and closer. As a result of the use of modern communication technology, the "familiar" and the "foreign" worlds began to interpenetrate each other. It is also noteworthy that in contemporary exchange of information between "us" and the "others" the time factor has been almost completely eliminated. Humans living in the twenty-first century may find it difficult to imagine that information flow between "us" and the "others" used to be determined by the speed with which the messenger, herald, courier, or animals could travel, and although pigeons have always been very fast animals, the number of bits of information that they can carry has been very small. Nowadays both time and space constitute only tiny barriers for building cosmopolitan identities.

At this point it is necessary to refer to the possibilities that internet communication brought about, including:

- the possibility to observe the "others;"
- the possibility to interact with the "other;"
- the possibility to unite with the "others."

3.1. THE POSSIBILITY OF VIRTUAL OBSERVATION OF THE "OTHER"

With the help of modern technology we can follow the latest world events even without having a TV, buying newspapers, or even purchasing an internet connection –all we need is a WiFi connection. We can watch various events, like e.g., the Japan tsunami wave, almost in real time, or become an "eyewitness" of a new Pope being elected at St. Peter's Square in Rome or follow the Olympic Games or observe Felix Baumhartner's jump "from space." We can find out about the feelings, experiences, and thoughts of the "foreign" people who participated in those events.

That possibility of observation brings us closer to those whom we "observe," because it makes their experiences and feelings real for us and thus we are able to experience "otherness." Although it does not equal experiencing the "other" in Husserlian sense, because we are not experiencing them physically, the possibility of observing them virtually may influence our willingness to engage in the "other's" issues thanks to a better knowledge of their views, needs, and problems; we feel the need of helping them, associating with them.

One good example of a situation where a society participating in a virtual observation becomes organized is the reaction to the tsunami in 2004. Both private individuals and agencies, as well as non-governmental organizations, rushed to help, showing a greater involvement in providing aid to the victims of the cataclysm than had ever been witnessed before.

3.2.   THE POSSIBILITY OF INTERACTING WITH THE "OTHER"

An important step towards associating with the "others" is the possibility of interacting with them via the modern instant messengers. "Telematics equals further and radical change, because it facilitates direct interaction in which many people from different places in the world can participate simultaneously; it enables people to take full advantage of the potential of information through the internet and fax; it also creates the possibility of overcoming the limitations connected with the transition from the spoken word to print; finally, it helps overcome language barriers thanks to the growing effectiveness of computer translation" [own transl.] (Hirszowicz, 2007, p. 41). The phenomenon of modern communication (which works as an intermediary) consists in the fact that it is largely based on playing with images. When someone *writes about themselves*, their text is presently often accompanied by an image – i.e. a photograph. Photographs have the magical power of capturing and preserving moments which we choose to consider important. They allow us to express ourselves without words, without thinking about syntax. Photographs thus allow us to communicate without language barriers.

The same applies to music or books – by *writing about oneself* on social networks it is enough to indicate what we like by clicking the popular "like" button. That way we allow "others" to get gain a more comprehensive knowledge about us. Moreover, such communication provides the possibility of immediate feedback. So the question asked by us can be answered in "real time." It is very important. Most probably everybody still remembers the era of writing letters – the promptness of the answer depended on the speed of delivery by post and was connected with an expedition to the post office. During the time that had to pass between the question and the answer, the issue which used to be important to us, could have become less pressing or could have even disappeared entirely. Today the timing of the answer depends solely on the will and the promptness of the answering person's reaction.

The internet makes it possible to create media platforms which can serve as a tool for cultural exchange, placing special emphasis on its immaterial aspects, which include beliefs, convictions, values, and ideas. So we have the possibility of getting to know not only the "other" themselves, but also the culture that the person in question comes from, and thus our perception

of them changes. Instant messengers allow us to form online relations with the "other" – something that has never been possible before. We can build networks around mutual interests, objects of liking or antipathy. Thanks to internet discussion forums we can practice citizen journalism and thus express our opinions on issues of utmost importance to us and discover other people's opinions on the subject that interests us.

3.3. THE POSSIBILITY OF UNITING WITH THE "OTHER"

The 2011 Facebook revolution in the Arab countries (or the Arab Spring) was a phenomenon which could serve as a fundamental example of virtual uniting. It is considered that internet played a major role in it, although paradoxically only 20% of Egyptian citizens had online access. This facilitated a united approach and the preparation of the so-called "Day of Rage" which worked as a catalyst of subsequent events. The wave of public protests against the introduction of the ACTA (Anti-Counterfeiting Trade Agreement) regulations is a prime example of individuals unifying across divisions into "us" and "others" and based on shared important values.

It was the internet that worked as a platform enabling the interested parties to join the wave of protests, as well as share their opinions. The internet has been and will continue to be the motor in the formation of new collective identities, for which one of the most important questions, i.e. "where are you from?" has been replaced by "who are you?" This introduces completely new possibilities of creating cosmopolitan communities. However, we should remember that cosmopolitanism, in its essence, does not question the fact that it is an immanent feature of human beings that we are different from each other – so in no way does cosmopolitism call for unification or for creating one universal global identity. On the contrary, it assumes that everybody has the right to be whoever they want and to define themselves as members of any chosen group, to profess any chosen religion, to advocate views that they agree with instead of those which are forced upon them, to participate in any chosen community of "ideas and rules." The essence of cosmopolitanism consists in defining the relationship between what one believes to be their "own" and what one considers to be "foreign;" a relationship that should be characterized by respect and responsibility.

Thus, the internet has become a crucial tool in the process of building cosmopolitan identities, because it facilitates getting to know the "other" and understanding them, and this way it strengthens the respect for what is "foreign."

4. THE BOUNDARIES OF COSMOPOLITAN IDENTITIES FORMATION

Shmuel Eisenstadt outlines such most crucial codes to shape the constructions of collective identity:

- primordiality

- civility

- sacrality.

The question of whether those codes are boundaries for the formation and separation of cosmopolitan identities in the era of the knowledge society and of the internet, is immensely significant.

The ethnicity code is a natural boundary; it forms and strengthens the boundary between the interior and exterior. The code does not seem in any matter to be an obstacle for creating cosmopolitan identities, which do not question variety. The identity of gender, generation, and race does not mean that they cannot participate in cosmopolitan collectivities. It only positions and indicates a place for each individual.

The civilization code is connected with the civil awareness. It is considered by many to be the core of the collective identity, which is built according to the behavioral rules, traditions, and routine social practices. The code does not seem to be a possible boundary for cosmopolitan identities. The fact that societies are different from one another does not eliminate their mutual cosmopolitan relation.

The sacral code is affiliated with forming a boundary between "us" and "strangers" based on the relation between the collective subject and the field of loftiness with *sacrum*. It might seem to be the most significant code, which allows building cosmopolitan identities. It is associated with the world of values. Although cosmopolitism does not assume their universalization, according to Samuel P. Huntington (2005) cultural differences, which mostly derive from religious separations, are presently becoming the main sources of conflicts. In this case, do the differences caused by the variety of the world religions prevent forming permanent cosmopolitan identities? It will appear so, as long as the relation between religions is not based on cosmopolitan rules and there is no tolerance towards "strange" religions.

Tolerance does not only mean "a restraint from persecution and oppression towards people of beliefs different from those approved by the majority of a particular society ..., but it is most importantly the allowance of uniqueness of a human being and the evangelical right to love," according to John Paul II, but also "respecting freedom with the constant approval of the

transcendent dignity of a human being.... Evangelic sensitivity will protect us from emotions and agitation, which might easily lead to xenophobia and ... intolerance. The basis of tolerance is respect to human dignity, human conscience and freedom. It is a fundamental factor to guarantee peace." While setting the tasks, which define tolerance, John Paul II claims that "it is necessary to accept and protect inalienable right to act according to our own conscience, professing and practicing individually and collectively our own faith, under the condition of inviolability of public order." He focuses and warns from unlimited tolerance, pointing out the fact that "tolerance requires the allowance of mutual limitations between the preached truths. Tolerance for breaking human rights, disregarding elementary moral principles cannot be justified.... The Pope warns from the tolerance that wants to decide about the good and the truth" [own transl.] (Zwoliński, 2003, p. 525).

Therefore, the contemporary "inter-religious cosmopolitan dialogue" ought to be based on tolerance; however, it is not the unlimited tolerance, but it is the tolerance that enforces some limitations based on the respect to another person, life, and freedom together with its basic rules.

These questions become immensely crucial when, while discussing cosmopolitan identity, the events of September 11, 2001 are taken into consideration. It was after 9/11 when the discussion on dividing the world into "strangers" and "us" commenced in intellectual circles. In the discussion between Giovanna Borradori, Jürgen Habermas, and Jacques Derrida, *Philosophy in a Time of Terror: Dialogues with Jürgen Habermas and Jacques Derrida*, following the attacks of 9/11, an incredibly crucial and still current book for cosmopolitism, the issue was risen. Jürgen Habermas claims that

> with the globalization of markets, particularly the financial markets, and with the expansion of foreign direct investments, we find ourselves today at a completely different stage. Things are different insofar as world society is meanwhile split up into winner, beneficiary, and loser countries.... With its unapproachable lead in development and with its overwhelming technological, economic, political, and military superiority, the U.S.A. appears as an insult to their self-confidence while simultaneously providing the secretly admired model.... A materialist West encounters other cultures – which owe their profile to the imprint of one of the great world religions – only through the provocative and trivializing irresistibility of a leveling consumerist culture. Let's admit it- the West presents itself in a form deprived of any normative kernel as long as its concern for human rights only concerns the attempt at opening new free markets and as long as, at home, it allows free reign to the neoconservative division of labor between religious fundamentalism and a kind of evacuating depleting secularization. (Borradori, 2013, pp. 32-33).

The reasoning of Jürgen Habermas is quite clearly within the frames of the discourse of creating cosmopolitan identity, the world of unevenness, disregarding the attitude towards differences, which leads to an inevitable catastrophe. Here, the shift of Islamic fundamentalism

and the attacks associated with it were taken into consideration; however, if we look at the issue from a wider perspective, it seems that the well-known behavioral patterns cannot lead to any positive changes in the future.

Therefore, it appears that the condition determining the creation of cosmopolitan identities ought to be global justice. It means that on the basic moral level everybody should be treated equally regardless of nationality, religion, gender, and beliefs. There should be a catalogue of universal human rights of a dual character. It would work in such a way that everybody has a duty of applying the rules but is also entitled to use them (Mandle, 2009, p. 4). Global justice is a concept of open justice (inclusive) seen as the ideal of justice (Perelman, 1959), addressed to everybody and considering everybody. It is the opposite of closed justice (exclusive) – the one in which justice norms are created, applying to and within a given closed society.

Consequently, spreading and implementing the rules of global justice is the key to creating cosmopolitan identity. In the era of the knowledge society and the internet the spread of global justice becomes real. It is not, as it used to be in the past, a utopian idea.

5. SUMMARY

The revolution of communication and the internet contributed to the appearance of new contexts of human relations. It caused the fact that those relations occur within the shrinking time and space, and as a result, other conditions for creating a supranational society, which is far from the old space inveteracy. In the era of the knowledge society, virtual space has become a platform of intercultural meetings above any boundaries. It is due to modern communication technologies that the penetration through the "well-known" and "strange" worlds has occurred. The definition of a boundary is becoming more and more unclear and unspecified. The boundaries of national states, similarly to other boundaries, which have been considered as limitations, are becoming insignificant obstacles in the responsibility towards all the other members of the global society. Due to the internet new collective identities are and will be formed. They are of various characters; however, one of the most crucial relational questions is not, as it used to take place – *where are you from*, but – *who are you*?

Another canonic condition determining the creation of new collective identities has to be ethical cosmopolitism. It means that on the basic moral level everybody ought to be treated equally, regardless of nationality, religion, gender, and believes. Cosmopolitism is based on the feeling of being responsible for those, who we do not know, as well as those who are not close to

us; however, their lives should also be the subject of our concern. It constitutes the first canonic condition – a possibility of watching "strangers," a possibility of interacting with a "stranger," as well as a possibility of uniting with "strangers." These possibilities create virtual "meeting" platforms, which constantly expand in the era of the knowledge society and the internet.

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