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# Complementary Model of Personality Self-Determination

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## Abstract

**Introduction.** The relevance of studying the phenomenon of self-determination is substantiated by the compliance of this research problem with two actively developing areas of personality psychology – the psychology of a change and the psychology of a possible. The variety of manifestations of personality self-determination, the complexity and uniqueness of this phenomenon necessitate the generalization of existing theoretical developments, ideas and concepts, as well as accumulated empirical material. Modern Russian authors formulate theoretical prerequisites for the study of self-determination in the framework of the subject-activity approach, however, providing empirical research, they are often based on the methodology of foreign colleagues. The originality of the present work consists in the search for new methodological foundations for the study of personality self-determination. **Theoretical justification.** The complexity and ambiguity of the phenomenon of self-determination enhance the differentiation of theoretical approaches to its description. The researchers focus on different levels of manifestations of self-determination: the nature-conditioned ability to self-organization and the innate need for autonomy of the individual, the processes of self-regulation of behavior and activity by the Subject, the mechanisms of the formation of subjectivity and the development of the Self, as well as personality's ways to realize a freedom and an intentionality. Along with a wide variety of theories and concepts, there is a deficiency of systemic and complex models. **Results.** The authors of the article first proposed the complementary model of self-determination, which allows to integrate existing theoretical approaches to research through a level-by-level consideration of individual's, subject's and personality characteristics. The basic level of spontaneous (functional) self-determination corresponds to the principles of self-organization of complex open non-equilibrium systems with a naturally conditioned ability to self-deterministic behavior. The second level of purposeful or "activity-based" self-determination demonstrates the role of conscious planning, volitional effort and conscious choice as a tool for achieving goals and self-regulation of the Subject. Finally, the third, highest level of meaningful self-determination describes the value and moral self-regulation associated with the implementation of meaningful choices. **Discussion.** The research presents a new look at the scientific problem of personality self-determination. The complementary model reflects a complex multilevel system of self-determination, the evolution of its mechanisms in the

process of ontogenesis from the basic psychological needs of the individual to the complex processes of meaningful self-determination of the personality.

**Keywords:** self-determination, personality, subjectivity, autonomy, free will, intentionality, self-organization, self-regulation, telosponding, meaningful choice

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## Introduction

Self-determination is a unique phenomenon that combines a humanistic view of human nature and its natural-scientific basis. The content of the term of self-determination, historically associated with the problem of “non-causal view of reality” (Mamardashvili, 1997, p. 546), directly unites the two most actively developing areas of personality psychology: the psychology of a change (Asmolov, 2018; Kostromina, 2019; Grishina, 2018; Martsinkovskaya, 2015, etc.) and the psychology of a possible (Leontiev, 2019; Znakov, 2022, etc.). The versatility of the manifestations of self-determination conditions the complexity and ambiguity of its description, the impossibility of limiting the understanding of self-determination exclusively to one approach or a single idea.

In the foreign psychological literature, the problem of self-determination has been actively developed since the late 70s of the twentieth century due to the revealed insufficiency of existing explanatory models of human behavior motivation, which the authors of the modern model of self-determination characterized as an “existential crisis of psychology” (Ryan, Soenens & Vansteenkiste, 2019). The most well-known works in the field of self-deterministic behavior research, in addition to the theory of E. Deci and R. Ryan, are currently the concepts of R. Harre (1983) and A. Bandura (1997).

The analysis of Russian works on the problem of self-determination shows their predominantly theoretical nature, which is associated with the complexity of the concept itself and methodological problems of its study (Averyanov, 2014; Gordeeva, 2010a, 2010b; Kostina, 2010; Kolotaev, Ulybina, 2012; Korneenkov, 2012; Popov, Balyмова, 2009; Pochtareva, 2015; Sapogova, 2011; Stepanova, 2017; Shadrin, 2012; Shatakhanov, Karina, 2015). In general, it should be recognized that despite the deep domestic traditions in the understanding of the Subject and subjectivity, founded by S. L. Rubinstein (1997, 2003, 2020), A. N. Leontiev (1975), L. S. Vygotsky (2005), B. F. Lomov (1984), A. V. Brushlinsky (1991, 2006), K. A. Abulkhanova-Slavskaya (2005), they are used as a theoretical justification of the phenomenon of self-determination, while the methodology of empirical research is based on the works of E. Deci and R. Ryan (Ryan & Deci, 2017; Sheldon & Prentice, 2019), which have a different ideology and approach to understanding a self-determination. In this inconsistency, there is a deep gap between the existing theoretical prerequisites in the study of self-determination in domestic psychology and the absence of a developed construct, as well as its own research methodology. As a consequence, in many modern Russian works, there is

common a reduction of the unique concept of self-determination, which has its own content and specificity, to other concepts, in particular, such as self-regulation, self-realization, self-actualization, self-definition, subjectivity, humanity, freedom of choice, self-improvement (Bolotova, Puretsky, 2015; Bohan et al., 2019; Galazhinsky, 2008; Rastorgueva, 2017, etc.). There are studies in which the concept of self-determination remains unrevealed, but it is concluded that it determines the level of autonomy in relation to the social environment, awareness and independence of choice (Kolotaev, Ulybina, 2012). This circumstance elicits a number of key questions for researchers that require a separate theoretical and methodological analysis of the essence of self-determination as a psychological phenomenon. Among them there are questions about the relationship between the concepts of subjectivity and self-determination, about the nature of self-determination, about its structure and the possibilities of operationalization, which we will try to answer in this article.

## **Theoretical justification**

### ***Scientific approaches to the study of personality self-determination***

In our opinion, the uniqueness of the phenomenon of personality self-determination is explained by its complex multilevel hierarchical structure and specific nature, integrating biological, social and individual-personality factors.

The origins of the domestic approach to the problem of self-determination are closely related to the idea of *subjectivity*, first identified in the works of S. L. Rubinstein, L. S. Vygotsky and A. N. Leontiev. The ability to feel like the initiator and owner of activity, which is aimed at changing the surrounding world and oneself, is defined as a key characteristic of a Subject. A. K. Osnitsky (2010) directly points out that self-determination is predicated by subjectivity, which in turn reflects the content-action characteristic of human activity. Continuing the tradition of A. V. Brushlinsky, E. A. Sergienko underlines the connection of subjectivity with the category of self-regulation (Sergienko, 2013). She considers subjectivity as a special way of self-regulation and self-organization of the personality, through which coordination and coherence of internal and external conditions, under which the implementation of activities is proceeding. The ideas of E. A. Sergienko and K. A. Abulkhanova-Slavskaya are consonant with the general theoretical ideas of V. A. Petrovsky (1996, 2013), who, when revealing the term of the Subject, refers to the concept of "free causality" (*causa sui*) and names it as the main characteristic of subjectivity. Developing the traditional idea of domestic psychology about the leading role of activity in the formation of human existence, D. A. Leontiev and V. I. Slobodchikov (1986) describe self-determination from the point of view of the personality resource of the Subject as the experience and realization of one's activity possibilities. Self-determination is considered by D. A. Leontiev as a mechanism for the formation of subjectivity and the realization of freedom (Leontiev, 2000).

However, we suppose that self-determination is not identical to the concept of subjectivity, and therefore its more complete definition implies the inclusion of both individual's and personality characteristics into the analysis. These characteristics are found in foreign theories and concepts describing various manifestations of self-determination and phenomena close to them in content.

*At the level of an individuum* included in the social environment, self-determination can be defined by interpreting the most popular and verified by numerous empirical studies self-determination theory by E. Deci and R. Ryan (Ryan & Deci, 2017; Amiot, Blanchard & Gaudreau, 2008; Altena, Boersma, Beijersbergen & Wolf, 2018; Bauer, King & Steger, 2019; Benita, 2020; Gomez-Baya & Lucia-Casademunt, 2018; Liu, Raza, Zhang, 2022; Sedikides, Ntoumanis, Sheldon, 2017). The crucial

thesis of the theory is that the tendency for self-determination and autonomous regulation of one's own behavior is a *biologically determined basic need* that has an innate nature, and various options for the realization of this need are mediated by the interaction of the individual with the surrounding social context (Deci & Ryan, 2008). The representation of various in content and complexity forms of motivation in a person is explained by the fact that the basic need for self-determination is coordinated with other innate needs – needs for competence and relatedness with people, as well as with other need-motivational or cognitive individual characteristics: cognitive evaluations of the situation, the tendency to organismic integration, the content of goals, causality orientation, relationships motivation (Ryan & Deci, 2020; Howard, Gagné & Bureau, 2017).

In contrast to the theory of E. Deci and R. Ryan, in a great number of other approaches, self-determination is not positioned as an independent object of research, however, the *personality phenomena* described in them can be considered as various forms of its manifestation.

Thus, the role of cognitive factors as driving attitudes of personality in the performance of self-determined behavior is emphasized in the concept of the locus of control by J. Rotter (Rotter, Chance & Phares, 1972; Brosschot, Gebhardt & Godaert, 1994) and A. Bandura's theory of self-efficacy (Bandura, 1997; Ansari & Khan, 2015; Azizli, Atkinson, Baughman & Giammarco, 2015). The authors associate the formation of these cognitive attitudes with the mechanism of internalization and the process of social learning, therefore, the nature of self-determination, according to the logic of this approach, is rather social, and not conditioned by innate basic needs.

Manifestations of self-determination can also be observed in the socio-culturally conditioned mechanism of Self-development, which is found in the expectations, goals, fears, hopes and aspirations of the personality, i.e., in the elements of the Self-concept directed to the future ("possible selves") (Nuttin, 2004; Markus & Nurius, 1986; Oyserman & James, 2009). In addition, the nature of self-determination can be explained by the dialogical structure of "I", which assumes the presence of relatively independent "I-positions", each of these formulates its own independent narrative and at the same time preserves the ability to communicate with others (Hermans, 1996, 2001; Hermans et al., 1992). In this context, self-determination correlates with the ability of a personality to "position" itself in a system of variable positions and "possible selves", as well as with the concept of meta-position, which describes the process of self-reflection and the height point for making independent decisions by a personality.

*The existential aspect* of self-determination is associated with the realization of personality freedom – a key category of being, manifested in a person's ability to understand that he is determined, and choose his attitude to what determines him, accept his own fate, despite the inevitability of death, and be ready for changes (Frankl, 1990; Harre, 1983, 2002; May, 1967). The opportunity to make a free choice, giving meaning to one's past experience and predicting the future, is based on a person's intentionality, which, at first sight, can be identified with the concept of subjectivity, since it defines the teleology of behavior, its conscious purpose aspect (Višak, 2017; Vazeou-Nieuwenhuis, Orehek, Scheier, 2017). However, according to R. May, intentionality can go beyond the conscious, manifest itself in spontaneity, bodily sensations, symbolic meanings and other phenomena related to the sphere of the unconscious (May, 1997). In other words, in framework of the existential approach, self-determination performs as a characteristic of the content of the inner world (personality characteristic), including spontaneous unconscious internal processes, as well as a form of realization of the inner world in the external plan, in behavior and activity (a characteristic of the Subject) (Sergienko, 2013).

As can be seen from the above examples, the authors consider concrete manifestations of the phenomenon of self-determination, which, in essence, can be attributed to *different levels of human organization* (individ's, subject's and personality characteristics). This circumstance enables to make an analogy with the level descriptions of other psychological phenomena, widely presented in Russian and foreign literature (Barsky, 2008; Grishina, Kostromina, Mironenko, 2018; Klochko, 2005; Krupnov, Novikova, Vorobyova, 2016; Baumert et al., 2017; Sosnowska et al., 2019, 2020; Strus & Ciecuch, 2017), and to illustrate the systematic approach with examples closely related to the personality self-determination.

In particular, V. S. Merlin developed a system model of «integral individuality», which is a hierarchical set of subsystems on different levels that are not included in each other and relatively autonomously coexisting: subsystems of individual properties of the organism, individual mental properties and socio-psychological individual properties (Dorfman, 2008; Merlin, 1980). There is significant statement in his theory about the *existence of different types of determination* in this system: on the one hand, there is a hierarchy of causal connections, according to which the properties of the lowest level are determinants of higher properties, and on the other hand, there is teleological determinism in the system – a focus on a certain useful result and following the internal goal of the system. A similar description of the mechanisms of regulation of human behavior is presented in the model of the desired future by N. A. Bernstein. According to the theory, the model of the desired future is the goal of the organism, directing motor activity of a high level of complexity and allowing to go beyond reactive behavior through regulation by complex functional motion control systems (Bernstein, 1966).

In the conception of a life path S. Buhler describes the processes of determination through a hierarchy of multidirectional basic human tendencies unfolding in the process of development. The model includes such elements as needs satisfaction, self-limiting for the purpose of adaptation to the environment, the desire for self-expression, achievements and creativity, the tendency to integrate and uphold the order of the inner world (Bühler & Allen, 1972; Bühler & Marschack, 1968). The stages of the life path identified by S. Buhler can be correlated with various levels of self-determination: needs satisfaction and adaptation to the environment are realized predominantly at the individuum level, the desire for activity, achievements and creativity can be considered as manifestations of subjectivity, and the integration of the inner world determines the highest, meaning level of the personality organization.

The idea of the levels' functioning of personality autonomy is also presented in the works of G. Allport, who distinguished between stable and "preservative" functional autonomy based on feedback mechanisms in the nervous system (the level of properties of individuum) and one's own "proprie" functional autonomy associated with acquired human interests, values, attitudes and intentions (personality level) (Allport, 2002).

The identity model of D. McAdams also describes different levels of personality: it includes a description of personality at the level of basic traits or dispositions that determine stable behavioral patterns, as well as at the level of individual motives, goals, schemes and values associated with the inclusion of a person in a social context (McAdams, 2008). As the third integrating level, D. McAdams describes the identity of a personality, defined by him as a subjective life story that integrates the past, present and future and gives meaning, direction and unity to a person's life (McAdams, 1996, 2009; Thorne & Latzke, 1996).

The reviewed system descriptions of psychological phenomena are closely related to the construct

of self-determination and provide reasons to suppose that combining various manifestations of personality self-determination in a level model will allow us to describe in greater detail the structure of self-determination as a complex and heterogeneous phenomenon, thereby expanding the possibilities for operationalization of this concept.

### ***Self-determination as a complex multidimensional phenomenon***

The general scientific view of the problem of self-determination, which has developed in modern literature, allows us to formulate several important conclusions. On the one hand, practically all authors concede the presence of biological bases (innate mechanisms) of self-determination. In foreign sources, this idea is maximally complete realized in the motivational theory of E. Deci and R. Ryan (Ryan & Deci, 2017), who describe self-determination in terms of basic psychological needs for autonomy, competence and relatedness. At the same time, D. A. Leontiev's critical remark (Leontiev, 2011) highlights the fact that this theory absents an answer to the main question: Why do people need autonomy and self-determination? What is their meaning? On the other hand, this aspect is quite completely revealed in the domestic literature, which actually identifies subjectivity and self-determination by recognizing the role of consciousness in the ability and readiness to make a choice, as well as in the meaning orientation of this choice. It's hard to disagree with the objective fact that in life decision-making and the transformation of possibilities into reality occur significantly more often in the process of awareness of life experience, and not due to the proceeding of innate mechanisms.

The existing contradiction, as we see it, is rather based not on the difference in theoretical views and methodological approaches (although they also take place), but on the variety of manifestations of self-determination, conditioned by the complexity of the phenomenon of personality itself. The variety of forms of self-determined behavior does not fit into the "Procrustean bed" of any one structural and functional localization and causes the question of the necessity of a level consideration of self-determined behavior (from the lowest – at the level of self-organization of individ's system, through volitional regulation – willpower and goal-setting, to the highest level – freedom of will and freedom of choice). Obviously, the different functional levels of personality comply with their own mechanisms of self-determination, which, because of the evolutionary changes of personality during a life (its development and complication), also develop and getting more complicated, complementing each other.

The ontological essence of personality determines the evolutionary processes of the differentiation of its structure, the development of new forms of behavior and the formation of a variety of functional mechanisms that determine human ways of interacting with reality. While at the beginning of its development the basic elements of self-determination are innate mechanisms of autonomous behavior of the system, as it develops, those come to the fore that are fixing in the experience of interaction with the environment and dialectically building up over the previous ones (mental over biological, meaningful over mental). At the same time, there is going on a reorganization of the elements of the personality system at lower levels, which are under the controlling influence of higher structures. This means that, like any other functional substructure, self-determination undergoes similar processes of complication and differentiation. Submitting to the principle of isomorphism, self-determination has an appropriate form and mechanisms of implementation in relation to the hierarchically organized architecture of the personality system. In other words, it continues to exist as an innate ability for autonomous behavior and

subject's activity, while more conscious forms of self-determined behavior are developing, such as self-management or self-change. In her time S. Buhler (Bühler & Marschack, 1968) said that a personality's life path is a way of realizing intentionality, which manifests itself in life choices that are not always recognized by a person. However, at higher levels, other forms of its realization emerge that are not directly connected with the biology of the individuum. Confronting with a problem in achieving a result, through trial and error, a person develops new forms (new actions) of self-determined behavior, which, if they are effective and meaningful, become anchored and serve as the basis for the birth of new forms and mechanisms of self-determination. Therefore, as a person matures and gains experience, forms of self-determined behavior grow and change, which complement previous ones at the expense of their value to the person's life functioning.

## Results

### ***Complementary model of self-determination: level-by-level description***

In essence, a processual understanding of self-determination (Kostromina, 2019; Moskvicheva et al., 2022; Kostromina et al., 2022) from the point of view of the evolution of complex open self-developing systems eliminates the existing contradiction in the understanding of self-determination as an innate or acquired (socially conditioned) personality trait. A level-by-level description of self-determination allows it to be described as a complementary model (fig. 1), revealing the complementary nature of different types of self-determination and emphasizing its transformation as the personality evolves through ontogenesis. At the same time, regardless of the level of description, the key conditions (or principles) for self-determined behavior persist. These include internal activity (subjectivity), long-term plasticity (ability to change and transform according to conditions) and freedom of choice (plurality, alternativity, redundancy).

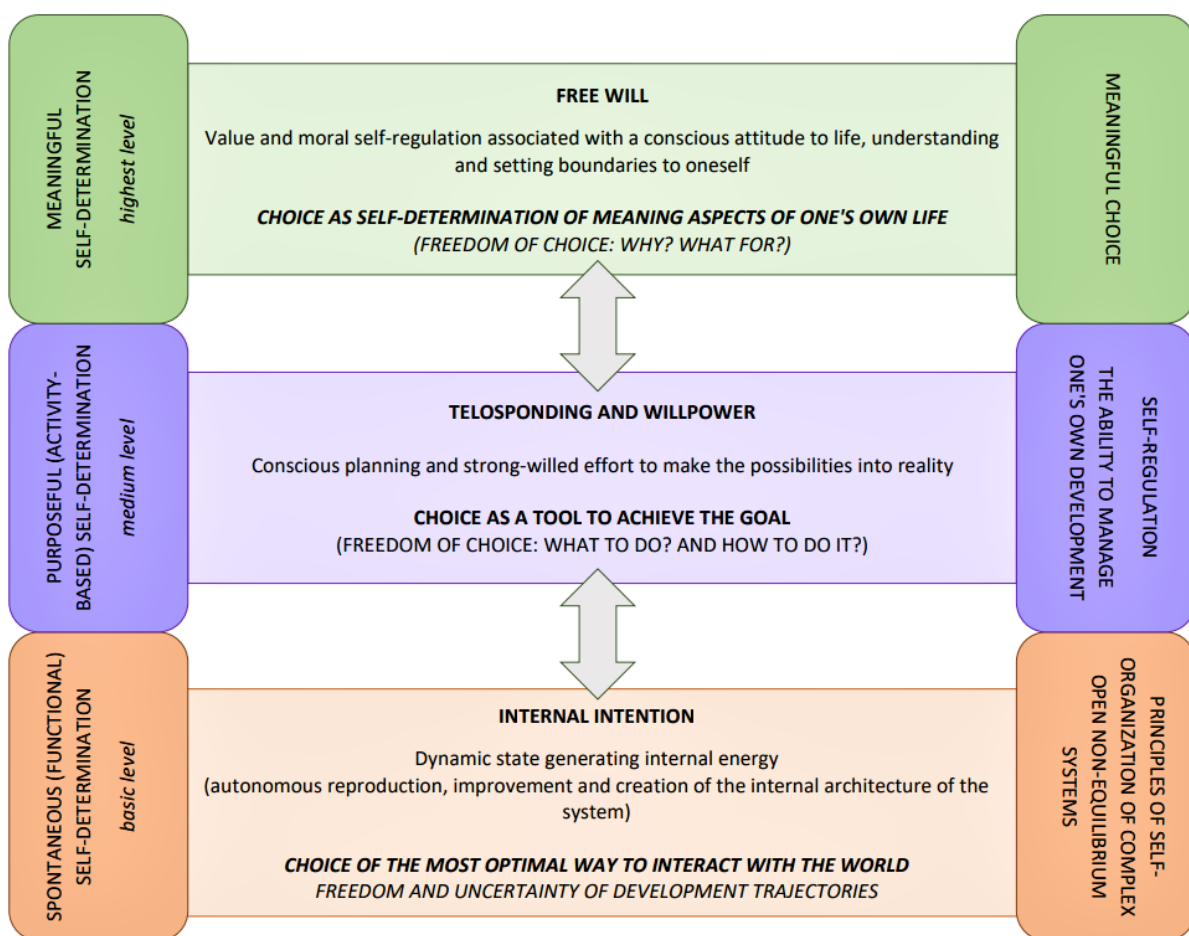
It should be admitted, that, from the idea of the innate nature of self-determination, there is the existence of a **basic (first) level** based on the principles of living systems characterized by their ability for self-organization and self-development. In such systems, on the basis of the immanent properties of structures and functions, the internal architecture is independently reproduced, refined and created without external control influences. The foundation for independent growth and change is the ability to **active life functioning (involvement)**, which determines expansion into the outside world (especially in the mature stages of development) and the **active exchange** of energy and information with the outside world (**openness**). Accordingly, choice at this level is realized in the evolutionary **mechanism of bifurcation** (Prigogine, 1991) – through the choice of the most efficient way of interacting with the world at the current moment in time, providing maximum adaptive effect. Thus, active behavior is not determined by an external stimulus, but by the discharging internal sources of energy accumulated within the system itself.

It is unlikely that at this level we can speak of a manifestation of subjectivity in the classical domestic understanding. In general, these are dynamic states associated with instability and the generation of internal energy. Disturbances in inner equilibrium due to external and internal influences are accompanied by an active energy emission in the form of thoughts, experiences and acts, and by the necessity to order the inner state. Henri Bergson used the metaphor of "creative impulse" to define the process, which is inherent in all living things and does not simply describe different directions of movement, but functions as a fulcrum for irreversible processes driving to the emergence of new structures, where systemic connections are self-established (Bergson, 2019). S. L. Rubinstein referred to this state as "being in change", as "going on" and

“constant motion” (Rubinstein, 1997). It is the “inner life” of a personality, where intentions and desires are generated, plans and images of the future are constructed, a dialogue with oneself is conducted, fluctuations in decision-making occur, past events are experienced and life experience is integrated (Rubinstein, 2003).

**Figure 1**

*Complementary model of personality self-determination*



Therefore, at the basic level, self-determination manifests itself in a special way. A naturally conditioned ability for self-development determines the internal generation and accumulation of energy, which is used to overcome various external and internal obstacles that appear in the way of realizing any goals or programs of activity. And the higher one's involvement in life, the more sensitive one is to various kinds of fluctuations, the more probably one is to form attractors providing the creation of a “space of freedom” – a “window of bifurcations” where a



range of multiple states is generated from which only one will be chosen. Hence, at this level self-determination and autonomy are necessitate in order to find out **the best way of interacting** with the surrounding reality, that is, the one which is most rational and functionally valuable for the current conditions. Self-determined behavior in this case reveals an aspiration for the future that prevails over reactivity. The internal energy initiates a vector of activity into the space of the future, displaces activity into the future, towards the achievement of the desired state. Based on the naturally conditioned ability for self-determined behavior of complex open non-equilibrium systems, the first basic level could be designated as **the level of spontaneous self-determination, self-determination as a natural given**.

Obviously, the self-determined human behavior cannot be explained **exclusively** by coincidence or by the spontaneous (analogous to mutation) emergence of structures. Beyond this explanation remains the idea of the authorship of life, the initiation, construction, maintenance and management of all kinds and forms of external and internal activity that aim to achieve the goals being built. In addition to experiencing emotions, person is able to monitor and regulate them, and in some cases struggle with them, without always being aware of these processes. The conscious activity of a Subject reveals self-determined behavior as a manifestation of purposeful actions of self-construction and self-management. "Telosponding" (Rychlak, 1984, P. 115–150) implies selection of the determinants of one's behavior as a choice of one's own actions in the space of the possible, where life activity manifests itself in the coordinates of the potential of self-realization and the result depends on the individual as a "doer".

The "activity" aspect of self-determination focuses on the fact that it is the individual who translates possibilities into reality. Only the individual can determine for oneself what one considers as opportunities, what one invests resources in, how one prioritizes. So, **the next (second) level** of self-determination (fig. 1) is directly related to the feeling that my behavior is chosen by me and not imposed by external forces. It is identified by one's ability to manage oneself. Freedom at this level is the freedom to choose what to do and how to do it. It is directly connected with self-awareness, the ability to interrupt the stimulus-response chain, to create a pause in which we can make conscious choices about our reaction (May, 2013). The important thing to note is that the self-determination of this level is largely conditioned by the characteristics of goal-directed activity, the belief in the possibility of changing what is there. The feeling of freedom and the belief in the ability to change or realize something exactly determine the degree of autonomy of the Subject, who is ready to determine one's own actions on the basis of desires and the meaningful goals, to enter into a system of conscious self-determination of one's own activity (Rychlak, 1979, 1981) That is, the "activity-based" nature of self-determination allows us to designate **the second level** as **the level of purposeful self-determination**, where **choice** is a tool for achieving a goal, where the degree of involvement of regulatory mechanisms, volitional and reflexive processes in self-determined behavior plays a crucial role. The "activity" aspect of self-determination emphasizes that it is only the individual oneself who translates possibilities into reality (Leontiev, 2019).

Finally, another aspect of self-determination is the value-semantic dimension of personality freedom. Saying that self-determination is a mechanism for the realization of freedom it would be unfair to limit freedom of choice to the phenomenologically experienced control over one's own behavior. E. Fromm (1990, 1992, 2012) points out that freedom is not a trait or disposition but an act of self-emancipation in the decision-making process. This is a dynamic, flowing state.

Freedom derives from the fundamental anthropological abilities of the individual for self-distancing (taking a position in relation to oneself) and self-transcendence (going beyond oneself as a given, getting over oneself). That is why one is free even in relation to oneself, free to rise above oneself, to go beyond oneself. It is the freedom from “being just that, the freedom to become another” (Harre, 1983, p. 94).

Therefore, **the highest (third) level of self-determined** behavior (fig. 1) is related to the special meaning aspects of one's own life: understanding and self-defining the limits of one's capabilities, a conscious attitude towards one's life, which is mediated by value-based (“what for?”, “why?”) self-management. The meaning aspect of freedom in this case becomes a “higher regulating instance” (Leontiev 1999, 2000), which allows the Subject to free itself from the determining influence of lower levels, to transcend them.

In order to make the transition, a person needs to be aware of what is happening, to be aware of the factors influencing behavior and of what is decisive in liberation from their influence. However, it is important to be aware not only of what is, but also of what is not yet there – to be aware of the possibilities and possible futures. So, the meaning essence of self-determination is an expression of free will, which consists in the awareness of one's own goals and desires; the forces and actions influencing them; the here-and-now possibilities and resources (external and internal) available to achieve goals and realize plans; the consequences that they entail; and in giving a value basis to choices, without which freedom loses all meaning. **Meaningful self-determination** is supported by the socio-cultural structures of human freedom (Lee, 1986), so the third meaning level of self-determination is a level of **value and moral regulation**, connected with the realization of free will and awareness of what choice I make and why. Its essence is primarily determined by setting boundaries for oneself.

It is important to highlight that the three described levels of self-determination are not mutually exclusive and should rather be considered as complementary substructures, which evolve during the personality development.

## Discission

The analysis of theoretical background for the research of personality self-determination has led us to conclude that this phenomenon is complex and multifaceted, and that its description is ambiguous. Self-determination is defined, on the one hand, as an innate basic need of the individuum (in the theory of E. Deci and R. Ryan) and, on the other hand, as a complex mechanism of subjectivity formation and a way of realizing personality freedom (D. A. Leontiev). The various manifestations of the phenomenon of human self-determination can be observed in everyday life at the level of motivation, self-regulation of behavior and activity, but they are also found when moving to a deeper existential level of personality analysis, when considering the essential aspects of human intentionality and freedom as a given of being. The presence of complex, varied and multi-level forms of self-determination is, from our point of view, conditioned by the processual nature of personality.

In most of the contemporary Russian academic works on the topic, there is a contradiction between the theoretical justifications offered by the authors for the phenomenon of self-determination and the chosen methodology of empirical research. Despite the wide variety of theories and concepts that explain the nature and mechanisms of self-determined behavior, we can currently state that there is no developed construct or comprehensive models of self-determination that

can serve as the basis for the creation of our own research methodology in domestic psychology.

The complementary model of self-determination that we propose allows to integrate existing theoretical approaches to the study of this phenomenon by level considering the system of individ's, subject's and personality characteristics.

### **Conclusion**

The evolution of self-determination mechanisms in the life process contributes to the development of more complicated forms of self-determined behavior. This suggests that self-determination is a cross-cutting process. Being an innate property of personality, it transforms into different forms during ontogenesis, ranging from the basic principles of functioning of a complex open self-organizing system and a set of basic psychological needs of the organism to complex processes of meaningful self-determination. In the process of complicating, developing and gaining experience of interaction with the environment, self-determination is transformed into a complex multi-level system of conscious attitude towards oneself and the world. From this perspective, the three levels of self-determination are a manifestation of the trinity of individuum, Subject and personality.

We can summarize the results of the theoretical analysis and modelling in the following highlights:

- self-determination is a multilevel dynamic system that provides energy, purposeful and meaningful activity for the personality and specifies the relative freedom in realizing one's own life aspirations;
- the complementary model of self-determination reveals the organization of self-determined human behavior on three main levels: as an individuum (spontaneous self-determination), as a Subject (purposeful or "activity-based" self-determination), and as a personality (meaningful self-determination);
- at the level of spontaneous self-determination there are the basic principles of existence of living systems, which indicate the ability to self-organization and self-development; at the "activity-based" level there are the volitional processes of self-regulation, which characterize the ability to manage oneself; the meaning level includes value and moral regulation.

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#### **Information about conflicts of interest**

The authors have no conflicts of interest to declare.