



## PERSONALITY PSYCHOLOGY

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### Temporal models of identity

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*There are discussed dynamic variants of identification processes. Being based on a model of normal and pathological variants of identification they distinguish three basic forms of a possible temporal vector: postfigurative, configurative and prefigurative. Their possible combinations, crossings and basic restrictions are described.*

**Key words:** *identification models, identity, identification disturbances.*

Realization of individual self-identification of the person besides the possibility of choice of certain models of behaviour, social and gender groups, belonging to values of either formal and informal cultural or subcultural associations [7, 17] should include conscious or unconscious temporal and dynamic characteristic of this choice. Whether the models for identification originate in the past, the future or the present? What is direction of their development: in the past, in the future or time dynamics is not provided at all? Whether this orientation eventually changes? This dynamic characteristic is extremely seldom discussed in the works devoted to a problematics of self-identification [22] though it represents one of the major qualities of this choice providing its persuasiveness, stability, legitimacy and internal consistency. Temporal factors of identification are basically discussed in the network of the problem of narrative identifications, its time coherence, possible trajectories, prospects, purposes and choices [15, 16, 18-21, 23, 24], or in a context of identification in conditions of instability, uncertainty and society transformation [1, 10, 9, 13]. Thus, as it seems to us, dynamic and vector characteristics of a choice of direction of a vector of temporal identity model remain not comprehended, though they are basic both for its content and structure.

A construction, close to the approach offered by us, was used by Margaret Mid in the network of the concept of intergenerational relations and mechanisms of culture transfer. Connecting relations between generations with the rate of social development and dominating type of family organization, M. Mid distinguished three types of cultures: a postfigurative where, first of all, children are taught by the ancestors; a configurative where both children and adults are taught by the contemporaries; and a prefigurative where adults are also taught by their children [6]. Though M. Mid does not say directly that either type of culture determines possibilities and ways of iden-



tification of a concrete representative of this culture, her model, with some additions, perfectly allows to do it.

If we extremely simplify the theory, it is possible to connect it, by analogy with a family, with key figures for each type of culture. In the postfigurative one as the sample of socio-cultural identity there were grandfathers, fathers, in the cofigurative - contemporaries are generators of dominating identity, and in the prefigurative - these are some abstract enough ideas.

The choice of a vector orientation can be defined by a number of factors: speed of development of real changes, necessity (inevitability) of adaptation to them, but from the psychological point of view as well it should be based on an intrasubject's experience of "truth" and "correctness" of this choice. It is this experience that provides subjective persuasiveness of an answer on the question on how much the person is capable to personalize a picture of the world and to find own place in it, that is to identify self, having answered the questions: where am I from, who am I, and where do I go? Abstracting an identification situation, in this case we would neglect an immediate character of choice which can be dictated by weakness or, on the contrary, by force, a concrete situation, a personal contact, benefit and so forth. We should consider it from the axiological points of view.

The first bifurcation point is connected with a relation to progress. The traditional one starts with the implicit representation about some "Golden Age" existing in the history of mankind which idea goes back to ancient myths about initial prosperity, about paradise lost by mankind and consequently any changes, if they contradict a former order, are evil, invincibly carrying us away from these best times. One thing is clear: with removal from the Golden Age there is an alternation of generations, regressing from gold to silver, copper and, at last, iron [4]. The alternative (progressive) position consists in the fact that as much "gold" and bright century is localized not in the past, but in the future. The arguments used by supporters of both points of view are basically distinguishable not enough. It is only a question of where on the time axis this "era of prosperity" should be placed. Really arguments of the traditional and progressive points of view are difficultly demonstrable, for they place ideal time in almost not verified chronotope. If to speak about the past it is localized in such subjectively far-off days that any attempt to challenge, considered as an attempt at precepts of ancestors, is not really verified. For supporters of disposition of happiness in the future the problem is even more facilitated, for its absence is not sufficient argument, it is always possible to believe that we have not reached the true future yet, just as Achilles cannot catch up with a turtle.

This binary opposition of positioning of the Golden Age, basically, can be added by the idea that it is in the present. However, there are much less supporters of the idea that God's own country belongs to the present, as, first, proceeding from ordinary experience and elementary common sense, it is impossible to say that there can be a lot of people satisfied in the present, and in the second, such view deprives mankind



of the desire something to change in the existing world for any changes would cause deterioration of a state of affairs.

If the past is selected as such model, whether it is mythologized in any way, it possesses basic for effective identity qualities of stability and trustfulness by the time: our great ancestors "owned the world", "have created the whole culture" and so forth. The model for identification is already created, the greatest that is required from the person who has chosen it is the maximum sequence and severity of observance of the settled rules. The prefigurative model often possesses an advantage of individual attractiveness of our own childhood which not always was intolerable. Infantile feeling of safety, low individual responsibility give to it qualities of an "individual paradise" to which it would be desirable to return. "Cherry orchard" and "Obломovka" are the exact literary analogues of the idealized relation to the past [5, 11]. This rather comfortable model, first of all, is based on the most eldest part of population as according to its logic, the elder is person, the more value he possesses, and every young man, if he is unhappy in the present, has possibility to get the advantages in the future grow old.

But abstract evidence and attractiveness of the prefigurative model become complicated at its concrete realization. If it is written off from own family history everything remains more or less clear, if it is a question of a national or cultural history there is a number of not cleared moments. In this case there is a question on what concrete temporal model it is necessary to follow? After all history is also dynamical if, for example, to speak about Russian history it is not clear what is necessary to choose as a correct reference point: the pagan or Christian period, Kievan Russia, the Vladimiro-Suzdal or Moscow principedom, the pre-Peter or post-Peter time, pre-revolutionary or post-revolutionary Russia? Choice of the prefigurative identification model usually demands reconstruction (or mythologizing) of the history and creation of a pantheon of heroes with whom and without excessive "damned" questions it is possible to identify self. The reality of the considered events in this case is not basic. Some cultures are lucky enough, they have artefacts, apologizing their history, for the others, less successful, it is necessary to invent, forge them, exercising in the acrobatic argument of participation in "heroic acts". The logic of identification is frequently based on obviously false premises, and as from the lie there can follow anything you like, the identification process will be carried out faultlessly, but the result appears ephemeral and fragile. For the purpose of acknowledgement of superiority of either model of identification, chosen and arisen in either conditions of the present, the whole previous history can be suddenly rewritten and interpreted in such various ways that at times it is easier to answer the a question: "Whether there was a life on Mars?", than to find reference points in the past and to establish connection with them, especially if any true about it either is excluded, or deformed in streams of circulating information. "The whole our reality, including tragic events of the past, has passed through mass media" [3, p. 134].

The second vulnerable moment of the prefigurative model is the implicit assumption of its attraction to all members of society though if to identify self, for example,



with pre-reform Russia, it is necessary to solve a choice question: with whom, actually, we are going to be identified - with serfs or landowners? This model remains steady in societies with a subjective acceptability and sensation of justice of existence of strata, castes or classes. At destruction of this sensation, absence or insufficiency of the social lifts, allowing to move within the very prefigurative model, becomes a source of revolutions or the reforms calling into question its existence. This is a patrimonial imperfection of the prefigurative model: putting invariance in a basis of the functioning, it automatically generates a quantity of persons dissatisfied in their place in this invariance and aspiring to reform it. In a steady kind it exists in rare cultural isolatings, having possibility to minimize communication with the changing world.

More often it is a question of dynamic variant which it would be possible to name "forward in the past". The prefigurative model of identity is actualized in a situation of loss of reference points of the present and anxiety concerning the not clear future. In this situation there is a splash of traditionalism as the prefigurative model is perceived by ordinary consciousness as the most safe. The church role has sharply increased in Post-Soviet Russia, enormous success there had various "meetings of noble family", "historical" renaming of streets, squares, use of pre-revolutionary spelling and stylistics in registration of various names in a genre "Russia that we have lost". Even at most emblematic places, such as the Kremlin or the Bolshoi theatre, the pre-revolutionary attributes were restored. In some way it has changed a situation, but gave a sensation of the filled vacuum of identification and some "back" development or rewriting of not quite comprehensible part of history.

It is rather difficult to find the absolutely consistent model of temporal identification in modern society. More often we deal with the "fragmentary" or "mixed" vectors of directions of search of self-identity. Passing to real processes of identification, it is possible to face cases of paradoxical mixture of models of the past, the present and the future in which there are subjectively and consistently combined formally logically incompatible reference points. Traditional orientation at a level of practical realization can use the most perfect technologies of its embodiment or acknowledgment. So, it is possible to result examples of use of the most modern technologies, such as the radio carbon method applied to artefacts' documenting which should verify conformity of the mythological history to the real, as examples here can be the Turin shroud, writings on birch bark, mummies, etc.

The other illustration of the ambivalent interpenetration of models of identities of the past and the future is a new splash in distribution in the countries with dominating Islamic culture of the ideology directed on statement of fundamentalist ideals, based on firmness of traditions of the past and total protection from alien cultural influences. It would seem, where is the contradiction here? The people of traditional East do not want to change the way of life and thought, despite influence of the modernism of culture of the western type. But not everything is unequivocal - into environment of the oriental culture there have already rather deeply penetrated the technologies produced in conditions of another temporal model of identity, focused



on the future, and inherently alien and even harmful to the forms of identification funded on the past. So in due time Bedouins have been supplied by Kalashnikov's, and Talibs were financially and technically supported by the known parties of the cold war. Today technologically developed West world has shared the Internet with East, has equipped it with mobile communication, has taught to build the highest in the world skyscrapers, and the whole of this is in hope of achievement of the technological, and then the ideological consensus. Europeans have created new environment for enough and long termed identical people, thus, not always understanding that any introduced improvement interferes into integrity of their being. Cars, automatic machines, technologies of the atoms for peace, rockets "Stinger", computers, mobile phones, and then the Internet have made something that liberal Europe could not expect.

To this it is necessary to add the fact that a number of the Islamic countries most influential for today by the unexpected development are obliged, although it is paradoxical, to the very Western civilization which has supplied the third world by financial resources, the modern weapon and the newest technologies. Focused on constant growth of manufacture the developed industrial society demanded more and more power resources which have been found, as a matter of fact, in countries of Middle East remaining on the level of medieval development. Oil has given to Islam cradle unprecedented money, and just in time. Becoming unexpected power donors of Western world a number of the states simultaneously have appeared generators of the forces focused on their statement at a new qualitative level of the identity model, the fundamentalist model based on the past. There has appeared an environment in which conditions there are generated completely identical, not having any doubts in their correctness people capable for the sake of preservation of the casually found privileges, having used the unexpectedly received technologies, to destroy Western society, infinitely experiencing the identity crisis, that have their raised. Thereupon it is possible to remember the words of M. Mid – "absence of doubts and absence of sensibleness are the key for preservation of any postfigurative culture. Frequency with which the postfigurative styles of cultures are restored after the periods of mutinies and revolutions, consciously directed against them, specifies that this form of culture remains, partially, at least, as accessible to the modern person, as it was to his ancestors thousand years ago" [6]. In this case it is a question of the fact that, despite the revolutionary on the spirit and scale Western world influence, Islamic culture in its radical, fundamentalist directions does not lose, but also strengthens its postfigurativeness, actively using all advantages of the technologies received from the prefigurative culture.

According to M. Mid the cofigurative culture is connected with a situation of fast changes when experience of ancestors cannot serve as a model for imitation, and it is replaced by orientations to contemporaries. In our understanding the cofigurative identification model is a situation when the present is necessary for preserving. Patrimonial weakness of this model is in that the present is fully probably possible only



as a rather short moment, dynamically it does not exist, and it inevitably moves either in the past, or should be supported in the future in special way. In the norm the configurative identity is peculiar to teenagers whose orientation to a subcultural circle allows them to feel mutual support concerning the world of adults, providing feeling of collective safety and respect for their values at collision with the world of adults [2]. Though the teenage period quickly comes to the end, in the pathological form such form of identity can turn into unwillingness of growing, eternal adolescence or even eternal childhood with its attributes in the form of aspiration to observance of a youth fashion, basic infantilism, leaving from inclusion in normal socialization through signing the songs composed by a singer poet, never-ending games, Peter Pen's syndrome, a phenomenon of "kidalts" – adult children, wishing to get advantages of adults without their responsibility.

One of variants of such identity they can consider hedonism, with its aspiration to put pleasure of the present over necessity to refuse momentary pleasures for the sake of not clear future or uninteresting past: "Stop a moment, it is wonderful". Such identification was peculiar to the epoch of "hippie" of the 60<sup>th</sup> years which essence of world outlook was reduced to negation of bourgeois values of the previous epoch, refusal of their reproduction in the future and fixing on the lacunar identification form in the present. Hippies did not want to be entered into modern society, creating in it an original isolate with values and subculture which rather satisfied them. Original experience was only the experience directly existing in this isolate, however the natural course of time has led to washing out of this value. The psychological trap of the configurative identity also consists in the fact that it deprives the person of one of basic stimulus of his individual development: voluntary regulation and refusal of momentary pleasures for the sake of achievement of the perspective purposes. Voluntary regulation has the sense only if there is a representation about time and life prospect.

The special variant of the configurativeness is peculiar to postrevolutionary situations as a certain "changes fatigue". In this case it is necessary by all means, even most fragile and far from being ideal, to preserve stability in order to avoid any social shock. As a result the society appears plunged into the stagnation status, which for a long time is gratefully accepted by citizens as peaceful, not absolutely rich, but quiet life. The problem consists in that despite all reasonable efforts of both the power and the majority of population on keeping the stability of the present, the configurative model of identification developed by them implicitly comprises an inevitable trap in itself. The internal logic of development, anyhow, generates contradictions in the illusory firm world, and in a flash apparently indestructible political modes fall down as colossuses on clay feet. Before our eyes there collapsed configurative Middle East societies when revolutions, for example in Tunis, have been inspired by accumulation in population of the persons dissatisfied in possibilities of self-realization in narrow frameworks of a rigid society, being not ready to give the expected future to them.

It is possible to result a lot of examples of crashes of configurative political models (now for this purpose one may simply switch on a news TV channel and wait



the reporting on the next victim of the pan-Arabic revolution), but there is something common, something that unites them. If to trace the history of formation of actually any power of the configurative type we find out that its sources have other vector orientation – postfigurative. Before turning to “patriarchs” on a decline of their autumn, the grown old leaders were once the revolutionaries dreaming not about preservation of the won past (or the personal privileges), but about the future prosperity of the people. Being in a state of eternal fights for the future is replaced by the changes fatigue, as a result there come stability times in which in the paradoxical way the former revolutionary heroes become governors of the world, supreme commanders in chief and, finally, owners of national riches. The classical example of the “configurateness celebration” represents the Brezhnev’s stagnation when the party nomenclature living its last years in any way interfered with any attempts of decision of the urgent social problems. Thereupon it is instructive the history of Cuba where prefigurative revolution fire has gone out in the hearth of the stable poverty of the Cuban people conducted by ideas of the constant Com-mandant Castro.

The configurative identification has in itself one more serious form of “social pathology”, strengthening splitting of the society from the point of view of motivation of representatives of various strata layers and formation of “lacunar” interests. Extremely aggravating, it can be described as the society’s division into those who “does not want to lose what they possess” and on those “who have nothing to lose” in a present situation. To status or mercantile interests of “those who have something to lose” there corresponds aspiration to preservation of the status quo which they impose on the whole society in various ways, the more so because they have various possibilities for this purpose. Towards the society they start to broadcast statements that changes can break a “fragile social balance”, “they never swap horses while crossing the stream”, on invaluable experience of any “political heavyweights”.

Within our memory there was a radical transformation of aspirations of yesterday’s revolutionaries to changes which “our hearts demand”, to stability at any cost. Intuitively or consciously they understand that the future is always the Pandora’s Box which does not need to be opened. They perfectly understand an essence of the statement of Danton that revolution opens hundred thousand vacancies. But even better they understand that these vacancies can be opened at the expense of their life – the revolution devours its children (P.Vernio), liberating places for new candidates for the bright tomorrow. At an ordinary level it was realized, for example, in the following: in the first years of Post-Soviet Russia the accepted decisions and laws on restriction of terms of selectivity, age limits for employment of administrative posts have appeared not even cancelled, but magically forgotten. Having reached the top, any person wants to cancel or minimize possibilities of his evacuation from own heights. In these lacunas of identification there is an original feeling of comradeship, mutual support, the same pack of a personnel is shuffled for each fragmentary culture should provide a sensation of security for its recruits. In society



there is a latent or obvious opposition of the lacunar identity based on private interests and motivation, and the national and cultural identity, especially when the last experiences crisis. In an extreme form such variant of configurative identification is expressed in the words, attributed to the marquise de Pompadour: "after us the deluge!" However, it is possible to remind how everything has ended. The lacunar configurative identity, based on interests, blocks social lifts not worse, than the prefigurative one, and, in this sense, being transposed in the past (preservation of already created position), it also creates new classes, castes and striations already submitting to postfigurative laws. Even if it continues to articulate itself as the prefigurative one, in this case more likely the future often appears as the personal project of the improved present. L. Shevtsova during the analysis of the logic of decline of Post-Soviet Russia as one of basic factors also marks an unwillingness of change of the status quo by the ruling elite which takes charge of preservation of own position or is afraid of its possible deterioration [Shevtsova 2011]. But this unwillingness should be considered not as a special case of pursuit of interests, but as a necessary consequence of choice of the configurative identification model.

It is interesting that it is the configurative model that appears the most vulnerable for revolutionary changes, possible because unlike the prefigurative one its legitimization is rather unstable. For ordinary consciousness it is more clear why it is necessary to keep the great past the more so because nobody of the living representatives haven't seen how to prove welfare of preservation of the present, which defects everyone can personally feel.

At the first sight, the most simple situation arises when the future becomes a registration target. Here there are no problems, it is opened, everything is possible in it, there are no restrictions for imagination which face the supporters of substantiation of own origin from mythical gods. Orientation to the modernist style in a wide, world outlook sense of this word, is accompanied by depreciation of the last epochs, everything from monuments of culture to morals becomes unnecessary. The Middle Ages and Renaissance attitude rather easily to destruction of the antique heritage understood as barbarity and paganism: architectural monuments either stayed in oblivion, or collapsed for use as a building material. The present or the future in the modernistic ideology always possess an invariable primacy before the past - so, to please ideal plans, at first for the sake of the statement of force and glory of religion, and then for realization of the idea of progress ancient cities were passionlessly destroyed. The prefigurative model in its ideal embodiment always generates the destructive relation to a heritage of the "alien" past.

The basic fatal property of the identity model, focused only on the future, is that on its very essence should be its advantage – constant variability, orientation on something that "doesn't exist". Each subsequent model possesses an advantage before the previous since it is newer, technological and perfect. It seems to us, that this immanent property of the identification model, focused on the future, makes its essentially vulnerable and does not allow to create the steady context necessary for formation





of real, consistent, effective self-identification. Its vulnerability is localized in several points. If the person is not equal to himself and represents only the open project of the possible future there is a basic and unsolvable problem of his unrealizability. I am not who I am, but who I can be. Moreover, absence of possibilities of the present to be realized in the future, as a matter of fact if does not depreciate, than calls into question the sense of the past. The similar turn certainly opens possibilities for infinite changes, but it does not leave a place for their fixing and the person turns into an original "rolling stone" (in the worst variant - into the zombie, manipulated person), he cannot and should not be fixed in some point, after all it becomes his death moment. The future can exist only as the open form, as not yet carried out. To find the future means to die.

The second critical property concerns not a concrete person, but the relationship between the person and previous generations. Orientation to the future assumes levelling and depreciation of the whole preceded this person. Roughly his unique function is like a speeding up rocket block – to place in orbit and to fall away. But if it is so each generation should invent and find own forms of identity in the illusory and never coming future, turning into a self-reproducing fiction. To the future, if not to make it similar to a turtle unattainable by Achilles, it is also inherit to be transformed at first into the present, and then into the past getting their restrictions. If it is considered as a phantom which always is behind a horizon line, sooner or later it starts to affect an attractiveness of the prefigurative model, anyway, in a context of temporary restrictions of human life.

In the network of the cofigurative model there is a rupture in society, in conditions of the prefigurative one it starts to divide generations. For youth refusal from prefigurative model is a form of motivation pathology, for older persons is a normal form of dynamic identity if their prefigurative model does not start to be transposed on children and grandsons. The process of constant technological renovation and acceleration of change of images, styles, world-view models leads to change of the "generation" concept. If in societies of the postfigurative type the generation concept could be extended through rather solid time period - the changes distinguishing fathers, grandfathers and great-grandfathers practically were not observed, in the cofigurative model - the generation actually coincides with the period of human life yet, in the prefigurative type of cultural identification it is observed its subdivision in fragments of generations in the network of the period of human life. In view of prompt change of information society even the difference in 10 years leads to intragenerational ruptures. So for the born in the seventies of the last century it becomes rather difficult to find common language with the born later on a couple of years – thus much there changes the cultural, technological, aesthetic environment surrounding them.

Besides, the prefigurative model is always abstract, and here it loses in concreteness and material evidence of the postfigurative or the cofigurative one. At rather limited intervals of time the prefigurative cultural and personal identi-



cation is capable to organize great masses to whom they promise a possibility to "become everything from nothing", but the further they remove the realization of the project of general happiness, the more it loses its organizing force. We remember (the XXI century generations do not remember) the promises that "the present generation of the Soviet people will live at communism", and each family "in a separate apartment". These is absence of real changes that leads to disappointment in the prefigurative identity model, is quite possible the variant of replacement of one prefigurative model by another, when, for example, the communism is under construction, and then "back to the future", to capitalism, becomes the future purpose, and yet it is not the fact that this is a definitively chosen direction. The future, what it would not be promised, always has in itself a sensation of disproportion with the localized chronotope of human life. "Life, love, libraries have no future" [8, p. 537].

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Three ways of the culture identification offered by M. Mid and interpreted by us in other aspect remain no more than idealized models, but even from an abstract consideration of temporal vectors of development of society there can be drawn quite concrete conclusions. Neither of the post-, co-, and pre-figurative models can be chosen as the exclusive. Any detailed analysis shows that each of them has own "skeleton in the cupboard", there is only a question of its integrity and "viability". Despite the guarantees of stability of social order funded by values leaving in centuries, as the history shows, orientation to the past is always finished by traditional civilization's full leaving from a historical - though it is necessary to recognize a historic fact - span of life of the prefigurative cultures surpasses the others. Whatever the past is represented by us, we are assured that at least it has existed, and in this it is already found a guarantee of some reference point. As to an opposite orientation, the choice of the future as the sample, defining sense of the present and eliminating the past, involves not only external, but also internal rupture in identity structure. The future is rather ephemeral substance; it can simply happen (or not happen) not in that form which we expected both objectively, and subjectively, therefore prefigurativeness implicitly has in itself an existential fear of disappointment, loss of a real point of support. And, at last, the most disturbing in our opinion, the identification model is connected with, apparently, the most clear and close interval of time, the present. What dangers are hidden in it? The trap of suddenly found here and now "stable" identity causes defensible desires by all means to keep a level of "happiness", "freedom", "prosperity", and "calmness" as the main thing. It doesn't anymore concern the prosperity bases in the past; it has already been recognized as unfounded and incriminated to please the future changes. As well as continuation of changes becomes not necessary - they can destroy stability of an "excellent today". The cofigurative world appears attractive enough, but illusive in practice, absolutely



unstable in time, fragile, as “the stopped moment” which is doomed to be between ruthless millstones of the past and the future which existence its apologists refuse to recognize up to the fatal end.

In the modern reality the described ideal types of the identification figures are not often met, we live in the world of mosaic and at times paradoxical mixture of fragments of temporal modus of which there are made cobwebs of the present. Achievement of harmony of presence of the past, the present and the future in life of both the individual, and the society in whole, perhaps, is the best variant to avoid the “metastases of false identity” in conditions of such an unstable present.

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