RELATIONS BETWEEN IDENTITY AND TEMPORAL ORIENTATION IN ADOLESCENCE

In Erikson’s view, formation of a relatively stable identity and conception of one’s own future is the specific developmental task in adolescence. Erikson’s theory and Marcia’s conception of the identity status give an interesting basis for construction of two models of development of this relation and its changes in lifetime.

**Keywords:** adolescence, identity, future orientation, temporal orientation, development of identity.

**Introduction**

Erik Erikson emphasizes the central role of emergence of the sense of identity in human development (between 13 and 18 years of life). But identity is not fully created at the end of adolescence, but this process of creation continues through adulthood. Process of creation of identity requires from young individual to recognize the sense of self and adapt it to pubertal changes, make occupational choice, achieve sexual identity, and search for new values (Bee, 1994).

Successful transition of a young person from the period of adolescence to early adulthood requires the knowledge of oneself and the surrounding external reality. The conception of oneself and one’s future emerges from the collision between the developmental potential of the individual with the developmental context, actual possibilities and restrictions perceived and anticipated. These two constructs play an important role in regulation of person’s activity in life and this role is particularly expressed in adolescence and early adulthood.

**Development of identity in the period of adolescence**

According to Erikson’s theory (1968, 2004), a growing up individual faces a dilemma of identity and confusion of roles, and a positive solution of this dilemma is a symptom of having reached a preliminary internal integration. A young person defines his / her identity, including the sexual and professional identity, through the choice of certain social roles. This process requires the consolidation and re-evaluation of the experience from earlier developmental periods and a new definition of one’s position associated with the other age groups.

The awareness of having reached one’s identity provides one with the sense of psychological comfort and one’s stability and continuity despite the flow of time, changes in one’s psyche and organism and changes in the external world (Obuchowska, 1996). The formation of identity understood as mentioned above and its significance for the individual requires integration of three temporal dimensions: the perceived current situation, incorporation of past experience (images) in the current context and anticipations about the future, similarly as formation of temporal orientation. In the current study, we assume that the temporal orientation is the inner structure responsible for cognitive, affective and evaluative absorption of the subject’s experience that is a representation of past events and anticipated future events in a certain time sequence (Liberska, 2004, 2009). The category of time is a common element essential for identity and temporal orientation. This relation between the identity of the subject and its temporal orientation, in particular with respect to the orientation towards future and the period of adolescence, needs explanation. In this article we will concentrate on the model of relationship between these two phenomena rooted in the Erikson’s concept of psychosocial development (Erikson, 1968): Marcia’s statuses of identity (Marcia, 1980) and Nurmi’s concept of future orientation (Nurmi, 1991).

**Integration and reintegration of ego in Erikson’s theory**

Adolescence is characterized as a time between childhood and adulthood. At this time, the old identity (I am a child) has to change, rebuild or be replaced by the new identity (I am an adult). It involves two processes: reintegration and integration.

Analysis of the types of ego integration distinguished by Erikson (1968), taking into account the properties of boundaries between “self” and “non-self”, specific features of individual experience (homogeneity and heterogeneity) and features of the system of values (generally assumed as the most important structure of the human psyche from the viewpoint of behaviour control) (see: Piaget, Inhelder, 1970, Liberska, 2007, Oleszkowicz, Senejko, 2013), makes it possible to distinguish three types of identity: foreclosed, diffusion and achieved.

The diffusion identity is characterized by unstable structure related to the lack of clear boundaries between...
“self” and “non-self”. Its experience is scattered, selective, poorly structured and often confused. The system of values is labile and devoid of the central value. As a consequence, the individual showing this type of identity has problems in correct evaluation of events and thus is susceptible to external influence and his/her behaviour is characterised by changeability and irresoluteness. Such a person is easily susceptible to manipulation. According to some authors, this fact explains the observed fear of close social relations suffered by the persons of the diffusion type of identity (Brzezińska, 2000).

The foreclosed identity is characterized by a stable, compact and relatively stiff structure centred about the well-crystallised system of values of clear hierarchy. It is difficult to transform because of the limited flow of information through the strong and well-defined boundaries between “self” and “non-self”. The individual with such an identity reveals behaviour aimed at protection of status quo – as the information contradictory to the centre does not pass through the borders of ego or is rejected as contradictory to the experience and hierarchy of values. In relatively stable conditions, the individual with this type of identity can be very effective, in particular in solving closed or schematic problems. In social relations, he/she is principal. When meeting persons of different opinions he/she reacts either by withdrawal or with aggression. Development of this type of identity is fostered by very strong positive relations between the child and the parent who is an authority for him/her (Liberska, 2007).

The achieved identity is characterized by relatively stable and coherent structure. The boundaries between “self” and “non-self” are defined but not quite closed so that the individual is able to continue to enrich his/her experience in new contents, including the contents differing from the earlier ones. This type of identity is open to new situations and new challenges. The system of values is relatively stable and includes well-defined central value. The process of creation of the achieved identity is supported by warm atmosphere in family (Liberska, 2006). Unfortunately, lack of emotional engagement in parents may block the construction of adolescents’ identity.

Developmental changes lead from the diffusion type of identity through the foreclosed one and moratorium one to the achieved identity (Turner, Helms, 1999). In the contemporary processual approaches to this problem, it is emphasised that identity can be developed during whole life. Psychologists distinguish three ways of development of identity: progressive, regressive and stagnant, however, only progressive changes within the identity structure provide increasing sense of identity and effective socialisation of a new generation (Nurmi, 1991). The effective socialisation is expressed by incorporation of aims and tasks specific to a given culture and external expectations into the idea of oneself and future development of one’s own personality. It should be emphasised that the cultural context influences all aspects of human development, including identity (see: Lewin, 1939, Laursen, Williams, 2002).

The period particularly important for integration of the identity structure is the moratorium, which is a biologically and culturally programmed delay of passing from childhood into adulthood (Erikson, 1968, Brzezińska, 2000). This delay gives the temporal and psychological space needed by young person for understanding of his/her own possibilities, interests, ideals and ecological context for making decisions about one’s life and future that are optimal at a given moment of development (Liberska, 2007a). The moment of taking the first decisions that are important for future life marks taking responsibility for oneself.

The lack of example of an adult person (a man or a woman) and clear and well understood patterns of behaviour, conflicts and cold emotional climate in the family, dynamic and radical changes in the socio-economical context (revolution of informatics, spectacular acts of terror, etc.) lead to the sense of insecurity and disturb the processes of identity development (Obuchowska, 2000) and formation of temporal future orientation (Artar, 2002). In such developmental conditions, the structure of identity is not integrated but confused and the activity directed to future is restricted to the present; or even the activity is concentrated on the past. In particularly adverse types of developmental context, stimulating the values, social roles and tasks that the adolescent is not able to accept and interiorise, the inner emptiness and alienation appear. The errors in socialization may lead the young person to the aims that are not acceptable in a particular culture and thus trigger the development of negative identity. Consequently, the young person can form the future orientation that does not take into account the normative events peculiar to the culture.

Contemporary researchers have pointed out at many worrying changes in processes of identity development and temporal orientation and their effects, for instance those related to radical transformations in the living context (Malmberg, Trempala, 1999, Liberska, 2002, 2008, Giddens, 2006, Straś-Romanowska, 2007). Also, the necessity of taking into account the intercultural changes in investigation on identity development has been emphasized (Dymkowski, 2007).

Status of identity as a result of exploration and commitment

Focus of Eriksons’ theory at dilemma of identity vs role confusion has been very influential (Bee, 1994). Starting from the ideas of Erikson on the types of ego integration, Marcia (1966, 1980) distinguished two stages of identity development: exploration and commitment, and according to the strength of exploration processes and content of commitment, he identified four statuses of identity: diffusion, foreclosure, moratorium and the achieved one (Fig.1). To achieve a full identity that is expressed as identity achievement status, young men or woman “…must move through a crisis, in which goals and values are examined, and arrive at a commitment to a particular role or set of values.” (H. Bee, 1994, p. 30).
Exploration permits a young person to recognize and test his/her abilities and interests and evaluate the present offers of the external world.

| Degree of commitment to a particular role and values | Degree of crisis          | Low |
|------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| High                                                 | Identity achievement status | Foreclosure status |
| High                                                 | Crisis is over              |                |
| Low                                                  | Moratorium status           | Identity diffusion status |
|                                                      | Midst of crisis             |                |

Fig. 1. The four identity statuses by Marcia (1980)

At this stage, the activity of an adolescent is concentrated on trying many new roles (sexual, professional, family and civic), testing ideas, religious systems, political systems, social relations, etc. A young individual is forming his/her beliefs. The adolescent tests different alternative conceptions of him/herself (Turner, Helms, 1999). Next, on the basis of experience from the preceding stage, the young person chooses the alternatives and sets a certain level of engagement in particular tasks and roles. It is related to feeling of responsibility for oneself. At the moment when an individual becomes capable of making choices, which takes place at the moment of development that is difficult to grasp, which means he/she becomes capable of making projections of oneself for the future, of creating the future and since that time he/she takes responsibility for further development.

The adolescent who does not take up exploration as he/she does not feel the pressure form society or from his/her own organism or does not have possibilities of free search has the status of a diffusion identity. Such a young person is limited to his/her past and present. His/her activity is directed to running after temporary pleasures. Such persons are not able to define themselves as they did not make the effort to recognize their developmental potential, the possibilities of their own development in the actual reality or in the potential reality. A consequence of not taking up the key task of adolescence is the rise of the sense of helplessness and loss. In the case of this group, we can’t expect a successful transition to adulthood.

An adolescent who decided to take over the responsibilities from authorities and did not take up independent exploration has the identity status of foreclosure. This way of identity construction, with the first stage passed over, is related to low personal cost, does not involve reflection, protects the young person to a high degree against the experience of dilemmas related to the search for the conception of oneself. However, the gained sense of security related to the fact that one is at least partly released from taking responsibility for one’s decisions, can prove illusory, if failures appear in realization of this conception of oneself foreclosed from a person of authority. Strict adherence to such foreclosed conception of oneself closes the chances for autonomous development and taking full responsibility for oneself and one’s family. Consequently, the conceptions of development of self and creativity can hardly refer to such a person.

The identity of a young person who is in the process of testing his/her own potential and chances of development offered by the environment does not feel ready for making specific choices, and has the status of moratorium. Such a person is not able to construct a conception of one’s life in a longer time perspective or to take responsibility for his/her further development. According to results of relevant studies, the economic and political transformation at the turn of the 20th and 21st centuries has significantly extended the phase of moratorium (Liberska, 2007a, Liberska, 2009).

If an adolescent has shaped his/her identity passing through the stage of exploration, then through the stage of taking responsibility and moratorium, his/her identity has the status of the achieved identity. Conducive to reaching this status is a harmonious atmosphere at home, parents’ readiness for parenthood and their personal development permitting, among others, keeping up with the development of their children and fostering self-reliance and the sense of responsibility in their children (Craig, 1996, Tyszkowa, 1996, Liberska, 2007a).

**Future orientation according to Nurmi**

What is the future orientation? According to the model proposed by Nurmi (1991, 2005), the future orientation is coherent combination of motivation, planning and evaluation (Fig. 2).

Motivation leads to identification of the areas of adolescents’ interest, tasks and expectations. Having established the aims that make the content of future orientation, a young person plans the way of their accomplishment in the anticipated context, so chooses the means, methods, time frames etc.

Then the adolescent defines a satisfactory level of accomplishment of his/her aims in future life path and performs evaluation.

**Development of identity and formation of future orientation**

Analysis of the pathways towards the identities following from the conceptions of Erikson and Marcia provided the grounds for derivation of relations between the development of identity and formation of temporal orientation in the period of adolescence, first of all the orientation towards future (Nurmi, 1991, Liberska, 2006). There are strong relations between the processes determining the future orientation and the pattern of factors defining the types of identity. The contents of commitments refer to the aims, expectations and interests located by the indi-
individual in future; exploration provides the grounds for effective planning of future and the strength of commitment determines the degree to which the young person is motivated to achieve selected aims. These relations are graphically illustrated in Fig. 2.

On the basis of the knowledge gained in the process of exploration a person defines general motives and accepts them as personal goals. According to Marcia, exploration is the first stage of identity’s development. Nurmi, when analysing relations between the development of identity and formation of future orientation, observed that the first stage of formation of future orientation depends on the first stage of identity development. At the second stage of future orientation, the individual plans of his/her activity towards reaching the earlier set aims take place are being formed. The planning is based on the knowledge of the anticipated context in which work towards accomplishment of the aim will take place. An important source of this knowledge is earlier exploration or transmission from authorities (when the first stage of identity development is omitted) and the abilities obtained during the exploration.

![Figure 2. Formation of future orientation in relation to the development of identity in adolescence (after: Nurmi, 2005).](image)

The individual of achieved identity has a strong and ordered structure of values based on stable central value, which provides a good basis for setting and logically relating aims and objectives. Moreover, the completed exploration facilitates the choice of aims and means of their accomplishment and flexible boundaries between “self” and “non-self” permit modification of both the aims and the plans of their reaching. The persons of moratorium identity are not able to effectively plan their future as the main stream of their activity is exploration so they have not yet established the content of their expectations. The stage of planning by the persons of foreclosed identity can be characterised by the effectiveness similar to that of the persons of achieved identity can use the experience of the authority from which they took their identity. However, under new circumstances, the new from the point of view of the authority experience, the persons with foreclosed identity are not able to modify their plans. Only the exploration performed by oneself provides rich and diverse knowledge of adult life and permits gaining of abilities important for effective planning of activities. Therefore, it is reasonable to expect that the future orientation is the most effective in regulating the behaviour of a person of achieved identity.

After making plans but before taking up work towards their accomplishment an individual decides to be
committed to particular roles, tasks or ideologies (Fig. 2). However, before taking up work towards the implementation of the commitments, another evaluation is made. In this evaluation, the subject styles of evaluation, the subject’s emotions and “self” if forming (among others – due to the information from other people collected in the process of exploration of alternatives) are considered to be important. The more intense is the exploration, the more complete is the knowledge about oneself and the ecological context, and consequently, the more accurate is the evaluation of plans for the future. After the evaluation of plans an individual assumes commitments towards their implementation and from that moment the identity of this individual is established.

In the above mentioned approach, the formation of future orientation is intertwined with the development of identity. However, the closing of identity, irrespective of its type, requires the earlier formation of future orientation (Nurmi admits the possibility of identity transformations in further stages of development). In general, in the model of relations between the identity and future orientation proposed by Nurmi, the processes engaged in their formation are interconnected. The review of relations between the development of identity and the formation of temporal orientation brings a few doubts and questions on the developmental sequence of these processes. From the developmental point of view, in my opinion exploration is the basis not only for planning understood as the choice of means adequate to aims and possibilities, but first of all it is the basis for making decisions on the values, aims and roles which are transformed into commitments. The experience gained by a young person during exploration after the cognitive assimilation and evaluation in the structures of the mind, makes grounds for the development of identity and creation of one’s future (Tyszkowa, 1996, Liberska, 2004). Not always the experience gained from exploration performed by oneself is the basis for the development of identity, in the individuals of foreclosed identity, the basis is the message transmitted by the authorities. Then the question appears if for this group of young people formation of future orientation precedes the development of identity.

The above-signalled confusion in the relations between development of identity and formation of future orientation found by Nurmi, could be eliminated by distinction of two types of commitments: those to accomplishment of aims chosen by an individual due to the exploration activity and those to realization of plans constructed on the basis of earlier exploration. However, analysis of the model of relations between the development of identity and formation of future orientation proposed by Nurmi, excludes such a distinction. In this model, commitment assumes full engagement and can be concluded about only on the basis of activity expressed in real acts directed towards reaching the aims chosen by the subject and the choice of the aims is the conclusion of the stage of exploration.

The beginning of identity and temporal orientation

The interest in one’s future and the first recognition of identity in the basic sense (e.g. I am a girl and boys tease me) are revealed at the first stages of development. They can be observed in the children games (e.g. a five-year old girl imagines herself as an adult woman, dressed up in mother’s clothes, puts on her mother’s lipstick, imitates mother’s gestures, mimics and timbre of voice). The first efforts towards the expression of one’s identity are noted already in the behaviour or an infant (Harwas-Napierala, 2007). During the first months of child’s life it is possible to note the first attempts at his/her control of time: the infant by moving his/her head and directing the sight at some place signals about the expectations concerning the future moment but also anticipates the change of the present state or even initiates such a change. In this simple way the infant reveals, not fully realizing it, the expectation that the mother will bring him/her the doll he/she wants and not any other doll; and usually the infants desire is satisfied. The origin of such behaviour is considered as the development of the structures of the mind allowing the realization of an object stability and actual existence. These observations suggest that the development of identity and temporal orientation are combined (coexist) almost from our birth. However, at the early stages of development, the future has a character of reconstructive reappearance. It can be perceived as a result of projection of past events onto future.

In the light of Piaget’s conception of intelligence development (1970), formation of future perspective, conception of oneself in temporal dimension and conception of one’s future, requires the development of formal operations and they can appear in the period of adolescence. Only in this period, one is able to realize the potential aims, imagine the states and situations never experienced, and perform their transformations in the mind. This ability of transformation in the mind refers to the possibilities and limitations of a person and those imposed by the environment. An adolescent is able to visualise the desired and hypothetically possible states and turn one’s thought towards increasingly distant future (Piaget, 1970).

In view of the solution of the fundamental dilemma of adolescence beneficial for the individual development, it seems reasonable to put forward the thesis that only the achieved identity has also the potential for the development. Only this type of identity is characterised by adaptability and flexibility. It promotes the development as its structure has imprinted programme for further growth.

A model of relations between identity and temporal orientation in the developmental context – propositions of the author

The search for a satisfactory description of relations between the development of identity and formation of temporal orientation within the area of developmental psychology has prompted me to propose my model of these relations.
The starting point is the beginning of puberty. Under the pressure of the needs that emerge in the process of puberty and the pressure of expectations and culture standards, an individual undertakes exploration of the aims and roles imposed by a given culture and types of behaviour approved and not approved by the environment. As a result of exploration, the individual assumes commitments and in this way defines his/her identity. This is the starting point for the construction of the conception of one’s life in temporal perspective. By taking up commitments, the individual stabilises the aims and aspirations and adding the means and tools that would help their accomplishment and anticipated alternative events from the external world. In this way, the individual constructs flexible plans for achieving the aims and then after the positive evaluation of the plans – crystallizes his/her future orientation. Therefore, construction of the idea of one’s future can be considered as the third stage of the development of identity in the period of adolescence, so in other words the temporal orientation follows from the identity. This approach differs from the proposition of Nurmi, according to whom the first stage of identity development is exploration, the second one is the construction of conception of one’s future and the third one is taking up commitments. Only then the identity development is finished at the given stage of the subject development.

The activity undertaken to achieve the aims and aspirations stabilises and strengthens the identity of the subject. The signals informing about difficulties or success received as a result of the activities either maintain or contribute to changes in the structure of the content of identity and future orientation and their temporal structure as well as logical relations between them (according to the TOTE model). Also, the restructuring of temporal orientation forces changes in identity and stimulates its further development. The relations between identity, future orientation and the socio-economical context are illustrated in the scheme presented in Fig. 3.

Figure 3. Proposed model of relations between development of identity and formation of temporal orientation in adolescents

Temporal orientation of different types of identity

The future perspective and future orientation can be considered only according to the achieved and foreclosed identity as both of them are based on commitments which (by definition) are focused on future and to some degree forced by changes in organisms, cultural expectations and system of society organisation.

The moratorium can be only related to a short perspective which is also variable and unstable. Because a young person is concentrated on acquiring knowledge about himself/herself and exploration of the currently available offer of the world, the young person can be described as focused on the present. It is a consequence of the pressure exerted by the changes in the organism and psyche of the adolescent and by expected changes in his/
her social position and subjective evaluation of the position importance, of the world and related to changes in one’s personality. Although in the moratorium type of identity, the majority of exploratory work is undertaken thinking of the future and transition to adulthood, but for the reasons given above, the present orientation dominates over the future one.

The diffusion type identity is related first of all to orientation on the present as the individuals of such identity are concentrated on protection against changes in the current situation or have limited possibilities of exploration by specific life circumstances or for different reasons are afraid of changes in their situation and avoid any activities that could change the status quo. Consequently, they do not undertake the activity related to the formation of identity and have no chances of future orientation so also no chances of positive transition to adulthood.

The content, functional and genetic relations between the identity and temporal orientation has been confirmed by comparative studies of the two constructs (Bosma, 1985, Grotevant, Cooper, 1985, Nurmi, Liberska, 2002, 2004, 2007). Unfortunately, there is the lack of empirical data on the further stages of development. It is necessary to collect them, which is consolde a new challenge for scientists.

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СВЯЗЬ МЕЖДУ ИДЕНТИЧНОСТЬЮ И ВРЕМЕННОЙ ОРИЕНТАЦИЕЙ В ПОДРОСТКОВОМ ВОЗРАСТЕ

В статье рассматриваются и анализируются подходы к вопросу временной ориентации в подростковом возрасте и ее связи с идентичностью. По мнению Э. Эриксона, формирование относительно стабильной идентичности и концепции собственного будущего являются конкретными задачами развития личности в подростковом возрасте. Теория Эриксона и концепция Марсія о статусе идентичности дают возможность построения двух моделей развития этого соотношения и его изменения в жизни. Автор предлагает свою модель соотношения между идентичностью и ее временной ориентацией в процессе развития. Отправленной точкой является начало полового созревания. Под давлением потребностей, которые возникают в процессе полового созревания, а также давлением основных и стандартов культуры, человек берет на себя изучение целей и ролей, налагаемых культурой и типами поведения, принятых и не принятых в ближайшем окружении. В результате исследования индивид принимает на себя обязанности и, таким образом, определяет его/ее идентичность. Это является отправной точкой для построения концепции своей жизни во временной перспективе. Принимая обязательства, человек стабилизирует цели и стремления и добавляет средства и инструменты, которые помогли бы в исполнении и предвидении альтернативных событий внешнего мира. Таким образом, индивид строит гибкие планы для выполнения целей, а затем, после положительной оценки планов, — кристаллизуется его/ее будущая ориентация. Таким образом, построение идеи о будущем можно рассматривать в качестве третьего этапа развития идентичности в подростковом возрасте. Таким образом, временная ориентация является значимым элементом развития идентичности. Девят весь, осуществляя для достижения целей и стремлений, стабилизирует и укрепляет идентичность субъекта. Сигналы, информирующие о трудностях или успехах, полученные в результате деятельности или избегания, вносят изменения в структуру содержания идентичности и будущей ориентации, а также их временной структуры, так же как и логические связи между ними (в зависимости от модели TOTE). Кроме того, перестройка временной ориентации приводит к изменению в идентичности и стимулирует ее дальнейшее развитие.

Ключевые слова: подростковый возраст, личность, ориентации на будущее, временные ориентации, развитие идентичности.