
Personality Revisited: A Posthumous Tribute to Albert Bandura and David Magnusson

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To honour the memory of Albert Bandura and David Magnusson, a few years after their deaths, the current status and perspectives of research on Personality is addressed. There is a growing demand for psychological knowledge to enable our societies to value their human capital. To this end, contemporary research on Personality moves beyond traditional rivalries among competing theories and addresses the whole personality by focusing on the unique properties that account for humans as agentic and moral beings, and for the social conditions that enable us to unveil and nurture the best of our humanity.

Introduction

Albert Bandura passed away on 26 July 2021 at his home in Stanford, USA, where he spent most of his life and academic career. The news was reported by the *New York Times*, and countless awards attested to his merits in his long life, including President Barack Obama’s National Medal of Science in 2016.

David Magnusson passed away on 4 September 2017 in Lidingö, Sweden, and, although the news of his death did not get great attention from the press and the public at large, his merits were countless, including being one of the founders of the Academia Europaea and one of its vice-presidents.

Both were born in 1925.

It was a great opportunity for me to be inspired by their thinking, and a great privilege to benefit from their friendship. I am convinced that their contributions

represent a valuable body of knowledge regarding the development and functioning of the human personality, and not only for psychology. Both scholars showed how central these issues are to the development and functioning of our societies, and how urgent the dialogue of psychology with other sciences is in order to come to terms with them. Both contributed to the emergence of a new conception of the human person in which the mind plays an active and generative role, and the individual is a responsible agent of her or his own becoming. Therefore, it is with the gratitude I owe both of them that I intend to resume the review of research on personality that I initiated in this journal more than 20 years ago (Caprara 1999).

That review deserves to be updated in view of the prominence that psychological issues have taken on in the economic thought of Nobel laureates such as James Heckman, Daniel Kahneman, Amartya Sen, Herbert Simon and Richard Thaler and in recent political events. The reference to personality is explicit in James Heckman, who first pointed to the importance of non-cognitive abilities and then to personality and character for economic and social development, while acknowledging the need for investing in psychological capital with early interventions to counter the influence of environmental disadvantages that can undermine individuals' aspirations and achievements (Heckman *et al.* 2006, 2023). As regards politics, the case of Cambridge Analytica has brought to the public's attention the potential and questionable use of personality research when combined with new technologies, with the aim to profile segments of the electorate and to influence their preferences over and beyond respect for individuals' privacy and will (Wylie 2019). In this regard, several volumes attest to the increasing relevance of personality research to account for leaders' and citizens' political behaviour, as anticipated in my earlier paper in this journal (Caprara, 2007; see also Caprara and Vecchione, 2017; Jost, 2021; Nai and Maier 2024).

Actually, no one can elude a network of interrelated notions to organize knowledge, impressions and conjectures regarding one's own and others' personality, to dialogue with oneself and to interact with others. Nor can societies and public policies avoid achieving the knowledge needed to value citizens' psychological resources since they are crucial for their development and prosperity. In this regard, relevant progress has been made in the last decades, often beyond what has been commonly acknowledged.

The Definition of Personality, the Domain of Personality Psychology and Major Investigation Trends

Personality is strictly connected to the notion of person and is commonly associated with patterns of habits and mental properties that impress others and make individuals distinguishable from one another. While the person can be viewed as the ideal type that summarizes the unique proprieties and entitlements of humans among living beings as regards self-consciousness, intentionality and responsibility, personality can be regarded as the system that summarizes the qualities of being

particular persons. Indeed, personality attests to what a person can be under given conditions of life. This leads us to acknowledge that each person has their own personality that accounts for their personal and social identity, namely for the experience of being I and me, and for the recognition of ‘mineness’ that we share with others. Likewise, it leads to the realization that the properties and diverse expressions of personality are bounded to the historical, social and cultural context in which individuals are recognized as persons entitled to rights and obligations, and as agents that make things happen and are responsible for the consequences of their actions. In this regard, the same notions of person and personality in current psychology carry the legacy of Western speculation and, in particular, of Christian philosophy, concerning the uniqueness of human nature and the distinctive properties of the human mind. As a result, the fact that most modern scientific literature has largely been dominated by Western paradigms and by the English language warns of its limitations in contexts where different world views and lexicons may have posited alternative frames within which to address the various aspects of human experience and of individuality.

Under these premises and caveats, and in accordance with a large part of current scientific literature, personality can be defined as the system, made up of cognitive, affective and behavioural structures and processes, from whose orchestration derives the sense of unity, stability and continuity that characterizes individuals’ personal identity. This leads us to view personality as the psychological system that results from the evolutionary co-action of nature and culture, to enable humans to adapt actively to the environment, to interact constructively with each other, and to make sense of their experience. Hence, this means attributing a special role to the study of personality psychology in bringing to unity the various disciplines of psychology, to accompany the study of individuals with the study of societies and of cultures, and, ultimately, to meet what people expect from science as regards the conditions that may bring about the best of their humanity. This is particularly needed at a time when science has extended human power to a scale that may be worrying with regard to the prospects of life on our planet unless proper knowledge of the determinants of human decisions and behaviours is gained.

While every individual needs to be an innocent personality psychologist in order to dialogue with themselves and to recognize others, science is still far from meeting all the demands that may arise regarding the organization of thoughts, feeling and actions that characterize being human and that enable living together. These demands concern the mental structures and mechanisms accounting for the affective, cognitive and motivational processes that can explain people’s behaviour and account for the extent to which individuals can be held responsible for their lives.

In this regard, the study of personality has traditionally developed along two courses of inquiry: the study of individuals’ behavioural features that mostly impact on others and on society as a whole, and the study of mental processes that account for people’s unique experience (Caprara and Cervone 2000). As people exhibit consistent stable patterns of experience and action, some personality psychologists have focused on individual differences, mostly with regard to habits and beliefs, that

enable us to distinguish individuals from one another, and to make conjectures and predictions regarding their conduct. This has led to considering personality as an architecture of dispositions that are traceable to a few basic psychophysical entities that, from the very beginning, have imprinted the kind of personality that may develop. Other personality psychologists, instead, have focused on the mental processes that emerge and unfold during development, and thus on the organization of mental structures that accord thought and action, and from which each individual's unity, coherence and continuity derive. This has led to considering personality as a system that interacts actively with the environment in conformity with personal criteria and goals.

The two views are not independent of one another, and both are crucial for prediction and explanation in everyday transactions. Yet, prioritizing one view over the other has led to diverse questions, different methods and thus to distinct research programmes. Although the real story is always made of multiple combinations of theories and practices that unavoidably hybridize one another, trait and social cognitive theories can be viewed as the ones that best summarize the different approaches which have dominated the field of personality psychology in the last decades, at least in academia.

Trait Theories

Trait psychologists have viewed personality as the architecture of behavioural tendencies, enabling us to recognize and distinguish one individual from another, and have pointed to traits as the enduring combinations of feelings, thoughts and actions that account for these patterns. Earlier programmes focused on surface characteristics that are most likely to influence the impressions and evaluations one may draw from the way individuals present themselves and behave, and that are commonly associated with a variety of relevant social outcomes. Later it became evident that one can enlist manifold individual characteristics that show the stability of traits and that can serve either to distinguish or to make predictions on individuals' behaviour. Yet, it was also found that most of those characteristics can be traced to a few basic broad traits, each summarizing clusters of individual qualities that one can detect at the surface level of behaviour. This led to the view that human beings are naturally predisposed to establishing stable patterns of affect, cognitions and action, which equip them to manage the basic requirements of existence and which, under the influence of socialization and individual experiences, may turn into a variety of interconnected behavioural tendencies.

Along this reasoning, the Five Factor Structure/Model (FFM) has represented a great step forward among trait theories by providing a common framework for organizing major individual differences in behavioural tendencies and for bringing together two prestigious traditions of research in personality: the lexicographic and the factorial tradition (Digman 1990; Goldberg 1993; McCrae and Costa 1997). Both the analysis of words that people commonly use to describe and distinguish themselves and other individuals, and of questionnaires designed by psychologists

for assessing personality differences at the habitual behaviours level, converged in identifying the same factors across different cultures and in positing the same broad traits underlying the whole personality architecture. Indeed, an impressive body of research has accumulated in the last four decades, leading to the identification of a limited number of traits with the basic predispositions that equip people to manage the major tasks of human existence. These traits include interacting with the environment and doing so in concert with similar others, as they turn into a variety of behavioural tendencies that are made accessible through experience and that are most congenial to successful adaptation.

Despite some divergences among various authors regarding their origins and the names to be given to primary traits across cultural contexts, substantial agreement has been achieved on five big traits: (I) Extraversion; (II) Agreeableness; (III) Conscientiousness; (IV) Neuroticism; and (V) Openness to Experience (Schmitt *et al.* 2007). This, however, did not take place without acknowledging relevant exceptions (Smaldino *et al.* 2019; Singh and De Raad 2017). Furthermore, it was evident that the Big Five do not provide a sufficiently fine-grained description of personality since more than five dimensions are needed to capture the multifaceted features of individuality and the complex interactions among multiple combinations of traits that give rise to the uniqueness of personality.

Instead, the Five Factor Model provided a valuable compass to map onto a common framework a large variety of behavioural tendencies and carried useful tools for assessing and making predictions about individuals' performance and choices in manifold contexts. Indeed, their merits are mostly attested by their functional and pragmatic value. Viewing personality as an architecture in which five broad basic traits organize lower-level dispositions that, in turn, supervise lower-level behavioural habits, has proved particularly useful for mapping individual differences that show robust associations with academic attainments, work and sport performance, health and well-being (Allen *et al.* 2013; De Neve and Cooper 1998; Huntz and Donovan 2001; Ozer and Benet-Martinez 2006, Poropat 2009; Roberts *et al.* 2007). Furthermore, it is worth noting that the FFM has been largely abused by Cambridge Analytica in order to profile and influence voters.

Behavioural tendencies at the surface level, as the ones commonly traced to the Big Five, however, disclose mostly the side of personality that captures the attention of the bystander, leaving largely unattended what remains behind. Furthermore, the efforts to find a strict correspondence of the Big Five with specific biological structures has failed so far (Chen and Canli 2022). Rather, it seems more likely that stable, coherent and functional patterns of responses across settings emerge over the course of development as a result of the properties of the mind that enable people to manage their relations with the environment and to capitalize upon experience by selecting and stabilizing the combinations of thought and actions that are most congenial to adaptation.

Thus, one cannot doubt that focusing on how traits relate to each other and account for relevant outcomes can be extremely important across a whole variety of contexts. Yet, traits alone cannot entirely account for how they operate in concert at

the service of adaptation, and for the distinctive experience of each person. To account for the sense of being, the will and agency that are distinctive of human experience requires a theory of personality capable of addressing the processes and mechanisms from which consistency, intentionality and the sense of one's own individuality derive. This leads beyond the study of individual differences in habitual behaviours, to incorporate their activation and orchestration under given physical and socio-historical conditions within a comprehensive theory of personality development and functioning.

Social Cognitive Theories

Social cognitive theories include several approaches that, to varying degrees, have addressed personality mostly as a cognitive system that operates in a social context. Broadly speaking, cognition may also include affect and motivation, while the social sphere may include the whole variety of phenomena pertaining to interpersonal relations, being part of communities and culture. A common feature of various approaches is the assumption that in order to understand what individuals do and what they may become, one should understand how people appraise the world and make sense of their experience. The premise is that people grow and live in a social and cultural context that provides the opportunities and constraints for their development, and gives meaning to their behaviour. Thus, social cognitive theorists have addressed the manifold cognitive and affective structures and processes which account for how people appraise, explain and direct their conduct (Bandura 1986, 2006; Mischel and Shoda 1995). This leads to a focus on how events and situations are encoded, how emotions are activated and managed, and how people develop beliefs, competencies, expectancies that lead to setting goals, generating plans and executing behaviours that accord with the image they have and want to convey to others of themselves.

The use of individual differences has been instrumental in addressing the process that accounts for how people acquire and organize their knowledge of themselves and of the world, how they manage their affectivity, relate to each other, reflect upon their experiences, dialogue with themselves, experience needs and motives, endorse value priorities, and accord their conduct to the pursuit of meaningful goals. The notions of needs and motives have been used to organize stable individual differences in being sensitive to particular incentives, and thus to account for individuals' desires and goals (McClelland 1985). Over the years, a large consensus has been reached in pointing to autonomy, relatedness and competence as the basic psychological needs whose satisfaction conditions individuals' development and full realization (Ryan and Decy 2017).

Likewise, the notion of value has served to refer to stable individual differences in the sphere of priorities and aspirations that are largely grounded in the experiences people share with others and that are functional to ones' own self-realization and to living together. In this regard, Shalom Schwartz's taxonomy of values (Schwartz

1992) has largely been corroborated across cultures as a consensual model to address the basic principles that guide individuals' conduct in society. It posits 10 basic values distributed around a circumplex in which self-focused values such as power, achievement, hedonism, stimulation and self-direction oppose socially focused values such as universalism, benevolence, tradition, conformity and security. Ultimately social cognitive approaches redirected their focus from traits and situations to the personality properties that enable individuals to make sense of their experience and to interact purposively with the environment as active agents that construe, select and change the environments in which they live.

This has led to highlighting the reciprocity of person–situation interactions as they unfold over time, and to paying special attention to the conditions that allow turning human potentials into agentic capacities such as self-reflection, symbolization, learning, forethought, and behaviour regulation. These capacities enable individuals to exert a broad control over their experiences and to extend their influence upon the external world. They, however, do not spring spontaneously nor operate independently of the environments, both physical and social, that provide the opportunities, establish the limits and shape their expressions.

Special attention has been paid to the cognitive and affective processes and structures that emerge and develop over time to enable individuals to make sense of their experience, to strive for goals and to chart the course of their lives. Individuals, in fact, assign meanings to the circumstances they encounter, monitor their feelings, dialogue with themselves, and regulate their actions and efforts in accordance with the pursuits they value.

Among the cognitive structures that attest to mental processes capable of conferring unity, continuity and directness to individuals' actions, and that attest to the power of human agency, none has proved to exert a more pervasive influence over thought, motivation and action than people's perceived self-efficacy, namely beliefs people hold about their capacity to cope effectively with life's challenges and to face demanding situations. These concern beliefs in one's own capability to organize and execute the courses of action required to produce given achievements, as well as beliefs in one's own capability to manage one's own feelings and thoughts to maximize one's own achievements and well-being. Originally, self-efficacy beliefs have been viewed as knowledge structures deriving from practice and from reflection upon experience under given conditions (Bandura 1977, 1986). Claiming their specificity and pursuing a multifaceted approach in the study of their various expressions across tasks, situations and subjective states have been critical to identifying and addressing the self-regulatory processes and mechanisms from which their properties derive, and to devise practices that, through guided and assisted mastery experiences, are conducive to inoculating self-confidence and to valuing one's own capacities. This has proved valid in various contexts: to sustain learning in schools, to improve performance in sport and at work, and to protect and promote health (Bandura 1997).

Yet self-efficacy beliefs do not operate in isolation from one another since people develop interrelated beliefs about capabilities pertaining to broad domains of

functioning. As people reflect upon their experiences across various settings, self-efficacy beliefs may generalize beyond specific performances and situations, and across activities, due to co-development of subskills and to beliefs resulting from mastery experiences. Thus, discovering the kinds of self-efficacy beliefs that exert a major influence in given domains of functioning, generalize more widely and are more accessible to change, is crucial to account for the unique organization of personality and to design interventions aimed at promoting individual growth, health and well-being.

This has led to extending the study of perceived self-efficacy to broad domains of functioning, such as emotion regulation and interpersonal relations, in accordance with a conceptual model in which self-efficacy beliefs in managing emotions and interpersonal relations significantly contribute to well-being and successful adjustment across situations (Caprara 2002). Several findings have attested to the merit of this model as regards the study of psychological disorders and of well-being, showing that the more people feel able to deal efficaciously with their affectivity, the more they feel (and, indeed, are) capable of handling their relations with others successfully, and the more they perform successfully and feel good (Bandura *et al.* 2003; Steca *et al.* 2009).

Towards a Comprehensive Theory of Personality Development and Functioning

Although trait and social cognitive theories have often been portrayed as rival theories, their convergence has been inevitable in acknowledging the need for a theory that can integrate description and prediction in order to account for stability and for change and, ultimately, to meet the requirements of assessment, care and promotion of the individual's assets and well-being (Baumert *et al.* 2017; McAdams and Olson 2010; Mischel and Shoda 1998; Roberts and Yoon 2022). Today, most scholars would agree to view personality as a dynamic system of psychological structures and processes that mediates the relation of the individual with the environment and accounts for what a person is and may become. This occurs under the assumptions that one may derive from previous research in psychology and from findings of other biological and social sciences.

It is evident that the overall organization of this complex system results from synergistic interactions among multiple cognitive, affective and behavioural subsystems that convey, foster and preserve a sense of personal identity. Likewise, it is evident that to account for constellations of qualities that allow us to distinguish individuals from one another and for the sense of unity, continuity, wholeness and uniqueness that distinguishes each individual's experience, one should focus both on the orchestration of affect, cognition and behaviour that unfolds over the entire course of life and on the transactions that take place between the person and the environment within given social cultural contexts. This leads us to examine the vast array of assets that equip human beings to deal with the fundamental task of human

existence and to identify the conditions of life that foster the establishment of mental structures enabling the actualization of those potentials. While development and functioning of individual personalities and of social systems are reciprocally conditioned, human beings carry the responsibility of creating the conditions of life that may maximize their welfare.

Advances of knowledge on the functioning of brain, genetics and development have led us to further appreciate the vast potential of genetic endowments, the plasticity of brain functioning, the malleability of conduct and the variety of developmental pathways conducive to well-being, successful adaptation, and deviant behaviours or suffering. They have also led us to view the mind as an emergent property of the brain whose development and functioning, however, is largely conditioned by the opportunities of the environments in which people grow.

A large body of developmental and clinical research, on the other hand, has documented the important role that social environments exert in laying the foundations and in conditioning the realization of personality. They point to the role of earlier experiences in sustaining maturation, in shaping dispositions and in promoting the development of abilities that are needed for social adaptation. Equally, they point to the importance of nurturing, throughout life, the capacities and attitudes necessary for successfully managing challenging transitions and ageing.

Ultimately, it has become clear that one should consider the person as a whole and over the whole life span, as established by the seminal intuitions of David Magnusson. Indeed, Magnusson was a precursor in advocating the need to complement the traditional variable approach with a novel person approach. While the former has commonly pointed to specific features of psychological functioning and examined their individual variations across time and context, the latter aims to address the undivided living being over the course of development. It also focuses on how adaptive processes of maturation and learning unfold over time, carrying continuous reorganizations of mental, biological and behavioural factors into new patterns of functioning (Magnusson 2001, 2003).

It is likely that humans come into the world with a set of predispositions that have been selected through phylogenesis and which, over the course of development, equip them with the mental structures enabling them to deal with the basic tasks of human existence, such as interacting with the environment, collaborating with similar others, and preserving their life. Over the course of development, emergency and appropriation characterize the joint action that nature and culture exerts, through maturation and socialization, to construe a dynamic personality system capable of interacting adaptively with the environment. To this aim, the establishment of stable coherent and functional patterns of responses across settings do not reflect inherited scripts but result from the unique potentials of human beings to capitalize upon experience and to manifest themselves in forms that are most congenial to adaptation and growth.

Predispositions turn into mental structures and adaptive behavioural tendencies in accordance with the requirements and the resources of the living environments. Likewise, people gain access to their own inner states, make sense of their own and

others' behaviour, and purposively set the goals of their lives, gradually and in accordance with the opportunities and expectations of their social environments, drawing upon self-reflection and upon their own experience, while using the lexicon and knowledge made available by their culture. Thus, in looking at the transactions that occur over the entire life span between personality and the social environments, one should focus on the transformations that result from their reciprocal influences either as regards the structures and process that account for the various expressions of personality and also with regard to the social outcomes that attest to its impact on the world.

The study of intelligence, as the orchestration of those cognitive abilities enabling humans to solve problems, cannot be disjoined from the whole personality development and functioning, since the active role that persons may play over the course of their lives largely depends upon their mental abilities to reason, to learn and to solve problems taking advantage of experience and forethought. Likewise, investigating how traits operate in concert with motives, values and self-efficacy beliefs is crucial, both to understand the power that human beings may exert over the environments, and also to promote the mindsets that are conducive to value and pursue the common good.

These phenomena have often been treated as different entities and within traditions of research that have emphasized their distinctiveness and overlooked their commonalities. This mostly accorded with the needs of scientists to organize knowledge of psychological structures that one infers from individuals' variation in phenomena one can observe or report. Yet, it is unlikely that they correspond to specific entities, established from the very beginning as part of our genetic endowment and located in specific biological loci. Rather, it is likely that they correspond to different organizations of mental structures and processes that emerge over the course of development through the interactions of the entire human organism with the environment.

Indeed, cognitive abilities, traits, motives, values and self-efficacy beliefs may engage the same biological systems and, to various degrees, may contribute to revealing how the environments contribute to shaping their expression and how nature and nurture impinge upon individuals' experience and behaviour. Still, the functions that these constructs have exerted in organizing our knowledge of personality account for their commonalities and diversities more than the knowledge of their causes (Wood *et al.* 2015). Their relevance is mostly due to the fact that they have allowed us to distinguish individuals from one another, have been associated with socially relevant outcomes and have proved useful to account for people's strivings, achievements and well-being.

The notion of trait may still serve to refer to stable individual characteristics that reflect basic potentials and manifest themselves in the form of habitual behaviours and evaluative dispositions. Indeed, a large body of evidence has shown that individual differences in behavioural dispositions commonly traced to the Big Five can be traced to two higher-order factors (De Young 2006; Digman 1997), which likely equip humans to deal with the fundamental tasks of their existence. In

accordance with earlier intuitions of Bakan (1966), they can be referred to as agency and communion. Furthermore it has been found that individual differences in self-esteem, optimism and life satisfaction are stable and exert a notable influence on health, well-adjustment, performance and well-being, no less than the Big Five. Actually it turned out that self-esteem, optimism and life satisfaction are evaluative dispositions, associated to a variety of positive outcomes, highly intercorrelated and traceable to a common latent dimension across several languages and cultural contexts (Caprara *et al.* 2012). This led to positing a disposition, originally called positive orientation, that accounts for a basic trait that leads to appraising and organizing one's own personal experience under a positive lens. Subsequent studies have corroborated our reasoning regarding the need and the protective function of positive orientation, while pointing to Positivity as the evaluative tendency that, over the course of and concurrently with the development of self-awareness, self-reflection and forethinking, attests to what is common to self-esteem, optimism and life satisfaction, and what may result from their synergies (Caprara *et al.* 2017).

Over the last few decades, studies have multiplied to investigate the relations among traits, motives and values, and their associations with a whole array of outcomes (Dweck 2017; Fisher and Boer 2015; Roccas *et al.* 2002; Vecchione *et al.* 2019). Findings have shown that traits, motives and values are all relatively stable and inter-correlated, and are all traceable to basic functions for adaptation and growth, such as interacting with the environment, living with others and valuing ones' life. Furthermore, it has been shown that they are all susceptible to change over the course of life and that their expressions and changes are largely conditional on the opportunities and constraints of living conditions. In particular, basic traits such as the Big Five have turned out to be less stable than originally expected, and are variously susceptible to change, thereby showing a general tendency to develop in a positive direction until a decline takes the upper hand at an age that is much more advanced than in the past (Bleidorn *et al.* 2013; Damian *et al.* 2019; Roberts and Yoon 2022). A similar tendency suggesting a kind of growth in maturation and adjustment has been found for self-esteem, optimism and life satisfaction (Baird *et al.* 2010; Orth *et al.* 2018; Tetzner *et al.* 2024).

These changes parallel the developmental tendencies of what has been referred to as fluid and crystallized intelligence: namely, the components of intelligence that mostly reflect biological and cultural endowment (Cattell 1963). After young adulthood and over the course of adulthood up to an advanced age, culture and experience tend to account more for intellectual performances that principally depend on capacities to organize thought, motivation and action, to capitalize upon practice, to select ones' own endeavour, and to compensate ones' own limitations (Baltes *et al.* 1999; Schaie 2004).

Changes with age are generally adaptive in response to social opportunities and expectations (Roberts *et al.* 2005). The correlation between traits, motives and values, and their stability, in fact, are congruent with social attributions and expectations, further attesting to the continuous and reciprocal interaction between humans and their social environments.

All this reinforces the conviction that one cannot understand personality unless one focuses on the functions it serves, the tasks it has to cope with, and the conditions under which it can operate. Nor can one understand personality unless one focuses upon its development, which is always historically and socially situated and conditioned. In reality, the study of biological factors, at the level of genes, body and brain, is crucial in order to identify the correlates that establish limits to the expressions of personality. But the knowledge of its dynamics and manifestations mostly derives from the study of phenotypes that attest to the emergence and functioning of psychological systems capable of interacting with social and cultural systems. This requires focusing on evaluative and behavioural dispositions, and on the regulatory properties that are most relevant for individual adaptation, in order to clarify the degree to which they reflect different mental structures accounting for different organizations of individual experiences, and the extent to which each of them, uniquely and in concert with the others, contributes to personality functioning.

The Self-system

The coordination of the manifold and diverse expressions of personality requires the functioning of an internal organization, which one may identify with the self-system that also accounts for the sense of unity, coherence and continuity that is unique to human's experience.

The self-system is responsible for the experience of being I and me, for the ownership people hold of their thoughts, feelings, purposes and actions, for the sense of being and remaining themselves despite changing continuously in the pursuit of the full expression of their own individuality, and in accordance with the opportunities and constraints of their environments. It is the locus of subjectivity, agency and responsibility that results from the concertation of mental structures and processes that gradually take control over the various predispositions that equip humans to face the fundamental task of existence and puts them at the service of adaptation and development. It is the organizing system that integrates personal self-representations and memories into personal narratives and identities and predisposes towards action. It enables people to enact and to shape dispositions in accordance with contingent constraints and opportunities, and to transform their environments in accordance with their own goals and at the service of the actualization of their own potential. Ultimately, it is the self-system that accounts for the integration of fuzzy combinations of affect, cognition and behaviour that, conceptually and conventionally, are commonly acknowledged as separate features of personality such as cognitive abilities, traits, motives and values.

Much remains unknown about the development and the functioning of the self-system (Bandura 2008; Blasi 2004; Harter 2012; McAdams 2013). Its development is likely interwoven with the development of cognitive abilities and with the experience

of positive and negative affect under the guidance and within the opportunities of the sociocultural conditions in which people grow. Concurrently with the development of cognitive abilities, children learn to be a distinct entity from those who take care of them. Depending on how other people's care alleviates a child's pain and carries pleasure, the child acknowledges that life and growth can be worthy of value.

The establishment of a unified sense of self, including I and me, and of *mineness* that lies at the core of individuals' identity, and attests to all the above organizing properties, emerges gradually and concurrently with maturation processes that enable people to appropriate their own experience under the conditions made available by the environment in which they unfold. It is thus with the establishment of the subjective I that autonomy, relatedness and competence become experienced and gradually acknowledged as needs whose satisfaction pave the way to self-determination and self-actualization (Ryan and Deci 2017). Likewise, it is over the course of development that humans, in concomitance with the formation of their own personal identity, assimilate the values transmitted from one generation to another and for the influence that they may exert throughout individuals' life (Blasi and Glodis 1995).

Self-awareness, self-reflection, self-determination, self-regulation and self-reactivity are core properties of the self-system that account for the distinctive qualities of being human. Self-awareness and self-reflection allow people to acquire and revise their knowledge about themselves and the social world by taking advantage of positive experiences and of positive affect to nurture their confidence in themselves and in life. Self-determination accounts for the purposes people pursue; self-regulation allows aligning purposes and behaviour to goals and standards; self-reactivity allows aligning behaviour to judgement and forethought by fostering actions that may carry pleasure and pride, and by refraining from actions that, instead, may carry blame and anxiety. These properties enable human beings to contribute to charting the course of their lives as they represent the levers through which they may extend their control over themselves and, accordingly, the priority targets of psychological investigations and interventions aimed at pursuing a betterment of the human condition.

Along this reasoning, I gained the conviction that moral judgement on how people should treat each other, and moral efficacy in aligning one's own actions to righteous principles, represent the highest expressions of personality development that most attest to human potential. Likewise, I became convinced that the future of our societies largely depends on the moral growth of citizens, and thus on human beings' potential to constantly transcend the moral legacy of previous generations in pursuing the conditions that may grant everyone the opportunity to achieve the best of their humanity. This requires nurturing individuals' capacity to transcend their own private interest and to operate as moral agents that pursue the common good by committing themselves to social obligations and righteous causes. Indeed, the more integrity, mutual care and justice represent moral ideals that people have appropriated as irremissible components of their selves, the more they operate as imperatives that they cannot elude without undermining their being worthy of respect.

Conclusions/Promising Directions

Our societies need to know more about how people function, develop, relate to each other, and manage diversities in a global world, and about how their mental potential may turn into capacities and attainments conducive to peaceful, healthy and prosperous conditions of life. Human functioning is, in fact, a product of a reciprocal interplay of intrapersonal, behavioural and environmental determinants. Thus, a renewed commitment of psychological science is required to contribute to managing major societal problems.

To this end, progress in personality psychology shows that humans carry extraordinary potential to grow and to develop capacities enabling them to exert a considerable influence over their experience and their course of life. It brings the 'person' to the centre of psychological inquiry and appeals to the responsibility that each individual has to ensure that all others be granted the good life to which they aspire and believe they deserve. Equally, it brings to the centre of psychological scrutiny the environments transformed and constructed by humans, and thus the cultures and the social institutions that historically and contextually condition the expressions and the development of individuals. All this ascribes to personality psychology a crucial role in combining knowledge that derives from different domains of psychological investigations, and in casting bridges to other social and biological sciences.

Actually, much progress has been made since my earlier publication in this journal. Progress in genetics and neurosciences has further documented the malleability of human biological endowments that lead to the emergence of mental structures which underly their functioning. Likewise, progress in developmental studies across cultures has further attested to the extraordinary variety of pathways and to the manifold expressions of human diversity. Malleability, emergency and diversity have challenged the idea of entities that, from the very beginning, operate as causes of subsequent courses of life. Rather, they have corroborated the view of personality as a system that develops over the entire course of life and whose functioning is largely conditional on the resources, pressures and opportunities of the social environments in which it occurs.

In this regard, both Bandura's and Magnusson's intuitions and contributions have played an important role in addressing the person as a wholeness of mind and body, and in placing individuals' personality in their social historical context, thereby distancing themselves from any form of biological or social determinism. Both, in fact, acknowledged the large degrees of freedom that human beings hold in charting their course of life and both pointed to the responsibility that societies hold in establishing the conditions for fostering the best expression of individuals' potentials and for the role that science may have for the betterment of the human condition.

Our tribute to Bandura and Magnusson as models of scientists who put their wisdom and achievements at the service of the common good is largely due.

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