CHAPTER SEVEN

ALLPORT: PERSONOLOGICAL
TRAIT THEORY

Chapter Overview

• ILLUSTRATIVE BIOGRAPHY: MOTHER TERESA
• BIOGRAPHY: GORDON ALLPORT
• MAJOR THEMES IN ALLPORT’S WORK
  • Personality Consistency
  • Social Influence
  • The Concept of Self
  • Interaction of Personality with Social Influence
• ALLPORT’S DEFINITION OF PERSONALITY
  • Dynamic Organization
  • Psychophysical Systems
  • Determinative
  • Unique
  • Adjustments to the Environment
CHAPTER OVERVIEW

- **PERSONALITY TRAITS**
  - Allport’s Definition of Trait
  - Can We All Be Described by the Same Traits?
  - Inferring Traits
  - The Pervasiveness of Traits: Cardinal, Central, and Secondary Traits
  - Levels of Integration of Personality

- **PERSONALITY DEVELOPMENT**
  - Functional Autonomy
  - Qualities of a Normal, Mature Adult
  - Unity of Personality
  - Stages of Development
  - Continuity and Change in Personality Development

- **INFLUENCE OF PERSONALITY ON SOCIAL PHENOMENA**
  - Prejudice
  - Religion and Prejudice
  - Rumor Transmission

- **ECLECTICISM**

PREVIEW OF ALLPORT’S THEORY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE 7.1</th>
<th>Preview of Allport’s Theory</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Individual Differences</td>
<td>Individuals differ in the traits that predominate in their personalities. Some traits are common shared by many people, others are unique (belonging only to one person).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adaptation and Adjustment</td>
<td>Psychology or it looks too much for illness. Allport listed several characteristics of a healthy personality.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cognitive Processes</td>
<td>People’s self-statements can generally be taken at face value.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Society</td>
<td>Adaptation to society is of central importance.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Biological Influences</td>
<td>All behavior is influenced, in some part, by heredity, but the mechanisms are not specified.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Development</td>
<td>The proprioception (self or self) develops through stages that are ordered but not research in detail.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Adult development consists of integrating earlier developments.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

ILLUSTRATIVE BIOGRAPHY: MOTHER TERESA

- Development
- Description
- Adjustment
- Cognition
- Society
- Biology
GORDON ALLPORT

- Born in Indiana in 1897
- Grew up in Cleveland
- Undergraduate student at Harvard University
- Graduate student in psychology at Harvard
- Professorship at Harvard
- Visited with Freud in 1919
- Died in 1967

MAJOR THEMES IN ALLPORT'S WORK

- Personality
  - Consistency
- Social Influence
- The Concept of Self
- Interaction of Personality with Social Influence

ALLPORT’S DEFINITION OF PERSONALITY

- Dynamic Organization
- Psychophysical Systems
  - Temperament
  - \( P = f(H) \times (E) \)
- Determinative
  - Circular Reasoning
- Unique
- Adjustments to the Environment
Personality Traits

Allport’s Definition of Trait

“a generalized and focalized neuropsychic system (peculiar to the individual), with the capacity to render many stimuli functionally equivalent, and to initiate and guide consistent (equivalent) forms of adaptive and expressive behavior.”

Personality Traits

Can We All Be Described By the Same Traits?

- **Individual Traits**: Possessed by only one person
  - Idiographic
- **Common Traits**: Possessed by many people, each to a varying extent
  - This allows standardized personality testing
- **Unique Traits**

Personality Traits

- Inferring Traits from Language: The Dictionary Study
  - Webster’s New International Dictionary
    - 17,953 traits (4.5% of the dictionary)
- Inferring Traits from Behavior
  - Expressive traits
- Inferring Traits from Documents: Letters from Jenny
  - Letters from Jenny Grove Masterson
  - Structural-dynamic analysis (content analysis)
    - Traits inferred: Self-centered, independent, autonomous, aesthetic-artistic, aggressive
- Inferring Traits from Personality Measurement: The Study of Values
Inferring from Personality Measurement: The Study of Values

Personality Traits

- Allowing for inconsistency in making trait inferences
- Difference between: phenotypical (observable behavior) and genotypical (underlying motive)
- Influence of more than one trait on a behavior
- Trait may not always be active

Allport’s Attitude toward Methodology

- Accepted “corrective empiricism”
- Distrusted statistics
- Objected to methodological excess (“methodolatry”)

The Pervasiveness of Traits: Cardinal, Central, and Secondary Traits

- Central Traits: Affects many behaviors
- Secondary Traits: Least pervasive
- Cardinal traits: central, most pervasive
Levels of Integration in Personality

Most integrated
- Unifying Philosophy of Life
- Self
- Traits
- Attitudes
- Habits
- Reflexes

Least integrated

Personality Development

- Functional Autonomy
- Qualities of a Normal, Mature Adult
- Unity of Personality
- Stages of Development
- Continuity and Change in Personality Development

Functional Autonomy

An individual’s trait which is independent of its developmental origins
Qualities of a Normal, Mature Adult
- Extension of the Sense of Self
- Warm Human Interaction
- Emotional Security
- Realistic Perception, Skills and Assignments
- Self-Objectification: Insight and Humor
- Unifying Philosophy of Life

Unity of Personality
- Unitas Multiplex: The unity of multiples
- The Proprium: Includes all aspects of the personality that make for unity

Stages of Development
1. Bodily Sense
2. Self-Identity
3. Ego-Enhancement
4. Ego-Extension
5. Self-Image
6. Rational Agent (rational coper)
7. Propriate Striving
8. The Knower (self as knower)
Influence of Personality on Social Phenomena

- Prejudice
- Religion and Prejudice
- Rumor Transmission

Prejudice

- Allport’s classic book: The Nature of Prejudice
- Individual perspective, not from social historical perspective
RELIGION AND PREJUDICE

EXTRINSIC RELIGIOUS ORIENTATION
WHAT’S IN IT FOR ME?

INTRINSIC RELIGIOUS ORIENTATION
I TRULY BELIEVE RELIGIOUS TEACHINGS TO LOVE OTHERS

CONCEPTS ASSOCIATED WITH INTRINSIC AND EXTRINSIC RELIGIOUSNESS IN ALLPORT’S WRITINGS

| Table 7.4 Concepts Associated with Intrinsic and Extrinsic Religiousness in Allport’s Writings |
|-----------------|-----------------|
| **Intrinsic**   | **Extrinsic**   |
| Returns to all of life | Compartmentalized |
| g, h, c, d, f, g, h, d | g, c, d, f, g, h, d |
| Universal, nonjudgmental, universal | Instrumental, secular |
| g, c, d, f, g, h, d | g, c, d, f, g, h, d |
| Integrative, unifying, meaning-endowed | Instrumental, utilitarian |
| g, c, d, f, g, h, d | g, c, d, f, g, h, d |
| Regular church attendance | Integral church attendance |
| g, c, d, f, g, h, d | g, c, d, f, g, h, d |
| Makers for mental health | Defenses or escape mechanisms |
| g, d | g, f, g |

Note: Chart was reconstructed and edited from original source. Concepts were drawn from Allport (1961). 

RELIGIOUS ORIENTATION AS A PREDICTOR OF RELIGIOUS FUNDAMENTALISM AND PREJUDICE

Figure 7.3 Religious Orientation as a Predictor of Religious Fundamentalism and Prejudice against Social Minorities, Gays, and Lesbians

Note: Higher scores indicate greater social conservatism, higher religious fundamentalism, and more prejudice against gay men and lesbian women. Prepared from data reported by Weeks (1987).
Rumor Transmission

- The Psychology of Rumor
- Stereotyped perception of knife in the hand of a black/white man in a subway car (Allport & Postman, 1947)

Eclecticism

- Jackdaw
  - Eclecticism: not selective
- Systematic
  - Eclecticism: selective

Chapter Summary

- Major Themes in Allport’s Work
- Allport’s Definition of Personality
- Personality Traits
- Personality Development
- Influence of Personality on Social Phenomena
- Eclecticism