

Person-situation debate - from psychology to sociophysics and back

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What determines human behavior - personal traits or rather situation? There was a longstanding and complex discussion among psychologists, known as the person-situation debate, connected with this question. The debate has started in late sixties and recently it has been announced to be over. However, there is still a lot of controversy around the subject. Due to some psychologists it is an academic problem because the concept of situation is not well defined and some questions in the debate are poorly posed. On the other hand, intuitively the subject of the debate is clear. Nowadays most of psychologists agree that both, situation and personal traits, influence people's behavior. The challenge is to examine which of these factors (personality or situation) and when are more important. This is not the aim of this paper to ultimately solve one of the most significant debates in the history of psychology. However, it seems that the debate is an excellent excuse for a closer look at some fundamental problems in a field of sociophysics or more general in a field of so-called agent-based modeling (ABM). On the other hand, as a feedback from the research inspired by the debate, some results within ABM might shed some light on the debate. Tackling it and elucidating on if and how psychology and agent-based modeling (ABM) may mutually benefit from each other are the goals of this paper.

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