EAPP Expert Meeting

on

SITUATIONS AND PERSON-SITUATION INTERACTIONS

John F. Rauthmann    David C. Funder
BACKGROUND: WHY AN “EXPERT MEETING”?

The science of personality can and should be complemented by a psychology of situations to unravel the complexities of dynamic person-situation transactions in the study of the “personality triad” (Funder, 2009): persons, situations, and behaviors. However, it is up to now not clear what a “situation” (or associated terms such as occurrence, episode, environment, context, etc.) is, how we should (or even if we can) scientifically approach this concept, how we can make it measurable, or how a taxonomy of situations would look like. In short, there are still glaring shortcomings with (a) the definition, (b) measurement, and (c) taxonomization of situations.

The “old” interest in situations and person-situation interactions (see Magnusson, 1981) is rising with a recent increase in publications (e.g., Funder, Guillaume, et al., in press; Rauthmann, 2012; Reis, 2008; Sherman, Nave, & Funder, 2010, 2012; Wagerman & Funder, 2009; Yang, Read, & Miller, 2009) and a well-attended symposium at the ECP16 in Trieste 2012. That we need a psychology of situations has been emphasized often (Bem & Funder, 1978; Magnusson, 1981; Wagerman & Funder, 2009), and it is now time to tackle this issue with a clear, coherent, and viable framework for person-situation research.

SCOPE: WHAT IS THE POINT OF THE EXPERT MEETING?

The broad aim of the proposed expert meeting is to gather different (expert) perspectives and stimulate lively discussion on situations and relationships among persons, situations, and behaviors so that we can embark on new and sophisticated studies on person-environment transactions. Specifically, there are four grand points to be tackled, with an emphasis of Points 1 and 4:

(1) **Definition:** What is a situation?
(2) **Measurement:** How can we assess situations?
(3) **Taxonomization:** How can we order and structure situations coherently?
(4) **The person-situation nexus:** How exactly are situations relevant to personality?

OUTCOMES: WHAT ARE WE AIMING AT?

Four broad outcomes could ideally be anticipated:

(1) A **list of suggestions** for a clear definition of situations as well as approaches for their measurement, taxonomization, and associations with personality and behavior, summarized in a coherent framework for future research on person-situation interactions

(2) Establishment of a firm **Situation Research Network (SRN)**
   (see http://www.situation-research.com/cms/)
(3) **A target article** (tentative title: Definition, Measurement, and Potential Taxonomies of Situations: A Synthetic Approach to Person x Situation Interactions) with commentaries for the *European Journal of Personality*, with insights, outcomes, and comments from the expert meeting

(4) **Raising awareness** in personality/social psychology journals for situation research

Findings of the expert meeting will be published on the [SRN website](http://www.situation-research.com/cms/). The website is to provide a platform for (a) introductory and detailed information for people interested in situation research, (b) a synopsis of our expert meeting, (c) discussion with scholars from different backgrounds, (d) exchange of knowledge among each other, and (e) planning and organization of situation research and meetings.

**SCHEDULE: WHEN ARE WE DOING WHAT?**

The EAPP expert meeting will take place from **August 23 to 25, 2013** in Berlin, Germany.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Agenda</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Day 1:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Friday, August 23</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open</td>
<td>Optional pre-meeting program: Informal “meet &amp; greet” and chats</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.00 PM – 3.30 PM</td>
<td>Welcoming</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Discussion of agenda (topics, goals, scope, schedules, logistics, etc.)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.00 PM – 7.00 PM (with one coffee break)</td>
<td><strong>Topic 1: What is a situation?</strong></td>
<td>• Presentations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Discussions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.00 PM – open</td>
<td>Dinner</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## NIGHT 1

### Day 2:
9.00 AM – 12.00 PM (with one coffee break)
**Topic 2: How can situations be measured?**
**Topic 3: How can situations be taxonomized?**
- Presentations
- Discussions

12.15 – 1.45 PM  
Lunch

2.00 PM – 7.00 PM (with two coffee breaks)
**Topic 4: How do persons and situations relate?**
- Presentations
- Discussions

8.00 PM – open  
Boat trip + Dinner

## NIGHT 2

### Day 3:
9.00 AM – 12.00 PM
- Recapitulation and reflection of the meeting
- Discussion of future projects
- Farewell

12.00 PM – open  
Optional post-meeting program:
Lunch and guide through Berlin

---

### LOCATION: WHERE WILL WE MEET?

We will meet in Germany’s beautiful capital city: **Berlin**. The meeting will be held in the **Ameron Hotel ABION Spreebogen Berlin** (Alt-Moabit 99, 10559 Berlin, Germany) where rooms (**3 days, 2 nights**) have been booked for all meeting participants.

- Hotel website for more information: [http://www.abion-hotel.de/en](http://www.abion-hotel.de/en)
- The hotel in Google Maps: [https://maps.google.com/maps?q=Abion+Hotel&hl=en&ll=52.52319,13.345932&spn=0.001691,0.005284&sspn=0.006763,0.021136&hq=Abion+Hotel&t=m&z=18](https://maps.google.com/maps?q=Abion+Hotel&hl=en&ll=52.52319,13.345932&spn=0.001691,0.005284&sspn=0.006763,0.021136&hq=Abion+Hotel&t=m&z=18)
The expert meeting is funded by the European Association of Personality Psychology who was generous enough to make this event happen.

► **Covered** are (for each participant) 2 nights in the hotel (i.e., 3 days of stay), dinner on Day 1, lunch and dinner on Day 2, and a boat trip on Day 2.

► **NOT covered** are any longer stays in the hotel as well as the lunch on Day 1 and Day 3. Also, we cannot cover the flight or any other travel expenses.

**PARTICIPANTS: WHO IS ATTENDING?**

**Ten experts** have confirmed their attendance.

Jens Asendorpf
Ryne Sherman

Yu Yang

Matthias Ziegler

David Funder

John Rauthmann
The following nine experts are invited to bring another graduate or PhD level researcher as an expert meeting participant with them:

- Boele de Raad
- David Gallardo-Pujol
- Wendy Johnson
- Ryne Sherman
- Yu Yang
- Will Fleeson*
- Marco Perugini*
- Manfred Schmitt*
- Matthias Ziegler*

Please send us (jfrauthmann@gmail.com) names and interests of the accompanying researchers until May 1, 2013. (Experts in gray with an asterisk * are exempted from this because they have already nominated their accompanying person.)

**CONTENT: WHAT TOPICS WILL BE COVERED?**

Apart from the definition, measurement, and taxonomization of situations, we should focus on how persons, situations, and behaviors are interlocked. We use the terms “person-situation interaction” and “person-environment transaction” as broad umbrella terms for following phenomena that we may elucidate further in our meeting:

- Situation perception
- Situation selection, evocation, and modification
- Person-environment fit
- Trait expression and manifestation
- Behavioral variability and consistency
- Motivational salience in situational affordances
- “Environment” in behavioral genetic contexts
- “Environment” in personality developmental contexts
- “Environment” in evolutionary contexts (ancestral presses and niche selections)
- Social environments (other people: peers, family, friends, groups, teams, etc.)
- Cultural environments (macro-entities: institutions, cities, countries, etc.)

Each expert (along with their accompanying person) may hold a 20-minute talk with a 20-minute discussion on a topic of interest. Experts will be contacted individually. After gathering topics and speakers, a tentative schedule for the meeting will be published (probably in June).

**ANY QUESTIONS, REQUESTS, OR PROBLEMS?**

Please contact us at jfrauthmann@gmail.com. We are happy to help!
References


Rauthmann, J. F. (2012). You say the party is dull, I say it is lively: A componential approach to how situations are perceived to disentangle perceiver, situation, and perceiver x situation variance. *Social Psychological and Personality Science, 3*, 519-528.


