

# PROJECT SUMMARY

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## **Overview:**

Culture is reflected and transmitted through the daily experience of ordinary situations. However, psychological research has traditionally paid much more attention to the conceptualization and measurement of persons than of situations, and this imbalance extends to cross-cultural psychology. The proposed research moves to remedy this imbalance, in a project guided by the hypothesis that attributes of situational experience are active ingredients of culture.

Participants recruited by an international team of collaborators login to a multi-lingual website, where they use the recently-developed Riverside Situational Q-sort (RSQ) to describe a situation they experienced within the previous 24 hours. Participants also describe their behavior in these situations and, separately, their personalities. Data analyses address both descriptive and theoretically-guided questions. Descriptive questions include:

1. To what extent is situational experience similar and different across cultures?
2. Which cultures are most and least similar in average situational experience?
3. How do specific elements of situational experience differ across cultures?
4. Which elements of situational experience vary the most and least across cultures?
5. How do relations among personality, behavior and situations vary across cultures?

The answers to these questions are important, because the basic terrain of similarities and differences in situational experience around the world remains to be mapped.

Theoretically-guided questions include:

1. What are the essential dimensions of situational experience across cultures?
2. How are international differences in personality associated with situational experience?
3. How are cultural values associated with situational experience?
4. What other culture-level variables are associated with situational experience?

Associations with meaningful cultural attributes will confirm the hypothesis that international variations in situational experience are important active ingredients of culture.

## **Intellectual Merit :**

Intellectual merit stems from the importance of the substantive topic (cross-cultural differences in situational experience), the unique methodological approach (first-person assessments using the RSQ), and the integration of prior research on dimensions of culture (including values and personality) with the study of situational experience.

## **Broader Impacts :**

First, the project expands the use of the Riverside Situational Q-sort to a unique and important context, encouraging others to use this instrument and to develop other tools for the cross-cultural study of situations.

Second, the project will construct and make freely available a new, multi-lingual website for collecting international data. In addition, we will post our data online for others to confirm our analyses or to conduct innovative ones of their own.

Third, the findings of this research will contribute to cross-cultural understanding, which is important for the world economy and for avoiding and resolving international conflict.

Fourth, the project involves student researchers from historically underrepresented groups.

UC Riverside is a Minority Serving Institution (MSI) and Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI).

Fifth, the project enhances the world-wide infrastructure of science, by maintaining and extending an already-sizable international network of research collaborators.

The project is potentially transformative because: (1) By developing a novel and unique method for comparing situational experience around the world, it opens new questions for cross-cultural research. (2) By developing a new, flexible, multi-lingual, open-source website, it will stimulate international research using Q-sort methodology. (3) By providing unprecedented data about how situations are experienced similarly and differently around the world, it will provide unique insight into the basic processes that reflect and transmit culture.

### Introduction: The Active Ingredients of Culture

Behavior is a function of an interaction between the person and the situation. Everybody knows this by now (Funder, 2001). However, psychology has long paid far more attention to the conceptualization and measurement of persons than of situations (Reis, 2008), and this imbalance extends to cross-cultural psychology. The imbalance is troubling, because while culture is reflected and transmitted through the daily experience of ordinary situations (Gangestad, Haselton & Buss, 2006; Oyserman, Klemmmeier, & Coon, 2002), little is known about the degree to which such experience is the same or different around the world.

Numerous investigations have identified ways in which persons differ psychologically across countries (Church, 2010)<sup>1</sup>. These include values (Hofstede, 1980, 2010; Ingelhart et al., 2004; Schwartz et al., 2012), social orientation (Markus & Kitayama, 1998; Masuda & Nisbett, 2001), and personality structure (Gurven, Rueden, Massenkoff, & Kaplan, 2013; McCrae & Allik, 2002; McCrae & Costa, 1997). Research also has addressed the match between international differences in personality and national stereotypes (Hřebíčková & Graf, 2014; McCrae et al., 2013; Realo et al., 2009; Terracciano et al., 2005), and cross-cultural differences in within-person behavioral variability (Ching et al., 2013; Church et al., 2013).

Research has paid much less attention to the experience of everyday *situations*. “Situations,” in this context, can be defined as configurations of socially-relevant stimuli that are stable for significant but limited periods of time (generally a few minutes but sometimes longer). In a detailed conceptual analysis, Rauthmann, Sherman & Funder (2015) distinguish situations from *occurrences*, which are brief and unstable, and *episodes*, *life events*, *environments*, and *contexts*, which are (increasingly) long-term and more stable aspects of the social environment. While not all situations are social (e.g., those that occur while living alone on a desert island), social situations are the ones that reflect and transmit culture.

The traditional method for assessing cultural environments has been anthropological field work. Researchers immerse themselves in unfamiliar settings, interview informants, and return with detailed or “thick” descriptions (Shweder, 1991). However, anthropological research generally eschews cross-cultural comparison, which is sometimes seen as inimical to full understanding (Frake, 1980).

A few groundbreaking studies within psychology have compared particular aspects of situations across cultures. Realo, Linnamägi and Gelfand (2014) compared situational constraint between Estonia and Greece. Church, Katigbak, and del Prado (2010) gathered informants’ ratings of the degree to which hypothetical situations were conducive to expressing the Big Five personality traits in the US and the Philippines. Pioneering studies using the “situation sampling” method asked participants to recall situations relevant to self-esteem (Kitayama, Markus, Matsumoto, & Narasakunkit, 1997), emotions (Kitayama, Mesquita, & Miyamoto, 2006), and social influence and adjustment (Morling, Kitayama, & Miyamoto, 2002). However, these studies and others have generally been limited to specific categories of situations (e.g., ones “that affected your self-esteem”) rated along single dimensions (e.g., whether a situation “would increase or decrease your self-esteem”), and compared across only two countries (usually the US and Japan)<sup>2</sup>. In this way they follow what Bond (2002, p. 74) has called “the standard operating procedure of using only two cultural groups.” The situation sampling method could, in principle, be extended to asking subjects to rate typical rather than particular kinds of situations and expanded to more countries beyond the usual two. A more critical omission in previous research is the *comprehensive* assessment of situational

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<sup>1</sup> Exact definitions of “culture” vary and the issues are complex (Valsiner, 2003), but most (not all) “cross-cultural” research entails comparisons across different nations, the approach of the present study.

<sup>2</sup> A rare exception was a study by Gelfand et al. (2011) that asked participants in 33 countries to rate the degree to which social norms constrained behavior in hypothetical settings (e.g., bank, park, bedroom).

experience, making holistic comparison of cultural similarities and differences impossible. In this way, much cross-cultural research resembles experimental social psychology, which also typically examines just one or occasionally two situational dimensions at a time.

The general lack of comprehensive situational assessment in psychological research has largely stemmed from the lack of an appropriate measurement tool. Innovative researchers have addressed the classification of situations within single countries (among others: Bem & Funder, 1978; Edwards & Templeton, 2005; Forgas & Van Heck, 1992; Furr & Funder, 2004; Kelley et al., 2003; Magnusson, 1971; Reis, 2008; ten Berge & De Raad, 2002; Van Heck, 1984; Yang, Read & Miller, 2006). However, their work focused on discovering important dimensions of situations rather than constructing an instrument to measure them, much less an instrument that could be applied cross-culturally.

The Riverside Situational Q-sort (RSQ; Wagerman & Funder, 2009) aims to fill this gap. It describes situations with 89 items such as "a job needs to be done" and "talking is expected or demanded" and allows situations to be compared with each other holistically rather than just along single dimensions. As detailed in the next section, research has already successfully used the RSQ in studies of behavioral consistency (Sherman, Nave & Funder, 2010, 2012), situational construal (Sherman, Nave & Funder, 2013), and even evolutionary theory (Morse, Neel, Todd & Funder, in press). A pilot study described below has demonstrated its potential for cross-cultural investigation. The purpose of the proposed project is to fulfill this potential, addressing larger theoretical issues as well as fundamental descriptive questions. The overall theoretical hypothesis is that *situational experience is an important active ingredient of culture*.

Descriptive questions include:

1. To what degree is situational experience similar and different across cultures?
2. Which cultures are most and least similar in average situational experience?
3. How does the similarity of situational experience within cultures compare to its similarity across cultures?
4. How do specific elements of situational experience – the 89 items of the RSQ – vary across cultures, and which ones vary the most and least?
5. To what degree, and in what ways, are the relations between personality, behavior and situations -- the "personality triad" (Funder, 2006) -- similar and different across cultures?

The answers to these fundamental questions are, at present, completely unknown, because they require precisely the sort of method for holistic situational description that has been lacking until now. The basic terrain of similarities and differences in situational experience around the world remains to be mapped.

Theoretically-guided questions include:

1. Is there a universal structure of situational experience across cultures? Recent research across 5 countries found that the 89 items of the RSQ can be usefully reduced to 8 basic factors, labeled Duty, Intellect, Adversity, Mating, Positivity, Negativity, Deception and Sociality (Rauthmann, Sherman, Nave & Funder, 2014). Will these factors emerge across a larger number of more geographically diverse countries? To what degree are these factors useful for assessing cross-cultural differences in situational experience?
2. How are international differences in the Big Five personality traits (McCrae, Terracciano, et al, 2005; Schmidt et al., 2007) connected with differences in situational experience?
3. Are international differences in values, as assessed by the well-known surveys of Hofstede (1980) and others, connected with differences in situational experience?
4. Is cultural constraint associated with variability in situational experience? Gelfand et al. (2011) measured "tightness-looseness" in 33 countries. An intriguing hypothesis, which the proposed research will address, is that countries with higher scores will have less variability in situational experience.
5. What other culture-level variables are associated with situational experience? Promising

cultural characteristics include Bond et al.'s (2004) measurements of "dynamic externality" and "societal cynicism" in 41 cultures and other variables ranging from economic and demographic differences (e.g., Lynn & Martin, 1995) to climatic warmth and immune load (McCrae, Terracciano, Realo & Allik, 2007; Schaller & Murray, 2008).

The big question addressed by this research, the one that underlies *all* the specific theoretical and descriptive questions outlined above, is this: What are the active ingredients of culture? Many possibilities have been suggested over the years, including customs, laws, religious beliefs, child-rearing practices and even mealtime rituals. The present research adds another entry to this list: the daily experience of situations.

### Results of Prior NSF Support

**Overview** Our lab has been supported by two NSF grants. The first, BCS 0642243, "The Psychological Assessment of Situations," was active from May 1, 2007 to April 30, 2010, with a no-cost extension to April 30, 2011 and a total funding of \$309,209. This grant was co-sponsored by the Social Psychology and the Measurement and Methodology Programs. The second grant, BCS 1052638, "The Construal of Situations," was active from May 1, 2011 through April 30, 2014, with a no-cost extension to April 30, 2015 and total funding of \$274,994.

To date these grants have supported eight published empirical articles (Funder, Guillaume, Kumagi, Kawamoto, & Sato, 2012; Morse, Neel, Todd & Funder, in press; Naumann, Guillaume & Funder, 2012; Rauthmann, et al., 2014; Sherman, Figueredo & Funder, 2013; Sherman, Nave & Funder, 2010, 2012, 2013), one article on statistical methodology (Sherman & Funder, 2009), and three theoretical commentaries (Funder, 2009a, 2009b; Wagerman & Funder, 2009). Two more articles were recently submitted for publication (Guillaume, Todd...30 international authors, & Funder, 2014; Rauthmann, Sherman, Nave & Funder, 2015).

The first grant supported the development and initial application of a new tool for situational assessment, the Riverside Situational Q-sort (RSQ). The second grant supported research on "construal," the individual interpretation of situations. We video recorded the behavior of 231 participants in three different 3-person interactions. Afterwards, participants rated their perceptions of the situations (using the RSQ). For data analyses, "construal" was operationalized in two ways (1) the difference between a participant's RSQ description of the situation and the consensus of his or her 2 partners, and (2) the difference between his or her RSQ and descriptions provided by impartial research assistants who view the videos. Participants provided measures of their personalities, notably the California Adult Q-sort (CAQ; Block, 1978), and their personalities were also described by two close acquaintances.

Data collection was completed in January, 2014 and coding of the videos by research assistants is currently in progress. The data have already yielded results reported in a doctoral dissertation (Todd, 2014) and several articles being prepared for publication.

**Human resource development** Our lab routinely recruits and trains undergraduate research assistants who, in exchange for course credit, work with participants, code video observations, and perform other important tasks. The project has employed more than 200 undergraduate students in this capacity since commencement of NSF support.

Graduate students Seth Wagerman, Ryne Sherman, Chris Nave, Esther Guillaume, John Rauthmann, Elysia Todd, Patrick Morse, Erica Baranski and Kyle Sauerberger co-authored articles as part of their research work. Wagerman earned his Ph.D. in 2007 and Sherman and Nave completed theirs in 2011. Todd completed her Ph.D. in 2014. The others are continuing. John Rauthmann first became associated with our research when he was an undergraduate at the University of Innsbruck visiting UCR; he continued this association through earning his Ph.D. at Humboldt University in Berlin in 2014 (the PI was a member of his committee) and into his current junior faculty position there. Laura Naumann, a postdoctoral scholar supported by an independent NSF Minority Postdoctoral fellowship, joined our lab for the year during 2010. She

is now a member of the faculty at the University of Nevada, Reno.

**Situations and behavior** One of the first published studies using the RSQ found that situations experienced over time by a given participant tend to be described more similarly to each other than to situations experienced by other participants (Sherman, Nave & Funder, 2010). Moreover, behavior tends to be more consistent across situations described more similarly, and personality characteristics predicted individual degrees of behavioral consistency, even after statistically controlling for situational similarity. A further study found that the degree to which one's personality matches or is "congruent" with one's behavior in particular situations is associated with psychological adjustment (Sherman et al., 2012). Examinations of individual RSQ items have also been informative. Gender and personality are associated with distinctive ratings of certain items; for example, extraverts are more likely to see themselves as the focus of attention in an interaction, and men are more likely than women to see a situation as including a potential for someone being blamed for something (Sherman, Nave & Funder, 2013). Additionally, the RSQ was used to test predictions of situation-behavior correlations derived from evolutionary theory (Morse et al., in press).

**Situational construal** In an experimental study, participants used the RSQ to describe situations portrayed on video clips. The principal finding was that construing a situation "distinctively" (i.e., differently from most other observers), was associated with personality attributes including Neuroticism and Openness (Todd & Funder, 2012; see also Serfass & Sherman, 2013). The first analyses to emerge from the major study of construal supported by the second grant recently found that individuals who construe the situations they experience distinctively, i.e., who describe it (with the RSQ) differently from the consensus of their two interaction partners, tend to be negativistic, hostile, and self-defeating (Todd, 2014).

**Cross-cultural situational assessment** The first cross-cultural application of the RSQ found that behavioral correlates of items including "P [the participant] is being criticized" and "members of the opposite sex are present" were remarkably similar in the United States and Japan (Funder et al., 2012). These results encouraged us to consider this question: What is the broader potential for the RSQ as a means to assess similarities and differences in situational experience across cultures?

Our lab recently conducted a pilot project to provide a preliminary answer (Guillaume et al., 2014). Using a custom-built website, 5447 members of college communities from 20 countries<sup>3</sup>, recruited by local collaborators, used the Riverside Situational Q-sort (RSQ) to describe the situation they experienced the previous evening at 7pm. The average situational Q-sort profile of each country was compared with the others; correlations ranged from  $r = .73$  to  $r = .95$ . The most similar were USA/Canada; the least similar were South Korea/Denmark. The country with the most similar situational experience to the others, overall, was Canada; the most distinctive were South Korea and Japan. Comparisons among individuals, as opposed to national averages, indicated that Japan had the most homogenous situational experience across individuals; South Korea was the least homogenous. Among the RSQ items that varied the most across countries were "situation is potentially emotionally arousing," and "others are present who need or desire reassurance"; among the least varying items were "a decision needs to be made," "members of the opposite sex are present," and "situation is potentially enjoyable." In general, the most varying items described relatively negative aspects of situational experience; the least varying items were more positive.

The most important contribution of the pilot study was to demonstrate the usefulness of the RSQ for cross-cultural situational assessment, and the feasibility of recruiting an international team of research collaborators. Its success encouraged the development of this proposal.

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<sup>3</sup> The countries are Australia, Austria, Canada, China, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Germany, Italy, Japan, Netherlands, Poland, Russia, Singapore, Slovakia, South Africa, South Korea, Spain, UK, and US.

**Broader impacts** Understanding the ways that different people may construe and respond to the same situation is fundamental to understanding personality (Allport, 1961); thus the present research has major implications for personality theory. The difference between situations as they really are and how they are perceived – Murray's (1938) alpha and beta press – is a central concern for psychopathology. Thus, the research also has implications for clinical psychology. The success of the RSQ in international application has promising implications for cross-cultural research.

As mentioned above, the project is closely involved with the education of undergraduate, graduate, and postdoctoral students. Because UCR is an officially designated Minority Serving Institution (MSI) and Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI), this involvement directly supports the professional scientific development of members of underrepresented groups.

For outreach, the research findings are disseminated through major journal publications, convention presentations, and the lab website<sup>4</sup>. Computer programs for computerized Q-sorting and for randomization tests are also freely available on this website, without restriction.

**Intellectual merit** This research program successfully developed and implemented an innovative and useful methodology for situational assessment. Specifically, as outlined above, development of the RSQ enabled research that shed new light on the basis of behavioral consistency, personality-behavior congruence, and individual differences in situational construal. Finally, a recent, preliminary study provides encouraging evidence that the RSQ is useful for assessing cross-cultural differences in situational experience.

*Publications from Prior NSF Support*

- Funder, D.C. (2009a). Naïve and obvious questions. *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, 4, 340-344.
- Funder, D.C. (2009b). Persons, behaviors and situations: An agenda for personality psychology in the postwar era. *Journal of Research in Personality*, 43, 120-126.
- Funder, D.C., Guillaume, E., Kumagai, S., Kawamoto, S., & Sato, T. (2012). The person-situation debate and the assessment of situations. *Japanese Journal of Personality*, 21, 1-11.
- Morse, P., Neel, R., Todd, E., & Funder, D.C. (in press). Renovating situation taxonomies: Exploring the construction and content of fundamental motive situation types. *Journal of Personality*.
- Naumann, L.P., Guillaume, E.M., & Funder, D.C. (2012). The correlates of high parental academic expectations: An Asian-Latino comparison. *Journal of Cross Cultural Psychology*, 43, 515-520.
- Rauthmann, J.F., Gallardo-Pujol, D., Guillaume, E.M., Todd, E., Nave, C.S., Sherman, R.A., Ziegler, M., Jones, A.B., & Funder, D.C. (2014). Situational eight DIAMONDS: A taxonomy of major dimensions of situation characteristics. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 107, 677-718.
- Sherman, R.A., Figueredo, A.J., & Funder, D.C. (2013). The behavioral correlates of overall and distinctive life strategy. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 105, 873-888.
- Sherman, R.A., & Funder, D.C. (2009). Evaluating correlations in studies of personality and behavior: Beyond the number of significant findings to be expected by chance. *Journal of Research in Personality*, 43, 1053-1063.
- Sherman, R.A., Nave, C.S., & Funder, D.C. (2010). Situational similarity and personality predict behavioral consistency. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 99, 330-343.
- Sherman, R.A., Nave, C.S., & Funder, D.C. (2012). Properties of persons and situations related to overall and distinctive personality-behavior congruence. *Journal of Research in*

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<sup>4</sup> The URL is not provided here because of NSF guidelines concerning proposal content. It can easily be found via a web search for "Riverside Accuracy Project."

*Personality*, 46, 87-101.

Sherman, R.A., Nave, C.S., & Funder, D.C. (2013). Situational construal is related to personality and gender. *Journal of Research in Personality*, 47, 1-14.

Wagerman, S.A., & Funder, D.C. (2009). Personality psychology of situations. In P.J. Corr and G. Matthews (Eds.), *Cambridge Handbook of Personality* (pp. 27-42). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

### **The International Situations Project**

The proposed project aims to assess the *situational experience* of a sizable sample of participants from around the world. To be sure, situations can be conceptualized as existing separately from individuals' perceptions of them, such as Murray's (1938) classic distinction between alpha and beta press. As in our past research, the project includes a facet designed to measure objective properties of situations separately from subjective ones (see *Procedure*).

Still, for cross-cultural comparison, first-person situational experience remains key. This experience is a joint product of both the objective situation that confronts an individual and his or her construal of it. At the cultural level of analysis, the two are closely tied and for comparative purposes may not be meaningfully different. An individual's perception of reality must be close to reality itself for simple reasons of survival, and the average individual's perception of situations within a culture is an important property of the culture in its own right and, in fact, comprises a reasonable approximation of "cultural reality." Moreover, at least one comprehensive theoretical model shows the objective situation and its subjective construal prone to exactly the same cultural influences (Oyserman et al., 2002, Figure 1, p. 113). As Oyserman (2002) et al. observed, "In spite of the many ways in which cultures differ, the proximal prediction of affective, behavioral and cognitive responses will be subjective construal of the situation" (p. 116). In other words, situational experience is where the rubber meets the road. For this reason, it is the central focus of the proposed research.

**An International Collaboration** The participants will be recruited by local collaborators, psychological researchers who themselves reside in the countries from which the participants are recruited. We proceed in this way for two reasons.

- (1) The major alternative method for international on-line data gathering, Amazon's Mechanical Turk (MT), while useful for some purposes, also entails many problems (see Paolacci & Chandler, 2014, for a balanced overview). A disproportionate share of MT participants are from two countries, the US and India, many MT participants are near-"professionals" who respond to numerous studies and surveys, sometimes simultaneously, and the demographics of MT users are often very different from those of the countries in which they reside. Questions have also been raised concerning the accuracy with which MT participants identify their countries of residence (Shapiro, Chandler & Mueller, 2013), a critical issue for the present research.
- (2) Some cross-cultural studies follow the model sometimes called "research by 747" (Doob, 1980), in which researchers briefly visit the cultures they wish to study and then return home to write reports from their own cultural perspective. In contrast, our international partners are full collaborators in the enterprise, who help to design and translate research instruments, interpret data, and co-author articles. Our pilot study, currently under editorial review, has 33 authors from 20 different countries.

Some collaborators in the pilot study were already professional acquaintances of the PI. In addition, we sought out international researchers at conferences where they presented posters or symposia, notably SPSP, the International Association for Cross-cultural Psychology, and the European Association for Personality Psychology. The Supplementary Documents include

letters of commitment from 23 psychologists in 18 countries<sup>5</sup> (not counting the US); many of these are internationally recognized experts in cross-cultural psychology.<sup>6</sup> We continue to seek collaborators in India, the Middle East, South America, and elsewhere in Africa with a goal of at least 40 countries and preferably more. We also seek collaborators at multiple sites within countries when feasible and appropriate. Within-country cultural variation (e.g., within Russia, South Africa and the US) can be as meaningful as variation between countries (e.g., Allik et al., 2009; Nisbett & Cohen, 1996; Valchev et al., 2013).

The travel budget allows the PI and graduate students to approach potential collaborators in person and to keep in touch as the project proceeds. For the most part, such contact occurs at professional meetings that attract international attendance. Within the past two years, the PI has also personally visited several collaborators at their own labs in Japan and in Europe.

**Recruiting participants** Local university-based collaborators seek out and recruit participants from their own countries and communities and provide them the study ID and login information.

In our pilot study, these participants were all members of local college communities. In this more extensive study, we will work with our collaborators to recruit wider samples, through local advertising and other means. Demographic information will be obtained to allow for statistical correction of sample differences, when appropriate (see *Analyses*). A budget to cover small payments to participants is included when necessary.

*N and Power* For setting the N, our practice has been “as large as possible during the time allotted.” In order to complete data collection in an orderly fashion, we have found that it is best to specify a common time period for data gathering, e.g., June 30, 2016 to December 31, 2017. Experience suggests that it will not be difficult to obtain a large overall sample. Our pilot study had a total N of over 5000 in 20 countries, and in the new study we anticipate a total N of at least 10,000 across 40 or more countries. Sample sizes will vary widely because of particular circumstances in local contexts. We will set a minimum goal for each country of 120 participants, 60 of each gender. An N of 120 yields a power of approximately .60 for detecting an “average” effect size for personality and social psychology research of  $r = .21$  (Richard, Bond & Stokes-Zoota, 2003; Fraley & Marks, 2007); the total sample size for many calculations and comparisons will be much larger.

*Human Subjects Issues* Concerns involving human subjects have been less onerous than we anticipated (or feared). Our own IRB ruled the project “exempt/expedited” (judging it to be a fairly innocuous survey), and we provided copies of their approval to our collaborators on request. In most cases, this was sufficient to satisfy local authorities; a few collaborators submitted materials to their own IRB-equivalent organizations.

**Procedure** Participants login to the study website, which guides them through the procedure.

*A Note on Website Redevelopment* Our existing data-gathering website<sup>7</sup> was constructed on a shoestring by a succession of free-lance developers. It is currently functional and includes, as well as its visible participant interface, a back end that collects and organizes data into Excel and csv files that allow easy sharing with research collaborators. However, the site is running into serious problems. The goal of our initial developer was to quickly design a working website on a limited budget, a goal successfully accomplished. Successive developers added revisions to accommodate new languages (e.g., Arabic and Hebrew, which read from right to left) and refinements in the experimental procedure. The resulting code has grown complex and unevenly documented. At the same time, continual updates in operating systems are beginning

<sup>5</sup> Our UK and Austrian collaborators recently relocated to Germany.

<sup>6</sup> Two of them (Sylvie Graf, Czech Republic, and Anu Realo, Estonia) provided extensive, useful comments on this very proposal. Errors and omissions of course remain the sole responsibility of the PI.

<sup>7</sup> This site can be found via a web search for “International Situations Project.”



to make the site unstable and it will eventually become unusable. Therefore, the budget includes a professional developer to completely redesign the site with the goals of long-term stability, flexibility, and thorough documentation.

**Procedure Step 1: Logging in and Providing Demographic Information** After logging in to the website, participants begin by providing demographic information, which will allow us to compare each of our samples with population data for each country and, as mentioned above, when appropriate to statistically adjust for differences in samples (e.g., age, education level; see *Analyses*). We learned early in our pilot research that ethnic and demographic categories traditionally used (or even legally mandated) in the US often make little sense in the international context. Therefore, with our international collaborators we are developing a more nuanced measure of ethnicity and national background.

**Procedure Step 2: Describing the Situation** Situations have both an objective and subjective aspect (Murray, 1938). Some past studies have separated these aspects by having participants rate their perceptions of hypothetical situations presented verbally or on film, a method we have used in some of our own research (e.g., Todd & Funder, 2012). Another approach is to place participants in artificial, experimental situations where their behavior can be video-recorded, which was the method of our previous and still ongoing project (Todd, 2014).

Research is more complex when the situations are real experiences in participants' daily lives. Ideally, several independent raters would unobtrusively observe and rate participants' situations. However, this method is impossible in an international project of this scope for both practical and ethical reasons. A work-around is to ask participants to describe their own situations by reporting objective, simple and concrete "cues" (Rauthmann et al., 2015) prompted by W-questions: *Where were you? What were you doing? Who else was present?* While such a description is still filtered through the participant's perception, its specific, concrete nature allows for separate coding of the objective nature of the situation, which can be compared with participants' subjective construals as reported via the RSQ (see below). Our lab used this method in studies of situational construal by Sherman et al. (2013) and Rauthmann, Sherman, Nave & Funder (2014).<sup>8</sup>

Thus, following the prompt of the W-questions (where, what, who) described above, participants write a brief description (in their own language) of the situation they encountered at a randomly assigned, specified time the previous day, either 10 am or 7 pm. After writing this description, participants are guided through an RSQ assessment of their situational experience.

**Procedure Step 3: Describing Situational Experience using the RSQ** The RSQ, like all Q-sorts, is essentially a rank-ordering, with ties allowed. Using a drag-and-drop function on a computer screen, participants sort the 89 items into 9 categories ranging from "extremely characteristic" to "extremely uncharacteristic," in a forced distribution of 3, 6, 11, 15, 19, 15, 11, 6, and 3 items per category. Thus, by design, only a few items can be rated as highly characteristic or uncharacteristic.

Table 1 displays the RSQ items with the 5 highest and lowest mean ratings across the 20 countries in our pilot study. This version for international use (RSQ 3.15; Funder & Guillaume, 2013) was developed to simplify language and eliminate psychological jargon and idioms that are difficult to translate. For example, "Situation has potential to arouse internal conflicts and related anxiety," was revised to "Situation has potential to arouse competing motivations."

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<sup>8</sup> Another way to separate construal from objective aspects of situations is to gather participants' responses to filmed or written hypothetical vignettes (Peng, Nisbett & Wong, 1997), a strategy we also have used in our own research (Todd & Funder, 2012). However, a distinctive aspect of the proposed project is that it moves beyond such hypotheticals to compare experience in real situations, and adding vignettes to the other aspects of the study would increase time demands on participants to an unreasonable degree, given that most are volunteers participating without compensation.

We follow conventional practices of back-translation, in which the local collaborator translates the English text into his or her own language, and then an independent bilingual person translates it back into English. The two versions are compared and inconsistencies resolved. For example, the initial translation into Japanese of item 77, "Affords an opportunity to express charm," was back-translated as "Affords an opportunity to express attraction." The initial translation into Estonian of item 35, "A person or activity could be undermined or sabotaged," was back-translated as "A person or act could be hallowed or sabotaged." Such discrepancies were actually rare during our pilot research, and all were addressed in collaboration with our international collaborators. We have found it invaluable that our international translators are themselves psychologists, allowing for fruitful discussions of exact wording to capture constructs of interest.

Materials have been translated and placed online in 17 languages so far. As was mentioned in the previous section, the results of the pilot study showed, among other findings, that average RSQ descriptions of situations were remarkably similar across cultures. This finding might or might not be surprising<sup>9</sup>, but it does suggest that participants successfully followed the translated instructions, and understood the RSQ items similarly across languages. It also implies that Table 1 offers a reasonable description of the typical situation experienced by our participants around the world at 7 pm, which was a mildly pleasant social interaction.

**Table 1**

RSQ Version 3.15: Items with Highest and Lowest Mean Ratings across 20 Countries

RSQ #	RSQ Situational Item	Overall Mean
rsq076	Situation is basically simple and clear-cut.	7.01
rsq056	Social interaction is possible.	6.64
rsq001	Situation is potentially enjoyable.	6.42
rsq007	Talking is permitted.	6.31
rsq046	Situation allows a free range of emotional expression.	6.00
rsq074	Potential romantic partners (for P) are present.	3.86
rsq070	Situation includes stimuli that could be construed sexually.	3.38
rsq042	Situation contains physical threats.	3.31
rsq082	P's independence and autonomy is questioned or threatened.	3.17
rsq072	P is being abused or victimized.	2.17

Note. Complete RSQ has 89 items. Ratings are from a Q-sort distribution ranging from 1 (highly uncharacteristic) to 9 (highly characteristic).

The RSQ was designed to be a general-purpose instrument and has already been applied in many different ways, as outlined earlier. It was not designed specifically for cross-cultural comparison. This fact entails an inevitable trade-off. A general instrument allows results to be compared across theoretical and applied research contexts; a specific instrument may be better suited for each context considered individually. We expect that the proposed research will stimulate further research in our lab and elsewhere to develop new, specifically focused instruments to explore cultural variation in situational experience in even greater depth.

**Procedure Step 4: Rating Behavior** Directly after completing the RSQ, participants will rate their behavior in the situation using the 68-item Riverside Behavioral Q-sort, or RBQ (Funder, Furr & Colvin, 2000; Furr, Wagerman & Funder, 2010). Similar in format to the RSQ (and

<sup>9</sup> Allik (2012) reported that variance in personality trait scores "produced by cross-cultural differences is approximately nine times smaller than what is produced by individual variance within each country" (p. 115).

developed years earlier), the RBQ includes items such as “Dominates the situation,” “Smiles frequently,” and “Concentrates on or works hard at a task.”

**Procedure Step 5: Self-ratings of Personality** Approximately one week later, participants will receive an email directing them to a separate website to complete descriptions of their personality using a translated version of the modified California Adult Q-sort (CAQ; Block, 1978). This comprehensive, 100-item instrument includes items such as “Is critical, skeptical, not easily impressed,” “is a genuinely dependable and responsible person,” and “has a wide range of interests.” It has been used in a wide range of prior research by numerous investigators, including the present PI, demonstrating generally good agreement between self and peer reports, and impressive validity for the prediction of life outcomes and experimentally measured behaviors (e.g. Funder, Kolar & Blackman, 1995; Spain, Eaton & Funder, 2000; Fast & Funder, 2008). This follow-up session will also gather self-reports using the Big Five Inventory (BFI; John, Donahue & Kentle, 1991), a 44-item personality instrument designed to measure the five factors of personality as derived from lexical analyses (McCrae & Costa, 2008): Neuroticism, Extraversion, Conscientiousness, Agreeableness, and Openness.

## Analyses

The scope of this project and its data afford many different analyses. The 89 RSQ-item ratings from each participant can be holistically compared as a “profile” with the 89 ratings provided any other participant, by computing conventional correlation coefficients. Each item rating can also be averaged across individuals within a country, yielding a single average profile that can be compared holistically with other countries. In addition, mean placements of individual items can be compared across countries. Parallel analyses can be conducted using the behavioral information from the RBQ, and the personality information from the CAQ. These and other analyses address both descriptive and theoretically-guided research questions.

### Descriptive Questions

- 1. To what degree is situational experience similar and different across cultures? Which cultures have the most and least similar situational experience?** Within each gender within each country, the 89-item RSQ profiles provided by each participant are averaged across participants, yielding two sets of 89 average scores. The averages of the female and male participants are then averaged so that each gender contributes equally to each country's profile. This 89-item "profile" of average scores is then correlated with the 89 scores of each of the other countries.
- 2. How does similarity of experience within cultures compare with similarity of experience across cultures? Which cultures have the most homogenous situational experience?** The analysis to address these questions compares each *individual's* RSQ with that of every other (same-gender) *individual* within his or her country. The average of these values is a measure of the homogeneity or similarity of situational experience within countries.
- 3. Which RSQ items vary the most and least across countries?** The first question is addressed with an omnibus analysis of variance of each item across the countries. While it can be expected that (as in our pilot data) *all* omnibus differences will be "significant," the eta effect size from each test shows the degree to which that item varies across countries. In our pilot study, negative aspects of experience varied more across countries than did positive aspects. This intriguing finding deserves to be replicated and extended.
- 4. How does similarity of situational experience vary according to time of day or day of the week?** Participants will be randomly assigned to whether they are asked to report their experience at 10am or 7pm the previous day. Using information logged automatically by the website, the preceding analyses can also be broken out by day of the week. The primary hypothesis is that average experience on weekdays will be relatively homogenous

with each other compared to weekends, and that experience at a single time of day (within the times of 10 am or 7 pm) will be more similar than at multiple times (comparisons between 10 am and 7 pm).

5. **Are cross-cultural similarities different at different times of the day or days of the week?** This analysis breaks out the analyses described in points 1 and 2 by time and day.
6. **Are there groups or “clusters” of countries that are more and less similar to each other in their situational experience?** Examination of the data in our preliminary study did not reveal any obvious clusters of countries; for example, Asian countries do not seem to be notably more similar to each other than to European countries. However, the sample of countries was limited and the range of experience in the college samples may be restricted, making the proposed more extensive study important to conduct. With a larger and more diverse sample of countries included, cluster analyses can be used to identify groups with similar situational experience, which may be based on geography, economics, language, or some other yet-to-be-identified factor.
7. **How do patterns of behavior vary across countries?** The exact same analyses summarized above (points 1-5) will be performed using RBQ items instead of RSQ items, to address parallel questions. For example, what countries have the most and least similar patterns of self-reported *behaviors* at 10 am and 7 pm? The proposed study will provide unprecedented data allowing the comparison of specific behaviors across cultures.
8. **How do correlations between situations and behaviors vary across countries?** This question will be addressed by correlating each of the RSQ items in each country with each of the RBQ items, yielding an 89 x 68 matrix (or a 89 x 68 x 2 matrix for analyses separated by gender). These matrices will then be correlated with each other to reveal to what degree and how patterns of situation-behavior correlations differ across culture.
9. **How does personality vary across countries?** Cross-cultural similarity and difference in personality is a long-standing topic of psychological research, which has largely focused on the degree to which the Big Five are, or are not, universal dimensions and the degree to which international differences in personality map onto national stereotypes. Importantly, prominent researchers have called for cross-cultural research on personality that uses forced-choice methods (such as the Q-sort) because the method eliminates or lessens the influence of response sets such as acquiescence, extremity and social desirability, as well as the reference group effect (Heine, Lehman, Peng & Greenholtz, 2002; Ross & Mirowsky, 1984). The inclusion of the 100-item CAQ along with conventional Big Five personality measures answers this call, and allows assessment of the degree to which prior findings of cross-cultural differences in personality will be replicated using an instrument with less potential contaminated by response sets than the usual methods.
10. **How do relations between personality, behavior, and situational experience vary across countries?** Relations between personality, behavior and situational experience will be revealed in 100 x 68 (for behavior) and 100 x 89 (for situational experience) correlation matrices. Analyses of these matrices will yield the first-ever map of the countries around the world that are most and least similar in their patterns of personality-situation-behavior relations.

The questions listed above are exploratory and, in one sense, "merely" descriptive. However, it is important to note that because prior research has never attempted comprehensive situational assessment of the sort envisioned by this project, **the answers to these fundamental descriptive questions are almost completely unknown**. While single attributes of situational experience have been examined by a few cross-cultural studies, usually comparing only two countries, no prior research has ever attempted holistic comparison around the world. Cross-cultural comparisons of self-reports of specific behaviors at specific times (i.e., 10 am or 7 pm) have never been reported before. Cross-cultural comparisons of personality have been done before, but no study has used a forced-choice instrument such as the Q-sort. In

particular, no prior research has ever attempted comparison across cultures in the relations *among* personality, situations, and behavior – the “personality triad” (Funder, 2006). Thus, these descriptive questions venture into true *terra incognita* and their answers will represent genuinely new knowledge that can form a basis for subsequent inductive theory building (Haig, 2014).

While we look forward to stimulating the development of new theory, several prior theoretical efforts generate questions that can be addressed by the proposed research.

### **Theoretically-guided Questions**

1. **Is there a universal structure of situational experience across cultures?** Recent research across 5 countries (Austria, Germany, India, Spain, US ) indicates that the 89 items of the RSQ can be usefully reduced to 8 basic factors, labeled Duty, Intellect, Adversity, Mating, POSitivity, Negativity, Deception and Sociality (abbreviated DIAMONDS; Rauthmann et al., 2014). Will these factors emerge across an even larger number of countries? To what degree will they prove useful in assessing cross-cultural differences in situational experience? To answer this last question, the analyses described above will be repeated using the 8 DIAMONDS dimensions in place of the 89 RSQ items.
2. **Are national differences in personality associated with differences in situational experience?** Mean scores on the Big Five personality traits are available for a large number of countries (e.g., Schmitt et al., 2007; McCrae et al., 2005), and these norms are also available separately for men and women (Schmitt et al., 2008). The present research will gather its own Big Five ratings, allowing comparison with these norms. The usual presumption is that national differences in personality both produce and are a result of differences in situational experience, but suggestions have also been made that these differences have a genetic basis (e.g., Lynn, 1981). Relevant data are lacking. This project will provide the first-ever opportunity to provide such data, by correlating RSQ items and DIAMONDS factors with country-level trait scores<sup>10</sup>. Hypotheses about these relationships are in many cases straightforward (e.g., countries with mean scores lower on agreeableness will have more conflict situations; countries higher in Neuroticism will experience situations more negatively). More specific and nuanced predictions will be generated by having experts rate the relevance of each RSQ item for each of the Big Five, yielding five 89-item templates. Each country’s mean RSQ profile is then correlated with each template, yielding scores reflecting the degree to which its average situational experience would be expected to relevant to each trait. These scores, in turn, are correlated with each country’s mean trait scores, in analyses where the N is the number of countries. The correlations test the hypothesis that a country’s average situational experience can predict its average personality (and vice versa).
3. **Are cultural values associated with situational experience?** It cannot simply be assumed that the answer to this question will be yes. As Oyserman et al. (2002) pointed out, when values are assessed via self-report scales (as they typically are), “researchers must assume that culture can reasonably be expressed as a set of explicit, articulated values, attitudes and beliefs and that standard scales can capture these beliefs” (p. 114). Yet, in the words of Cohen (1997), because cultural values “are either... over-learned (or were never explicitly taught in the first place) they may bypass conscious processing altogether” (p. 126). Thus, the association between cultural values as assessed by surveys and daily situational experience is something that needs to be – and remains to be – empirically demonstrated.

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<sup>10</sup> Such correlations would provide the first evidence that international differences in personality are associated with differences in situational experience, but would not settle the question of whether such differences have a genetic or cultural basis.

The best-known assessment of international differences in values comes from the international surveys by Hofstede (1980, 2010) and other researchers who have adapted or modified his measures (e.g., Chinese Cultural Connection, 1987; Minkov & Hofstede, 2010; Suh, Diener, Oishi & Triandis, 1998). This work has focused on six cultural dimensions labeled Power Distance, Individualism, Uncertainty Avoidance, Masculinity (also called Quantity of Life vs. Quality of Life and other labels), Long-term Orientation, and Indulgence. Although some of these dimensions have been questioned and even criticized in various ways (e.g., Bond, 2002; Oyserman et al., 2002), they are useful because scores are available for many countries around the world and new findings can be connected to a large body of previous research. Other valuable sources of ratings of cultural values are the World Values Survey of Inglehart and his colleagues (e.g., Inglehart et al., 2004) and research by Schwartz and his colleagues (e.g., Schwartz et al., 2012).

The implications of these value dimensions for situational experience will be assessed in two ways. First, exploratory analyses will correlate each of the DIAMONDS 8 dimensions as well as each RSQ item with these scores. In our pilot study, we found that the situational DIAMONDS dimension of Adversity was negatively correlated with Power Distance, but positively correlated with Individualism and Indulgence. The single RSQ Item (#60) "Situation is relevant to P's bodily health" was positively correlated with Indulgence, and negatively associated with Power Distance and Uncertainty Avoidance. However, it might be wise to resist the temptation to interpret these correlations, as they are based only on  $N = 20$ , the number of countries in the pilot study, thus highlighting the importance of expanding the research as described in this proposal.

The second approach will be to generate and test theoretical predictions. Experts (who have not seen the data) generate theoretically-based predictions as to the dimensions of situational experience that would be expected to be positively or negatively correlated with each dimension, and then their predictions are correlated with the empirical results (for a demonstration of this method to generate and test predictions from expert ratings, see Morse et al., in press). For example, RSQ Item 29, "Others are present who need or desire reassurance" might be predicted to be rated higher in collectivist, interdependent cultures than in individualistic cultures.

4. **Is cultural constraint associated with variability in situational experience?** Gelfand et al. (2011) measured "tightness-looseness", or constraint, in 33 countries. Analyses parallel to those described above will test the intriguing hypothesis that countries with higher scores on constraint will have less variability in situational experience.
5. **What other culture-level variables are associated with situational experience?** Other promising cultural characteristics include Bond et al.'s (2004) measurements of "dynamic externality" and "societal cynicism" in 41 cultures and other variables ranging from economic and demographic differences (e.g., Lynn & Martin, 1995) to climatic warmth and immune load (McCrae, Terracciano, Realo & Allik, 2007; Schaller & Murray, 2008). Each of these culture-level variables will be correlated with RSQ item and DIAMONDS situational dimension scores, to assess their relevance to situational experience across cultures. Again, this will be done both via exploratory analyses, and by testing theoretically-based predictions offered by expert raters.

The overall hypothesis of the present research, which is that situational experience is an important active ingredient of culture, will be supported to the extent that previously established, important dimensions of culture are found to be associated with attributes of situational experience.

**The Specter of Chance** The proposed research includes (but is not limited to) exploratory analyses that address fundamental descriptive questions about matters that are currently

completely unknown. This fact raises the specter of capitalizing on chance. We deal with this possibility in three ways. First, the randomization method developed by Sherman and Funder (2009) allows calculation of the chance probability of the number of significant correlations obtained. However, this calculation pertains only to each set of analyses, not a series of exploratory analyses. Therefore, and second, analyses will test theoretical predictions concerning cultural variables associated with situational experience, as outlined above. Ultimately, and third, the only way to assure the reliability of results is through replication, both internally and across independent samples (Asendorpf et al., 2013; Funder et al., 2014). The proposed project offers opportunities to replicate central findings from previous research including our own pilot study, and replication is an ongoing activity of this program.

**Sample Differences** The typical cultural psychology study uses college-based samples and assumes them to be equivalent except for nation of residence. While this common practice – employed in our own pilot study – is not unreasonable, and sometimes is all that is possible, it is limited in two ways. First, it may underestimate cross-cultural differences to the extent that students around the world live in a universal student "culture." Second, it may provide a misleading picture of overall cultural similarity and difference because student samples are not fairly representative of any country including the US, being younger, wealthier and better educated than average. This is why it is important to go beyond college samples and recruit more broadly.

To the extent broader recruitment is successful, analyses will face the complication that the samples may not be straightforwardly comparable, requiring the use of multi-level modeling and related regression techniques. Such analyses must be conducted judiciously, because they can yield misleading findings to the extent that control variables are correlated with outcomes of interest. Accordingly, we will perform the analyses summarized above both with and without statistically adjusting for sample differences in age, income, and education level. We will also compare our sample statistics to national norms such as in the United Nations Human Development Report (United National Human Development Programme, 2013), and conduct analyses to assess the degree to which primary conclusions would change if sample statistics were adjusted to match these norms. If either sort of statistical adjustment changes any of our central conclusions, then this finding will be reported, and may in some cases change substantive interpretations. However, it is in general important to report results with and without such statistical adjustment (Funder et al., 2014).

While accounting for demographic variation across international samples is an important issue, it is relevant to note that past research in cross-cultural psychology has very rarely attempted adjustments of this sort. Thus, any progress made by this project in successfully accounting for between-sample differences in international comparisons will represent a significant methodological advance and an important contribution in its own right. Fortunately, several of our international collaborators (see the Letters of Commitment) are experts in related methodological issues, including Anu Realo, Marco Perugini, and Martina Hřebíčková.

### **Time Line**

*Pre-award period:* Recruiting international collaborators from under-represented areas including the Middle East, South Asia, Africa and South America, as well as multiple locations within diverse countries such as China and the US. The goal will be to recruit at least 20 additional countries for a total of at least 40 and preferably more, to make it feasible to assess correlations between country-level variables and attributes of situational experience.

*Year 1:* Continue to recruit collaborators. Hire web developer and construct new website. Test website and conduct pilot studies. Refine measurement of ethnicity and demographic variables. Translate materials into new local languages as needed. Begin data collection.

*Year 2:* International data collection.

*Year 3:* Complete data collection, and conduct data analyses and article writing.

### **Broader Impacts of the Proposed Work**

This research project will, first, expand the use of the Riverside Situational Q-sort to cross-cultural comparison. We expect that this study will spur further research and the development of new instruments for cross-cultural comparison that go beyond the RSQ.

Second, this project will yield a new, multi-functional website for the collection of international data. It not only will operate in numerous languages, but will be designed to be flexible to a wide range of research applications as well as stable across platforms and future operating systems. We will make this website freely available and "open source."<sup>11</sup> We also will post all of our (individually de-identified) data online for others to confirm our analyses or to conduct innovative ones of their own.

Third, this project promises unique illumination of international differences in situational experience, which have important implications for understanding intercultural relations and managing cultural diversity in a world where increasing numbers of individuals with different cultural backgrounds share situations with each other. The Hofstede dimensions of culture have long been a staple of consulting for leadership and international business (Hofstede, 2010), but their relevance to daily situational experience has never been empirically established. The proposed research will examine not only these widely-used dimensions, but the relevance of many other properties of cultures for daily situational experience.

Fourth, this project will involve student researchers from historically underrepresented groups. UC Riverside is a Minority Serving Institution (MSI) and Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI); our undergraduate research assistants closely resemble the campus as a whole.

Fifth and finally, the project will promote new international collaborations as we continue to recruit researchers in countries not currently included in our group, especially seeking collaborators in Africa, South America, South Asia, and the Middle East. The project will leverage expertise and specialized skills of our collaborators as we work together to develop research materials, recruit participants, and interpret findings, thus helping to build a "combined emic-etic approach in bridging global and local human experiences in psychological science" (Cheung, 2012, p. 721). In addition, this project will provide U.S. students and junior researchers with international research experience as graduate research assistants communicate with collaborators from around the world and meet them personally at meetings with international attendance such as SPSP, ARP, and the EAPP. For this purpose, the budget includes funds to support student travel.

#### **Is the Project Potentially Transformative?**

The proposed project meets this criterion in three ways: (1) By developing and demonstrating a novel and unique method for the comprehensive cross-cultural comparison of situational experience, it opens the door for research addressing novel and original research questions. Its findings will shed new light on an under-researched, but fundamental issue for cross-cultural psychology and, even more broadly, psychology as a whole: how situations are related to personality and behavior. (2) By developing a flexible, open-source website, it will provide a freely-available resource for international research using Q-sort methodology. Both this website and its data will be freely shared, helping to promote the rapidly expanding "open science movement." (3) By providing unprecedented findings about the degree to which situational experience is similar and different around the world, and the national-level aspects of personality and environment that are associated with these differences, it will offer unique insight into the active ingredients of culture.

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<sup>11</sup> Several years ago, our lab developed one of the first programs that permitted Q-sorts to be completed on a computer screen rather than with paper cards. The program has been available on our lab website for free download, without restriction, ever since.



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## Letters of Commitment

Recruitment of international collaborators is an important facet of this project. Our collaborators help to develop and translate assessment instruments, gather data, and analyze and interpret findings. At present, we have 24 letters of commitment from researchers in 19 countries (not counting the US). These letters appear on the following pages.

Further recruitment of collaborators is ongoing. We are particularly interesting in seeking collaborators from parts of the world currently under-represented in our sample, including Africa, the Middle East, South Asia, and South America.

Letters of Commitment attached, from the following countries:

Australia  
Canada (2)  
China  
Czech Republic  
Denmark  
Estonia  
Germany (3)  
Israel  
Italy  
Japan  
Netherlands (2)  
Poland (2)  
Russia  
Singapore  
Slovakia  
South Africa  
South Korea  
Spain  
Switzerland

To whom it may concern,

This is to confirm that I am currently collaborating with Professor Funder and his team on the International Situations Project. To date this ground breaking work, and my role in it, has shown to be very fruitful. Professor Funder and his team are broaching a relatively un-chartered territory in psychology - an examination of how people experience situations differently across contexts and cultures. Quite simply this has not been done and therefore the findings that are arising, and that will arise, from this work are likely to be foundational to new research directions and traditions.

I have already indicated to Professor Funder my commitment to the project. This involves providing access to ample participants from Australia, as well as assisting with data analysis, article writing and any other activities related to the project. I am indeed grateful to be involved in this line of research and hope that it continues to be fruitful and productive.

Yours Truly

**Dr Brock Bastian**

*ARC Future Fellow, UNSW School of Psychology*

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May 12, 2014

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Dear Colleagues:

I am very pleased to be a collaborator on the International Situations Project, led by PI David Funder. I am in full support of the proposed research, and am excited to continue my involvement with it. In this vein, I plan to continue my work this project by recruiting local participants in Vancouver, B.C. (Canada), as well as participate in data analyses, writing, and other research-relevant activities.

Please feel free to get in touch if I can provide any additional information regarding my support for the project.

Sincerely,

Jessica L. Tracy  
Associate Professor of Psychology  
Michael Smith Foundation for Health Research Scholar  
Canadian Institute for Health Research New Investigator  
University of British Columbia

December 29<sup>th</sup>, 2014

Dear Members of the Adjudication Committee,

I am writing this letter in support of the International Situations Project grant application. The cross-cultural examination of personality, situations, and the interplay of person and situations proposed in this application is not only extremely important to the scientific understanding of human behaviour, but also exceptionally comprehensive and unprecedented both in terms of its scale and cross-cultural sampling and focus.

Should it be funded, I would be extremely interested in collaborating with Dr. Funder and his research team on this project, and to contribute to this groundbreaking research in any and all aspects, including (but not limited to) the recruitment of participants in the U.S. and Canada (where I completed my PhD and conduct active research), data analyses, and writing up and presenting this research in major conferences in the U.S. and internationally.

Thank you for your consideration. Should you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Joey T. Cheng  
Assistant Professor  
Department of Psychology and Social Behavior  
University of California, Irvine  
Telephone: (949) 527-8847  
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To Whom It May Concern:

My name is Yu Yang and I am currently an Assistant Professor of Management at the China Europe International Business School (CEIBS) in Shanghai. Prior to joining the faculty at CEIBS, I received my Ph.D. in social psychology at the University of Southern California, and worked as a postdoctoral fellow at the Johnson School of Cornell University.

It is my pleasure to be invited to work on the International Situations Project (ISP). I have long interests in studying how situations can be best conceptualized, taxonomized, and measured. Over the past few years, I have also published a few research articles on this subject. To me, this is the next big thing for personality science.

I look forward to the opportunity to working with Dr. Funder and his team. I am happy to provide data collection support in China for the proposed research. I have extensive experience in collecting research data in China. I am also a native Chinese and can provide support for survey design and translation, and to ensure that the survey will be culturally appropriate. Additionally, I will participate in data analyses, article writing, and other activities of this research. I expect this collaboration to be a good example of enhancing cross-cultural exchange and advancing scientific knowledge.

Thank you very much for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Yu Yang, Ph.D.  
Assistant Professor of Management  
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Veveří 97, 602 00 Brno, tel: +420 532 290 270  
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May 15, 2014, Brno

To Whom It May Concern:

Drs. Martina Hřebíčková and Sylvie Graf took part in the first stage of the International Situations Project and were responsible for data collection in the Czech Republic. The first outcomes of the project showed that studying connection among situations, behavior and personality traits can noticeably enrich state-of-the-art knowledge in personality psychology. We would like to express our interest to continue the collaboration with Prof. David Funder at the International Situations Project. We are ready to help to recruit participants from the Czech Republic and participate in analyzing data, writing articles, and other activities connected with the project.

Doc. PhDr. Martina Hřebíčková, Dr., DSc.

Mgr. Sylvie Graf, Ph.D.

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[sylvie.graf@psu.cas.cz](mailto:sylvie.graf@psu.cas.cz)





Copenhagen, Denmark, May 13<sup>th</sup> 2014

To whom it may concern,

The study of situations is a neglected aspect in much psychological research despite its importance to understand human personality and behavior. David Funder's cross-cultural research contributes to this research with important perspectives by investigating similarities and differences in the understanding of situations, personality and behavior in different countries. If we really want to understand human psychology, investigating these aspects will definitely bring new knowledge. The project is in perfect line with my own research and I am therefore very happy to contribute with anything from recruiting Danish participants, participate in the data analyses, writing articles and everything else making this project come through.

Please do not hesitate to get in touch for elaborations of the above.

Kind regards,

**Lars Lundmann**

PhD fellow

**University of Copenhagen**

**Department of Psychology**

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To Whom it Might Concern:

I am writing to express my wholehearted support for David Funder's grant proposal to the US National Science Foundation.

I have been working with David Funder and his colleagues over the past four years in the framework of the "International Situations Project" (ISP). I find the project highly interesting and relevant as it aims to examine the complex relationships between the three components of the personality triad: situations, behaviours, and personality traits. Many previous studies have focused on examining personality traits in a range of different cultures whereas similarities and differences in the experience of everyday situations across cultures has received relatively little attention so far. Thus, the current project has the potential for high impact in the field.

In the framework of the ISP, I have already collected data from more than 200 Estonian college students on situations, behaviors, and personality and I am certainly willing to help to recruit more participants from Estonian general population as well as to participate in data analyses, article writing, and other activities related to the ISP.

I very much hope that the grant proposal by David Funder will be funded and that we can continue our collaboration on the ISP project also in the future.

If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely yours,

Anu Realo, PhD

Academy Research Professor  
Department of Psychology  
University of Tartu  
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**1 September 2014 to 30 June 2015**  
Fellow-in-Residence  
Netherlands Institute for Advanced Study  
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The Netherlands



## Letter of Support and Cooperation

This letter is to certify that I am still explicitly interested in working with David Funder and the International Situations Project. Specifically, I would actively participate by planning how to implement the project in Germany (and potentially also other German-speaking countries, such as Austria), recruiting participants, running analyses, helping with the write-up, and any other activities that should occur during the project.

I thus hereby express my full support of David Funder and his team in pursuing extended data sampling for the International Situations Project. This project is for many reasons important and transformative, and so I hope that (further) funding can be secured for it.

Sincerely,

John Rauthmann

Berlin, 06.01.2015

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Göttingen, 01/05/2015

**Letter of Support**

To whom it may concern,

I herewith confirm that I would be excited to continue participation in the International Situations Project (ISP) led by Prof. David Funder, University of California at Riverside. I have already participated in the first wave of the project, collecting data for Scotland, UK, and I am happy to collect more data from Germany (where I have moved since) for a second wave. The ISP is a novel and timely endeavor that fills an important gap in the psychological literature and I regard it as very worthwhile extending.

Sincerely,

Prof. Dr. Lars Penke





David Funder  
Department of Psychology - 075  
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---

**Letter of support**

Dear Dr. Funder,

With great interest I read about your plans to expand the International Situations Project. I would be willing and happy to cooperate within this project, for example, by helping to recruit participants. Researching the influence of situations, as we perceive them, is very important in my opinion and the International Situations Project would be an important milestone.

Best regards,

**Bankverbindung:**  
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Konto 512 6206 01  
BIC/SWIFT DEUTDEDB110  
IBAN DE95 1007 0848 0512 6206 01

Eyal Rechter, PhD

ד"ר אייל רכטר

To:

Proff. David Funder  
Department of Psychology  
University of California, Riverside

International Situations Project

Dear David.

I'm writing to let you know that I am working now with your developer on the final tunings of the Hebrew version of the study and will soon be ready to launch.

My partners and I are very excited about the project and believe it can make a significant contribution to science, filling gap of understanding situations and their interaction with personality. We are excited to be part of the project and the filling this gap, and see a great potential for its findings.

I am committed to it, and would happily continue to participate in data collection in Israel. I'm looking forward to participate also in data analysis, article writing, and continue to be an active participant in the International Situations Project.

I truly hope you will manage to receive the necessary funds to keep up the project. I believe I can get some funding at home, but nowhere near what's needed for a big-scale international project like we're aiming at. Also, proving that other institutions support the project will increase my ability to receive local funds.

I'm spending this year in the US, visiting scholar at Columbia University, and hope we'll take the chance to arrange a personal meeting.

Best regards,  
Eyal Rechter

Faculty of Business Administration  
Ono Academic College

Visiting Scholar  
Department of Psychology  
Columbia University in the City of New York



Milan, 11<sup>th</sup> June 2014

Dear David,

I wish to express my interest in working with the "International Situations Project" and I am willing to help to recruit participants from Italy, as well as to participate in data analyses, article writing, and all other activities needed for a successful project.

I truly believe that this project has all the qualities to be an outstanding contribution to the psychological field, let alone personality psychology, and I would be thrilled to be part of it.

Sincerely,

Prof. Marco Perugini, PhD  
Head of Department  
Department of Psychology  
University of Milan - Bicocca  
Piazza dell'Ateneo Nuovo, 1 (U6) 20126 Milan (ITALY)  
Tel. 0044-0264483710  
Email: [marco.perugini@unimib.it](mailto:marco.perugini@unimib.it)

2014.05.14.



**Written evidence of agreement from Proposal Participants**

Dear Professor David Funder,

I'm happy to be invited to join the research group of "International Situations Project".

I certify that

- i) I have read, understood and complied with the "International Situations Project";
- ii) I meet the relevant eligibility criteria for my role as specified in the "International Situations Project".

Best regards,

*Tatsuya Sato, Ph. D.*

*Professor of Ritsumeikan University*

*Dean, Reseach Division*

56-1 Toji-in Kitamachi, Kita-ku,  
Kyoto 603-8577 JAPAN

立命館大学文学部教授・サトウタツヤ



Padualaan 14, Utrecht

*Faculteit Sociale Wetenschappen*

Postbus 80140, 3508 TC Utrecht

Faculteitsbestuur

To Whom It May Concern

**Uw kenmerk**

**Ons kenmerk**

**Telefoon**

(030) 2539224

**E-mail**

m.a.g.vanaken@uu.nl

**Blad**

Blad 1 van 1

**Datum**

15 mei 2014

**Onderwerp**

This letter is to express my sincere interest in collaboration with dr. David Funder on the International Situations project. Until now, we have collaborated on the development of an International (in our case, together with colleagues from Tilburg University, a Dutch) version of the Riverside Situational Q-sort. This collaboration has both been very enjoying and productive, and we would certainly like to continue.

For any further collaborations, we would be more than interested to recruit participants from The Netherlands (as we have done in the previous phase of the collaboration), and to work together with dr. Funder and his colleagues on data analyses, writing articles, and any other activities.

We think the International Situations project is a highly exciting research project, in which methodological advances and sophistication are combined with research questions that are interesting and relevant from both a personality psychology and a cross-cultural point-of-view. Therefore, we would be honored to be part of any further endeavors regarding this project.

Sincerely,

Prof.dr. Marcel A.G. van Aken  
Full professor in Developmental Psychology  
Utrecht University  
The Netherlands



To whom it concerns

**International Situations Project: Letter of Cooperation**

Date 29/12/14  
Subject *Letter of Cooperation*  
Telephone +31 13 466 42 36  
Fax +31 13 466 20 67

With this letter, I would like to express my strong interest in collaborating with Dr. Funder in carrying out the International Situations Project. Dr. Funder has told me that the US National Science Foundation has evaluated a previous version of the proposal favorably, and that it might be eligible for funding following some revisions. Obviously, I was very happy to receive this news because the Situations Project would allow the scientific community to gather unique material regarding the structure and description of situations around the world.

Dr. Funder has asked me if I would still be available as a collaborator who will help him collect data in the Netherlands. Given the groundbreaking nature of the project, this is self-evident for me. I will thus gladly comply with this request and also assist Dr. Funder with data analysis and article writing, among other activities.

Enthusiastic regards,

Prof. Dr. Jaap Denissen



POLISH ACADEMY OF SCIENCES  
INSTITUTE OF PSYCHOLOGY

Pałac Kultury i Nauki, Plac Defilad 1,  
00-901 Warszawa, Poland

Tel. (48-22) 656 70 16  
Fax (48-22) 656 70 17

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Warsaw, 18th May 2014

Letter of Cooperation

I am very interested in working with the International Situations Project, and I'm willing to help to recruit participants from Poland as well as participate in data analyses, article writing, and other activities. A Polish team already took part in the initial data collection and we are proud to be involved in this pioneering and groundbreaking research.

Piotr Szarota, Ph.D.  
Associate Professor  
Institute of Psychology  
Polish Academy of Sciences  
Warsaw, Poland

Dear Prof. David Funder,

I am interested in working with the International Situations Project and I am willing to help to recruit participants from Poland.

I am also willing to participate in data analyses, article writing and other activities associated with this Project.

I am interested in cultural differences, especially personality and situation differences.

With kind regards

Paweł Izdebski

Institute of Psychology  
Kazimierz Wielki University in Bydgoszcz,  
Poland

my link in English:

[http://www.ukw.edu.pl/pracownicy/strona/pawel\\_izdebski/english/](http://www.ukw.edu.pl/pracownicy/strona/pawel_izdebski/english/)



May 30, 2014

Dr. David Funder  
Distinguished Professor of Psychology  
Department of Psychology - 075  
University of California, Riverside  
900 University Avenue  
Riverside, CA 92521-0426

Dear prof. Funder:

It's my pleasure to state my great enthusiasm to continue my collaboration in your research proposal under the title "International Situations Project".

My special value for the Project is that I can serve as a recruiter of the research participants from the Russian culture. I believe that data from my side will enrich the results the Project intended to attain as an extensive cross cultural study united scientists from about 20 countries. No doubt that my translation team and I will be glad to prepare all the needed research materials to be used in Russian culture appropriately. Besides, it is with my willingness that I can offer my competence in data analysis since I am skillful in working with the statistical methods relevant to the quantitative psychological investigation.

I am convinced deeply in the prosperity of the future collaboration due to our efficient work during the last two years. I have implemented translation and adaptation of the Riverside Situational Q-Sort, Riverside Behavioral Q-Sort, and other research materials to my native culture. Those methods adjusted to the Russian culture allowed my team and me to collect data of the Project's interest. What is of particular importance is that during those two years your research team and I have proved our ability to build strong working relationships which will enhance and facilitate our prospective collaboration.

It is with my particular delight that my scientific advisor approves and supports our research collaboration. Let me express my hope that your Project will be fully supported with a grant by the US National Science Foundation and all the Project's aims will be achieved.

Sincerely,

Elena Belinskaya  
Professor of Psychology  
Moscow State University



Igor Bronin  
Graduate Student  
Psychological Institute of Russian Academy of Education



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Ryan Y. Hong, Ph.D.  
Assistant Professor  
Department of Psychology  
National University of Singapore  
9, Arts Link, Singapore 117570  
Email: ryan.hong@nus.edu.sg

**Letter of Interest in Collaborating on the International Situations Project**

This letter expresses my strong interest in collaborating with Professor David Funder of the Department of Psychology at the University of California – Riverside on the International Situations Project.

As part of this collaboration, I will be collecting data from participants in Singapore that will contribute to this international effort in delineating how persons and situations interact across cultures. I understand from Prof Funder that I will also be involved in other aspects of this research, such as data analysis and manuscript writing.

The prospects of collaborating with esteemed colleagues around the world and the potential impact of this research in advancing what we know about person-situation interactions are very appealing to me. Hence, I hope to participate and contribute to this ambitious project in many ways.

Thank you.

Sincerely,



Ryan Y. Hong, Ph.D.  
Department of Psychology  
National University of Singapore  
May 15, 2014



INSTITUTE OF EXPERIMENTAL PSYCHOLOGY  
SLOVAK ACADEMY OF SCIENCES

Dúbravská cesta 9, 813 64 Bratislava, Slovak Republic  
Tel.: (+ 421) (2) 5477 5625 Fax: (+ 421) (2) 5477 5584

To:  
David Funder  
Department of Psychology - 075  
University of California, Riverside  
900 University Avenue  
Riverside, CA 92521  
United States of America

Dear David,

I highly appreciate your offer to participate in the International Situations Project. The project is a great opportunity to enhance the knowledge related the behavior in situation in different cultures and it has a potential to contribute substantially to the area of cross-cultural personality psychology. I am very interested in working with this project. I offer my help to recruit participants from Slovakia as well as participation in data analyses, article writing, and other activities related to project.

Sincerely

Peter Halama, PhD.  
Senior researcher  
Institute of Experimental Psychology, Slovak Academy of Sciences  
Dubravska cesta 9  
841 04 Bratislava  
Slovakia  
e-mail: peter.halama@savba.sk



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**Faculty of Commerce**  
**Ethics in Research Committee**

Courier: Room 2.21 Leslie Commerce Building Upper Campus University of Cape Town  
Post: University of Cape Town • Private Bag • Rondebosch 7701  
Email: Irwin.brown@uct.ac.za  
Telephone: +27 21 650-2311  
Fax No.: +27 21 689-7570

May 19, 2014

Francois de Kock  
Management Studies

**Project title:**

**The International Situations Project**

Dear Researcher,

This letter serves to confirm that the amendments to this project as described in your revised submitted protocol has been approved.

Please note that if you make any substantial change in your research procedure that could affect the experiences of the participants, you must submit a revised protocol to the Committee for approval.

Regards,

*Harold Kincaid*

Professor Harold Kincaid  
Commerce Faculty Ethics in Research Committee

Dear Prof. Funder,

It is my pleasure to work with you on the International Situation Project. I am willing to cooperate with researchers for the successful completion of this project in the future as well.

Sincerely,

Professor Gyuseog Han ph.D.

한규석 드림  
전남대학교 심리학과  
광주광역시 북구 용봉동  
757  
전화 (Tel) 062-530-2654  
팩스 (Fax) 062-530-2659

Gyuseog Q. Han Ph.D  
Dept. of Psychology, Chonnam Nat. Univ.  
300 Yongbond-dong, Gwangju. 500-757

韓圭錫 博士  
全南大學校 心理學科  
光州, 大韓民國 500-



June 5, 2014

Dr. David Funder  
Dept. of Psychology  
University of Riverside  
University of California  
900 University Ave.  
Riverside, CA 92521 USA

Dear Professor Funder,

By means of this letter, I would like to express my interest to participate in your research in your next projects.

So far, our collaborations have been quite fruitful, both in terms of scientific discussion and also in terms of publications, as our joint paper entitled "The Situational Eight DIAMONDS: A taxonomy of major dimensions of situation characteristics" shows, recently accepted for publication at the *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, or the forthcoming paper "The World at 7: Exploring Situational Experience in 19 Countries with the Riverside Situational Q-sort", that I have the privilege to co-author. My local team and I enthusiastically support you and your team to continue leading this research, that is called to be cornerstone in the interplay between Social Psychology and Personality Psychology.

I'm genuinely interested in pursuing new collaborations with you in the framework of the International Situations Project, and I am willing to help to recruit participants from Spain (EU), as well as participate in data analyses, article writing, and other activities.

Sincerely,

Dr. David Gallardo-Pujol  
Assitant Professor  
Faculty of Psychology  
University of Barcelona



**UNIVERSITÉ  
DE GENÈVE**

FACULTÉ DE PSYCHOLOGIE  
ET DES SCIENCES DE L'ÉDUCATION

SECTION DE PSYCHOLOGIE  
**PSYCHOLOGIE SOCIALE**

**Fabio Lorenzi-Cioldi**

*Professor*

**Clara Kulich, PhD**

*Lecturer / Researcher*

Geneva, June 23th, 2014

To whom it may concern,

We have been members of *the International Situations Project* for the past two years, contributing with the translation of questionnaires and data collection in the French speaking part of Switzerland and France.

We are enthusiastic about the continuation of this project which we believe has the potential to reveal important new insights. We are keen to further collaborate with David Funder and his collaborators for at least two reasons. First, they emphasise an approach that takes into account the individual and the situational context. As social-psychologists, we know that studying the individual without considering his/her social context does not provide a full picture of the psychological mechanisms at play. Second, mainstream research is most often conducted in Western cultures and it is thus enlightening to see that Funder et al. make an effort to provide a cross-cultural assessment of psychological models. This cross-cultural work not only contributes to the theoretical advancement of social-psychological knowledge (which is often biased by Western views of a self-contained person) but also helps to establish collaborations across different cultural context.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Fabio Lorenzi-Cioldi'.

Fabio Lorenzi-Cioldi

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'Clara Kulich'.

Clara Kulich

**UNI MAIL**

40 bd du Pont-d'Arve - CH-1205 Genève, Europe

Tél. 022 379 93 12 - Fax 022 379 93 19

Clara.Kulich@unige.ch

Fabio.Lorenzi-Cioldi@unige.ch