



# Are societal-level values still relevant measures in the twenty-first century businessworld? A 39-society analysis

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## Abstract

Since the days of Hofstede (1980), cross-cultural comparisons of countries based on societal-level work values have been a norm. This approach has been represented more recently in Ronen and Shenkar's (2013) 11 clusters of country cultures. However, more contemporary research found within-country heterogeneity of values/behaviors is substantial and growing exponentially across today's twenty-first century businessworld. We investigated, across a sample of 39 societies, whether work values variance within societies was greater than work values variance across societies, and whether individual work values differences contributed more to predictions of behavioral performance criteria than the society in which the individuals lived. Both sets of analyses addressed how work values conceived at societal-levels are relevant in understanding the twenty-first century businessworld. Our findings revealed first that there was substantial within-society values heterogeneity, which resulted in the failure to replicate Ronen and Shanker's (2013) societal cluster aggregations. Second, we found individual-level values contributed significantly to the prediction of employees' behaviors, while societal-level values contributed substantially less. These findings strongly suggest that cross-cultural studies of work values predictive power are most relevant when conducted at the individual-level. Finally, we also make available for future investigators a 51-society database containing 11,780 individual-level records.

**Keywords** Individual-level analysis · Societal-level analysis · Business values dimensions (BVD) · Subordinate influence ethics (SIE) behaviors · Cluster analysis · Hierarchical linear modeling (HLM)

Since Hofstede's (1980) seminal study, cross-cultural comparisons of societies based on their societal-level work values have been the norm. This approach was used recently by Ronen and Shenkar's (2013) to develop their 11 clusters of country

cultures. However, more contemporary research has also found within-society heterogeneity of values is substantial and growing exponentially across today's twenty-first century businessworld. Thus, the traditional view of homogeneous work values specific to a society or cultures may no longer be justified. For example, empirical research found demographic factors such as age (e.g., Egri & Ralston, 2004), gender (e.g., Costa et al., 2001) and region (e.g., Ralston et al., 2018a) identify significant within-society work values differences. Others contributed to the argument of within-society heterogeneity by noting substantial increases in: (1) migration of different-culture individuals across borders in search of employment (United Nations, 2017); (2) the volume of expatriate postings in multinational companies (Colakoglu & Caligiuri, 2008; Haslberger & Brewster, 2009); (3) bi-cultural and multicultural individuals becoming members of various society cultures (Vora et al., 2019); and (4) technological advancements in transportation and communication, resulting in opportunities for virtual (internet) as well as physical travel to experience and assimilate other cultures and values (Hummels, 2007; Schumann et al., 2012). Regardless, people constantly enter and exit the labor force, as populations age, some generations are larger or smaller than others and/or are affected by unique historically discrete events (e.g., World War II, U.S. baby boom generation, China's 36-year one child policy, Scharping, 2003). Prior authors dating back to at least as far as Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck (1961) and as recent as Vora et al. (2019) called for ongoing research to delve beneath the societal-level of analysis to the micro and meso levels. Many authors have argued the importance of focusing research on the individual (micro) level due to the factors noted previously (Kaasa & Minkov, 2020; Midgley et al., 2020; Moore, 2020; Ralston et al., 2020; Taras et al., 2016; van Hoorn, 2015).

At the heart of this debate is the relative importance of societal-level versus individual-level analyses to understanding cross-cultural research on work values in the twenty-first century businessworld. Clearly, the nature of these work values → work outcome relationships will greatly differ depending upon whether the societal work context exhibits a clear, dominant set of homogeneous work values versus one that has a set of heterogeneous work values with no dominant focus.

Indeed, the absence of a dominant, homogeneous set of societal work values would preclude the possibility of societal work values having both main and interactive effects. Hence, two wide-ranging questions initially emerge. First, and most fundamentally, regardless of whether homogeneous societal work values ever existed, *do homogeneous society values exist in the twenty-first century with all its attendant work-related changes in technology and migration of the world's population?*

Second, *what are the relative contributions of societal-level values versus individual-level values in predicting behavioral outcomes?* Given population and technology change as previously described, one might expect disaggregated (i.e., individual-level) measures of work values to predict better than those captured by aggregated societal-level values profiles.

The objectives of this paper are to report evidence addressing these questions. We address our first question (Study I) by examining whether Ronen and Shenkar's (2013) assertion of societal-level homogeneity in values replicates in a much more recent sample of individual-level data. A replication of the Ronen and Shenkar (2013) cluster findings is crucial on three counts. First, their country clusters have

started to dominate the literature as the go-to measure of cultural values. Since its recent publication, it has been cited 335 times (Google Scholar, February 7, 2022), an increase of 120 cites over the past two years. Any measure receiving this level of notice demands attention/replication.

Second, there is a burgeoning body of empirical literature challenging the use of averaged individual responses to work value surveys to operationalize societal-level work values—the foundation of Ronen and Shenkar’s country clusters—as accurate measures of “societal” work values (Midgley et al., 2020; Moore, 2020; Taras et al., 2016; Cerar et al., 2021). These authors argue that due to increasing heterogeneity of values within any given society, work values need to be assessed solely at the individual level and not at the societal level (Kirkman, Lowe & Gibson, 2017; Vora et al., 2019).

Next, in Study II, we examine the second research question, whether work values better predict behavior when studied at the individual-level vis-à-vis the societal-level. Knowledge of work values should provide usable insight about work behavior and not just be an end unto itself. The cross-cultural values literature has been largely remiss in examining how work values predict work outcomes, in spite of a long history of theory and evidence suggesting individual-level measures of work values predict performance-related behaviors (e.g., Vroom, 1964). Accordingly, to address our second question, we provide empirical evidence regarding whether individual-level employee work values predict important work-related behaviors better than societal-level values do.

Finally, considering the age and limited scope/quality of Ronen and Shenkar’s data, the current replication and extension is needed to determine if Ronen and Shenkar’s (2013) results generalize to samples drawn from more recent populations.

## **Study I: Relevance of using societal-level vis-à-vis individual-level values measures**

Since Hofstede (1980) popularized cross-cultural study of work values in the management literature, use of societal-level measures has dominated studies comparing values in Country A to those in Country B. Over the ensuing decades, hundreds, if not thousands, of studies followed this method of societal-level aggregation (e.g., Jackson, 2000; Ralston et al., 1993; Sheth, 1983; Smith et al., 1996; Srite & Karahanna, 2006; Strychalska-Rudzewicz, 2016; Treviño et al., 2021; Wyatt, 1988). More recently, a debate has intensified as to whether common societal-level values constructs are still relevant in cross-cultural research (e.g., Caprar et al., 2015; Tung, 2008; Tung & Verbeke, 2010; Venaik & Brewer, 2016). A growing number of researchers espoused forsaking the societal-level for the individual-level of analysis, arguing inhabitants within any given society are so heterogeneous as to preclude the existence of construct valid measures of a society’s work values (Inglehart & Baker, 2000; Kaasa & Minkov, 2020; Midgley et al., 2020; Taras et al., 2016; van Hoorn, 2015). Nonetheless, other recent research (e.g., Ronen & Shenkar, 2013) interpreted evidence suggesting homogeneous societal-level values are still relevant

for cross-cultural/multi-society research. As such, in Study I we pursue our first objective: to provide empirical evidence as to whether societal-level work values are still relevant in cross-cultural research.

Ronen and Shenkar (2013) published results capturing the essence of the homogeneous society values perspective. In this study, they interpreted results across a combined 10-study sample collected between 1967 and 1998 and found societies could be grouped into 11 homogeneous within-cluster and heterogeneous between-cluster values profiles. Their study presented a framework for societal-level comparisons, which most of the other hundreds of cross-cultural studies do not. Ronen and Shenkar's (2013) analyses are considered seminal by many; as previously noted, it is oft-cited. Thus, given its status, it was the logical choice to use as the comparison benchmark for our research.

Specifically, Ronen and Shenkar (2013) synthesized societal level values research in an updated version of their earlier work (Ronen & Shenkar, 1985), clustering societies based on their common societal values profiles. Ronen and Shenkar's (2013) conclusions were derived from an amalgamation of 10 societal-level, secondary-data publications. Their data sources—reported in Table 1 (p.874) of Ronen and Shenkar (2013)—included one PhD dissertation, three books and six journal articles (*Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*, *American Sociological Review*, *Applied Psychology*, *International Studies in Management and Organization*, and 2 *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*). Over 65% of their sample came from 1960-70 s Hofstede data and 1990s World Values Survey (WVS) data, with the latter being general population (e.g., students, teacher, homemaker) data, not businessperson data. Thus, none of Ronen and Shenkar's (2013) values profile data is from the twenty-first century, and a relevant portion is from respondents not in the businessworld. Further, their data was not obtained in an era that included audio and video internet-based communication that might facilitate human interaction that tends to shape and changes work values.

Ronen and Shenkar (2013) used matrices generated from each original research report showing how similar values profiles of one society were to the those of other societies. The original authors created their societal values profiles by averaging individual-level values survey responses within each society. Thus, Ronen and Shenkar had to ignore the likelihood that within-society heterogeneity existed because they did not have the original individual-level data needed to do so. Without access to the original individual-level data gathered by others, Ronen and Shenkar (2013) had no choice but to assume results from these 10 prior societal-level studies accurately reflected single, monotonic work values profiles characterizing each society. Whether or not these findings were accurate across all segments of each society decades ago is an issue of some historical significance, though not the objective of the present study. The question Ronen and Shenkar could not address with their data is whether their clusters of homogeneous societies occur when analyses are replicated using individual worker responses. In Study I, we do address this issue using a values survey that has been cross-culturally normed for the individual-level of analysis.

Thus, if respondents within societies, in our study, exhibited common core values profiles resulting in the cluster groupings revealed by Ronen and Shenkar's (2013) findings, current research will support their cluster model. If, however,

each society's respondents are spread across clusters, then the more heterogeneous is that society. The more heterogeneous the society, the more inaccurate it is to try to use societal-level measures to describe "common" values for people in that society, and the more inaccurate it is to cluster societies by those supposed "common" values.

## Methods

**Sample and Measures** Our original sample consisted of 11,780 businessperson respondents from 51 societies. The period of the data collection ranged from 2001 to 2011. It has been described as "...members of the business community... born/raised in the society in which they were sampled. The data in most societies were collected either through a mail survey or prior to management/employee development

**Table 1** Percentages of K = 10 Cluster Analysis of Five BVD Dimension Residuals Across Societies

Society	Dominant Cluster	Cluster 1	Cluster 2	Cluster 3	Cluster 4	Cluster 5	Cluster 6	Cluster 7	Cluster 8	Cluster 9	Cluster 10	N
Austria	1	84.62	4.81	4.81	1.92	0.00	0.96	0.00	1.92	0.96	0.00	104
India	2	0.00	30.66	14.60	11.31	13.14	4.75	4.75	9.12	6.93	4.75	274
Spain	2	0.00	30.49	19.51	6.10	8.54	0.00	2.44	4.88	23.17	4.88	82
Venezuela	2	0.00	27.21	18.38	9.56	10.29	7.35	5.15	9.56	9.56	2.94	136
Taiwan	2	0.00	21.56	14.49	9.19	11.31	9.19	8.13	15.19	6.36	4.59	283
Turkey	2	0.00	20.16	15.32	12.90	12.10	9.68	3.23	8.87	13.71	4.03	124
Estonia	2	0.00	19.46	7.39	16.34	7.00	12.45	8.56	12.84	10.90	5.06	257
Mexico	2	0.00	19.23	10.90	16.99	8.97	14.10	4.17	8.97	9.62	7.05	312
Argentina	2	0.00	18.75	13.54	4.17	14.58	11.46	9.38	11.46	9.38	7.29	96
Bulgaria	2/3	0.00	15.39	15.39	9.89	10.99	13.19	12.09	7.69	7.69	7.69	91
South Korea	3	0.00	11.64	30.18	5.82	10.55	5.46	11.64	8.73	6.55	9.46	275
Singapore	3	0.00	12.90	29.03	6.67	8.60	3.01	10.75	20.00	2.58	6.45	465
Colombia	3	0.00	21.20	28.26	6.52	17.94	3.26	4.89	9.24	6.52	2.17	184
Hong Kong	3	0.00	22.73	25.97	7.14	5.84	3.25	7.14	15.58	5.20	7.14	154
Malaysia	3	0.00	9.76	25.00	7.62	17.99	9.45	7.32	11.28	6.40	5.18	328
China	3	0.00	12.57	17.59	5.39	10.77	1.98	13.29	15.08	8.26	15.08	557
South Africa	3	0.00	13.24	13.73	13.24	9.31	13.73	7.84	10.78	11.28	6.86	204
New Zealand	4	0.00	7.26	7.26	26.61	5.65	20.97	4.84	8.07	13.71	5.65	124
Brazil	4	0.00	13.15	6.70	17.87	10.67	14.39	7.94	7.94	15.88	5.46	403
Germany	5	0.00	4.98	10.95	6.47	19.40	12.94	11.94	13.43	12.44	7.46	201
Chile	5	0.00	2.78	2.78	1.39	18.06	12.50	31.94	13.89	6.94	9.72	72
UK	5	0.00	5.32	6.46	10.27	15.21	14.07	14.07	13.31	14.83	6.46	263
USA	5	0.00	8.45	12.68	9.86	15.02	10.33	8.45	13.62	10.33	11.27	213
Italy	5	0.00	12.93	13.61	9.86	14.63	8.84	14.97	14.29	4.42	6.46	294
Hungary	6	0.00	5.47	5.47	14.84	11.72	28.13	8.59	7.81	11.72	6.25	128
France	6	0.00	2.46	5.91	4.43	15.76	26.60	22.66	7.88	10.84	3.45	203
Switzerland	6	0.00	6.17	4.02	7.24	14.21	23.86	12.60	8.85	17.43	5.63	373
Finland	6	0.00	4.55	3.03	9.09	16.67	18.94	11.36	12.88	18.18	5.30	132
Portugal	6	0.00	3.78	7.03	12.25	17.84	18.92	11.53	12.43	10.09	6.13	555
Canada	6	0.00	10.86	6.74	11.99	15.36	17.60	9.36	13.48	8.99	5.62	267
Peru	6	0.00	11.26	9.95	11.00	13.35	14.14	9.95	10.73	11.52	8.12	382
Indonesia	7	0.00	0.78	2.33	3.10	20.16	20.16	30.23	5.43	14.73	3.10	129
Israel	7	0.00	4.48	8.96	2.99	12.69	18.66	20.15	9.70	12.69	9.70	134
Australia	8	0.00	7.35	17.16	10.29	12.26	8.82	4.90	27.45	2.45	9.31	204
Thailand	8	0.00	8.24	15.05	9.32	9.68	5.02	15.41	26.52	2.87	7.89	279
Japan	8	0.00	13.14	12.41	8.03	13.14	4.38	18.25	18.25	4.38	8.03	137
Slovenia	9	0.00	10.33	6.67	12.33	6.67	14.33	6.00	8.33	28.67	6.67	300
Netherlands	9	0.00	7.73	10.63	6.28	14.01	10.15	17.39	10.15	14.98	8.70	207
Russia	10	0.00	10.41	11.77	5.88	8.15	0.91	6.79	16.74	19.46	19.91	221
Total %		0.96	11.86	13.10	9.70	12.39	11.37	10.53	12.50	10.40	7.21	
N		88	1085	1198	887	1133	1040	963	1143	951	659	9147

programs by local society data collectors. However, in some societies (e.g., Cuba) we used purposive and snowball sampling with the drop-off-and-pick-up method (Craig & Douglas, 2006). While slight differences in data collection method existed, we maintained sampling integrity and consistency across societies by ensuring that all respondents participated voluntarily, were provided anonymity, and received identical survey completion instructions. No more than five respondents per employer were included within each society, so samples were not dominated by a small number of organizations” (Ralston et al., 2018b, p. 1191). Our response rate for these societies ranged from 15 to 43%.

Additionally, we followed the five-step data cleaning process outlined in Karam and Ralston (2016) including: preparation, screening, correcting data problems, checking sample demographics, and checking factor analyses and scale reliabilities. Each society’s data were cleaned independently before being merged into a consolidated master database file. As an example of the screening part of the cleaning process, we eliminated a small number of participants who responded with the same response option to all items (e.g., no variance because they swiped down the entire column of “1” answers) or did not complete entire pages of the survey.

Finally, for purposes of analyses reported here, we removed all respondents from the 12 societies not included in Ronen and Shenkar’s (2013) 11 clusters. Respondents from the resulting 39 societies (N=9,147) were drawn from 10 of Ronen and Shenkar’s (2013) 11 cluster groupings. The Arab cluster was not included, as no Arab societies in our dataset are the same as the Arab societies in Ronen and Shenkar’s study.

Study I empirically estimated respondent groupings using the Business Values Dimensions (BVD) measure of work values (Ralston et al., 2018b). The BVD (Appendix B) consists of five values dimensions related to collectivism, universalism, and “the *good*, the *bad* and the *inquisitive*” of individualism (Ralston et al., 2018b, p. 1197). These dimensions are comparable to previous measures of values used in Ronen and Shenkar’s (2013) study (e.g., Triandis et al., 1998). Appendix A identifies the societies, their sample sizes, and the Cronbach’s alpha statistics for the BVD measures in this study.

**Analyses** The current data came from societies in 10 of Ronen and Shenkar’s (2013) 11-cluster solution. Hence, we performed a  $k=10$  cluster analysis expecting to replicate the smaller 10 cluster portion of their findings. Specifically, we used kmeans cluster analysis using Euclidean distance association metrics and  $k=10$  to confirm Ronen and Shenkar’s (2013) cluster solution. We did so for the five BVD residual scores after controlling for the demographic variables of age and gender. Kmeans cluster analysis should reveal clusters with similar society membership if societies’ work values profiles exhibit the similarities suggested by Ronen and Shenkar’s (2013) clusters. Importantly, if clusters of societies existed with similar societal-level work value profiles that differed from those reported by Ronen and Shenkar (2013), kmeans cluster analysis should also reveal them.

## Results

Table 1 reports the percent of society respondents in the 10-cluster solution for BVD residual scores. The societies are sorted based on cluster frequency count.

Table 1 findings strongly support the contention that within-society work values heterogeneity exists within these twenty-first century societies, with the possible exception of Austria.

Therefore, the findings of our study indicate that it is inappropriate to continue using within-society averages as representing an entire society’s workforce. To this point, no society, other than Austria, had more than 31% assigned to a single cluster for a BVD scale score. Austrian respondents’ mean BVD profile ratings did not appear to be an “outlier,” though clearly relationships between BVD scale scores were very different from other societies.

Table 2 reports percentage falling in each of the 10 empirically estimated clusters when respondents were grouped into 10 of the clusters reported by Ronen and Shenkar (2013). If results supported Ronen and Shenkar’s (2013) cluster groupings, the table would have had the highest frequency in each row occur on the main diagonal. For example, Ronen and Shenkar’s African cluster (Table 2’s row 1) would have had the majority of respondents empirically estimated to fall into only one cluster, with no other society’s respondents dominantly loading in that cluster. Each one of our empirically identified clusters should have coincided with one and only one of the 10 available Ronen and Shenkar cluster groupings. Table 2 results showed that none of the 10 Ronen and Shenkar cluster groupings had most respondents dominantly falling into one of the 10 empirically estimated clusters, while clusters 3 and 6 counted three Ronen and Shenkar society clusters as dominant members. Importantly, none of the 10 Ronen and Shenkar society-clusters contributed more than 22% of the respondents to any of the 10 clusters empirically estimated in the current data.

Accordingly, we found no evidence supporting Ronen and Shenkar’s (2013) contention that societal-level values profiles, when averaged across within-society respondents, accurately reflect the widely diverse values held by businesspeople within all but one workforce in the 39 societies we studied. To be fair, it may be that the homogeneous society-clusters developed by Ronen and Shenkar (2013) may

**Table 2** Percentages of K = 10 Cluster Analysis of Five BVD Dimension Residuals across Ronen and Shenkar (2013) 10 Clusters

Ronen & Shenkar Cluster Labels	Cluster 1	Cluster 2	Cluster 3	Cluster 4	Cluster 5	Cluster 6	Cluster 7	Cluster 8	Cluster 9	Cluster 10	N
African	0.00	13.24	13.73	13.24	9.31	13.73	7.84	10.78	11.28	6.86	204
Anglo	0.00	7.94	9.90	12.51	13.54	14.01	8.96	15.50	9.99	7.66	1071
Confucian	0.00	14.75	22.13	6.68	10.05	4.12	11.49	15.66	5.77	9.35	1871
Eastern Europe	0.00	12.54	8.63	12.04	8.12	12.54	7.72	11.23	17.95	9.23	997
Far East	0.00	13.86	16.54	8.52	14.65	8.32	11.78	14.16	6.63	5.55	1010
Germanic	12.98	5.61	6.20	6.20	13.57	17.11	10.47	9.15	13.42	5.31	678
Latin America	0.00	15.90	12.05	12.43	12.37	12.11	8.27	9.59	11.17	6.12	1585
Latin Europe	0.00	7.49	9.39	9.07	15.62	16.56	14.43	11.36	10.02	6.07	1268
Near East	0.00	20.16	15.32	12.90	12.10	9.68	3.23	8.87	13.71	4.03	124
Nordic	0.00	6.49	7.67	7.38	15.04	13.57	15.04	11.21	16.22	7.38	339
Total	0.96	11.86	13.10	9.70	12.39	11.37	10.53	12.50	10.40	7.21	
N	88	1085	1198	887	1133	1040	963	1143	951	659	9147

have been accurate several decades ago when their data were collected. As reported here, data gathered in the twenty-first century indicate these clusters no longer exist. In sum, *results reported in Study I did not replicate* Ronen and Shenkar's (2013) *results*. Thus, while making work values comparisons by society (i.e., Country A to Country B) is simple and easy, it is also an inaccurate reflection of reality. Further, results of our replication support Cerar et al. (2021: p.2) call for "...more healthy skepticism towards secondary data constructs..." Next, Study II takes this research an important step forward by examining how well individual-level versus societal-level measures of work values predict important performance-related criteria.

## **Study II: Predicting behavior with societal-level vis-à-vis individual-level values**

Most international management research examining work values focused on latent measurement models underlying responses to some survey measure. For example, using the current sample, Ralston et al. (2018b) found evidence to support the dimensional measurement equivalence of five individual-level Business Values Dimensions across 51 societies. However, international management research has been remiss in examining theories/models explaining how these work values relate to other phenomena of interest. Using the current data, we estimated one such model derived from Campbell et al. (1970) classic theoretical argument that job performance is a function of motivation, ability, and opportunity. As work values constitute a basic component of virtually all models of human motivation (e.g., Vroom, 1964), we expected measures of work values would predict worker perceptions of performance-related behaviors. Specifically, we estimated how well BVD work values predict the Subordinate Influence Ethics (SIE) behavior scales at the individual-level of analysis.

The SIE consists of four dimensions indicating how ethically acceptable respondents believe their co-workers would consider behaviors in each item's influence scenario in the questionnaire (see Appendix D). These dimensions form a continuum of positive (softer) to negative (harsher) subordinate influence behavior from the perspective of the organization (Karam et al., 2013). Behaviors range from the most positive (Pro-organizational SIE Behavior) to the most negative (Maliciously Intended SIE Behavior). As such, they capture respondents' estimates of how coworkers view desirability of behavior in the workplace. As employees' work values are expected to influence both their own and peer work behaviors, we expected BVD scale scores to predict SIE behavioral perceptions. Thus, we selected these two polar scales from the SIE (Karam et al., 2013; Ralston & Pearson, 2010) to serve as criteria in our analyses.

Specifically, BVD work values were expected to predict Pro-Organizational SIE Behavior and Maliciously Intended SIE Behavior. The six-item Pro-Organizational SIE Behavior dimension "...may be defined as the 'organizational person' approach to gain influence in that these behaviors reflect those that are typically prescribed and/or sanctioned by organizations. These may be viewed as behaviors that tend to be directly beneficial



to the organization” (Karam et al., 2013, p. 401). In contrast, the five-item Maliciously Intended SIE Behavior dimension “...may be defined as the ‘burn, pillage, and plunder’ approach to gain influence in that they are intended to directly hurt others and/or the organization, to facilitate personal gain. These behaviors are the extreme of self-serving behaviors, and in many industrialized societies these behaviors would also be considered illegal” (Karam et al., 2013, p. 401).

Next, we identified the BVD dimensions that theory would support as potential predictor variables. First, Ethical Achievement BVD values can be described as “...the desire to take the honorable and efficient path to prosper and flourish. Effective integrity and responsible behavior towards one’s self and others through personal competency is the emphasis of this values set” (Ralston et al., 2018b, p. 1196). As such, the BVD Ethical Achievement scale was expected to positively predict Pro-Organizational SIE Behavior and negatively predict Maliciously Intended SIE Behavior. Clear causal mechanisms support these expectations, as valuing honor, integrity, and responsible behavior is likely to motivate coworkers’ Pro-Organizational SIE Behavior. Simultaneously, they serve to de-motivate organizationally destructive Maliciously Intended SIE Behavior. Second, Power BVD values can be described as “...a self-centered need for the approval of others, domineering control of the situation and personal supremacy. A Machiavellian-like influence over other people, without reference to ethical standards, is the emphasis of this values set” (Ralston et al., 2018b, p. 1196). Thus, Power BVD values were expected to negatively predict coworkers’ Pro-Organizational SIE Behavior and positively predict Maliciously Intended SIE Behavior. Valuing control over others and personal supremacy without regard to any ethical standards is likely to motivate coworkers’ behaviors that burn, pillage, and plunder those around them inside the organization. The other three BVD work values (Other-Oriented, Globally Responsible Innovation, Universal Order) may also play a role in motivating SIE dimensional behaviors, although extant theory does not explicate exactly how.

Finally, if Ronen and Shenkar’s (2013) contention that work values fall into homogeneous values profile society clusters is correct, one would expect their clusters to contribute incremental criterion validity as a level 2 predictor relative to the level 1 BVD scales using hierarchical linear modeling (HLM). If, as per results reported in Study I, Ronen and Shenkar’s homogeneous society clusters are not present and/or unimportant, predictive power of BVD scale score level 1 models should not be meaningfully augmented by a cluster membership predictor estimated in level 2 random intercept or random slope HLM models. However, any contributions of level 2 cluster groupings to prediction may be due to true latent differences across societies, regardless of how societies might be grouped into clusters. Hence, we performed the additional test of comparing HLM results when societies were randomly assigned to clusters to generate a better point of comparison.

**Table 3** OLS and HLM results for SIE pro-organizational behavior criterion with Ronen and Shenkar (2013) cluster as level 2 variable

Criterion variable	Pro-organizational behavior								
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6	Model 7	Model 8	Model 9
Model									
Model type	OLS	HLM—Null	HLM—Random intercept	HLM—Random intercept	HLM—Random coefficient				
Grouping variable	Ronen and Shenkar (2013) cluster								
Coefficient varied					Ethical achievement	Global Resp. innovation	Power	Universal order	Other-oriented
Intercept	-.401***	.147	.299**	.302**	.305**	.303**	.303**	.302**	.304**
Age	-.002*		-.005***	-.004***	-.005***	-.004***	-.004***	-.004***	-.004***
Gender	.008		.068**	.031	.035	.029	.032	.031	.035
Ethical Achievement	.274***			.254***	.224***	.255***	.254***	.254***	.250***
Globally Responsible Innovation	-.061***			-.051***	-.051***	-.052***	-.050***	-.051***	-.051***
Power	-.196***			-.178***	-.175***	-.176***	-.184***	-.177***	-.173***
Universal Order	-.001			-.014	-.019	-.015	-.016	-.018	-.015
Other-oriented	.008			.025*	.025*	.024*	.025*	.025*	-.001
R	.247***								
Log Likelihood		-12,248.08	-12,228.30	-12,023.70	-12,000.34	-12,020.48	-12,016.69	-12,023.46	-12,005.2
Deviance (-2*log likelihood)		24,496.16	24,456.58	24,047.4	24,000.68	24,040.96	24,033.38	24,046.92	24,010.44
df		3	5	10	12	12	12	12	12
Δ Deviance (compared to Model 3)		/	/	409.17*** <sup>1</sup>	/	/	/	/	/
Δ Deviance (compared to Model 4)		/	/	/	46.69*** <sup>1</sup>	4.41* <sup>1</sup>	13.99*** <sup>1</sup>	.045 <sup>1</sup>	36.93*** <sup>2</sup>
Intraclass Coefficients		.067*	.072*	.075*	.074*	.074*	.074*	.074*	.074*
N (individuals)		9082							
K (clusters)		10							

\*  $p < .05$ ; \*\*  $p < .01$ ; \*\*\*  $p < .001$

<sup>1</sup>These ΔDeviance values fell inside or below the 95% BCa bootstrap confidence interval estimated when societies were randomly assigned to clusters

<sup>2</sup>The 95% BCa bootstrap confidence interval estimated when societies were randomly assigned to clusters ranged from 19.35 to 31.80

## Methods

**Samples and Measures** The same sample used in Study I provided data for these Study II analyses. The BVD measures were identified in Study I. Appendix C identifies the societies, sample sizes, and Cronbach's alpha statistics for the Pro-organizational and Maliciously Intended SIE Behavior individual-level measures.

**Analyses** A priori hypotheses regarding latent structural causal models could only be drawn for BVD Ethical Achievement and Power scales, as previously described. We simply don't know exactly how other BVD work values scales should impact motivation and subsequent behavioral outcomes. Indeed, since our model did not include Ability and/or Opportunity measures, estimates of Campbell et al.'s (1970) causal model suggesting  $\text{Performance} = f(\text{Motivation, Ability, Opportunity})$  from the current sample will almost certainly be underspecified and biased. Given the general absence of international management research examining how work values relate to criteria of interest at any level, we used HLM to estimate  $\text{BVD} \rightarrow \text{SIE}$  relationships with level 1 models and random intercept and random coefficients level 2 models to estimate any society/cluster main or interaction effects, respectively. Age and gender were included as covariates in all HLM models estimated. Hence, similar to Study I, Study II examined predictor-criterion relationships for 10 of Ronen and Shenkar's clusters. A significant increase in prediction due to level 2 random intercept and random coefficient models examining Ronen and Shenkar's clusters as the level 2 predictor would suggest clusters yield main (random intercept) and interactive (random slopes) effects in predicting SIE criteria. We also performed parallel HLM analyses after randomly assigning societies to clusters. Initial evidence suggesting Ronen and Shenkar's (2013) clusters play an important role in understanding how BVD work values relate to the SIE criterion measure will occur, if the level 2 random intercept and slope models for cluster predict significantly. However, any incremental prediction contributed by Ronen and Shenkar's clusters may reveal differences between societies that are simply diluted when societies are aggregated into clusters. If true, HLM results for Ronen and Shenkar's clusters should fair no better than HLM results generated when societies are randomly assigned to clusters. Results reported in Study I led us to expect a minimal increase in level 2 cluster model predictive power.

## Results

Results for (1) OLS multiple regression examining predictive power of the five BVD scales and (2) HLM estimates of BVD level 1 models and random intercepts and random coefficients level 2 models examining Ronen and Shenkar's (2013) cluster groupings are reported in Table 3 for the Pro-organizational SIE Behavior criterion and Table 4 for the Maliciously Intended SIE Behavior criterion.

Tables 3 and 4 also examine 10 of Ronen and Shenkar's (2013) clusters as predictors in level 2 HLM models. Several conclusions can be drawn from these results.

First, the five BVD scales generated statistically and practically significant predictions by themselves.  $R=0.247$  and  $0.245$  in predicting Pro-organizational and Maliciously Intended SIE Behaviors, respectively, suggested approximately 25% of available prediction utility was attained using BVD scales alone (Russell, 2009). OLS results also supported theory-based a priori expectations that the BVD Ethical Achievement scale would be positively related to Pro-organizational SIE behaviors ( $\beta=0.274, p<0.001$ ) and negatively related to Maliciously Intended SIE behaviors ( $\beta=-0.209, p<0.001$ ). Similarly, OLS results supported a priori theory based expectations that the BVD Power scale would be negatively related to Pro-organizational ( $\beta=-0.196, p<0.001$ ) and positively related to Malicious SIE behaviors ( $\beta=0.046, p<0.001$ ).

Tables 3 and 4 also report nested HLM estimates of a null model, a model containing only gender and age level 1 covariates, an extended level 1 model adding BVD predictor scales, and random intercept and random slope level 2 models. These revealed how BVD, cluster, and society variables incrementally contribute to prediction. Similar to the OLS results, HLM level 1 analyses suggested the BVD scales were significantly related to the Pro-organizational and Maliciously Intended SIE behavior scales, with BVD scales yielding significant incremental change in log likelihoods ( $\Delta$  Deviance) over the null model. Importantly, coefficient estimates for the Ethical Achievement and Power BVD scales were in hypothesized directions for both criteria and are the largest of any BVD scale.

In Tables 3 and 4,  $\Delta$  Deviance results suggested incremental change in log likelihood was statistically significant when Ronen and Shenkar's (2013) level 2 cluster variable was added in the random intercept model and all but two of the random slope models, although the size of the  $\Delta$  Deviance contribution to prediction was approximately 1/10<sup>th</sup> the size of the incremental change in  $\Delta$  Deviance contribution to prediction that occurred when the individual-level BVD scales were added to the null model. Next, a total of 30 sets of random society-to-cluster assignments were generated, while  $b=1000$  bootstrap samples of  $n=30$  estimated the 95% BCA confidence interval for both HLM ICC and  $\Delta$  Deviance estimates. Tables 3 and 4 found almost all ICC and  $\Delta$  Deviance estimates statistically significantly different from 0 using Ronen and Shenkar's clusters as level 2 predictors. However,  $\Delta$  Deviance results were not significantly different (or were significantly lower) than  $\Delta$  Deviance results generated from random clusters in 11 of 12 SIE Pro-organizational analyses and 12 of 12 SIE Maliciously Intended analyses (see footnote 1 in Tables 3 and 4). All ICC estimates generated using Ronen and Shenkar's clusters were within or below the 95% BCA confidence intervals of ICC estimates generated from randomly assigned clusters. In other words, while HLM results found Ronen and Shenkar's clusters to statistically significantly contribute to criterion prediction, *the Ronen and Shenkar societal clusters did not contribute more to prediction (i.e.,  $\Delta$  Deviance) of behavior than when clusters were formed randomly. Furthermore, the individual-level values contributed substantially more to the prediction of behavior than the societal-level clusters did.*

**Table 4** OLS and HLM results for SIE malicious behavior criterion with cluster as level 2 variable

Criterion variable	Maliciously intended behavior								
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6	Model 7	Model 8	Model 9
Model	OLS	HLM—Null	HLM—Random intercept	HLM—Random	HLM—Random	HLM—Random coefficient			
Grouping variable	Ronen and Shenkar (2013) Cluster								
Coefficient varied	Ethical achievement			Global Resp. innovation			Power	Universal order	Other-oriented
Intercept	.877***	-.035	.345***	.212**	.204**	.206**	.208**	.211**	.209**
Age	-.006***		-.008***	-.005***	-.005***	-.005***	-.005***	-.005***	-.005***
Gender	-.101***		-.199***	-.116***	-.119***	-.118***	-.117***	-.232***	-.118***
Ethical Achievement	-.209***		-.209***	-.232***	-.230***	-.235***	-.234***	.136***	-.232***
Globally Responsible Innovation	.129***		.137***	.135***	.135***	.136***	.136***	.045***	.136***
Power	.046***		.045**	.043**	.043**	.044**	.041*	.075***	.044***
Universal Order	.084***		.077***	.079***	.079***	.077***	.076***	-.098***	.077***
Other-oriented	-.107***		-.098***	-.098***	-.098***	-.097***	-.084***	.084***	-.098***
R	.247***								
Log Likelihood	-12,814.15	-12,750.35	-12,517.37	-12,506.27	-12,512.37	-12,514.08	-12,514.08	-12,515.02	-12,514.48
Deviance (-2*log likelihood)	25,628.30	25,500.70	25,034.74	25,012.54	25,024.74	25,028.16	25,028.16	25,030.04	25,028.96
df	3	5	10	12	12	12	12	12	12
Δ Deviance (compared to Model 11)	/	/	465.96*** <sup>1</sup>	/	/	/	/	/	/
Δ Deviance (compared to Model 12)	/	/	/	22.01*** <sup>1</sup>	22.01*** <sup>1</sup>	9.08** <sup>1</sup>	6.39* <sup>1</sup>	4.50 <sup>1</sup>	5.58 <sup>1</sup>
Intraclass Coefficients	.039*	.039*	.039*	.042*	.041*	.041*	.041*	.042*	.041*
N (individuals)	9082								

Table 4 (continued)

Criterion variable	Maliciously intended behavior								
Model	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6	Model 7	Model 8	Model 9
Model type	OLS	HLM—Null	HLM—Random intercept	HLM—Random intercept	HLM—Random coefficient				
Grouping variable	Ronen and Shenkar (2013) Cluster								
Coefficient varied				Ethical achievement	Global Resp. innovation	Power	Universal order	Other-oriented	
K (clusters)	10								

\*  $p < .05$ ; \*\*  $p < .01$ ; \*\*\*  $p < .001$

<sup>†</sup>These  $\Delta$ Deviance values fell inside or below the 95% BCA bootstrap confidence interval estimated when societies were randomly assigned to clusters

Importantly, results for models limited to BVD scale score predictors yielded results consistent with a priori theory-based expectations, regardless of variables used in level 2 HLM models. Specifically, Ethical Achievement BVD values were positively related to Pro-organizational SIE Behavior ratings and negatively related to Maliciously Intended SIE Behavior ratings. Power BVD values were negatively related to Pro-organizational SIE Behavior and positively related to Maliciously Intended SIE Behavior ratings. BVD work values of Global Innovation, Universal Order, and Other-orientation were often statistically significant predictors, though their effects were always much lower. Given our estimated model was known to be underspecified (due to the absence of ability and opportunity measures) and given the absence of a priori theory-based guidance, we felt it premature to speculate on the nature of the much smaller effect sizes of the remaining BVD scales, which were at best one-third the size of Ethical Achievement and Power effect sizes.

## Discussion

### Study I: Determining society homogeneity/heterogeneity

**Within-society heterogeneity** As shown in Table 1, we found no within-society homogeneity of work values across 38 of the 39 societies in our study. Specifically, Table 1 indicated only Austria had more than 31% of the respondents in a single cluster. Thus, we found no evidence of within-society values or behaviors homogeneity outside of Austria. Table 2 shows how often empirical clusters derived in the current sample match with Ronen and Shenkar's (2013) solution. Only Ronen and Shenkar's Anglo cluster matched with a single empirically derived cluster in the current sample. Five of their clusters had no dominant match, while four of their clusters were dominated by multiple empirically derived clusters. The essence of Study I findings was that within-society values were much too diverse to treat societies as homogeneous entities as proposed by Ronen and Shenkar (2013) and as assumed for decades in most of our past cross-cultural research (e.g., Hofstede, 1980).

Therefore, if societies in the twenty-first century businessworld are characterized with heterogeneous labor pools, as we found, then these heterogeneous workforces cannot be grouped into homogeneous societal-clusters. Table 1 results also do not support the possibility of clusters of societies exhibiting similar heterogeneous values profiles that are consistent across societies. The assumption of common within-society latent values profiles—an assumption Ronen and Shenkar (2013) had to make due to the limitations of their data—simply is not accurate as reflected in the current data. Our results strongly suggest Ronen and Shenkar's solution, grouping societies together within clusters, either: 1) may have been true 20–50 years ago, but is not true now; or 2) may have been driven by other factors (e.g., common methods, measures, or other sources of systematic error within society subsets). Ronen and Shenkar's (2013) results do not replicate when psychometrically sound measures of individual-level values are used across business respondents. In sum, *observed within- and between-society heterogeneity argues strongly for conducting research*

at the individual-level. Simply put, the individual-level of analysis, not the societal-level of analysis, is superior. However, it remains to be seen whether higher levels of aggregation contribute to our understanding. Further, the implications of the findings of this replication extend beyond the Ronen and Shenkar clusters. These findings have similar implications for *all* current societal-level measures, such as GLOBE and Hofstede's VSM.

**Future research** In-depth analyses replicating and extending these results should be explored in future research, as convergent results from multiple investigators using multiple samples and measures are needed. One approach might examine specific religious, ethnic, or educational groups across societies. Examination of aggregations based on access to technology would also seem justified. Our point is that greater levels of homogeneity might be found within alternate ways of aggregating groups. For example, future work values research will need to focus on groups of workers with homogeneous values profiles regardless of the political/geographic (i.e., societal) boundaries. This, we believe, could be very enlightening. Additionally, the preponderance of previous cross-cultural research has not examined subculture groups. New approaches need to compare current results to future BVD samples taken from the same societies that might reveal: 1) whether homogeneous BVD scale score profiles remain constant or change over time; 2) whether a change in a neighboring society's BVD profile predicts change in that society's BVD profile; 3) whether BVD profiles change over an individual's work life (e.g., life stages); 4) whether gender, age, and other demographic characteristics covary with change in BVD profiles over time; and 5) whether BVD profiles relate to important organizational, economic, and societal outcomes. Particularly relevant would be to address these questions within fast growth labor markets (e.g., the highly international and fast changing information technologies labor markets), especially where there is potential for work values change due to population migrations, such as is currently occurring between the Middle East and Europe.

## Study II: Predicting behavior

If Ronen and Shenkar's (2013) cluster memberships captured latent differences in structural relationships, then their cluster solution, or something very similar, should be revealed at least in HLM estimates of random intercept models when combined with level 1 BVD scale score predictors. While Study I findings strongly suggested Ronen and Shenkar's model was not supported, their cluster solution might still be relevant in discerning different latent structural models that explain how work values relate to other relevant criteria in organizations.

Importantly, international work values research becomes most relevant when relationships with key organizational outcomes and criteria are established. Hence, we investigated the values—behavior relationship, using a work values survey with demonstrated dimensional equivalence in psychometric measurement characteristics across societies. With it, we found no support for Ronen and Shenkar's (2013) cluster conceptualization of homogeneous society work values predicting behavior.



Thus, consistent with Study I findings, evidence reported in Study II shows Ronen and Shenkar's cluster solution did not contribute to criterion prediction any better than what was observed from randomly created clusters. In contrast, *individual-level BVD scale ratings did significantly and substantively predict behavior.*

## Limitations

Both studies have limitations that might be addressed by post hoc analyses and/or future research. Homogeneous societal clusters may exist in the current data that did not conform to those reported by Ronen and Shenkar (2013). If some number, 'k' (where  $k \neq 10$ , since 10 is the number of clusters we investigated in this study), societal clusters with common work values in fact existed, perhaps our data would have found evidence to have supported them. Thus, to address this possibility, post hoc, we performed both exploratory cluster analyses and kmeans cluster analyses with k ranging from 2 to 38. Generation of Table 1 results for each solution would, as in the analyses reported, support the presence of homogeneous society clusters, if each society's respondents were found dominantly in a single cluster. No evidence of this occurred regardless of clustering method or k value used. The 38 tables generated from these analyses are available from the authors, on request.

The current project was also limited in that it did not permit exploratory qualitative work, (e.g., a priori interviews aimed at identifying homogeneous subcultures within each society). Results of such qualitative efforts might suggest alternate work values measures and/or quantitative analyses needed to confirm homogeneous work values profile clusters that qualitative methods suggest exist within single societies or spanning multiple societies.

Common Method Variance (CMV) might have influenced results reported in Study 2, as both BVD predictor and SIE criterion measures were obtained from a single survey administration. This topic remains a contentious issue (Chang et al., 2010) that we cannot hope to resolve here. Regardless, there are a number of reasons to believe CMV minimally influenced results reported in Study 2. First, Campbell (1982) viewed strong construct validity evidence of survey measures as a necessary but not sufficient condition before assuming minimal CMV. As noted, such evidence was reported for the BVD scale by Ralston et al. (2018b) and for the SIE scale by Karam et al. (2013).

Second, Podsakoff et al. (2003) argued CMV would be minimized if surveys used to generate scale scores used different instructions and item formats. For example, using the same 7-point Likert response scale and instructions to indicate how important/frequently some phenomenon's characteristics A & B are perceived will likely yield scales suffering from common method variance. Examination of BVD and SIE survey instructions and item formats in Appendices B and D show substantive differences in instructions, item format, and response format that should have minimized CMV.

Third, post hoc CFA Marker analyses were performed following procedures described by Richardson et al. (2009). In this instance self-reported age and birth date (i.e., date of survey minus self-reported birth date) were used as indicators of age. Two measurement models were estimated using SEM estimation methods, one in which the two indicator loadings were free to be estimated, the other in

which the two indicator loadings were constrained to 0. No substantive or statistical differences could be found in how well these two measurement models fit, suggesting CMV was not present.

Finally, most CMV conceptualizations suggest it will inflate latent structural relationships between variables, although on rare occasions it might attenuate relationships. If, for example, four percent of the variance in scales generated from a common survey administration was shared due to CMV, one would expect a minimum correlation of  $r = \sqrt{r^2} = \sqrt{.04} = .16$  between all scales, even when  $\rho = 0.00$ . Six of the 10 BVD-SIE correlations yielded  $r \leq 0.06$ , meaning that less than 4/10<sup>th</sup>s of one percent ( $r^2 = 0.06^2 = 0.0036$ ) of the shared variance between predictors and criteria was likely to be due to CMV. In our case, with the largest  $r = 0.11$  and two BVD-SIE correlations being non-statistically significant despite  $N > 10,000$ , we must conclude that CMV played a minisculely small role, if any, in the current results. Nonetheless, future investigators are urged to obtain criteria using independent measures.

## Implications of the findings

**Research** The most obvious implication one might draw from our findings is that researchers should avoid societal-level comparisons and analyses involving work values, focusing instead on work values constructs at individual employee levels. This is particularly relevant when studying work values relationships with other important individual-level outcomes in organizations (e.g., job performance, job tenure/turnover, job satisfaction, work-life balance, career aspirations). A tangentially related point is that our findings generalize beyond Ronen and Shenkar's (2013) cluster findings. That is, when researchers are considering studying values differences/similarities in future multicountry studies, they should realize that any measure designed to work at only the societal-level (e.g., GLOBE, Hofstede's Values Survey Module) will be insufficient to capture the true outcome due to the inability of these measures to capture the effects of within-society values/culture heterogeneity.

**Business** As noted, many individual-level outcomes such as job performance and voluntary turnover are also relevant outcomes of interest to business organizations. Estimating expected levels of work productivity and human resource management systems costs due to predicted levels of voluntary turnover (e.g., recruiting, selection, and training costs) will be important when making decisions to start or expand operations in a given country. Findings reported in this study suggest such forecasts, if made at the country-level, will not be accurate. Accurate forecasts of important individual-level business outcomes will require measures that are capable of being predicted by individual differences (e.g., work values) within each society's relevant labor pool.

**Teaching** Our findings support the viewpoint that business educators and trainers should highlight the heterogeneous nature of societal cultures. They also need to caution students, our future leaders, not to commit to stereotyping individuals by

their cultural backgrounds (i.e., cultural clusters). The typical International Management textbooks or websites that discuss cultural differences across nations could be misleading. Understanding the heterogeneous nature of societal cultures is even more crucial for our future workforces than it is for us today. Workers in the future will not only likely work more with those from other nations, but will also likely work in much more diverse organizations and business communities at home. Similarly, managers need to be aware of the diversity within a society, and the similarity across societies. Our data/analyses provide an excellent illustration of the extent of diversity within 39 societies across the globe. In sum, making work values comparisons by society (i.e., Country A to Country B) is simple and intuitively pleasing. It is also an inaccurate reflection of reality.

### Researcher needs

Going beyond the contributions of the two studies in this paper, we realize that it is difficult to engage in international work values research at this level. The prime challenge is the ability to get access to the data needed to do large multicountry studies. An option is the World Values Survey (WVS), a series of waves of data collected by Inglehart (1997) and colleagues. However, “(a)s a sociologist, Inglehart’s agenda was understandably different from international business scholars who study cross-cultural differences in the workforce” (Ralston et al., 2018b, p. 1190). Inglehart collected societal-level data from general population samples across a wide variety of societies. Further, while the WVS provides a broad-brush collection of items covering many societal issues, it may have been too ambitious. For example, while the WVS included some full measures, it also includes some severely truncated measures (e.g., Schwartz Values Survey), making them substantially meaningless. As such, these societal-level, general population data may not yield useful insights into workplace values or their effects. Coming back to the work by Ronen and Shenkar’s (2013), which had to rely on secondary data to create their largescale, multicountry dataset, *if they had had access to current-day, primary data, using work values surveys of known psychometric quality, what might they have found?* Our results suggest their findings would have been very different. Addition of other societal level measures (e.g., economic indices that capture economic opportunity) might lead to better specified models and an explanation for the small contribution to prediction provided by the societal level in Study II.

Returning to the challenge of doing largescale, multicountry research, there is a need for authors to make data publicly available: 1) to permit future researchers to not have to make the assumption of within-society homogeneity required by Ronen and Shenkar; and 2) to permit longitudinal examination of changes in work values. As such, we provide colleagues with our data focusing on two measures (BVD and SIE). Both of these measures were cross-culturally developed to be used at the individual-level of analysis and were normed for the business sector (Ralston & Pearson, 2010; Ralston et al., 2018b). For those who might want to investigate at greater depths the phenomena addressed in this paper, we provide them with an Excel database of 11,780 individual-level BVD and SIE scale scores, including demographic information from

business professionals across 51 societies, with instructions on how to use these measures (See Appendices E, F, & G and Supplementary information). Thus, in addition to evidence supporting work values heterogeneity within societies and work values criterion validity, this paper's extensive database of individual-level values and influence behavior ratings provides the IM research community with a point of departure from which to greatly expand our knowledge in the area of cross-cultural management.

## Conclusions

Study I findings clearly showed no societal homogeneity of work values using BVD scale measures with strong construct validity evidence (i.e., common latent dimensional measurement models across cultures). In many instances, when forced into  $k=10$  clusters, respondents for a given society were spread virtually evenly across all 10 clusters. These findings across the societies in our study go far beyond questioning the findings of Ronen and Shenkar (2013). They show there is just too much within-society heterogeneity of values and behaviors to be able to use societal-level values and/or behaviors as cross-cultural research variables. In spite of the disappointing findings for the Ronen and Shenkar cluster approach reported in Study I, we continued to Study II to assess whether this approach could predict SIE behavior. As reported in Tables 3 to 6, Ronen and Shenkar's (2013) *societal-level cluster solution was found lacking, whereas the individual-level BVD values were able to predict SIE behavior*. Our opportunity to access current-day, individual-level data—an opportunity which Ronen and Shenkar did not have—likely contributed to the divergent findings reported in our study. Results suggesting random intercept and slope level 2 models for societies, when combined with Study I results showing no within society business values homogeneity, simply suggests other predictors exist at the societal level of aggregation that predict the criteria.

Future investigators of work values in international settings must examine both measurement and structural models. For example, even if Ronen and Shenkar's country cluster conclusions had been correct, it amounts to little more than the observation that groups of people are different. This is not terribly insightful, as we suspect most would agree that people do differ both within and between societies. The importance of those differences is found in how they relate to important organizational and economic outcomes. While scholars might find evidence of values differences "interesting," those differences only become important when they can be used to explain and predict relevant outcomes for individual worker performance. In sum, when it comes to scientific values/behaviors research in business settings, our findings for today's world provide substantial evidence that the societal-level of analysis is not primary, and research needs to move to include the individual-level to accurately study the specific work phenomena under investigation. As noted by Caprar et al. (2015), Taras et al. (2016), Tung (2008), Tung and Verbeke (2010), and Venaik and Brewer (2016), the implications of this finding are profound.

To speculate on what the future might hold, we conclude by taking a moment to extend our perspective on this evolutionary trend that takes us from focusing on the homogeneous, societal-level (i.e., country) values perspective of past decades to a focus

that is more at the individual-level. We might begin by asking, does a ‘Japanese way’ or ‘Chinese way’ or ‘American way’ of doing business remain? It seems reasonable to suggest that, today, these vestiges do still exist. However, if current trends continue, these “ways” of the past may become a thing of the past. Indeed, we envision societies of the future will evolve to become ‘diffused global communities’ in which the values held across Country A are somewhat similar to those held across Countries B, C, D, E, etc., where the within-society variance in values will be extremely high. Thus, while our current data is not longitudinal and hence cannot presently test this proposition, we propose that societies are moving in a direction that will make them *similar in their diversity*, further reinforcing the need for analysis at the individual level. Of course, only time and thoughtful research will tell if this prediction is correct.

**Supplementary Information** The online version contains supplementary material available at <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10490-022-09822-z>.

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## Appendix A. Cronbach’s Alphas for the BVD Measures

Society	Sample size* (N)	Ethical achievement	Power	Other-oriented	Globally responsible innovation	Universal order
Algeria	100	0.628	0.516	0.611	0.605	0.579
Argentina	96	0.853	0.760	0.819	0.772	0.672
Australia	198	0.763	0.780	0.837	0.765	0.739
Austria	105	0.673	0.774	0.704	0.509	0.634
Brazil	399	0.749	0.701	0.751	0.740	0.711
Bulgaria	88	0.618	0.674	0.648	0.588	0.756
Canada	265	0.730	0.765	0.798	0.734	0.668
Chile	72	0.819	0.663	0.625	0.817	0.780
China	552	0.818	0.722	0.797	0.768	0.788
Colombia	183	0.784	0.697	0.811	0.628	0.747
Costa Rica	68	0.731	0.755	0.789	0.759	0.722
Croatia	268	0.655	0.656	0.718	0.711	0.669
Cuba	564	0.719	0.669	0.706	0.684	0.640
Czech Rep	295	0.626	0.685	0.682	0.610	0.670
Dubai	99	0.520	0.451	0.662	0.512	0.454
Egypt	125	0.347	0.407	0.680	0.483	0.277
Estonia	150	0.727	0.723	0.722	0.613	0.648
Finland	131	0.714	0.752	0.738	0.572	0.562

Society	Sample size* (N)	Ethical achievement	Power	Other-oriented	Globally responsible innovation	Universal order
France	200	0.666	0.609	0.688	0.661	0.658
Germany	199	0.729	0.764	0.770	0.729	0.586
Hong Kong	153	0.848	0.818	0.766	0.790	0.695
Hungary	122	0.625	0.630	0.678	0.622	0.680
India	268	0.833	0.610	0.795	0.735	0.780
Indonesia	131	0.835	0.772	0.793	0.801	0.829
Israel	129	0.783	0.765	0.692	0.704	0.646
Italy	288	0.673	0.710	0.746	0.574	0.642
Japan	135	0.545	0.734	0.704	0.620	0.581
Lebanon	97	0.719	0.688	0.808	0.701	0.698
Lithuania	311	0.733	0.728	0.747	0.678	0.749
Malaysia	325	0.638	0.595	0.746	0.648	0.637
Mexico	298	0.799	0.720	0.739	0.714	0.630
Netherlands	205	0.766	0.716	0.787	0.765	0.643
New Zealand	122	0.653	0.744	0.737	0.696	0.639
Pakistan	338	0.799	0.693	0.717	0.707	0.714
Peru	375	0.789	0.772	0.775	0.735	0.708
Portugal	547	0.704	0.701	0.765	0.709	0.690
Russia	214	0.695	0.661	0.679	0.652	0.705
Singapore	465	0.798	0.789	0.808	0.774	0.772
Slovenia	299	0.693	0.703	0.683	0.636	0.726
S. Africa	201	0.737	0.760	0.839	0.683	0.763
S. Korea	275	0.736	0.689	0.697	0.664	0.668
Spain	82	0.780	0.766	0.666	0.628	0.581
Sri Lanka	114	0.812	0.709	0.813	0.785	0.773
Switzerland	368	0.664	0.735	0.673	0.650	0.597
Taiwan	277	0.868	0.759	0.835	0.780	0.847
Thailand	279	0.571	0.655	0.664	0.608	0.600
Turkey	123	0.788	0.708	0.794	0.740	0.636
UK	254	0.740	0.715	0.791	0.753	0.715
USA	209	0.697	0.725	0.802	0.666	0.672
Venezuela	134	0.850	0.781	0.755	0.741	0.708
Vietnam	190	0.756	0.710	0.777	0.706	0.723
All Societies	11,505	0.771	0.718	0.774	0.706	0.711

\* sample size on which coefficient alpha was computed across the scale

## Appendix B. Dimensions of the BVD and items in questionnaire format

### The five business values dimensions

The five BVD dimensions, which are comprised of 34 items, measure latent individual work values, which have been shown to exhibit a common measurement model across cultures (Ralston et al., 2018a, b). The BVD dimensions include (Ralston et al., 2018a, b, pp.1196–97):

*Ethical achievement.* This 7-item dimension captures “the desire to take the honorable and efficient path to prosper and flourish. Effective integrity and responsible behavior towards one’s self and others through personal competency is the emphasis of this values set.”

*Power.* This 6-item dimension captures “a self-centered need for the approval of others, domineering control of the situation and personal supremacy. A Machiavellian-like influence over other people, without reference to ethical standards, is the emphasis of this values set.”

*Other-oriented.* This 10-item dimension captures “other-oriented, deferential demeanor with self-effacing-predisposition to follow social rules aimed at harmony and minimizing conflict. Consideration for others with the purpose of serving these others with humility, which is tantamount to a collectivistic-orientation, is the emphasis of this values set.”

*Globally responsible innovation.* This 6-item dimension captures “embracing innovation in ways that respect the environment. The adventure of imaginative exploration of the unknown in a responsible manner is the emphasis of this values set.”

*Universal order.* This 5-item dimension captures “a need for a dependable, peaceful social environment. These items describe the value as being applied at all social levels (i.e., world, society, interpersonal).”

### BVD items presented in questionnaire format

Instructions: We are interested in your views. There are no “correct” answers.

Below is a list of 34 phrases, each expressing a different (unique) individual value. After reading each phrase, please indicate how important each is to you in leading your life.

In the space before each, write the number (1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9) that indicates your view of that phrase. Try to distinguish as much as possible between the phrases by using all the numbers. You will, of course, need to use numbers more than once.

Of no importance	Of minimal importance	Of moderate importance	Of substantial importance	Of very highest importance	
1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9			
<u>When leading my life, the importance of each of the following phrases is:</u>					<i>Dimension #</i>
1. _____	SOCIAL POWER: control over others, dominance				2
2. _____	CLEAN: neat, tidy				1
3. _____	WEALTH: material possessions, money				2
4. _____	NATIONAL SECURITY: protection of my nation from my enemies				5
5. _____	CREATIVITY: uniqueness, imagination				4
6. _____	FREEDOM: freedom of action and thought				4
7. _____	A SPIRITUAL LIFE: emphasis on spiritual not material matters				3
8. _____	FAMILY SECURITY: safety for loved ones				5
9. _____	UNITY WITH NATURE: fitting into nature				4
10. _____	AUTHORITY: the right to lead or command				2
11. _____	LOYAL: faithful to my friends, group				1
12. _____	HUMBLE: modest, self-effacing				3
13. _____	SOCIAL RECOGNITION: respect, approval by others				2
14. _____	SELF_DISCIPLINE: self-restraint, resistance to temptation				3
15. _____	INFLUENTIAL: having an impact on people and events				2
16. _____	CHOOSING OWN GOALS: selecting own purposes				1
17. _____	PRIVACY: the right to have a private sphere				3
18. _____	CAPABLE: competent, effective, efficient				1
19. _____	A WORLD AT PEACE: free of war and conflict				5
20. _____	HONEST: genuine, sincere				1
21. _____	OBEDIENCE: dutiful, meeting obligations				3
22. _____	INTELLIGENT: logical thinking				1
23. _____	HELPFUL: working for the welfare of others				3
24. _____	DEVOUT: holding to religious faith and belief				3
25. _____	RESPONSIBLE: dependable, reliable				1
26. _____	CURIOUS: interested in everything, exploring				4
27. _____	FORGIVING: willing to pardon others				3
28. _____	A WORLD OF BEAUTY: beauty of nature and the arts				4
29. _____	ACCEPTING MY PORTION IN LIFE: submitting to life's circumstances				3
30. _____	PRESERVING MY PUBLIC IMAGE: preserving my "face"				2
31. _____	MODERATE: avoiding extremes of feeling and action				3
32. _____	POLITENESS: courtesy, good manners				5
33. _____	A VARIED LIFE: life filled with challenge, novelty and change				4
34. _____	SOCIAL ORDER: stability of society				5
<u>Dimensions:</u>		1. Ethical Achievement	4. Globally Responsible Innovation		
		2. Power	5. Universal Order		
		3. Other-Oriented			

(Ralston et al., 2018)

## Appendix C. Cronbach's alphas for the SIE measures

Society	Sample size* (N)	Pro-organizational	Malicious intended
Algeria	99	0.667	0.689
Argentina	87	0.785	0.740
Australia	195	0.794	0.697
Austria	105	0.738	0.748
Brazil	400	0.682	0.773



Are societal-level values still relevant measures in the...

Society	Sample size* (N)	Pro-organizational	Malicious intended
Bulgaria	88	0.087	0.757
Canada	258	0.758	0.746
China	552	0.734	0.742
Colombia	178	0.679	0.805
Costa Rica	67	0.738	0.610
Croatia	272	0.661	0.697
Czech Rep	294	0.662	0.702
Dubai	99	0.470	0.623
Egypt	125	0.531	0.527
Estonia	255	0.778	0.730
Finland	131	0.706	0.766
France	200	0.849	0.731
Germany	197	0.796	0.817
Hong Kong	92	0.757	0.723
Hungary	126	0.698	0.695
India	256	0.783	0.809
Indonesia	129	0.614	0.670
Israel	132	0.751	0.657
Italy	288	0.704	0.775
Japan	135	0.672	0.723
Lebanon	94	0.701	0.762
Lithuania	311	0.532	0.646
Malaysia	328	0.704	0.659
Mexico	306	0.756	0.863
Netherlands	205	0.595	0.662
New Zealand	123	0.761	0.812
Pakistan	336	0.694	0.694
Peru	376	0.649	0.729
Portugal	550	0.676	0.785
Russia	213	0.677	0.726
Singapore	463	0.753	0.815
Slovenia	299	0.551	0.703
S. Africa	196	0.779	0.753
S. Korea	275	0.778	0.732
Spain	79	0.789	0.751
Sri Lanka	121	0.759	0.746
Switzerland	361	0.590	0.769
Taiwan	281	0.663	0.720
Thailand	278	0.574	0.624
Turkey	124	0.510	0.693
UK	259	0.671	0.777
USA	209	0.650	0.694
Venezuela	131	0.754	0.720

Society	Sample size* (N)	Pro-organizational	Malicious intended
Vietnam	199	0.621	0.604
All Societies	10,389	0.752	0.748

\* sample size on which coefficient alpha was computed across the scale

## Appendix D. Dimensions of the SIE and items in questionnaire format

### The four subordinate influence ethics behaviors

The four SIE dimensions measure subordinate perceptions of behaviors they engage in attempting to influence superiors (Ralston & Pearson, 2010). Items consist of short scenarios describing actual behaviors reported by businesspeople of their coworkers' behavior in business organizations. Ralston and Pearson (2010) described the iterative item development and construct validity evidence supporting the cross-cultural validity of these dimensions. SIE dimensions include (Karam et al., 2013, pp. 401–402):

*Pro-organizational ethics behavior.* This 6-item dimension “may be defined as the ‘organizational person’ approach to gain influence in that these behaviors reflect those that are typically prescribed and/or sanctioned by organizations for their subordinates. These may be viewed as behaviors that tend to be directly beneficial to the organization” (Karam et al., 2013, p.401).

*Image management ethics behavior.* This 5-item dimension “may be defined as subtle actions that an individual may use to influence his/her superiors with the objective being personal gain (Karam et al., 2013, p.402). They capture the ‘get others to like me’ approach to gain influence as they are non-confrontational (e.g., ingratiation), while still having a self-orientation. Image management behaviors are less aggressive than those found in the Self-Serving dimension.

*Self-serving ethics behavior.* This 6-item dimension “may be defined as the ‘it’s me first’ approach to gain influence in that these behaviors show self-interest being of paramount importance, and thus being above the interests of others and the organization. Whether these behaviors help or harm the organization is subject to interpretation and may be determined by the situation” (Karam et al., 2013, p.402).

*Maliciously intended ethics behavior.* This 5-item dimension “may be defined as the ‘burn, pillage, and plunder’ approach to gain influence in that they are intended to directly hurt others and/or the organization, to facilitate personal gain. These behaviors are the extreme of self-serving behaviors, and in many industrialized societies these behaviors would also be considered illegal” (Karam et al., 2013, p.401).

**SIE items presented in questionnaire format**

**Instructions:** We are interested in your views. There are no “correct” answers. Below is a list of 24 strategies that individuals might use to try to get ahead at work. After reading each strategy, please indicate how ethically acceptable you think that your co-workers would consider each strategy as a means of influencing superiors.

In the space before each item, write the number (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8) that indicates how ethically acceptable you believe that your co-workers would consider each strategy. Try to distinguish as much as possible between the items by using all the numbers, if possible. You will, of course, need to use numbers more than once.

Extremely Unacceptable	2	Somewhat Unacceptable	4	Somewhat Acceptable	6	7	Extremely Acceptable	
1		3		5			8	
<u>As a strategy to get ahead at work, my co-workers would consider it ethically acceptable to:</u>							<i>Dimension #</i>	
1. _____		spread rumors about someone or something that stands in the way of their advancement.						3
2. _____		volunteer for undesirable tasks to make themselves appreciated by the superior.						2
3. _____		try to influence the boss to make a bad decision, if that decision would help them to get ahead.						3
4. _____		learn the likes and dislikes of important people in the organization in order to avoid offending these people.						2
5. _____		use their network of friends to discredit a person competing with them for a possible promotion.						3
6. _____		withhold information to make someone else look bad.						3
7. _____		identify and work for an influential superior who could help them get an advancement.						2
8. _____		attempt to act in a manner that they believe will result in others admiring them.						2
9. _____		take credit for a good job that was done by their subordinates.						3
10. _____		use their technical expertise to make the superior dependent upon them.						2
11. _____		demonstrate the ability to get the job done.						1
12. _____		threaten to give valuable company information to someone outside the organization if their demands are not met.						4
13. _____		help subordinates to develop their skills so that the subordinates, in turn, will be in a position to help them attain their objectives.						1
14. _____		offer sexual favors to a superior.						4
15. _____		blame another for their own mistakes.						3
16. _____		try to create a situation where a competitor for a promotion might be caught using illegal drugs or engaging in some other illegal activity.						4
17. _____		behave in a manner that is seen as appropriate in the company.						1
18. _____		try to develop contacts who might be able to provide detrimental information about one of their competitors for a promotion.						*
19. _____		ask to be given the responsibility for an important project.						1
20. _____		steal secret corporate documents and give them to another company in return for a better job at the other company.						4
21. _____		maintain good working relationships with other employees, even if they dislike these other employees.						1
22. _____		seek to build a relationship with a senior person who could serve as a mentor.						*
23. _____		make anonymous, threatening phone calls to psychologically stress a competitor for a promotion.						4
24. _____		work overtime, if necessary, to get the job done.						1

\* Filler item.

- Dimensions: 1. Pro-Organizational Ethics Behavior      3. Self-Serving Ethics Behavior  
 2. Image Management Ethics Behavior                      4. Maliciously Intended Ethics Behavior

(Ralston & Pearson, 2010).

## Appendix E. Within-subject standardization of scale scores

1. Individual respondent raw score averages were calculated for each dimension.
2. Individual overall means and standard deviations for all BVD and SIE items were calculated based upon the following equation:

$$SS_i = [S_{(i)} - \mu]/\sigma$$

Where

$SS_i$  the respondent's standard score for dimension  $i$ ,

$S_i$  respondent's raw score for dimension  $i$ ,

$\mu$  overall mean of the BVD or SIE item scores, and.

$\sigma$  overall standard deviation of all BVD or SIE items.

## Appendix F. Variables of the excel database table

Variable name	Variable description	Values of the variable
SOCIETY	Society of data collection	See Appendix G (Society Codes)
YEAR	Year of data collection	
AGE	Age	Numerical age of participant
GENDER	Gender	1 = Male 2 = Female
EDUCATION	Highest level of education attained	1 = 4 or fewer years completed 2 = 5 to 8 years completed 3 = 9 to 12 years completed 4 = 13 to 16 years completed [Bachelor's degree] 5 = Master's degree 6 = Doctorate degree
POSITION	Position level in organization	1 = Non-supervisory staff 2 = First level manager 3 = Middle level manager 4 = Upper level manager
YRSWKD	Number of years of full-time employment (all jobs)	Numerical number of years
COSIZE	Company size	1 = Less than 100 employees 2 = 100 to 1000 employees 3 = More than 1000 employees

Variable name	Variable description	Values of the variable
INDUSTRY	Industry in which respondent worked	1 = Agriculture, mining, forestry, fishing 2 = Construction 3 = Manufacturing 4 = Transportation, communication, utilities 5 = Wholesale and retail trade 6 = Finance, insurance, real estate 7 = Services (example: hotel, restaurant) 8 = Public administration 9 = Healthcare 10 = Other
NATIONALITY	Society nationality of respondent	See Appendix G (Society Codes)
BIRTH	Society of birth of respondent	See Appendix G (Society Codes)
LIVED_15	Society in which respondent lived the longest (5 years or more) before the age of 15	See Appendix G (Society Codes)
BVD_EA	Raw data score for the BVD Ethical Achievement dimension	Numerical score
BVD_P	Raw data score for the BVD Power dimension	Numerical score
BVD_OO	Raw data score for the BVD Other-Oriented dimension	Numerical score
BVD_GR	Raw data score for the BVD Globally Responsible dimension	Numerical score
BVD_UO	Raw data score for the BVD Universal Order dimension	Numerical score
BVD_EA_STD	Standardized by individual score for the BVD Ethical Achievement dimension	Numerical score
BVD_P_STD	Standardized by individual score for the BVD Power dimension	Numerical score
BVD_OO_STD	Standardized by individual score for the BVD Other-Oriented dimension	Numerical score
BVD_GR_STD	Standardized by individual score for the BVD Globally Responsible dimension	Numerical score
BVD_UO_STD	Standardized by individual score for the BVD Universal Order dimension	Numerical score
SIE_PRO_O	Raw data score for the SIE Pro Organizational Ethics dimension	Numerical score
SIE_IMAGE	Raw data score for the SIE Image Management Ethics dimension	Numerical score
SIE_SS	Raw data score for the SIE Self-Serving Ethics dimension	Numerical score
SIE_MAL_I	Raw data score for the SIE Maliciously Intended Ethics dimension	Numerical score
SIE_PRO_O_STD	Standardized by individual score for the SIE Pro Organizational Ethics dimension	Numerical score
SIE_IMAGE_STD	Standardized by individual score for the SIE Image Management Ethics dimension	Numerical score

Variable name	Variable description	Values of the variable
SIE_SS_STD	Standardized by individual score for the SIE Self-Serving Ethics dimension	Numerical score
SIE_MAL_I_STD	Standardized by individual score for the SIE Maliciously Intended Ethics dimension	Numerical score

## Appendix G. Numeric codes for the societies in numerical order

1	USA	47	Bolivia	93	Belgium
2	Hong Kong	48	Lebanon	94	Norway
3	China	49	Turkey	95	Ireland
4	Russia	50	Peru	96	Luxembourg
5	Japan	51	Hungary	97	Lichtenstein
6	India	52	Bangladesh	98	Ghana
7	Germany	53	New Zealand	99	Senegal
8	Canada	54	Cuba	100	Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
9	Mexico	55	Colombia	101	Cyprus
10	Vietnam	56	Philippines	102	Ivory Coast
11	Greece	57	Pakistan	103	Afghanistan
12	Macau	58	Dominican Republic	104	Sri Lanka
13	Portugal	59	Egypt	105	Armenia
14	Chile	60	Czech Republic	106	Madagascar
15	Fiji	61	South Korea	107	Cameroon
16	UK	62	Kuwait	108	Burkina Faso
17	Brazil	63	Libya	109	Rwanda
18	Israel	64	Saudi Arabia	110	'Asian'
19	Ecuador	65	Bahrain	111	Kazakhstan
20	France	66	Oman	112	Tanzania
21	Netherlands	67	U.A.E	113	Uzbekistan
22	Bulgaria	68	Nigeria	114	Kyrgyzstan
23	Slovakia	69	Iran	115	Moldavia
24	Indonesia	70	Nepal	116	Latvia
25	Switzerland	71	Dubai	117	Belarus
26	Slovenia	72	Qatar	118	Scotland
27	Romania	73	Abu Dhabi	119	—
28	Yugoslavia	74	Lithuania	120	Ethiopia
29	Montenegro	75	Barbados	121	Zaire
30	Ukraine	76	Algeria	122	Trinidad
31	Poland	77	Costa Rica	123	Mauritius
32	Croatia	78	Iraq	124	Papua New Guinea
33	Argentina	79	Estonia	125	Macedonia

34	Australia	80	Jordan	126	Albania
35	Thailand	81	Morocco	127	Kenya
36	Singapore	82	Syria	128	Jamaica
37	Malaysia	83	Tunisia	129	Myanmar
38	Finland	84	Sudan	130	Tatar
39	Italy	85	Palestine	131	Zambia
40	Taiwan	86	Denmark	132	Zimbabwe
41	—	87	Sweden	133	Swaziland
42	Azerbaijan	88	Angola	134	Namibia
43	South Africa	89	Mozambique	135	—
44	Bosnia	90	Venezuela	136	—
45	Serbia	91	Puerto Rico	137	Cape Verde
46	Spain	92	Austria	138	Iceland

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