Digital Security Perceptions and Practices Around the World: A WEIRD versus Non-WEIRD Comparison

44th USENIX Security Symposium, 2025

Seattle, WA, USA

Franziska Herbert*   Collins W. Munyendo*   Jonas Hielscher   Steffen Becker   Yixin Zou
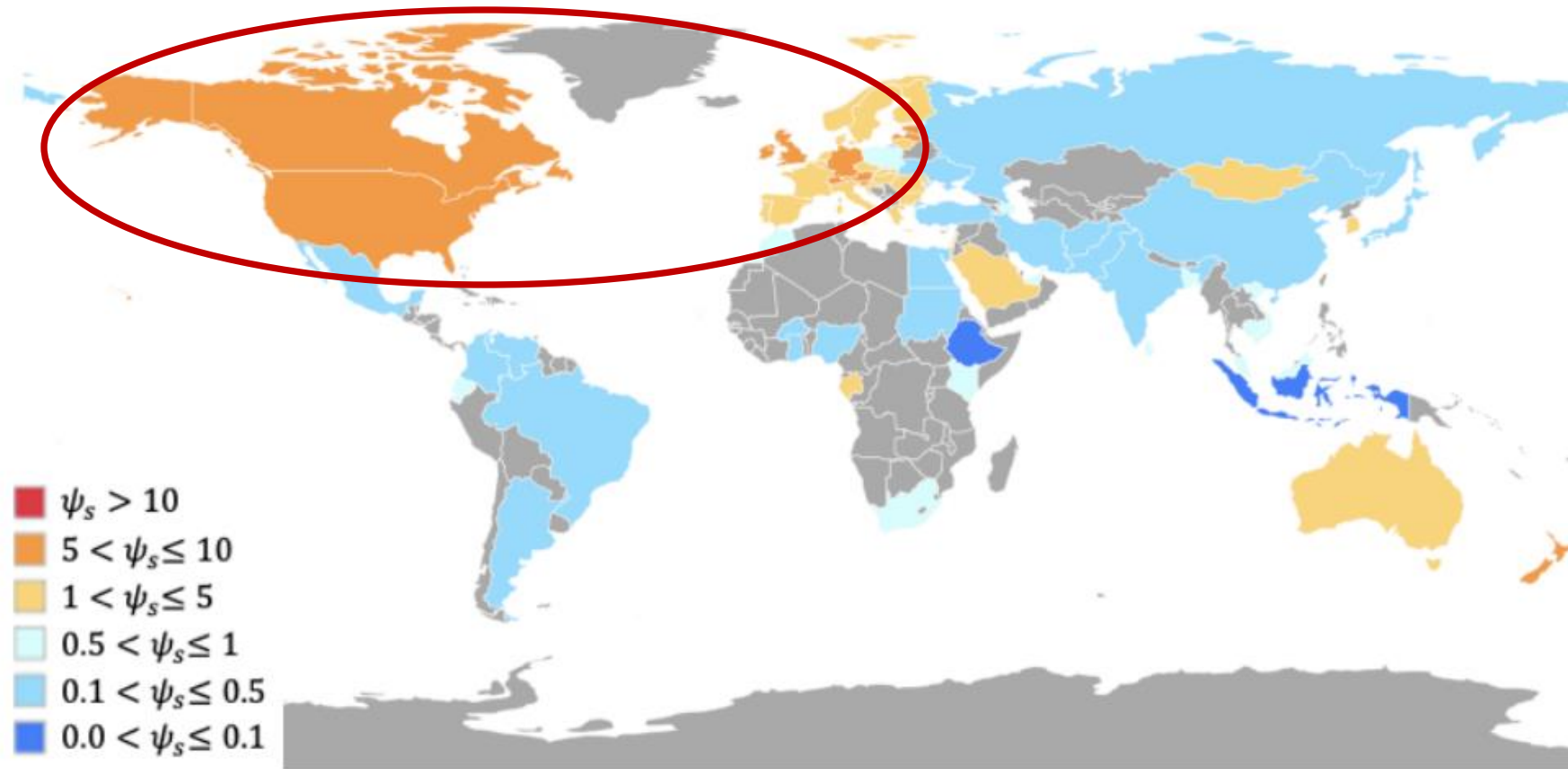

Co-first authors: Franziska and Collins contributed equally to this work

Two Decades of Usable S&P Research
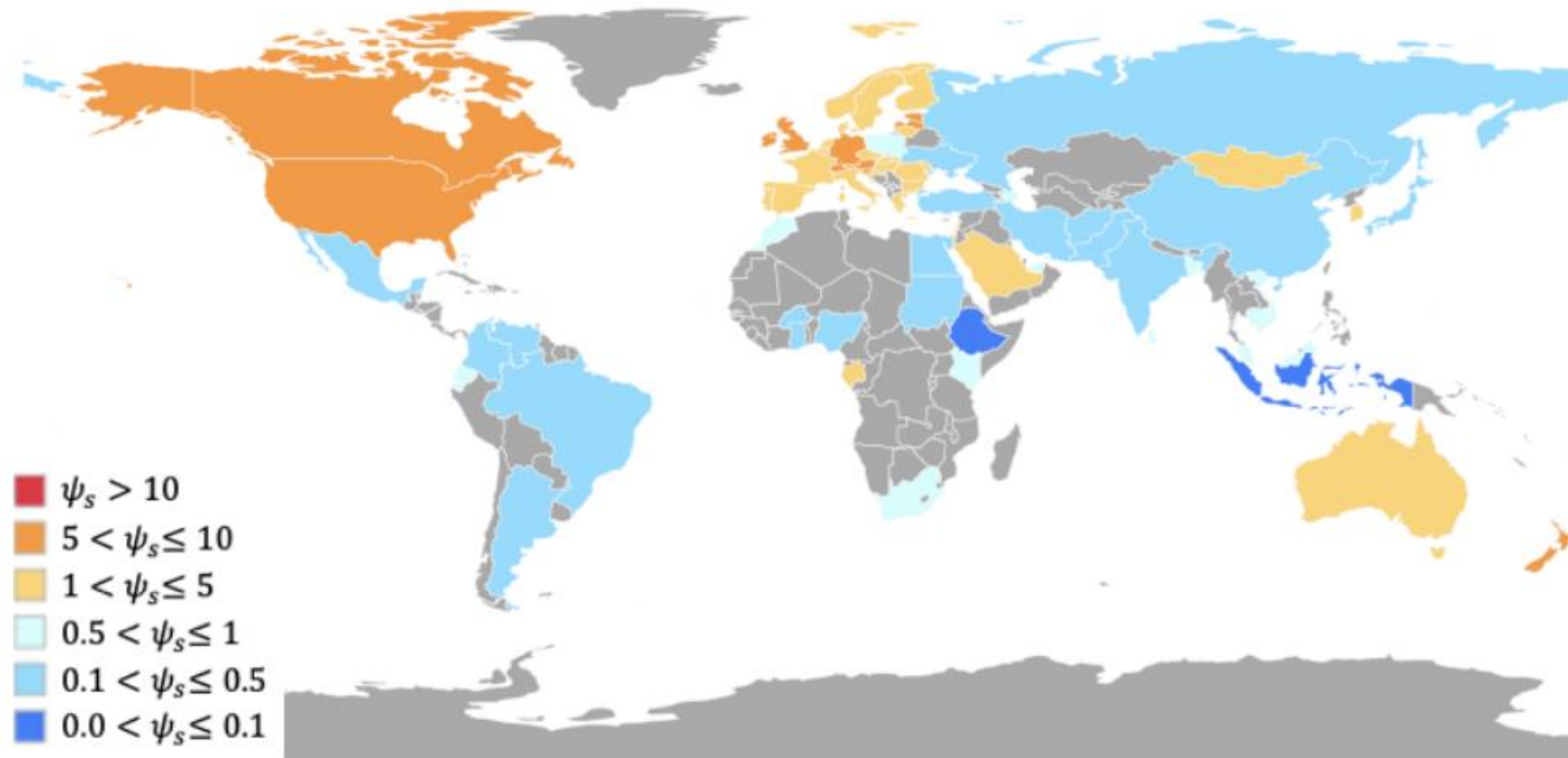
Ayako A. Hasegawa, Daisuke Inoue, and Mitsuaki Akiyama. **How WEIRD is Usable Privacy and Security Research?** In Proc. USENIX Security, 2024.
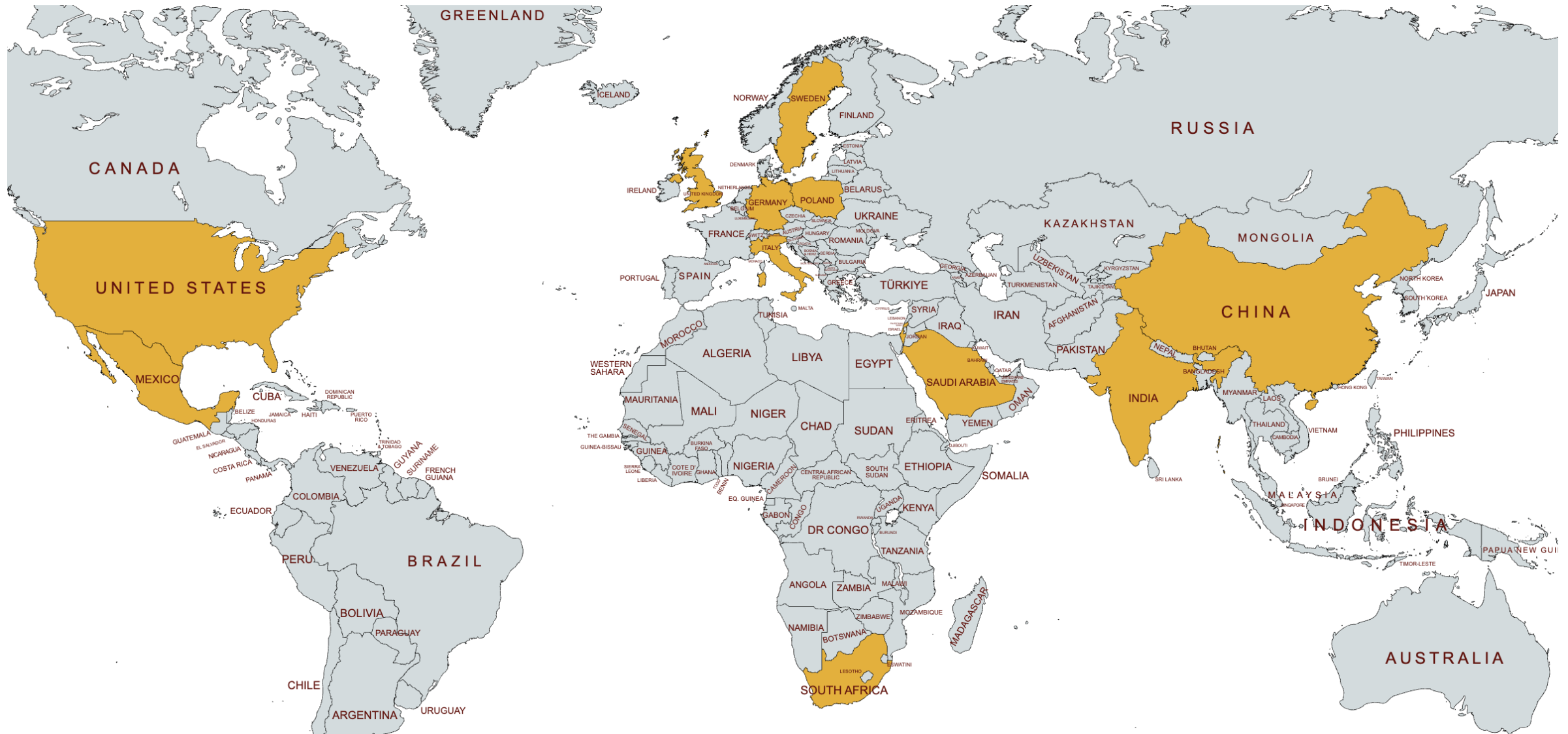
Mostly With WEIRD Participants

Ayako A. Hasegawa, Daisuke Inoue, and Mitsuaki Akiyama. **How WEIRD is Usable Privacy and Security Research?** In Proc. USENIX Security, 2024.

Our Study

How do users' digital security perceptions and practices compare between WEIRD versus Non-WEIRD countries?

- Survey (n=12,351) across 12 countries
- 7 WEIRD and 5 Non-WEIRD countries

Similarities Between WEIRD and Non-WEIRD

High familiarity with terms such as "malware" and "ad blockers" across all the countries.

Participants reported taking at least one protective measure, especially low-effort or automated ones.

Differences Between WEIRD and Non-WEIRD

Participants from non-WEIRD countries rely more on friends and family for security and privacy advice.

Participants from non-WEIRD countries reported being more familiar with most of the S&P terms.

7

Takeaways

WEIRD vs Non-WEIRD framework is valuable in explaining S&P differences, but has limitations.

Our study challenges some common assumptions about users in non-WEIRD countries.

Come to our poster for more details!