
The mere formulation of a problem is often far more essential than its solution, which may be merely a matter of mathematical or experimental skills. To raise new questions, new possibilities, to regard old problems from a new angle requires creative imagination and marks real advances in science.—Albert Einstein

This quotation, from Albert Einstein’s acceptance of the Nobel Prize in 1921, appears on the wall of the Nobel Museum in Stockholm, Sweden. It provides the inspiration for this presentation in which international research about adolescents and their connections to the societies and institutions of their nations are examined from some new angles.

The history of the American Psychological Association’s (APA’s) Committee on International Relations in Psychology (CIRP) sets the stage for a presentation of empirical results. In the 1940s APA saw its role as acting on the international scene in cooperation with intergovernmental institutions. This is noteworthy because in subsequent years social and political institutions have seldom been explicit parts of psychological researchers’ concerns. The early years of the 21st century are a prime time to think more broadly and to consider domestic and international institutions as they coconstruct the scenarios for development and involvement that are reflected in the attitudes and values of young people across the world.

Further, a credible criticism of current developmental research is its lack of connection to real young people and the situations in which they develop. This is not a new problem. In 1965 Nevitt Sanford complained about “research psychologists who . . . can define variables, state hypotheses, . . . get publishable results and miss the person” (quoted in Magnusson, 1998, p. 88). A new angle on this area is to formulate research problems in a person-oriented rather than variable-oriented way. In the first section of this article, person-oriented analysis is illustrated with an exploratory examination of adolescents’ attitudes toward social and political institutions conducted with nationally representative samples from 10 countries, 5 older Western democracies and 5 post-Communist countries. In the second section, I discuss the value of explicitly describing contexts for adolescents’ development, which is especially important in studies conducted in one country. In the third section, I consider the dynamic process of international collaboration in psychological research that matters.

Editor’s Note
Judith V. Torney-Purta received the Award for Distinguished Contributions to the International Advancement of Psychology. Award winners are invited to deliver an award address at the APA’s annual convention. A version of this award address was delivered at the 117th annual meeting, held August 6–9, 2009, in Toronto, Ontario, Canada. Articles based on award addresses are reviewed, but they differ from unsolicited articles in that they are expressions of the winners’ reflections on their work and their views of the field.

**Young People’s Attitudes Toward Political Institutions: A Research Topic That Matters**

**The History of APA’s Relations With Governmental and Intergovernmental Institutions**

When the APA’s Committee on International Relations in Psychology was established a little more than 60 years ago, psychologists wanted to shape the work of the recently established United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cul-
tural Organization in Paris. For example, American psychologist Hadley Cantrell worked on an action research project on reducing social tensions within Europe. He collaborated with Czech, Polish, and Hungarian psychologists at a time when the U.S. government forbade official contact with these nations.

Within a few years of its founding, CIRP began to send journals to devastated European libraries, to provide assistance to those engaged in democratic reeducation in Germany, to establish exchanges, and to encourage reviews dealing with the field of psychology in different countries (e.g., Mintz, 1958). During this period CIRP began to collaborate with the Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues. Redressing inequality and promoting social justice values was part of what mattered to these psychologists; for example, apartheid was a significant concern for them. These early efforts did not address all types of inequality, however. For nearly 40 years, until 1982, the large majority of CIRP members and all of its chairs were men.

In the 1940s and 1950s members of disciplines other than psychology also conducted research about values and culture. Anthropologists and sociologists led by Clyde Kluckhohn (1951) studied Zuni, Mormon, Navajo, Spanish American, and Texan communities to address differences in values persisting in spite of similar ecological demands and cross-cultural contact. These studies lacked a framework linking the findings to institutions, and the cross-cultural empirical study of values was largely abandoned by American anthropologists thereafter (D'Andrade, 2008).

During the next few decades, Ronald Inglehart, a political scientist, was an intellectual forefather of international research on adults' values and attitudes (e.g., Inglehart, 1977). In this period several projects to study the political attitudes of young people in the United States were initiated by political scientists (Jennings & Niemi, 1975) or involved collaborations between political scientists and psychologists (Hess & Torney, 1967/2005). This project demonstrated that it was possible to measure civic knowledge and political attitudes among adolescents cross-nationally, but in the next decades IEA made its reputation in studies of literacy and mathematics or science test achievement, not by studying attitudes.

Triandis and Brislin (1984) and Hofstede (1980) were among the psychologists who studied adults' values cross-nationally, and some of this research has mattered for designing training programs internationally. However, most of these scholars ignored young people as members of society whose attitudes mattered and focused on differences between group means in variable-centered analyses.

Keeping in mind this history and the desire to address research problems that matter (especially in the area of social justice), in the next section I describe how person-centered approaches such as cluster analysis applied to cross-national data can help in understanding how young people become connected to their society and its institutions.

**Variable-Centered and Person-Centered Approaches in Research About Adolescents**

For many decades psychologists thought of quantitative methods such as written questionnaires or surveys as the most appropriate way to study adolescents. Recently there has been a call to broaden those methods. García Coll highlighted the "role of culture in developmental change" (García Coll & Magnusson, 1999, p. 6) and called for a paradigm shift that would combine qualitative and quantitative methods. Other developmental psychologists have recognized the value of multiple methods, especially when one needs to place context and culture in the foreground in understanding young people's development (Haste & Hogan, 2006; Yoshikawa, Weisner, Kalil, & Way, 2008).

There are several examples of blending qualitative and quantitative methods to study young people's attitudes toward their society and its governmental institutions. Early research on political socialization used preliminary interviews in devising appropriate questions for surveys (Hess & Torney, 1967/2005). Hahn (1998) used focus groups with young people across nations to supplement surveys. Colby's current research exemplifies a mixed method approach (e.g., Colby, 2008; Colby, Ehrlich, Beaumont, & Corngold, 2007). In studying 20 programs designed to increase political engagement among college students, these authors surveyed 600 program participants but also conducted interviews with students and faculty members about how they saw political engagement and how approaches such as community-action projects were implemented in different contexts. The work of Youniss provides another model for national and international studies that explore young people's relations to social institutions in depth (Youniss & Hart, 2005) and examine patterns of change in identity rather than absolute increases or decreases in scores (Reis & Youniss, 2004). These studies address nuanced research problems and often have social justice themes.

Magnusson (1998) argued for methods that examine integrated individuals who are like some individuals and unlike others rather than methods that rely on variable-centered analysis. He developed person-centered models with Swedish longitudinal data forming holistic models of personality based on patterns or profiles of development over time (Magnusson & Torestad, 1993). In a similar
vein, Mahoney, Stattin, and Magnusson (2001) conducted a pattern analysis of five clusters of Swedish boys with different profiles of competencies at age 10 years and compared their subsequent participation in youth centers and criminal involvement.

Other researchers have looked for patterns or clusters of individuals at a single time point in the United States. Damon (2008) studied adolescents' sense of purpose with a survey of approximately 400 adolescents and young adults (conducted in three U.S. states) and 50 in-depth interviews. The respondents could be divided into four approximately equal groups: the purposeful (who have found something meaningful to which they are dedicated), the dabblers (who have tried various pursuits without becoming committed), the disengaged (who lack both a sense of purpose and an inclination to find one), and the dreamers (who can imagine themselves doing great things but are not pursuing any goals in a meaningful way).

Another example of looking at person-centered and variable-centered analyses as complementary comes from international educational research. The Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), a large-scale project conducted by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, reports variable-centered analysis in which countries’ mean scores are compared. Finland has consistently ranked high in PISA assessments and has been held up as a model school system. Some educators in the United States and Europe have concluded that the solution to their students’ performance problems is to replicate Finnish schooling. However, when Finnish researchers look at these variable-oriented analyses, they do not dwell on the group differences (Simola, 2008). Instead several Finnish researchers have chosen to use person-oriented analysis in the form of student profiles of school engagement (Lin, Nakyla & Malin, 2008) or preferences for learning environments (Tapola & Niemivirta, 2008).

The remainder of this section examines a person-oriented analysis of young people’s orientations to the institutions of their societies using data from the IEA Civic Education Study (CIVED). Here I use cluster analysis to examine how attitudes cohere within individual young people who have grown up in different political systems.

**The IEA CIVED as a Source of Data**

The IEA is a network of research institutes from more than 60 countries that is headquartered in Amsterdam (established in the 1950s). It is best known for studies such as the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study that focus on country ratings and are almost exclusively variable centered (e.g., Mullis et al., 2008). Following a study in the 1970s in the area of civic education that included a number of social attitude measures, in the early 1990s IEA was prompted by its post-Communist member countries to explore a study of civic education. From the mid-1990s until 2006 I acted as chair of the International Steering Committee for this internationally collaborative study of civic education in nearly 30 countries.

The IEA General Assembly was persuaded that two phases, one qualitative and one quantitative, were essential for CIVED. There was not a clear list of concepts to be investigated in this area because civic education was not an established subject in most of the countries wanting to take part. The first phase of this extensive study (1995–1999) consisted of a consensus-building process about what should be measured in a test and attitudinal survey, resulting in the collection of more than 20 qualitative national case studies (Torney-Purta, Schwille, & Amadeo, 1999). The purpose of the case studies was to pinpoint what the average 14- or 15-year-old was expected or likely to understand about topics such as elections, problems in the community, or the rights of minority groups. In other words, they described expectations for adolescents’ understanding of political and social institutions within each country.

The study’s steering group recognized that political thinking does not occur free of contextual influences. When the study began in the mid-1990s, salient aspects of context included the recent collapse of Communism with the associated social disruption, as well as the structuring of new democracies whose leaders were exploring changes in education. In this period the established democracies were also concerned about declining interest in political participation among younger generations. This problem seemed to have slightly different dimensions in the United States (where most children had social studies courses with some emphasis on citizenship throughout their school careers) and in England and the Nordic countries (where history was taught but without much attention to its civic dimensions or participation). Ironically, in countries such as Sweden provision was made for students to govern their schools, but participating in local or national political affairs received little attention.

At a meeting in 1995 the individuals appointed by their countries as CIVED national research coordinators received instruction in methods for preparing national case studies. A sociologist from Poland led a demonstration focus group in which coordinators from a dozen countries, including several post-Communist countries, were asked to recount childhood memories of political experiences. One individual mentioned having a picture of Lenin as a young boy on her wall. Others in the group echoed, “that picture of Lenin, I had it too.” Another described having to whisper when the family discussed social issues. Comments such as these suggested that mistrust and attitudes toward national symbols would be important topics to study.

In the second phase of CIVED (conducted during 1999) nationally representative samples of 14-year-olds in 28 countries spent two class periods answering written questions. Students took a test of political conceptual knowl-

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edge and skills in interpreting political material such as editorial cartoons and also a survey of concepts of citizenship, political attitudes, and expected behaviors. All items were carefully developed to be common across countries. The test specifications included direct quotations from the national case studies and from Internet conferences with students from five countries. Social psychologists from Poland, Hungary, and Germany suggested revisions for attitudinal items from databases in the United States and England.

Since the primary analysis of the 28 country results for approximately 90,000 fourteen-year-olds was published (Torney-Purta, Lehmann, Oswald, & Schulz, 2001), additional variable-oriented analysis has been undertaken using large groups of countries (e.g., Torney-Purta, Wilkenfeld, & Barber’s 2008 analysis of knowledge of and attitudes toward international human rights) and a more limited set of countries (members of the Organization of American States; Torney-Purta & Amadeo, 2004). Some of these variable-oriented analyses have resulted in findings that mattered. In Chile, students showed low levels of knowledge about democracy compared with those in other countries. The Chilean adolescents also showed little skepticism about information in the media and little awareness of potential threats to democracy (such as political influence on the judiciary). The military regime had established the curriculum that was in place in 1999. The Chilean Ministry of Education responded to the CIVED findings by establishing a commission to oversee curricular revision. In the United States two papers interpreting findings for policymakers have been issued (Torney-Purta & Vermeer, 2004; Torney-Purta & Wilkenfeld, 2009).

An Exploratory Cluster Analysis of Adolescents From 10 Countries

Examining the attitudinal part of the IEA CIVED instrument using person-centered analysis is intriguing for psychologists. In the next subsections I report an analysis of how more than 30,000 students from 10 countries responded on several attitudinal scales simultaneously, rather than comparing mean scores on these attitudes one at a time.

In particular it was of interest to compare clusters of adolescents from two groups of countries. One group has had stable democracy for generations (Australia, England, Finland, Sweden, and the United States). The other group recently had democratic government established after decades of Communist influence (Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, and Latvia). The contexts for political and social attitude development differ widely between these regional groups (here referred to as Western Europe and Eastern Europe, even though the first group includes the United States and Australia and the second group includes Central as well as Eastern Europe). These issues are considered in an upcoming publication (Barber & Torney-Purta, 2009). Table 1 shows the number of students and schools tested in each country.

The questions of interest to be explored in both regions were the following:

1. Is it possible to identify groups of adolescents with coherent and distinctive patterns of social and political attitudes?
2. To what extent are these clusters of adolescents different in nations with different histories, political institutions, and social contexts?
3. How do the distributions or proportions of adolescents holding these patterns of attitudes differ between countries or regions?
4. What types of beliefs about involvement in society and politics characterize adolescents in these clusters?
5. How do characteristics of the individual and of the school context relate to membership in these clusters?

A series of two-step cluster analyses were conducted to identify groups of 14-year-olds with distinct patterns of civic attitudes. Two-step cluster analysis groups cases into a series of “preclusters” and then runs a hierarchical cluster analysis on these preclusters (Norusis, 2007). This analysis is ideal for large-scale data sets such as CIVED. As a preliminary step, a missing values analysis was run on each of the 12 attitudinal scales chosen for analysis. In no case were data missing in more than 5% of the cases, and missing data were imputed with means. All cases then had complete data and could be included in the analysis. The data file was sorted by student ID within country before forming preclusters.

Next, all 12 scales were entered into the cluster analysis. In all but one case (Cynicism) these were IRT scales

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Student and School Sample Size in 10 Countries</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Western democracies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>England</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweden</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United States</td>
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<tr>
<td>Post-Communist countries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bulgaria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Czech Republic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estonia</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hungary</td>
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<tr>
<td>Latvia</td>
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developed either in the original IEA measurement development phase (Schulz & Sibberns, 2004) or in subsequent scaling (Husfeldt, Barber, & Torney-Purta, 2005). Separate analyses were run in the five Western European countries and in the five Eastern European countries. It was desirable to have the same number of clusters within each region. Examining the change in Schwartz’s Bayesian information criterion, with each additional cluster added in both the Eastern European and the Western European groups, showed that a five-cluster solution provided good data fit within each group of countries and comparability between the regional groups.

Once a five-cluster solution was reached, each case was assigned to one of these clusters. This created a categorical cluster-membership variable that could be analyzed like any other categorical variable. Cluster membership was used in four analyses. First, average scores for each of the 12 attitudinal variables that were included in the cluster analysis were calculated. This produced a display of similarities and differences in attitudes among the five groups of students in each set of countries. Second, the proportion of students in each cluster in each country was calculated. Third, a descriptive analysis compared the proportion of students in each cluster who planned to participate in various civic activities and who valued the rule of law.

Fourth, a logistic regression analysis was run to determine whether certain background variables could predict membership in one of the clusters. For this exploration of the usefulness of person-centered analysis, the focus is on predicting whether a student is a member of the group with the most negative civic-related attitudes (the alienated cluster that appeared in all of the countries). In this logistic regression analysis, predictor variables including gender, socioeconomic status, immigrant status, experiences in classrooms or schools, and experiences with peers predict the log-likelihood of belonging to the alienated cluster group. These log-likelihood coefficients can be transformed into odds ratios for ease in interpretation, such that an increase in the predictor increases or decreases the likelihood of cluster membership by a factor of y. All of the analyses take into account the nested sampling design within each country, weight the data to be nationally representative of 14-year-olds attending school within the countries, and weight each country so that it contributes equally to the analysis.

The Five Attitudinal Clusters Found in Adolescents From 10 Countries

The cluster analyses were run separately for the Western European and the Eastern European countries to identify differences in patterns. Figure 1 presents the pattern of attitudes for the five clusters in Western Europe, and Figure 2 presents the parallel patterns for the five clusters in the Eastern European countries. Note that each of the 12 attitudinal scales was set to have an international mean of 10 and a standard deviation of 2. The social justice cluster of adolescents contains individuals who express high levels of support for minority rights, immigrants’ rights, and women’s rights (average of about one standard deviation above the mean). This cluster is found in both regional groups. Adolescents in this cluster also believe that the government has some social responsibilities. Students in this cluster generally have below-average beliefs in the importance of citizens participating in action, either in the conventional political domain or through social action in communities or nongovernmental organizations. A motto for this cluster might be “I believe in rights for everyone but do not feel obligated to do much about it.”

The conventionally political cluster contains individuals who show high levels of trust in governmental institutions, who hold protectionist and patriotic attitudes (especially in Eastern Europe), and who believe that governments have social responsibilities. Adolescents in this cluster have relatively high levels of political self-efficacy and believe in the norm that adults should be active in both conventional politics (e.g., voting) and in more socially oriented activities (e.g., volunteering to help the community and joining human rights organizations). In Western Europe this group also has scores above the international mean on the social justice or inclusion scales (e.g., support for minority rights). The support for social justice for this cluster in Eastern Europe is very close to the international average. (See Malak-Minkiewicz, 2007, for a discussion of these attitudes in post-Communist countries.) The motto for this group might be phrased as “I believe in my country and will support the status quo with positive political and civic actions that are expected of me.”

The indifferent cluster in both regions contains individuals who have attitudes very close to the mean of 10 on the large majority of the scales. In the Western European countries, however, they also have strong protectionist and patriotic attitudes. Adolescents in the indifferent cluster are willing to do the minimum as citizens. Once they have met basic civic requirements they want to spend their time on pursuits that interest them more. Zukin, Keeter, Andolina, Jenkins, and DelliCarpini (2006) found a similar attitudinal group in the United States among young adults; their indifferent respondents believed that being a good citizen only required voting and not breaking laws. The disaffected cluster is similar to the indifferent cluster but with more negative beliefs about women’s and minorities’ rights and about norms of citizenship related to involvement in the community. The motto for those in both the indifferent and the dis-
affected clusters might be “I have better ways to spend my time than thinking about being active in politics, but I won’t do anything rash.”

The final cluster is of concern: the alienated profile of attitudes. This group holds negative attitudes almost uniformly across the scales, with scores on trust in government as much as 1.5 standard deviations below the international mean. These adolescents are more negative than those in any other cluster about the rights of immigrants, minorities, and women. Especially in Western Europe they do not believe in norms of citizen participation. They seem to be alienated both from the political culture and from belief in the rights of others. The motto for this group might be “I’m angry about the immigrants and minority groups in my country, and I don’t trust the government; I have the right to do what I want.” This cluster is numerically small, but its members hold problematic attitudes.

In defining these clusters among young people, three attitudinal dimensions were of importance: attitudes toward social justice, especially about equality of rights; trust in institutions; and beliefs about the norms of adult citizenship (according to confidence intervals for the clusters). The central role of social justice attitudes is similar to the conclusions of a set of studies in the United States by psychologists interested in ideology (Jost, Federico, & Napier, 2009) and also to some themes in the social psychology literature in Europe.

Distributions of Attitudinal Clusters Within Countries

In each of the Western European countries (see Figure 3) the most prevalent cluster type is the disaffected cluster (more than one third). Another similarity across these countries is that about 7% of students fall into the alienated cluster group.

In the United States, the second most prevalent cluster is conventional. A smaller proportion falls into the social justice cluster (slightly more than 15%), with the fewest students in the indifferent and the alienated clusters. In most
respects these mirror what Damon (2008) found in his study of patterns of purpose among adolescents.

Among Swedish and English adolescents the second most prevalent cluster (after the disaffected cluster) is the social justice cluster (about one quarter of students), with a smaller proportion in the indifferent and conventional clusters. To contrast, adolescents in Finland and Australia are more likely to be found in the indifferent cluster (more than one fifth of them), with smaller proportions in the social justice and conventionally political clusters.

The patterns of clusters within the Eastern European countries are more difficult to summarize (see Figure 4). The two most prevalent cluster groups in Bulgaria are the conventional and alienated clusters. The largest cluster group in the Czech Republic is the disaffected cluster, with the social justice and indifferent groups also being substantial in size; the two largest cluster groups in Estonia are the disaffected and indifferent clusters; the largest cluster groups in Hungary are the conventionally political, indifferent, and disaffected clusters, whereas in Latvia the disaffected cluster is the largest (about one third of the surveyed youths). The proportions of student in the alienated cluster tend to be higher in Eastern than in Western Europe. Guided by these exploratory results, Barber and Torney-Purta (2009) explore the patterns in more depth within countries.

To summarize, in all 10 countries there is a striking proportion of students who are indifferent, disaffected, or alienated. In all of the countries these three clusters account for more than half of the adolescents surveyed. In other words, the absence of a positive connection between the adolescent and his or her society is not confined to the post-Communist countries.

Figure 2
Cluster Profiles for Eastern European Countries

Note. womrt = Support for Women’s Rights; minor = Support for Minorities’ Rights; immig = Support for Immigrants’ Rights; cynic = Cynicism; effic = Efficacy; protc = Protectionist Attitudes to Country; patri = Patriotism; trusted = Trust in the Media; trust = Trust in Political Institutions; govso = Support for Government Social Programs; ctsoc = Belief in Adult Citizen Social Action; ctcon = Belief in Adult Citizen Conventional Action.

Differences Between Clusters in Belief About the Rule of Law and Expected Participation

Looking at some other beliefs these adolescents hold along with their expectations for future participation helps to further clarify the meaning of these clusters. Across the 10 countries the very large majority of adolescents support the
rule of law. However, adolescents who respond that it is “not important” or “somewhat unimportant” to obey the law are disproportionately found in the alienated cluster. In both regions about one quarter of the alienated adolescents are disinclined to obey the law, compared with about 1% among those in the conventionally political cluster and 6% among those in the disaffected cluster. The alienated cluster is also the group that is most likely to expect to participate in illegal protest activities (e.g., blocking traffic). Because of the strong anti-immigrant and anti-minority attitudes that characterize the alienated cluster, the existence of this group of adolescents should be a matter of concern in all of these countries. The alienated group is small proportionally, but nearly 200 students out of approximately 3,000 surveyed fell into this cluster in each country.

Another sobering result concerns the social justice cluster. Although this group of adolescents holds the kind of
supportive intergroup attitudes that many adults would applaud, these young people do not seem inclined to take political action other than voting (presumably for candidates who support these positions). In both regions 10% or less of these students say they expect to protest illegally (e.g., block traffic). They are only moderately likely to expect to engage in nonviolent protest (actually less likely than adolescents in several of the other clusters). In the previous section I noted that the social justice cluster members also did not think that participating in nonviolent protests or belonging to human rights organizations was particularly important for citizens. These relatively passive youth are hardly the inheritors of the Civil Rights Movement in the United States or the student protest movements of Europe.

Predicting Which Adolescents Are in the Alienated Cluster

This exploratory person-centered analysis identified an alienated cluster group in every country, and this is the group whose attitudes are of greatest concern. A logistic regression was used to identify characteristics associated with membership in this cluster. This analysis was conducted within region (rather than within individual countries). See Table 2 for the results for Western and Eastern Europe.

Males and students who spend more time outside of their homes with peers are more likely to be in the alienated cluster. In Eastern Europe low socioeconomic status is associated with a greater likelihood of alienation. There was no association with immigrant status.

There are hopeful signs about the possible role of school in reducing the likelihood of alienation, although the evidence is only correlational. The IEA CIVED has two school-based measures of climate, one focused on adolescents’ sense that they have power in the school setting (Confidence in the Value of School Participation) and the other measuring the adolescents’ belief that their classrooms are places where respectful discussion of different opinions takes place (Openness of Classroom Climate for Discussion). Adolescents’ reports of positive school and classroom climates are positively associated with a decreased likelihood of belonging to the alienated cluster. These results are parallel in the two regions.

Summary of the Person-Centered Analysis

Doing international research that matters requires that psychologists pay attention to individuals and not only to variable-centered analysis of group differences. Building a multimethod foundation for developmental science is one way in which this can be accomplished. Another approach, person-centered cluster analysis, was illustrated here. After extensive variable-oriented analysis of the CIVED data it was informative to embark on this exploratory analysis to identify cluster groups of adolescents who share similar attitudes (which might be called ideologies). This approach looked at adolescents’ involvement with distal institutions and also at the kinds of climates in proximal institutions, such as schools, that allow them to become engaged rather than alienated. This analysis of data from 1999 across five Western democracies and across five post-Communist countries produces similar but not identical findings. Students holding strong patriotic and protectionist attitudes, for example, appear in different clusters in Western versus Eastern Europe (see Figures 1 and 2).

Table 2
Logistic Regression Analysis Predicting the Likelihood of Belonging to the Alienated Cluster

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Predictor</th>
<th>Western Europe</th>
<th></th>
<th>Odds</th>
<th>Eastern Europe</th>
<th></th>
<th>Odds</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>4.31**</td>
<td>0.31</td>
<td>74.44</td>
<td>4.98**</td>
<td>0.24</td>
<td>145.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>-0.73**</td>
<td>0.09</td>
<td>0.48</td>
<td>-0.52**</td>
<td>0.06</td>
<td>0.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immigrant</td>
<td>0.15</td>
<td>0.14</td>
<td>0.16</td>
<td>-0.02</td>
<td>0.16</td>
<td>0.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Socioeconomic status</td>
<td>-0.02</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>0.98</td>
<td>-0.18*</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>0.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spend time outside of the home with friends</td>
<td>0.16**</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>1.18</td>
<td>0.30**</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>1.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confidence in the value of school participation</td>
<td>-0.33**</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>0.72</td>
<td>-0.46**</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>0.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Openness of classroom climate for discussion</td>
<td>-0.34**</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>0.71</td>
<td>-0.19**</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>0.82</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p < .05. **p < .01.
These person-centered results complement sophisticated variable-centered analyses. Adopting a cluster-based analytic strategy such as this also has a practical advantage for research that matters. There is a tendency for the general public, practitioners, journalists, and policymakers to be unimpressed by statistical arguments based on mean differences alone. An advantage of research that combines qualitative and quantitative measures is that audiences outside of the academic world can often be more readily convinced of a need for action if they can see the research findings as part of a context rather than as an abstract statistical procedure. Calling attention to groups of individuals having particular profiles within and across countries can aid researchers in interpreting the information gained from cross-national summary statistics. When it is possible to see a cluster of individual adolescents who remind them of young people they know, those involved in policy and practice are much more likely to take action than when they are told only about averages and statistical trends. This research can be a starting point to look at the ways in which institutions (schools as well as more distal institutions) have an impact on the younger generation. This is a contribution that person-centered cluster analysis makes to enhancing opportunities for young people internationally and therefore to research that matters.

The Role of Cultural Context in Research That Matters

Psychologists become reflective about the international shortcomings of their discipline about every 20 years. In 1984, for example, *American Psychologist* published a special section titled “The Price of Success: Our Monocultural Science.” Cole (1984), who was in the process of fully developing his ideas about cultural psychology, had an article in this issue. He lamented the fact that cross-cultural psychology, with its concerns about context, rarely informed psychological research in general. My article in this issue was very practical, suggesting specific materials and topics that could be used to internationalize undergraduate courses in developmental and social psychology (Torney-Purta, 1984). Holding to this 20-year cycle, in 2004 the American Council on Education involved the APA in a cross-disciplinary effort to internationalize the undergraduate curriculum for students. Adding to the justification for this effort, in late 2008 Arnett documented the extent to which articles published in APA journals use samples confined to the United States.

Psychologists often seem ambivalent about whether to search for depth of understanding of individuals embedded in their social and cultural contexts or to search for results that can be generalized across regions, countries, political institutional arrangements, and historical periods. The problem of samples being concentrated in any single country would be of less concern if all authors routinely presented enough contextual material that the reader could decide how widely the findings could be generalized. An informal review of articles recently published in *Child Development* and *Developmental Psychology* shows that studies conducted outside of North America were almost as likely as those conducted in the United States to lack information about relevant context specific to the country or region. For example, the concern about generalizing inappropriately applies to a study of racial attitudes conducted in Italy that failed to note which racial groups reside there or to acknowledge that social contexts or types of discrimination in Italy may differ from the social contexts and discrimination that exist in other countries where racial attitudes are studied (Castelli, Zogmaister, & Tomelleri, 2009). There are also problems with studies of academic motivation conducted in school systems with competitive selectivity (at least if one assumes that a study’s results would be the same in less selective systems). The same criticism could be made of studies of cognitive development in China that fail to give sufficient contextual information about how families relate to their children’s schools and learning (a criticism made by Liu, Wellman, Tardif, & Sabbagh, 2008) or studies of families that fail to take into account cultural norms and common socialization practices (a criticism made by Chen & French, 2008).

The more general point may be illustrated with an example. International research that matters would describe the goals and routines of family life as well as the expectations students face in their schools or neighborhoods. But this research would not stop with the proximal contexts for development provided through interaction with families, peers, and teachers. It would look at schools as institutions but also at institutions beyond the school, including the local and national governments and their policies. In short, it is depressing to see not only that the large majority of studies published in APA journals are conducted with U.S. samples (Arnett, 2008) but also that few authors from any country consider distal contexts (e.g., the school’s or university’s selectivity or the nature of racial diversity in society).

Taking contexts into account can be framed in relation to the age-old psychological problem of figure and ground. The figure is usually the adolescent, whereas the ground is some mixture of contextual factors. Perhaps there should be a reassessment of the balance between figure and ground in psychologists’ research reports. It is not just that more diverse samples are needed (from across the world as well as across regions and ethnic groups). It is also that more detail about the contexts in which these young people live needs to be provided. Are they surrounded by others like themselves or diverse peers? What is the nature of schooling to which they are exposed, and what stresses do they experience? What out-of-school structures allow adolescents to explore ideas or to gain personal connection and power in relation to the institutions of their society?
The Role of International Collaboration in Research That Matters

In recent decades, a characteristic of international psychological research that matters is the collaboration between researchers from different nations. Recently a workshop conducted by the National Academy of Sciences enumerated a variety of important contributions of such international collaborations:

These collaborations enable researchers to go beyond a view of culture as a static variable to be examined in isolation or controlled in an analysis. . . . They can mobilize a global network to consider and refine important ideas concerning education and psychological interventions, as well as social policies. They can give researchers new insights as they solve an unexpected problem. (National Research Council, 2008, p. 1)

International collaborations have a special role to play in enhancing the external validity of results, including determining the appropriateness of interpretations. Understanding international collaboration as a process has the potential to contribute to psychological research that matters beyond the content of the research findings themselves. Many boundaries are crossed in the process of collaboration: culture, language, discipline, and social or political institutional contexts. Reflection on these experiences can strengthen both research and researchers’ skills.

During the workshop, a comparison was reported between scientific research teams homogeneous in cultural background, discipline, and training and research teams that were heterogeneous along these dimensions (National Research Council, 2008). The heterogeneous teams had less harmonious discussion but generated more discoveries than did the homogeneous teams. Members of heterogeneous teams complained about spending time explaining obvious points, but this process actually generated awareness of underlying assumptions and alternative conceptualizations. This ultimately resulted in better scientific products.

The workshop also considered the results of a survey conducted for the U.S. National Committee for the International Union of Psychological Science (IUPsyS). The views and recommendations of 26 leaders of international projects on a range of topics in the behavioral and social sciences were gathered in a survey that combined ratings and opportunities for written elaborations (Torney-Purta, 2008). The IUPsyS survey results suggest that successful international collaborative projects often have three relatively distinct phases, and this is confirmed by the experience of the IEA CIVED (Hahn, 2006), and the research has mattered more because of this.

Conclusions

International research is more likely to be reflected in policy or practice and in the mindsets of a new generation of researchers if it is possible to visualize real individuals in its reported results. The author of a study conducted in any single country should be expected to explicitly address details of the cultural context in presenting and interpreting the research results. When studies involve more than one country, the give and take of international collaboration among researchers should be an integral and explicit part of the study’s development. In short, person-centered analysis such as cluster analysis (complementing variable-centered analysis), description of the context provided by proximal and distal groups in published studies, and a collaborative research process are three dimensions operating together and separately that have the potential to bring to international research the creative spark of imagination to which Einstein referred.

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