Adolescent Disclosure of Information Across Domains: A Person Centered Analysis of Chilean Youth

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Legitimacy of Parental Authority: Research from Social Domain Theory

- Legitimacy of parental control varies according to the domain in which an issue is categorized:
  - Moral
  - Conventional
  - Psychological
    - Prudential
    - Personal
    - Psychological (revealing self to others)
Legitimacy of Parental Authority: Research from Social Domain Theory

- Parents and adolescents agree that prudential issues are legitimately subject to parental authority, but that personal issues are not.

- Normative Differences:
  - Parents believe more issues fall in the conventional or prudential category than do adolescents.
  - Both parents and adolescents define more issues as personal with age.
Legitimacy of Parental Authority: Research from Social Domain Theory

Hypothetical Data

- Personal
- Conventional
- Prudential

Percent

Early Adolescence  Middle Adolescence  Late Adolescence
Is it okay for parents to set rules about seeing problematic friends?

- Is there evidence for heterogeneity in the population?
- Do we see normative, age-related change?
- Do older adolescents move towards a pattern of rejection of parental authority?
Focus:

- Heterogeneity of the population
- Within-person patterning of beliefs about parental legitimacy
3425 adolescents and parents from 7 schools in the Santiago metropolitan area
- Age 11-19 ($M = 15.0$)
- 62% female
- 10% mothers and 8% fathers <8th grade education

Questionnaire data collected in classrooms
- Strategic Disclosure questionnaire
  - 17 issues
  - Adolescents 6 questions about each
Legitimacy Beliefs by Domain

Six issues representing different domains:

- **Personal:**
  - how you use your free time
  - the type of TV programs, movies, or videos you watch

- **Multifaceted:**
  - hanging around with people your parents think are problematic

- **Prudential**
  - smoking cigarettes
  - drinking alcohol
  - using drugs
Latent Class Analysis (LCA) by Age

- Primary school
- Secondary school minors
- Legal adults

LCA creates latent class variables that capture the patterning of individuals’ responses.

- Latent classes differentiated by their likelihood of giving a particular answer to a particular question
- The likelihood of each individual belonging to each latent class, given their patterning of responses can be assessed
Results: Heterogeneous populations

Graph A: Early Adolescents

Graph C: Late Adolescents
Results: No evidence of a normative shift to the personal control class.
Conclusion

- If these cross-sectional results were interpreted as if they were longitudinal, it supports the normative shift previously reported in the literature.
- There are heterogeneous patterns of beliefs about the legitimacy of parental authority within adolescents of a given age.
  - At each age, most adolescents report believing parents have legitimate authority over all issues, including problematic friends.
Do you fully disclose to parents about your problematic friends?

- Is there evidence for heterogeneity in the population?
- Do we see normative, age-related change with older adolescents move towards a pattern of non-disclosure?
- Does disclosure about problematic peers function as a personal or a prudential issue?
Results: Heterogeneous populations

Early Adolescence

Middle Adolescence

Late Adolescence
Results: No evidence of a normative shift to non-disclosure
Conclusions: Full Disclosure

- There is no evidence for a homogeneous, normative shift towards either non-disclosure or disclosure.
- Disclosure about problematic friends appears to be treated as a personal issue, not as a prudential issue.
Where do we go from here?

- Focusing on the within-person patterning of responses focuses our attention on heterogeneity within the population.

- In both legitimacy beliefs and disclosure, we see three different patterns that appear similar at each age:
  - Parent control/shared control/adolescent control
  - Full disclosure/Disclosure of prudential/Nondisclosure
What is the underlying dynamic that leads to these patterns?

- It’s the adolescents: Temperamentally difficult adolescents are attracted to deviance, reject parental control and hide their deviance from their parents.
- It’s the parents: Intrusive parents drive their adolescents away.
- It’s the dyad: Adolescents should recognize reasonable limits placed on them by parents and parents should recognize the autonomy of their adolescents.