

# **Factors Influencing Teenage Attitudes toward Authority in Suburban and Urban Areas**

**AP Research 2018**

# Importance of disobedience

**“pivotal for parents not to raise children as obedient machines who turned out to be future ‘sleeping’ citizens, blindly accepting the authorities’ requests that can lead to negative social consequences”<sup>1</sup>**

<sup>1</sup> Fattori, F., Curly, S., Jörchel, A. C., Pozzi, M., Mihalits, D., & Alfieri, S. (2015). Authority Relationship From a Societal Perspective: Social Representations of Obedience and Disobedience in Austrian Young Adults. *Europe's Journal Of Psychology*, 11(2), 197-214. doi:10.5964/ejop.v11i2.883

# Location

- **Stereotypes about people from different locations**
- **Location itself has little to do with behavior of adolescents but the social surroundings of teens matter, and those provide context for different locations <sup>2</sup>**

<sup>2</sup> Scheer, S. D., Borden, L. M., & Donnermeyer, J. E. (2000). The relationship between family factors and adolescent substance use in rural, suburban, and urban settings. *Journal Of Child & Family Studies*, 9(1), 105-115.

# Socioeconomic

- **lower SES is more compliant**<sup>3</sup>

- **lower SES implies less compliance**<sup>4</sup>

<sup>3</sup>Tuma, E., & Livson, N. (1960). Family socioeconomic status and adolescent attitudes to authority. *Child Development*, 31(2), 387-399.

<sup>4</sup>Zafar, H., Nabeel, T., & Khalily, M. T. (2013). Adolescents' self-concept and their attitudes towards parents, teachers, and police authority.. *Pakistan Journal Of Psychology*, 44(1), 15-35.

# Age

- **Adolescence in general**
  - **Belief and action disconnect (Rigby & Densley) <sup>5</sup>**
- **Adolescence in high school**
  - **“more positive in late adolescents as compared to early and middle adolescents” <sup>1</sup>**

<sup>5</sup> Rigby, K., & Densley, T. R. (1985). Religiosity and attitude toward institutional authority among adolescents. *Journal Of Social Psychology, 125*(6), 723.

# Parental Influence

- **University students had similar attitudes as the perceived attitudes of their parents**<sup>6</sup>
- **Good relationship with both parents also important in positive attitudes toward authority**<sup>7</sup>
- **delinquents' parents' deficiency in the “supervision of, or bonding with their children”**<sup>8</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Rigby, K., & Rump, E. (1981). Attitudes toward parents and institutional authorities during adolescence. *Journal Of Psychology, 109*(1), 109.

<sup>7</sup> Ochoa, G. M., Lopez, E. E., & Emler, N. P. (2007). Adjustment problems in the family and school contexts, attitudes towards authority, and violent behavior at school in adolescence. *Adolescence, 42*(168), 779-794.

<sup>8</sup> Levy, K. C. (2001). The relationship between adolescent attitudes towards authority, self-concept, and delinquency. *Adolescence, 36*(142), 333.

# Methods

Participants	Survey Part 1	Survey Part 2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Conejo Valley Unified School District<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Suburban district (SD)</li><li>- 111 students</li><li>- 3 schools</li></ul></li> <li>● Neighboring district in an urban area (UD)<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- 215 students</li><li>- 2 schools</li></ul></li></ul>	<b>Demographics</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Gender</li><li>● Grade</li><li>● Socioeconomics</li><li>● Religious Affiliation</li><li>● Relationships with parents</li></ul>	<b>Attitudes toward Authority</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Hypothetical</li><li>● Abstract</li><li>● Opinion similarity with parents</li></ul>

# Results and Discussion

## Socioeconomic

- **SES Minority Correlation appears in 13 of 14 hypotheticals**

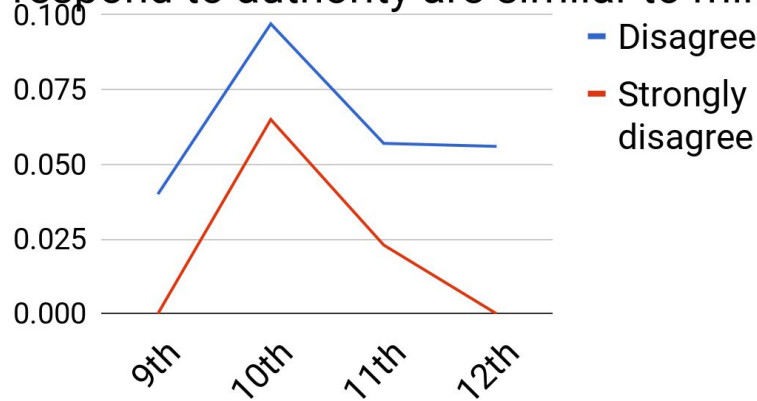


# Age

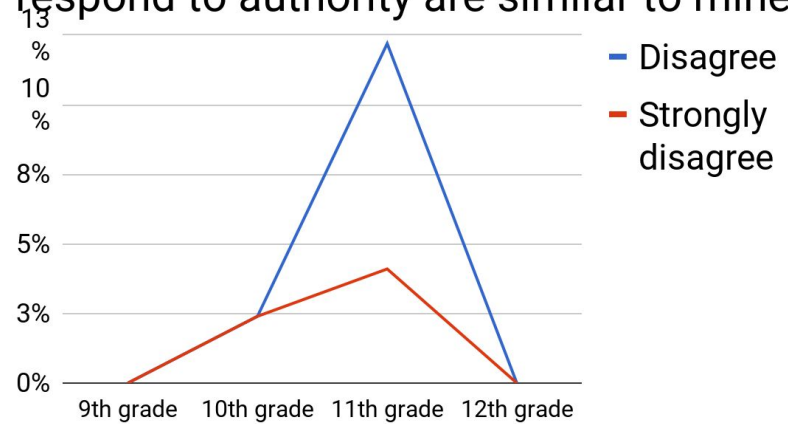
- **UD hypotheticals: 10th and 11th challenge authority most**
- **Less compliance in early/middle adolescence<sup>1</sup>**

# Age (cont.)

SD: My parents' opinions on how to respond to authority are similar to mine.



UD: My parents' opinions on how to respond to authority are similar to mine.



- **Students stray from parent authority views in 10th and 11th grade but most return by 12th grade**

# Parental Relations

- In 12 of 14 hypothetical situations, one-parent kids were least cooperative and more confrontational
- Disconnect between hypothetical and abstract responses  
UD one parent kids

# Limitations

- **Wording of question in survey**
- **Behaviors may be linked, but may not be causal**

# What's Next?

- **Society's next generations**
- **SES: schools better serve students, including minorities**
- **Age: proper intervention to teach students positive behaviors toward authority**
- **Parental relationships: indicates more complexity in parent-child relationships than expected**

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