

The Jacobs Center Research Seminar Series

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Whose Rules? Correcting Parental Misperceptions of Adolescent Preferences over Smartphone Use

Debates about limiting adolescents' screen time have focused on institutional measures such as school phone bans and social media age limits. The rules parents set at home have received far less attention. These decisions rest on beliefs about what a rule does, and about if adolescents will accept it. I field a three-wave survey experiment in Germany that brings adolescents' own views into this question. In the first wave, 494 adolescents aged 16 to 20 report their support for, and perceived fairness of, a range of parental mediation strategies. In the second wave, 1,500

parents of children aged 9 to 17 state their beliefs about adolescents' preferences and about the effectiveness of each strategy. A randomly assigned group receives population-level statistics from the first wave, and a follow-up wave four weeks later records whether household rules changed. The design measures whether parents' beliefs about adolescent views are systematically biased, and whether correcting them changes the rules households set.

Monday, September 28, 2026, 14:45 h

University Of Zurich, Andreasstrasse 15, 8050 Zurich, 4th floor, AND 4.55/4.57