

Associations between parental civic engagement, negative beliefs toward civic engagement and youths' future civic attitudes and behaviors

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Abstract

Introduction: Civic engagement (CE) in adolescence is associated with a higher level of engagement in adulthood and is reported to be beneficial to youth's development and societal well-being. Parents are among the most influential factors in adolescents' lives. This study examined the associations between parents' own civic participation, their negative beliefs toward youth CE and their child's future CE. While prior research documented positive associations between parental civic behaviors and youth CE, the role of parental negative beliefs has remained unexplored and could act as an additional barrier to adolescents' CE.

Methods: A total of 234 adolescents (65% girls; mean age = 13.77) and their parents (79% mothers; mean age = 44.20), residing in the Canadian province of Quebec from 2016 to 2019, were recruited for this cross-sectional study. Parents completed measures of their civic activities and their negative beliefs regarding youth CE. Adolescents completed measures of future civic attitudes and behaviors.

Results: Hierarchical regressions revealed significant positive cross-sectional associations between parental civic behaviors and their child's future civic attitudes and behaviors. However, parental negative beliefs toward youth CE were negatively associated with youths' future civic attitudes and behaviors, even after considering parental civic behaviors and family socioeconomic status. Adolescents' age did not moderate these relationships.

Conclusion: These findings highlight the significant role that parents could play in shaping CE of future generations. Interventions promoting youth CE should thus target both adolescents and their parents.

KEYWORDS

adolescent development, adolescents attitudes, adolescents behavior, civic behavior, community involvement, parental attitudes

Civic engagement (CE) encompasses the contributions made to a community with the intention of improving the lives of its members and strengthening the society's prospects (Adler & Goggin, 2005). CE is pivotal in addressing global challenges, like climate change and social inequalities, by inducing change and policy actions (Swinburn et al., 2019). Since adolescence is a critical period where new foundational values are developed and cultivated (Finlay & Flanagan, 2013), the role of youths in instigating social change is often recognized as essential (Chrysochoou & Barrett, 2017). Notably, developing CE is particularly important during adolescence, as studies suggest that adolescents who engage in civic activities often maintain

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this involvement into adulthood (Chan et al., 2014; Finlay & Flanagan, 2013). Although numerous studies showed that youth CE is beneficial to the individual's development and society's improvement (Flanagan & Levine, 2010; Metzger et al., 2020; Pancer et al., 2007; Zaff et al., 2008), it is believed to be low worldwide (United Nations Development Programme, 2015; White & Mistry, 2016). In one of our recent studies, only 19% of adolescents reported participating in organized civic activities (Philippe, 2019). It therefore becomes imperative to identify the barriers that could prevent youths from CE (Gingras et al., 2018; Lenzi et al., 2014; Warren & Wicks, 2011). The goal of the present study was to investigate the associations between parental civic activities and negative beliefs toward youth CE, and adolescents' future civic attitudes and behaviors (e.g., intention to help the less fortunate in the future). Identifying whether parental beliefs act as a barrier to youth CE can shed light on the subdued levels of youth engagement and the pivotal role parents could play in shaping it. In turn, this has the potential to pave the way for refining interventions aimed at bolstering CE among both adolescents and their parents.

1 | YOUTH CE

As a multidimensional construct, CE encompasses different concepts such as attitudes, behaviors, knowledge, and skills (Ballard, 2014). Civic attitudes represent the feeling of social responsibility that individuals hold toward their community (Lenzi et al., 2014), while civic behaviors are the actions that individuals can adopt to improve their community's life, such as volunteering (White, 2021) or political participation (Giersch & Dong, 2018). Finally, civic skills and knowledge represent individual's abilities, such as knowing how and when to vote, or monitoring the news (McIntosh et al., 2007). A distinction must be made between these concepts, as one can lack skills and opportunities to engage in civic actions but still value social responsibility (Metzger et al., 2020). This is especially true with adolescents not having civic opportunities in their community but believing in the importance to engage in civic activities, or, on the contrary, adolescents required to volunteer without having any motivation for it (Wray-Lake & Shubert, 2019). In this study, youth CE was assessed through adolescents' future civic attitudes and behaviors, namely, their intentions toward social responsibility and civic activities. Indeed, adolescents can be limited by their environments or their age (e.g., too young to vote) but can see themselves engaging in their communities in the future. The distinction between attitudes and behaviors was made because some factors can prevent people from civic actions (e.g., lack of opportunities) (Flanagan & Levine, 2010; Lima et al., 2021), while still valuing the importance of CE (Wray-Lake & Shubert, 2019).

CE is especially important in a democracy as it allows people to choose and act to improve their community (Pavlova et al., 2016; Sherrod, 2015). It is also associated with multiple positive effects in adolescence, such as higher school grades (Philippe et al., 2023), formation of a strong personal identity (Crocetti et al., 2012), higher prosocial skills and behaviors (Albanesi et al., 2007) and lower depressive symptoms (Thuot-Jolicoeur et al., 2023; Wray-Lake, Shubert, Lin, 2019). Since CE has multiple beneficial effects for adolescents and the society, it is important to understand the factors that could promote or hinder youth CE (Le et al., 2023).

2 | PARENTAL POSITIVE CORRELATES OF YOUTH CE

CE is not entirely intrinsic to the individual and depends on the adolescent's environment (Kelly, 2006). Thus, attitudes and ideologies of the culture, local policies (Bronfenbrenner, 1994; Flanagan, Bowes, et al., 1998; Flanagan, Jonsson, et al., 1998; Wilkenfeld et al., 2010), government-established high school curriculum (Fournier-Sylvester, 2014), teachers' lack of time and training, and availability of civic opportunities at school (Gingras et al., 2018; Kahne & Sporte, 2008; Wilkenfeld et al., 2010), as well as parental civic attitudes and behaviors and discussions with family and friends (Ballard, 2014; Gingras et al., 2018; Kahne & Sporte, 2008; Pancer et al., 2007; Wray-Lake & Shubert, 2019; Zaff et al., 2008) can all play a role in youth CE.

Yet, even if neighborhoods and peers are becoming more important in adolescence (Leventhal et al., 2009), family is still one important influential environment (Lenzi et al., 2014; Muddiman et al., 2019). According to the social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1986), individuals can learn values, beliefs, and behaviors by observing people around them. Therefore, adolescents can acquire civic attitudes and act by mimicking their parents (Le et al., 2023; Lenzi et al., 2014). Studies reported that parents that are close to their children, discuss politics at home, are involved in their children's civic activities, engage in civic attitudes and behaviors, and encourage civic participation, also have children with greater CE (Le et al., 2023; Lenzi et al., 2014; McIntosh et al., 2007; Muddiman et al., 2019; Pancer et al., 2007; Silva et al., 2004). Additionally, parents promoting responsibility to treat others equally with respect are more likely to have adolescents endorsing beliefs that people are generally trustworthy and fair. This social trust is linked to democratic values and civic behaviors (Wray-Lake & Flanagan, 2012). Thus, by acting as role models, parents can develop and reinforce their adolescent's sense of social responsibility (Kelly, 2006; Lenzi et al., 2014; Silva et al., 2004).

3 | PARENTAL NEGATIVE CORRELATES OF YOUTH CE

Whereas a great number of studies investigated parental correlates of youth CE by focusing on parental civic attitudes, behaviors, trust, or efficacy, a fewer number of studies investigated parental beliefs toward youth CE (Le et al., 2023; White & Mistry, 2016). Yet, this distinction is important to better understand the distinction between a lack of interest and active opposition to CE. On one hand, youth CE can be affected by parents not having any interest in CE. On the other hand, parents holding negative beliefs toward youth CE could be even more deleterious to adolescents' future CE as it could prevent them from acquiring civic values from other sources in their environment, such as peers, school, or the neighborhood. Indeed, parents who believe, for example, that youth CE is problematic, and that it only creates protesters and rebels, are going to act proactively against their adolescent's civic participation, even if school or other proximal contexts are promoting it. This could explain why some youths can internalize beliefs preventing them to engage in civic activities (e.g., believing they are too young) (Ballard, 2014; Born et al., 2015). Surprisingly, to our knowledge, no study investigated parental negative beliefs and stereotypes toward youth CE and their associations with youths' civic attitudes and behaviors. However, the negative influence of parental beliefs has been demonstrated in other domains, such as gender-related stereotypes for career choice while in school (Chaffee & Plante, 2022), or participation in sport activities (Boiché et al., 2014).

Verifying if parents' negative beliefs toward youth CE are negatively related to their children's thoughts about future civic attitudes and behaviors is important for two main reasons. First, it could further our understanding of the reasons behind certain adolescents' lack of CE. Second, it could help tailor interventions involving both adolescents and their parents. By specifically addressing these negative beliefs, the positive contribution of CE in adolescence could be promoted, which could foster trust among parents and encourage them to support their children's civic activities (Perkins et al., 2007).

4 | THE PRESENT STUDY

The goal of the present study was to investigate the associations between parents' civic behaviors and negative beliefs toward youth CE and adolescents' future civic attitudes and behaviors. Two hypotheses were formulated based on prior research. First, as parental civic behaviors were reported to be positively related to youth CE (Le et al., 2023; White, 2021), it was hypothesized that they would be positively associated with youth future civic attitudes and behaviors. In other words, if parents engage in civic behaviors, their adolescents should be more likely to consider holding civic attitudes and adopting civic behaviors in the future. Second, it was hypothesized that parent's negative beliefs toward youth CE would be negatively linked to youth future civic attitudes and behaviors, even after considering parents' civic behaviors. In other words, if parents believe that youths should not engage in civic activities, adolescents should be less likely to report a social responsibility toward their communities and to plan on engaging in civic behaviors in the future.

In addition, as spending time with family becomes less central in adolescence and peer influence increases (Silva et al., 2004), a third hypothesis was formulated that age would moderate these results. Because adolescents are renegotiating their autonomy as they grow (Branje et al., 2021), the associations between parents' civic behaviors and negative beliefs toward youth CE, and adolescents' future civic attitudes and behaviors should be lower in magnitude in older adolescents. Finally, since previous studies showed that lower income and lower parental education are typically linked to lower CE (Flanagan & Levine, 2010; Lenzi et al., 2012; Lima et al., 2021), the family's socioeconomic status was used as a control variable.

5 | METHOD

5.1 | Participants

High schools across the province of Quebec, Canada, were contacted to participate in this study (secondary 1–5, which is Quebec's equivalent of Grade 7–11; ages 12–17 years old). Only schools whose students could answer questionnaires in French were targeted. Overall, ten schools agreed to participate, from seven different regions. Three were private schools and seven were public schools. Based on the Quebec government's school deprivation index, five of the public schools were from higher socioeconomic status areas and three were from lower ones. The selection of participants was not random, as it was determined by the school's availability and interest in the research project, parents' consent, and by adolescents' and parents' willingness to participate.

This study is part of a broader research project which recruited 1077 adolescents across high schools in Quebec. Overall, 234 parent-adolescent dyads completed all the measures for this study. A priori power analysis revealed that a sample of $n = 202$ is required to detect an increase of $R^2 = 0.05$ of a predictor at an $\alpha = .05$ with a power of 0.90 in a hierarchical regression including three predictors. As parent's participation was depending on the school willingness to communicate

with the parents and to coordinate with them the completion of the questionnaire, as well as parent's own consent, the recruitment of parents stopped once the required sample was obtained. A comparison of the retained ($n = 234$) versus the non-retained adolescents ($n = 843$) revealed that adolescents whose parents completed the survey were younger, $t(1075) = 4.22, p < .001$, Cohen's $d = 0.31$, and reported greater future attitudes, $t(1075) = -2.63, p = .009$, Cohen's $d = 0.20$, and greater civic behaviors, $t(1075) = -3.72, p < .001$, Cohen's $d = 0.28$, than adolescents whose parents did not complete the survey. Among the adolescents, 65% identified as female, and the mean age was 13.77 years (standard deviation [SD] = 1.32 year), with a range between 12 and 17 years. Among them, 10% identified themselves as part of an ethnic minority group. Among the parents, 79% were mothers. The mean age of parents was 44.20 years (SD = 6.83 years) and 6% of them identified themselves as part of an ethnic minority group.

5.2 | Procedure

The research team first contacted the school boards to get permission for the study. The research project was presented as a study of the associated benefits of various activities on adolescents' school success and well-being. The study's title did not mention civic activities to avoid biases during the recruitment. Schools were then randomly selected from an existing list of all schools in Quebec. Once the school principals agreed to participate, they were invited to choose which classes would participate, depending on the availability and consent of the school personnel. School members in charge of administering the questionnaire were mostly teachers. They were trained to provide adolescents with all information and to avoid influencing their decision to participate or not, or their responses to the questionnaire.

Once the school agreed to participate, they invited parents to consent online to their child's participation and to complete their own consent form, as well as the different measures of the study. Only one of the parents participated in the study. A unique identification code, linked to their child, was attributed to them to ensure confidentiality. Adolescents' participation was planned during class time, under teacher supervision. Each participant was provided with a unique identification code, to ensure the confidentiality of their answers. The questionnaire was completed by adolescents online or on paper, after providing their consent. An alternative activity was organized by the school for adolescents who did not want to participate in the study or did not have the consent of their parents. Participants completed the measures between October and June during the school years of 2016–2017 or 2017–2018. This research protocol was approved by the Research Ethics Board of the University of Quebec at Montreal.

5.3 | Measures

Adolescents and their parents completed different questionnaires regarding CE. Scales can be found in the Supporting Information S1: Material File.

5.3.1 | Adolescents' scales

Adolescents' future civic attitudes

The measure was adapted from a list of civic commitments identified by Flanagan, Bowes, et al. (1998); Flanagan, Jonsson, et al. (1998), and used in previous studies to assess participants' level of civic beliefs and intentions (Denault & Poulin, 2009; Vézina & Poulin, 2019). The measure was composed of 10 items with a Likert scale ranging from 1 "Strongly disagree" to 5 "Strongly agree." To the question "When thinking about your future, how important is it for you to achieve the following things?" participants were invited to express their commitment toward subjects like "Helping the less fortunate" and "Doing something to eliminate pollution." The mean of the 10 items was calculated to create an index of adolescent's future civic attitudes. The reliability test showed an excellent internal consistency ($\omega = 0.90$).

Adolescents' future civic behaviors

The measure was adapted from the Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement (CIRCLE) index of civic and political engagements (Andolina, Jenkins, 2003; Andolina, Keeter, et al., 2003; Keeter et al., 2002). Previous studies focused on past or current activities, while in this study the 12-item measure was adapted for future actions with a Likert scale ranging from 1 "Not at all likely" to 5 "Very likely." Participants were invited to answer to "When thinking about your future, how likely it is for you to do the following actions?." Examples of actions were "Participating in activities aimed to protect the environment" and "Writing a petition regarding a political or social issue." The mean of the 12 items was calculated to create an index of adolescents' future civic behaviors. The reliability test showed an excellent internal consistency ($\omega = 0.90$).

To examine whether future civic attitude and behaviors could be conceptually and empirically distinguished, we conducted an exploratory factor analysis using Mplus 8.4 (Muthén & Muthén, 2017) using Maximum Likelihood as the method of estimation and a target rotation. Results of a two-factor model showed adequate fit to the data, $\chi^2(178) = 418.14$, CFI = 0.90, RMSEA = 0.077 [0.068; 0.087], SRMR = 0.059. More importantly, standardized factor loadings of the future attitudes scale were all above 0.40, except for one indicator at 0.38 and all cross-loadings from the future behaviors scale were <0.31. All factor loadings from the future behaviors scale were all above 0.40, except for two indicators at 0.32 and 0.33, with all cross-loadings from the future attitudes scale < 0.24. Future civic attitudes were correlated at 0.59, $p < .001$ with future civic behaviors, which suggests that attitudes often lead to planned behavioral intentions (Conner & Norman, 2022). Overall, this provides adequate evidence of factorial validity for the future civic attitudes and behaviors scales.

5.3.2 | Parents' scales

Parental civic behaviors

This measure assesses the frequency of various civic actions undertaken by the parents over the past year. It was adapted from the CIRCLE index of civic and political engagements (Andolina, Jenkins, 2003; Andolina, Keeter, et al., 2003; Keeter et al., 2002). A similar measure was used in previous studies (Vézina & Poulin, 2019, 2022). Participants were invited to complete a 20-item measure with a Likert scale ranging from 1 "Never" to 5 "5 times and more." Examples of civic actions were "Participating in a protest or march to demonstrate your disagreement with a social or political issue" and "Offering help (money, food, clothes, and transportation) to people in need." The mean of the 20 items was calculated to create an index of parental civic behaviors. The reliability test showed a good internal consistency with an omega of 0.82.

Negative parental beliefs toward youth CE

The measure was adapted from a list of barriers to CE identified with Quebec's school workers by Gingras et al. (2018). The scale was composed of eight items targeting myths and stereotyped beliefs that adults can hold toward youth CE. An explanation of what civic activities represent was first provided to parents. They were then asked to indicate their degree of agreement with each of the items using a Likert scale ranging from 1 "Strongly disagree" to 7 "Strongly agree." Examples of reasons were "I am reluctant to have such activities carried out at school" and "This type of activity only creates protesters and rebels." A factor analysis using principal axis factor as the method of extraction revealed one factor with an Eigen value of 3.41, explaining 42.6% of the variance. All factor loadings were above 0.30 (see Supporting Information S1: Table 1 in Supporting Information S1: Material File). The mean of the eight items was calculated to create an index of negative parental civic beliefs toward youth CE. The reliability test showed an acceptable internal consistency with an omega of 0.76.

5.3.3 | Sociodemographic variables

Age and sex were both assessed with a one item, inviting participants to enter their current age and to choose their sex respectively. Family's socioeconomic status was calculated by using each parent's level of education and current occupation. Ganzeboom's coding scheme, based on the ISCO-08 classification, was used to code the parents' occupational status (Ganzeboom, 2010; International Labour Organization, 2012). The inter-judge agreement was satisfactory with $k = 0.85$ based on 25% of the material. The level of education of each parent was correlated with their occupational status ($r = 0.40$ and $r = 0.49$ for the mother and the father respectively). A single socioeconomic status variable was therefore created by averaging education and occupational status of each parent and then both parents' socioeconomic status ($r = 0.43$).

5.4 | Statistical analyses

Two hierarchical regressions were conducted to examine the associations between negative parental beliefs toward youth CE and the future civic attitudes and behaviors of their child. In the first regression, the dependent variable was the adolescents' future civic attitudes. In the second regression, the dependent variable was the adolescents' future civic behaviors. In both regressions, socioeconomic status was entered as a control variable with parental civic behaviors in Step 1. The independent variable representing the negative parental beliefs toward youth CE was entered in Step 2 to verify the unique percentage of variance explained by this variable.

Two other regressions were conducted to investigate whether age moderated the associations between parental civic behaviors and youths' future civic attitudes and behaviors. Likewise, two regressions were conducted to investigate whether

age moderated the associations between negative parental beliefs and youths' future civic attitudes and behaviors. To test the difference between the younger and the older adolescents, adolescents were divided into two size equivalent groups of 12–13 years old ($n = 116$) and 14–17 years old ($n = 118$). Sensitivity analyses were also conducted by dividing the adolescents into two groups equivalent in terms of age gap (12–14 and 14–17 years old).

6 | RESULTS

6.1 | Descriptive analyses

Table 1 reports the means, standard deviations, and correlations for all studied variables. Results showed that negative parental beliefs toward youth CE were negatively correlated with the two dependent variables, with parents' civic behaviors, and with socioeconomic status (all $ps < 0.01$). Parental civic behaviors were positively correlated with the two dependent variables ($ps < 0.001$) and with socioeconomic status ($p < .05$). The adolescents' future civic attitudes were positively correlated with adolescents' future civic behaviors ($p < .001$), but not with socioeconomic status. Finally, adolescents' future civic behaviors were positively correlated with socioeconomic status ($p < .01$).

6.2 | Hierarchical regression analyses

Table 2 reports the results of the two main hierarchical regressions using adolescents' future civic attitudes and adolescents' future civic behaviors as dependent variables, respectively. Parental civic behaviors were the independent variable in Step 1 and parental negative beliefs, in Step 2. Socioeconomical status was also entered as a control variable in Step 1.

TABLE 1 Means, SD, and correlations of study variables.

	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4
1. Adolescents' future civic attitudes	3.94	0.74	–			
2. Adolescents' future civic behaviors	2.89	0.83	0.59***	–		
3. Parental civic behaviors	1.68	0.55	0.22***	0.26***	–	
4. Negative parental beliefs toward youth civic engagement	2.24	0.90	–0.21**	–0.30***	–0.32***	–
5. Socioeconomic status	0.42	0.75	0.02	0.21**	0.15*	–0.19**

Note: $n = 234$.

Abbreviations: *M*, Mean; *SD*, standard deviation.

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$.

TABLE 2 Hierarchical regressions results for parental negative beliefs toward youth civic engagement.

	Adolescents' future civic attitudes			Adolescents' future civic behaviors		
	<i>B</i> (<i>SE</i>)	β	<i>t</i> (233)	<i>B</i> (<i>SE</i>)	β	<i>t</i> (233)
Step 1						
Socioeconomical status	–0.01 (0.06)	–0.01	–0.15	0.20 (0.07)	0.18	2.79**
Parental civic behaviors	0.29 (0.09)	0.22	3.33**	0.35 (0.10)	0.24	3.73***
Step R^2	0.05**			0.10***		
Step 2						
Parental negative beliefs toward youth civic engagement	–0.13 (0.06)	–0.16	–2.42*	–0.20 (0.06)	–0.22	–3.32**
Change ΔR^2	0.02*			0.04**		

Note: $n = 234$.

Abbreviations: *B*, Unstandardized *B*; *SE*, Standard Error; β , Standardized *B*.

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$.

6.2.1 | Parental civic behaviors and youth future CE

Results of the first step of the first hierarchical regression showed that parental civic behaviors variable was positively associated with adolescents' future civic attitudes, explaining 5% of the variance, $F(2, 231) = 5.61, p < .01$. These results suggest that the more parents adopt civic behaviors, the more their child plan to embrace civic attitudes in the future. Likewise, results of the first step of the second hierarchical regression showed that parental civic behaviors variable was positively associated with adolescents' future civic behaviors, explaining 10% of the variance, $F(2, 231) = 12.76, p < .001$. These results suggest that the more parents adopt civic behaviors, the more their child plan to engage in civic behaviors in the future.

6.2.2 | Parental negative beliefs and youth future CE

Results of the second step of the first hierarchical regression showed that parental negative beliefs toward youth CE were negatively associated with adolescents' future civic attitudes, after controlling for parental civic behaviors and socioeconomic status, explaining an additional 2.4% of the variance, $F(1, 230) = 5.85, p < .05$. These results suggest that the more parents have negative beliefs toward youth CE, the less their child plan to embrace civic attitudes in the future. Likewise, results of the second step of the second hierarchical regression showed that parental negative beliefs toward youth CE were also negatively associated with youth future civic behaviors, after controlling for parental civic behaviors and socioeconomic status, explaining an additional 4.1% of the variance, $F(1, 230) = 11.03, p < .01$. These results suggest that the more parents have negative beliefs toward youth CE, the less their child plan to engage in civic behaviors in the future, even after controlling for parental civic behaviors.^{1,2}

6.2.3 | Moderation by age

The results of the hierarchical regressions using age as a moderator showed no statistical difference between younger (12–13 years old) and older (14–17 years old) adolescents. This suggests that parental civic behaviors and parental negative beliefs are associated the same way with adolescents' future civic attitudes and behaviors, regardless of their age. Full results can be found in the Supporting Information S1: Material File (Supporting Information S1: Tables 2 and 3). Similar results were found when adolescents were divided into two groups equivalent in terms of age gap (12–14 and 15–17 years old).

7 | DISCUSSION

The aim of the present study was to investigate the associations between parental civic behaviors and negative beliefs and adolescents' future CE. While prior research had explored parental civic behaviors, parental negative beliefs had not been studied extensively. Findings revealed that parental civic behaviors were positively associated with youths' future civic attitudes and behaviors. Additionally, results showed that parental negative beliefs toward youth CE were negatively linked to their adolescent's future civic attitudes and behaviors, even after considering their civic actions. Finally, results were the same regardless of adolescents' age.

7.1 | Parental civic behaviors and youth future CE

Results of the present study suggest that parental civic behaviors are positively associated with adolescents' future CE. Thus, parents engaging in civic behaviors are more likely to have adolescents' planning to adopt civic attitudes and civic behaviors in the future. Since we measured adolescents' future CE, this suggests that current parental civic behaviors are associated with

¹Sensitivity analyses were conducted to ensure that the year of the data collection and parental sex did not impact the results.

The same hierarchical regressions were conducted while controlling for the school year of data collection. Results were similar to the analyses done without this additional control variable, and the coefficients for that variable were not significant ($p = .76$ and $p = .06$ for future civic attitudes and future civic behaviors as the dependent variables, respectively).

Similarly, the same hierarchical regressions were conducted by adding parental sex as a control variable in Step 1, to control for who completed the questionnaire between both parents. Results were similar to the analyses done without this additional control variable and the coefficients for that variable were not significant ($p = .21$ and $p = .23$ for future civic attitudes and future civic behaviors as the dependent variables, respectively).

²The same hierarchical regressions were conducted with the addition of the interaction between Negative parental beliefs toward youth CE and Parental civic behaviors on Step 3. Results show no significant interaction ($p = .09$ for future civic attitudes, and $p = .14$ for future civic behaviors).

how adolescents see themselves in the future and what is important to them on a longer period. These findings are consistent with previous research reporting a positive association between parental civic actions and youth CE (Andolina, Jenkins, 2003; Andolina, Keeter, et al., 2003; Le et al., 2023; Muddiman et al., 2019; Zaff et al., 2008).

These results can be explained by the social cognitive theory, which stipulates that adolescents can learn by observing and emulating parental actions (Bandura, 1986). In a qualitative study conducted in the same cultural context, young adults engaged in civic activities also reported the importance of their parents' civic behaviors on their own civic actions. As one participant of the qualitative study reported: "I think, there is a bit of my parents in there" (Quéniart & Jacques, 2009). Thus, observing parental civic behaviors during childhood could promote future actions. Witnessing parental involvement in civic activities can encourage youths to develop a habit of adopting similar behaviors or instill a sense of naturalness, motivating them to maintain such engagement in the future.

Overall, these findings indicate that initiatives aiming to enhance CE among youths should also focus on encouraging civic activities among parents. Such parental involvement may serve as a catalyst for adolescent's CE by showing them the benefits of being engaged in one's community. As youth CE is linked to greater CE in adulthood (e.g., Chan et al., 2014), having parents playing role models could help mobilize the next generation of citizens.

7.2 | Parental negative beliefs and youth future CE

To our knowledge, this study was the first to investigate parental negative beliefs toward youth CE and their associations with adolescents' future civic attitudes and behaviors. Results suggest that parental negative beliefs toward youth CE were negatively associated with adolescent's future CE, even after considering parental civic behaviors and controlling for the family socioeconomic status. Thus, parental negative beliefs toward youth future CE were still associated with their children's future civic attitudes and behaviors over and above their own CE. Similar findings were reported in previous research conducted in different fields, highlighting the impact of parental beliefs and stereotypes on youths' attitudes and life choices (Boiché et al., 2014; Chaffee & Plante, 2022; Monge-Rojas et al., 2015). These results also align with the social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1986). Adolescents not only observe their parents' actions but can also internalize parental beliefs that CE is not for them.

These results could suggest that parental negative beliefs are a barrier to adolescents' civic behaviors if parents forbid civic activities that are believed to be detrimental for their development. These prohibitions could then become a habit, making it less probable that adolescents will see themselves as adopting civic behaviors in the future.

7.3 | Similar associations regardless of age

Contrary to our hypothesis, age did not moderate the associations between parental civic behaviors and parental negative beliefs toward CE and adolescents' future CE. Despite adolescence being a period characterized by changes resulting from identity development (Meeus et al., 2010), the fading influence of parents might be more evident in early adulthood when it comes to CE (Roberts et al., 2006). In other words, our sample was maybe too young to detect a moderating effect of age. It is also interesting to note that age was not associated with adolescents' future civic attitudes and behaviors. Yet, prior studies sometimes suggest that CE increases with age (Grütter & Buchmann, 2022), which was not found in our study. Here again, considering a higher range of age, including early adulthood (18–19 years old), might shed a light on the potential effect of age on youths' intention to adopt civic attitudes and behaviors in the future.

7.4 | Implications for practice

These findings have two important implications that should be considered when promoting youth CE. First, parental negative beliefs toward youth CE could prevent the influence of other environments close to the adolescents, such as school, peers, or the neighborhood. For instance, some authors suggest that prior knowledge of CE is important to have high quality classroom discussions (Hess, 2015). By inducing beliefs in adolescents that CE is not for them, parents can become an obstacle in acquiring the necessary interest and knowledge to obtain benefits from civic discussions in classrooms. This is especially important to consider as studies showed that the influence on youth CE is greater from parents and peers than from school (Muddiman et al., 2019; Quintelier, 2015). If one of adolescents' important source of influence becomes an obstacle, initiatives promoting CE outside the family could have a smaller impact. Second, parental negative beliefs toward youth CE can have an impact on their adolescent's development, as CE has been associated with multiple positive effects, such as greater social skills, higher grades, and a better mental health (Albanesi et al., 2007; Philippe et al., 2023;

Thuot-Jolicoeur et al., 2023; Wray-Lake, Shubert, Lin, 2019). Hence, it appears important to take into consideration parental beliefs when implementing initiatives promoting CE among youths. Interventions should focus on changing parental beliefs, breaking stereotypes, and encouraging parents to adopt civic values and behaviors, as studies showed that engaged parents foster greater CE among their children (Le et al., 2023; Muddiman et al., 2019; White & Mistry, 2016). Not considering that parental negative beliefs can influence adolescent's CE when implementing interventions could fail to reach some of the parents that are directly opposing to youth CE. Focusing on offering more opportunities for youth CE in other environments might not be enough if parents are not involved (Ballard, 2014). Moreover, it appears that parental beliefs can be changed. For instance, a study showed that a program can change parental beliefs, in this case beliefs toward child development and the levels of parental involvement; the more intensive program increased parental investment which was linked to more favorable child outcomes (List et al., 2021). More research is needed to examine whether the same can be done with beliefs toward youth CE.

7.5 | Study limitations and future research

The present study has several limitations. First, because the sample depended on schools, parents' and adolescents' willingness to participate, it was not representative regarding geography, gender, and ethnicity. This could influence the generalizability of the results. For instance, participating parents were mostly mothers (79%), and it was previously reported that mothers have a greater impact on youth CE (Muddiman et al., 2019). Previous research also highlighted differences in CE between cultures and native and immigrant youths (Born et al., 2015; Perkins et al., 2007). In addition, as mentioned in the method section, participating adolescents had parents that accepted to participate in this study, and they scored higher on future civic attitudes and behaviors than adolescents whose parents did not participate. This could represent a bias, because it is possible that the participant parents are more invested in their adolescent's school and projects. Thus, future research should try to have a more representative sample to examine whether associations between parental variables and youths' intention to adopt civic attitudes and behaviors vary across different cultures, between mothers and fathers and among different types of parenting.

Another limitation is that the study used only one time point measurement, preventing the investigation of the associations over time and an interpretation of the direction of the effect. Future research should use a longitudinal design to examine how parents' civic behaviors and negative beliefs could predict youth CE over time. A longitudinal design would also allow the investigation of an intergenerational learning, through which adolescents might predict their parents' CE (Hartley et al., 2021). Socialization is reciprocal (Wilkenfeld et al., 2010), and previous research has demonstrated a bidirectional effect, indicating that youth's political interest can influence their political interaction with significant others (McDevitt & Chaffee, 2002; Stattin & Russo, 2022). Further research is necessary to determine whether this reciprocal influence exists across all dimensions of CE. Such confluence could provide an additional avenue for promoting CE among both adolescents and their parents.

8 | CONCLUSION

The present study brought new important insights into the associations between parents' and youths' future CE by using parents' own reports of their civic behaviors and beliefs, and by investigating parents' negative beliefs toward youth CE. Consistent with previous research, parental civic behaviors were associated with higher future civic attitudes and behaviors in youths. More importantly, results revealed that parental negative beliefs toward youth CE are negatively associated with their adolescent's future CE, regardless of their adolescents' age, which has never been studied before. These findings highlight the need to consider parents and adolescents together when promoting youth CE.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

Olga Fliaguine: Data curation, formal analysis, writing of the original draft, review and editing. **Aurélien Thuot-Jolicoeur:** Data curation, formal analysis, review and editing. **François Poulin:** Conceptualization, review and editing. **Anne-Sophie Denault:** Conceptualization, review and editing. **Jean Robitaille:** Conceptualization, review and editing. **Marie-Claude Geoffroy:** Conceptualization, review and editing. **Frederick L. Philippe:** Conceptualization, supervision, validation, data curation, formal analysis, review and editing.

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CONFLICTS OF INTEREST STATEMENT

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DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

The data supporting the findings of this study are available upon reasonable request from the corresponding author.

ETHICS STATEMENT

Informed consent was obtained from all study participants and their parents/guardians. This study was conducted in accordance with the Tri-Council policy statement: ethical conduct for research involving human. Approval was granted by the ethics committee of the University of Quebec at Montreal.

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