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Warm and Supportive Parenting Can Discourage Offspring's Civic Engagement
in the Transition to Adulthood

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Abstract

It is widely believed that warm and supportive parenting fosters all kinds of prosocial behaviors in the offspring, including civic engagement. However, accumulating international evidence suggests that the effects of family support on civic engagement may sometimes be negative. To address this apparent controversy, we identified several scenarios for the negative effects of supportive parenting on youth civic engagement and tested them using four waves of data from the Finnish Educational Transitions Studies. They followed 1,549 students (55% female) from late adolescence into young adulthood, included both maternal ($n = 231$) and offspring reports of parental support, and assessed civic engagement in young adulthood. Control variables included socioeconomic status, other sociodemographic indicators, church belonging, personality traits, and earlier civic engagement. Higher maternal warmth and support and a stronger identification with the parental family in adolescence predicted offspring's lower political activism up to 10 years later. Perceived parental support in young adulthood predicted lower volunteering 2 years later. There were no significant effects on general organizational involvement (e.g., in student and hobby associations). None of the a priori scenarios that we identified from the literature appeared to explain the pattern of results satisfactorily. We put forth cultural and life stage explanations of our findings.

Keywords: civic engagement; parental warmth and support; parenting styles; positive youth development; youth volunteering and political activism

Introduction

Civic engagement may be defined as “individual and collective actions designed to identify and address issues of public concern” (American Psychological Association 2015, Definition of Civic Engagement, para. 1). Examples are volunteering, petitioning, and taking part in nonviolent political demonstrations. As a vital prerequisite to democracy and a way of providing material, social, and cultural services and products, civic engagement is regarded in Western societies as a highly desirable activity (Putnam 2000). In developmental psychology, the emergence and upholding of civic attitudes and behaviors is considered as part of positive development in youth and beyond (Lerner, Wang, Champine, Warren, & Erickson 2014). Hence, aspects of youth’s developmental ecology that may foster or hinder civic engagement have received much attention (Flanagan 2003; Lerner et al. 2014). In the present study that used longitudinal data spanning 10 years, we focused on the influence of warm and supportive parenting on offspring’s civic engagement in the transition to adulthood.

A positive youth development perspective (Lerner, Dowling, & Anderson 2003; Lerner et al. 2014) contends that youth who grow up in warm and supportive families, peer groups, schools, and communities develop positive individual attributes (“5Cs”: competence, confidence, character, connection, and caring), which, in turn, enable them to contribute to the well-being of their social environments. Youth become involved in adaptive person↔context developmental regulations, whereby the individual and the context contribute to each other’s thriving. In democratic societies characterized by an adaptive “social contract” (i.e., where the social system protects individual rights and freedoms, and individuals, in turn, support the social system), individual contributions to their social environments may be expressed through civic engagement, especially in the form of community service. Similarly, Flanagan (2003, 2013) argues that “mediating institutions,” such as families, schools, and community organizations, are the proximal settings in which youth learn and practice the norms of their society. If such institutions convey the norms of mutual support, compassion, and social responsibility, youth are likely to adopt these norms, which, in turn, may foster civic engagement (Flanagan 2003, 2013; Wray-Lake & Flanagan 2012).

Along with other ecological assets, positive parenting has been regarded as a major factor that may foster youth thriving and the development of prosocial behaviors (Chase-Lansdale, Wakschlag, & Brooks-Gunn 1995; Gagné 2003). Parental warmth and appropriate demandingness (i.e., authoritative parenting; Baumrind 1991) are thought to make youth more caring, better regulated, more trusting, and more socially responsible, qualities that may promote both motivation and ability to make civic contributions (Lewin-Bizan, Bowers, & Lerner 2010; Pancer & Pratt 1999; Schmid Callina, Johnson, Buckingham, & Lerner 2014; Wray-Lake &

Flanagan 2012). Autonomy supportive parenting satisfies the basic psychological needs of autonomy, competence, and belonging, freeing youth's psychological resources to pay attention to the other's needs (Gagné 2003). In addition, warm and supportive parents may encourage their offspring's interests (Fletcher, Elder, & Mekos 2000). Parents may also promote youth civic engagement more directly, via conveying the values of social justice and responsibility, discussing news and politics at home, and modeling civic activities such as voting and volunteering (Flanagan 2003, 2013; Pancer & Pratt 1999). These latter pathways of influence are well established from prior research (Diemer & Li 2011; Mustillo, Wilson, & Lynch 2004; Smetana & Metzger 2005), but they are mostly limited to the social networks of already engaged individuals.

Supporting empirical evidence for the broader influence of positive parenting comes from many North American studies that found warm, supportive, or authoritative parenting reported by adolescents or their parents or observed during family interactions to predict young people's social trust (Wray-Lake & Flanagan 2012), concern for future generations (Lawford, Pratt, Hunsberger, & Pancer 2005), and civic engagement (Mahatmya & Lohman 2012; Fletcher et al. 2000; Gagné 2003; Pancer, Pratt, Hunsberger, & Alisat 2007), also via fostering their positive individual attributes (Lewin-Bizan et al. 2010; Schmid Callina et al. 2014) and psychological need satisfaction (Gagné 2003). These effects were found both in non-Hispanic White and in ethnically diverse samples and held for an impressive range of civic outcomes, including volunteering and community service, blood donations, voting, conventional political participation, and social action.

However, accumulating evidence suggests that warm and supportive families may sometimes play a less positive role for civic engagement. In samples from different regions of Italy, researchers found no significant associations between parental support and youth volunteering or political participation (Kanacri et al. 2014; Marzana, Marta, & Pozzi 2012). In African American adolescents, Smetana and Metzger (2005) found no significant effects of maternal warmth, support, and cooperative behaviors in observed dyadic interactions on adolescent subsequent volunteering and political participation, although positive effects of mothers' confident and respectful communication did emerge. Schmid Callina et al. (2014) found that US adolescents who reported a drop in trust toward their parents, followed by a recovery, also reported the highest levels of contribution to their communities. Furthermore, Omoto and Snyder (1995) found *negative* effects of perceived general social support from multiple sources, including family members, on the duration of AIDS-related volunteering in US adults. Alesina and Giuliano (2011) conducted a multinational study, which yielded *negative* associations of family ties strength with political participation and generalized trust in adults. These negative effects held across conventional (e.g., working for political parties) and unconventional (e.g., boycotting products and joining strikes) forms of political participation. Finally, in a sample of contemporary adult residents of the former East

Germany, Pavlova, Körner, and Silbereisen (2015) found *negative* effects of perceived family support on future intentions for civic engagement, mainly volunteering for various nonpolitical organizations.

The cited studies differed along multiple dimensions, including the cultural context, participants' age, sampling procedures, the way parental or family support were operationalized, and the measurement of civic engagement. It is therefore difficult to speculate where the differences in findings come from. Nevertheless, these differences indicate that, in some situations, warm and supportive family contexts may have negative, rather than positive, effects on civic engagement.

When or Why Does Positive Parenting Have Negative Effects on Youth Civic Engagement?

We were able to identify four hypothetical scenarios for negative effects from scattered literature. The first possibility involves the mechanism of self-selection (Omoto & Snyder 1995). Individuals with low family support may seek new sources of social support through involvement in voluntary organizations, which is known to increase one's social connectedness (Flanagan, Kim, Collura, & Kopish 2015). Importantly, one does not have to become a volunteer or an activist to profit from the "social gratifications" (Verba, Schlozman, & Brady 1995) of voluntary memberships. Evidence exists that a mere membership or a low-scale participation in voluntary organizations (e.g., attending meetings occasionally) suffices to find new friends and to extend one's social network (Wollebaek & Selle 2002). Moreover, active participation in hobby associations and sports clubs certainly provides opportunities for socializing and benefits individuals in other ways, although it does not necessarily produce collective goods as volunteering does (Wilson 2000). We therefore propose that youth who seek new sources of social support are likely to join any kind of voluntary associations, not only those that work toward the common good.

The second possibility refers to another distinction between types of civic engagement (Omoto & Snyder 1995; Pavlova & Silbereisen 2015). Warmth and support experienced in the family may detain individuals from less socially desirable or more confrontational activities, such as AIDS-related volunteering or political activism, while fostering purely prosocial, conflict-free types of engagement, such as nonpolitical volunteering. Volunteering is commonly understood as unpaid voluntary work to benefit other persons or the community in general (Wilson 2000). In most cases, volunteers produce some goods and services *directly*, such as by cooking for the poor or by coaching a children's sports team. In contrast, political activism represents individual or collective action to effect social change *indirectly*, through influencing public policy, for instance, by appealing to politicians and government officials, joining strikes and demonstrations, and taking consumer decisions that are meant to affect governments and corporations (Stolle, Hooghe, & Micheletti 2005; Theiss-Morse & Hibbing 2005). Whereas nonpolitical volunteering typically takes place in an atmosphere of mutual

solidarity and support among like-minded people, conflict and contestation are inherent to political activism (Theiss-Morse & Hibbing 2005). It therefore requires an ability to constructively negotiate differences and engage in conflict (Flanagan 2013). Some warm and supportive parents may inadvertently discourage political activism by socializing their children to regard interpersonal conflict as harmful, if not to avoid it altogether (Koerner & Fitzpatrick 2004). Although developmental literature has addressed parental influences (e.g., political discussion at home) on the development of critical consciousness (i.e., critical awareness of social inequalities and injustice and action to bring about social change), especially in marginalized youth (Diemer & Li 2011), the role of broader characteristics of parenting in the development of political activism has received less attention. Regarding volunteering, both positive (Mahatmya & Lohman 2012; Fletcher et al. 2000; Gagné 2003; Pancer et al. 2007) and negative (Omoto & Snyder 1995; Pavlova et al. 2015) effects of supportive family have been found. However, one study (Pavlova & Silbereisen 2015) reported that a high perceived family support predicted stronger future intentions for volunteering but not for political engagement in young adults from the former East Germany.

The third possibility involves the distinction between authoritative and permissive parenting. In the absence of appropriate demands and control, parental warmth and support may promote self-centeredness rather than caring for the welfare of others (Baumrind 1991; Chase-Lansdale et al. 1995). For instance, Baumrind (1991) found that adolescents with nondirective parents (i.e., responsive but posing little demands) were less socially responsible and self-regulated than those whose parents were authoritative (i.e., both responsive and demanding) or democratic (i.e., responsive and more conscientiously engaged with their children than nondirective ones). In a more recent study, indulgent parenting predicted a higher adolescent aggression and had no significant effect on prosocial behaviors (Crandall, Ghazarian, Day, & Riley in press). We are not aware of any research linking permissive parenting to civic engagement.

The fourth and last possibility refers to the cultural context. In family-oriented societies, such as some Southern European regions, family is the only social connection that matters, and it also takes precedence over individual rights and well-being (Alesina & Giuliano 2011). In such contexts, warm and supportive families may actually discourage cooperating with strangers and helping them, activities that lie at the core of civic engagement. This argument aligns with Flanagan's (2003, 2013) contention that families as a mediating institution of a particular social order reinterpret and convey to their offspring a set of values characteristic of this social order.

Civic Engagement and Family Relationships in Finland

We chose Finland as a study setting because social democratic regimes (i.e., Finland and other Nordic countries) differ in important ways from both North American countries, where most of prior findings on the positive link between supportive parenting and civic engagement originate (e.g., Mahatmya & Lohman 2012; Fletcher et al. 2000; Gagné 2003; Lewin-Bizan et al. 2010; Pancer et al. 2007; Schmid Callina et al. 2014), and South and East European countries, where nonsignificant or even negative associations between supportive family relationships and civic engagement were sometimes found (Alesina & Giuliano 2011; Kanacri et al. 2014; Marzana et al. 2012; Pavlova et al. 2015). Similarly to the non-Hispanic White populations of the US and Canada, Finland boasts high rates of civic engagement, also among young people (around 70% of university students volunteer; Haski-Leventhal et al. 2010). However, service learning programs are uncommon in Finnish educational institutions (Haski-Leventhal et al. 2010). Furthermore, Finland has well-developed public services (i.e., the state uses its high tax revenues to provide for the needy). Consequently, civic engagement in such countries is much less service-oriented (i.e., it involves fewer helping activities) than it is in liberal North American countries (Salamon & Anheier 1998). Finnish voluntary organizations provide only about 17% of social services and 5% of health services, whereas the public sector covers 67% and 83% of those, respectively (European Commission 2012). Civic engagement in Finland occurs most often in the context of sports clubs and other recreational or cultural organizations, where volunteering mostly involves organizational tasks, followed by social and health services and religious organizations, where helping activities are more typical, followed by professional, political, human rights, and environmental associations (European Commission 2012).

Furthermore, the majority populations of Nordic countries appear to be less family-oriented than those of South and East European as well as North American countries. In Alesina and Giuliano's (2011) comparative study that used data from the World Values Survey, Finland, along with other Nordic countries, scored well below the mean on the index of family ties. This index measured the importance of family in one's life, the belief that parents should always be loved and respected, regardless of their qualities and faults, and the belief that it is parental duty to do the best for their children, even at the expense of parents' own well-being. Although one cannot presume that all people in Finland share the same values or that family relationships are unimportant there, it could be argued that Finnish youth are not generally expected to put family relationships above other social connections and individual interests.

The Present Study

Using longitudinal data from Finland on youth development from late adolescence (ca. 16–18 years of age, 2004) into young adulthood (ca. 25–27 years of age, 2013/14), we attempted to identify the conditions under which the effects of warm and supportive parenting on offspring's civic engagement would be negative. We

conducted secondary analysis of an existing dataset, which was not designed to address our research questions but included data on the key constructs of interest.

One of the major developmental tasks of the transition to adulthood in Western societies is achieving a balance between individuation and connectedness in one's relationship with parents, which gradually becomes more egalitarian and reciprocal (Grotevant & Cooper 1986). During this process of relationship transformation, both parents and adolescents often perceive less emotional closeness and more conflict in their relationships in comparison with childhood years, as research conducted on North American and West European samples suggests (Collins & Laursen 2004). Moreover, parental and adolescent reports of relationship quality tend to diverge quite substantially, with mothers overestimating both the overall positivity of relationships and the severity of occurring conflicts (Collins & Laursen 2004; Steinberg 2001). Between late adolescence and early adulthood, parental and adolescent views of their relationship increasingly converge, and reported conflict becomes less frequent, whereas perceptions of support and closeness gradually recover (Collins & Laursen 2004; Guan & Fuligni 2016).

To take this typical relationship dynamics into account, we used information on parenting or parent-child relationship from two informants (i.e., adolescents and their mothers) and two time points. Specifically, both adolescent and mother reports were available in late adolescence, when participants were aged 16–18, whereas in young adulthood (ca. 23–25 years of age), only offspring's reports of perceived parental support were collected. This decision seemed adequate as the discrepancies between parental and offspring's perceptions of their relationship usually diminish in young adulthood (Collins & Laursen 2004). We considered the role of age when parenting was assessed in an exploratory fashion, because prior literature on parenting and civic engagement offered few clues on the potential influence of a life stage. Existing longitudinal studies in this field had too short time intervals between assessments to enable any conclusions about life-stage differences (Lewin-Bizan et al. 2010; Mahatmya & Lohman 2012; Schmid Callina et al. 2014; Wray-Lake & Flanagan 2012).

In the present study, civic outcomes were measured at 25–27 years of age. To test whether parenting could actually predict change in civic engagement, we controlled for earlier levels of civic engagement at age 23–25. Additionally, we considered third variables that might covary with supportive parenting or with civic engagement and might therefore produce spurious or trivial relationships between these constructs. For instance, socioeconomic status (SES), which is usually assessed through educational and occupational attainment as well as income, is consistently associated with higher civic engagement (Verba et al. 1995; Wilson 2000) and with more authoritative as well as indulgent parenting (Hoff, Laursen, & Tardif 2002). Furthermore, in most countries, females volunteer to a similar extent that males do, but females are less likely to be politically active

and to hold leadership positions (Verba et al. 1995; Wilson 2000). Unemployment and singlehood are related to a lower embeddedness in social networks and therefore reduce the likelihood of being recruited by voluntary organizations, whereas having small children limits the time available for leisure activities, including civic engagement (Wilson 2000). In turn, positive parenting may reduce the later risk of unemployment in the offspring (Kokko & Pulkkinen 2000) and appears to be implicated in the intergenerational transmission of social competence and romantic relationship quality (Ehrensaft, Knous-Westfall, & Cohen 2011). Moreover, religiosity, which was shown to predict positive parenting (Spilman, Neppl, Donnellan, Schofield, & Conger 2013), is also a major predictor of civic engagement, especially volunteering, because religious people are often embedded in church communities that espouse helping values and actively recruit volunteers (Verba et al. 1995; Wilson 2000).

Finally, we considered youth adaptive personality traits, which might both evoke warm and supportive parenting and increase youth's propensity to behave prosocially (Knafo & Plomin 2006). Among the Big Five, agreeableness, conscientiousness, and emotional stability represent socially desirable, adaptive traits that are required to enact adult social roles (Digman 1997; Lodi-Smith & Roberts 2007). They have shown to be related to a greater likelihood of volunteering (Lodi-Smith & Roberts 2007) and to a lower likelihood of political activism (Mondak, Hibbing, Canache, Seligson, & Anderson 2010). Furthermore, extraversion and openness to experience are agentic traits that reflect an active, curious, and open approach to experience (Digman 1997). Individuals with high scores on these traits appear to be more likely to get involved in all kinds of organizational activities (Mondak et al. 2010; Omoto, Snyder, & Hackett 2010).

Our central hypotheses are shown in Figure 1. According to the self-selection hypothesis, individuals with low family support may opt to get involved in voluntary organizations of all kinds, including hobby associations. However, they will not necessarily become a volunteer or a political activist (arguably more costly types of civic engagement), because a relatively passive participation in any voluntary organization already enriches one's social network (Flanagan et al. 2015; Wollebaek & Selle 2002). In this case, the negative effects of parental warmth and support will primarily be found for general organizational involvement, which will mediate the negative effects of supportive parenting on political activism and volunteering (see Figure 1a). To test the type of engagement hypothesis (i.e., prosocial vs. confrontational), we compared the effects of parental warmth and support on young individuals' volunteering (expecting positive effects) and political activism (expecting negative effects; see Figure 1b). Regarding the permissive parenting hypothesis, we tested whether the effects of parental warmth and support on young people's civic engagement would only be negative when parental demands and control were low. That is, we expected to find a statistical interaction between parental

warmth and support and parental demands and control (see Figure 1c). Finally, we could not test the cultural hypothesis directly, because we had no cross-cultural comparison. Nevertheless, choosing Finland as a study setting allowed for an indirect test of this hypothesis. As argued above, Finland cannot be described as a country where family is strongly prioritized over other interests and concerns (Alesina & Giuliano 2011). We therefore assumed that any negative effects of parental support on youth civic engagement, should they emerge, could not be attributed to a family-oriented cultural context.

[Figure 1 about here]

Method

Participants and Procedure

The Finnish Educational Transitions Studies (FinEdu) is a longitudinal survey that focuses on educational transitions and psychosocial adjustment (Wired Minds 2015). In 2004, when the survey started, the first master sample included all ninth-grade students from all comprehensive schools (i.e., those offering compulsory secondary education) in a middle-sized Finnish city; the second master sample included all second-year students from all upper secondary schools (i.e., academic track) in the same city. In 2004, this city's population (ca. 97,000) had very similar sociodemographic characteristics (e.g., average age, gender distribution, demographic dependency ratio, unemployment rate, religious affiliations, and common types of schools) to the entire Finnish population; however, this city had a slightly higher proportion of better educated individuals but a lower average disposable income than the general population (Statistics Finland 2016).

Both samples were followed up five times, in 2005, 2006, 2008/09, 2011, and 2013/14. At each time point, researchers tried to reach all members of the original master samples. While participants were still in school, data were collected in classrooms via group-administered questionnaires; afterwards, participants responded to postal or online questionnaires or were surveyed by phone. Efforts were made to motivate students to participate through multiple reminders and raffles. In line with Finnish laws and with the institutional approval, passive parental consent and active student consent to participate were obtained.

In this study, we pooled the two samples together. Including the entire sample of upper secondary school students made sense because the vast majority of Finnish young people complete an upper secondary degree (82% of 20–24-year-olds in 2014; Statistics Finland 2016). Table 1 shows sample sizes, response rates, and participants' ages for the four measurement points used in the present study. The total sample size for the students who participated in at least one of four measurements was 1,549, whereas 631 individuals were present at all four measurements. Attrition analyses showed that female gender and a higher educational attainment significantly reduced the likelihood of dropout, effects that are typical of longitudinal studies. Additionally,

participants who reported a higher identification with the parental family in 2004 were slightly less likely to drop out in 2011, whereas those who engaged in associational activities in 2011 were slightly less likely to drop out in 2013/14. There were no systematic associations of longitudinal attrition with any other study variables.

[Table 1 about here]

In 2004, parents of the participants from four randomly chosen large schools were asked to fill in a parental questionnaire. It was beyond the scope of this survey to collect parental reports for all participants. Of those approached, 59% provided data for at least one parent ($n = 254$). To measure parenting styles at the first wave, we chose to use only maternal reports ($n = 231$), which were available for the largest number of cases.¹ Testing the differences between the subsample of adolescents whose parents participated and the rest of the sample showed that significantly fewer parents from the upper secondary school sample than from the comprehensive school sample took part in the study. In addition, adolescents whose parents participated reported a slightly higher identification with their families in 2004 than those whose parents did not participate ($r = .08, p = .004$), but as young adults (2011), they showed no differences in perceived parental support ($r = .04, p = .227$). There was no evidence for selection effects for any other variables included in this study. At subsequent measurements, 160 participants whose mothers provided parenting data in 2004 were present in 2008/09, 170 were present in 2011, and 174 were present in 2013/14.

Measures

Parenting. Mothers' parenting styles were assessed in 2004 with a Finnish version of the Blocks' Child Rearing Practices Report (CRPR; Roberts, Block, & Block 1984), which has been widely used in Finland to measure parenting practices in relation to both children and adolescents. This version was shorter in comparison with the original CRPR and included fewer scales (Aunola & Nurmi 2004). Maternal warmth and support was measured with 11 items (e.g., "I believe that praise is more effective than punishment," "I often show my child that I love him/her," "I encourage my child to be spontaneous;" and "I encourage his/her initiative"). Four items assessed maternal control (e.g., "My child should learn that we have rules in our family"), whereas two more items referred to maternal knowledge (i.e., "I know with whom my child spends time" and "I usually know where my child is and what she/he is doing"). The rating scale for all CRPR items was from 1 = *not at all true* to 7 = *completely true*. See Table 2 for reliability and validity information for all parenting scales.

¹ More parenting data from mothers ($n = 231$) than from fathers ($n = 138$) were obtained. Adolescent reports on their parents' parenting styles were collected only in a subsample of ninth-graders ($n = 210$) but not in upper secondary school students. As a result, only 140 cases had complete data on both maternal and adolescent reports on mothers' parenting styles.

As mothers' reports were not available for all participants, we also used adolescent reports on their identification with the parental family in 2004 as a proxy for the quality of parent–adolescent relationship. All participants were asked to think about things that are important in defining who they are (1 = *not at all important*; 7 = *very important*). We used two items (“my family” and “home and parents”), which were highly correlated (see Table 2). This scale was uncorrelated with maternal reports of their parenting styles (see Table 3), indicating a common discrepancy between different informants (mothers vs. adolescents).

In 2011, young adult participants responded to a short scale that assessed perceived support from parents in the context of occupational choice (Dietrich & Salmela-Aro 2013). This scale consisted of five items (e.g., “My relationship with my parents is very close,” “My parents have supported me in my decisions,” and “My parents are often too busy to find out about my affairs,” inverse coded; 1 = *not at all true*; 7 = *completely true*). This scale was uncorrelated with maternal warmth and support in 2004. However, it was significantly and positively correlated with adolescent identification with the parental family in 2004 (see Table 3), a measure obtained at a different time point from the same informants.

[Table 2 about here]

Civic engagement. In 2013/14, participants rated on a five-point scale how often they had engaged in several civic activities in the past two years (1 = *never*; 5 = *very often*). Five items reflected political activism (i.e., (1) boycotted or (2) bought a product for ethical reasons; (3) signed a petition or a plea; participated in (4) a demonstration or (5) some another political event).² These items were almost identical to the set of items used in the first wave of the European Social Survey (<http://www.europeansocialsurvey.org>; see also Andolina, Keeter, Zukin, & Jenkins 2003). Note that boycotting and boycotting goods and products for ethical reasons are acknowledged forms of modern political activism (Andolina et al. 2003; Stolle et al. 2005). Two other civic engagement items were conceptually distinct. Specifically, a single item on organizational involvement (a shortened version of a group membership index proposed by Andolina et al. 2003) read “In the past two years, have you participated in organizational activities (e.g., student organization/hobby association)?”, whereas a single item on volunteering referred to having “done voluntary work” in the past two years (analogous to the Longitudinal Study of American Youth 2010; <http://lsay.org>). Although this might have also been voluntary work for political organizations, we assumed that volunteering reported under this item would be overwhelmingly nonpolitical, simply because in Finland, as elsewhere, the prevalence of political volunteering is

² Additional analyses showed that parenting variables had no significant effects on voting. This was unsurprising, because voting is a low-effort type of civic engagement that is rather normative (the vast majority of our participants voted at least sometimes). We do not report these results in the main part of the article.

much lower than that of nonpolitical volunteering (European Commission 2012). Reliability and validity information is summarized in Table 2.

Control variables.

Prior civic engagement. It was assessed in 2011 with the same items as above, with the following exceptions:

There was no volunteering item, and the rating scale was dichotomous (0 = *no*; 1 = *yes*). Thus, we used two constructs: political activism (five items; $\alpha = .61$) and organizational involvement (one item).

Socioeconomic status. A mean score of a mother's and a father's occupational status (1 = *blue-collar*; 2 = *lower white-collar*; 3 = *upper white-collar*; $r_{\text{mother-father}} = .38, p < .001$) was derived from open-ended adolescent reports of their parents' occupations in 2004 and 2005. Cases with nonworking parents or with parents whose occupation was not readily ranked according to this scheme (e.g., "self-employed" without further specification) were assigned missing values on this indicator. Additionally, in 2011, youth reported on their current educational track/attainment (1 = *no upper secondary degree*; 2 = *one upper secondary degree completed*; 3 = *studying for or completed another upper secondary degree*, such as a vocational school certificate; 4 = *studying for or completed a polytechnic institute degree* (a lower-level higher education in Finland); 5 = *studying for or completed a university degree*) and financial situation (one item; "Do you think your income covers your expenses at the moment?" 1 = *extremely well*; 5 = *poorly*).

Sociodemographic indicators and church belonging. These included sample (0 = *ninth-graders*; 1 = *upper secondary school students*; this indicator also served as a proxy for age group), gender (0 = *male*; 1 = *female*), being unemployed in 2011 (0 = *no*; 1 = *yes*), being in a romantic relationship in 2011 (0 = *no*; 1 = *yes*), and having children in 2011 (0 = *no*; 1 = *yes*). One item asked about church belonging in 2011 ("How firmly do you feel you belong to church?" 1 = *not at all*; 5 = *very much*).

Personality traits. In 2008, participants responded to a 15-item brief version of the Big Five Inventory (John, Donahue, & Kentle 1991) with a five-point rating scale. We computed two second-order factors (Digman 1997). The alpha factor included agreeableness, conscientiousness, and emotional stability ($\alpha = .65$), whereas the beta factor comprised extraversion and openness to experience ($\alpha = .62$).

Analytical Approach

To reduce measurement error, we modeled parenting indicators and civic engagement as latent variables if they were measured with two or more items. However, to reduce model complexity, we used mean scores on control variables that included multiple items. After having established the measurement model (see below), we conducted multiple regression analyses. In the first step (Model 1), we regressed each indicator of civic engagement assessed in 2013/14 on its respective indicator assessed in 2011 and on three key predictors:

maternal warmth and support in 2004, adolescent identification with the parental family in 2004, and perceived parental support in 2011. As volunteering was not assessed in 2011, we controlled it for prior levels of organizational involvement and political activism (see Figure 1). In the second step (Model 2), we added sociodemographic and personality factors measured in 2008 and 2011 to check for the robustness of parenting effects. By comparing the effects of parenting across the three dependent variables, we aimed to test the self-selection hypothesis (see Figure 1a) and the type of engagement hypothesis (see Figure 1b). In the third step (Model 3), we tested the permissive parenting hypothesis (see Figure 1c) by adding the indicators of maternal control or knowledge in 2004 and their interactions with maternal warmth and support in 2004.

All analyses were conducted with Mplus v.6 (Muthén & Muthén 2010) using a maximum likelihood estimation. A usual situation in psychological research, our main predictors and outcomes were not normally distributed, with parenting variables being skewed toward higher values and civic engagement variables being skewed toward lower values. Consequently, in most models, we used bootstrapping (i.e., repeated random resampling of observations with replacement; Erceg-Hurn, Wilcox, & Keselman 2013) with 1,000 draws to compute standard errors. This method yields sufficiently accurate standard errors when multivariate normality assumption is not met or when outliers are present in the data (see also Robustness Check). For the models that included interactions between latent variables, bootstrapping was not available, and we used robust maximum likelihood estimation with Monte Carlo numerical integration instead (Klein & Moosbrugger 2000). This method yields robust standard errors and is asymptotically equivalent to bootstrapping (Muthén & Muthén 2010). Missing values of all types (i.e., item nonresponse, longitudinal attrition, and nonparticipation of mothers) were estimated with the full information maximum likelihood (FIML) algorithm (Enders 2001). This algorithm calculates a likelihood function (i.e., the discrepancy between observed and predicted values) for each individual case, whereby all data observed for this case is used. Parameter estimation proceeds by maximizing the sum of such individual likelihood functions across all cases and thus uses all available information from the entire sample (Enders 2001). Simulation studies have shown that FIML is vastly superior to listwise and pairwise deletion of missing values as well as to mean substitution (Enders 2001; Newman 2003). Note that FIML is also a method of choice with very large amounts of missing data and with data not missing at random because it provides the most accurate parameter estimates and, in contrast to imputation techniques, does not inflate the effective sample size (Newman 2003). For instance, in our analyses, the estimated effects of maternal warmth and support in 2004 and their standard errors were based only on the subsample of individuals whose mothers participated in the study. Where control variables were not part of the regression equations, we still included their variances and covariances into the models to facilitate accurate estimation of missing values on

central variables (Muthén & Muthén 2010). This was not feasible for computationally demanding models with latent interactions, for which reason these models had a smaller estimated sample size.

Results

Descriptive Statistics and Bivariate Correlations

All parenting indicators had very high means (around 6 on a 7-point scale; see Table 3, bottom), which indicated that they were rated mostly very positively by both mothers and their offspring. In contrast, participants scored rather low on average on three indicators of civic engagement in 2013/14 (around 2 on a 5-point scale, which corresponded to “once in the last two years”). Organizational involvement was most and volunteering least widespread. Other descriptive statistics showed that in 2011, this was a well-educated sample on average, with the majority having completed upper secondary school degrees and pursuing a tertiary education. The fact that females slightly outnumbered males reflected the actual gender distribution of upper secondary school graduates in Finland (Statistics Finland 2016). Two thirds of the participants reported being in a romantic relationship, but very few had children, which was typical of this age group.

[Table 3 about here]

Somewhat surprisingly, maternal warmth and support, maternal control, and identification with parental family in 2004 showed small but significant negative correlations with parental occupational status.³ As to the three civic engagement indicators, their differential correlations with church belonging and personality (see Tables 2 and 3) were in line with prior literature (Lodi-Smith & Roberts 2007; Mondak et al. 2010; Omoto et al. 2010; Verba et al. 1995; Wilson 2000) and supported our decision to treat them as separate constructs. Moreover, providing first support to our expectation to find negative effects of parenting on civic engagement, political activism in 2013/14 correlated significantly and negatively with four indicators of parenting out of five, volunteering in 2013/14 correlated significantly and negatively with perceived parental support in 2011, whereas organizational involvement in 2011 had a significant negative correlation with adolescent identification with the parental family in 2004. However, all these correlations were small in size. No significant correlations between organizational involvement in 2013/14 and parenting variables emerged.

The Measurement Model and Regression Analyses

The measurement model included three latent indicators of parenting assessed in 2004 (maternal warmth, 11 items; maternal control, 4 items; maternal knowledge, 2 items), a latent indicator of adolescent

³ Many studies have established a positive link between warm and democratic parenting and family SES (Hoff et al. 2002), also in Finland (Aunola & Nurmi 2004). However, most of them referred to younger children. Maybe in higher-SES families, mothers are better able to adjust their parenting style to the child’s developmental stage and express less warmth and closeness to encourage adolescents’ independence (Chase-Lansdale et al. 1995).

identification with the parental family in 2004 (2 items), a latent indicator of perceived parental support in 2011 (5 items, with two negatively worded items allowed to correlate), and a latent indicator of political activism assessed in 2013/14 (5 items, with two items on boycotting/buycotting products and two items on attending a demo/another political event allowed to correlate). This model showed a good fit to the data, χ^2 (359, $N = 1,549$) = 589.3, $p < .001$, CFI = .969, RMSEA = .020, SRMR = .084. Correlations between latent variables ranged from -.28 to .55.

[Table 4 about here]

Table 4 shows multiple regression results. As expected, the indicators of civic engagement assessed in 2011 had strong positive effects on later engagement reported in 2013/14. No significant effects of parenting variables on general organizational involvement emerged. We checked whether parenting had any significant effects on earlier organizational involvement assessed in 2011; this was not the case. These zero findings were not consistent with the self-selection hypothesis, which predicted that youth who experienced low parental support would join any kinds of voluntary associations to find new sources of social support (see Figure 1a).

In contrast, maternal warmth and support in 2004 had a significantly negative effect on political activism assessed in 2013/14, $\beta = -.25$, whereas parental support perceived by young adult participants in 2011 had a significantly negative effect on volunteering assessed in 2013/14, $\beta = -.09$ (see Table 4, Model 1). However, the type of engagement hypothesis predicted that parental support would have negative effects on political activism (i.e., a more confrontational type of engagement) but positive effects on volunteering (i.e., more prosocial; see Figure 1b). The pattern of findings did not support this hypothesis because both effects were negative. We checked whether maternal warmth and support in 2004 had an indirect effect on volunteering in 2013/14 through perceived parental support; this was not the case, because perceived parental support in 2011 was not significantly predicted by earlier maternal warmth and support. As noted above, we attributed this lack of association to a common discrepancy between parental and offspring views on family relationships (Collins & Laursen 2004).

Adolescent identification with the parental family in 2004 had no significant effects on civic outcomes in 2013/14 (see Table 4, Model 1). We found that its effect on volunteering appeared to be mediated through perceived parental support in 2011, $B_{\text{indirect}} (SE) = -0.04 (0.02)$, $p = .041$, 95% CI [-0.07, -0.01], $\beta = -.03$. However, the total effect of identification with parental family on volunteering was not significant, $B (SE) = 0.04 (0.06)$, $p = .456$. We did find a significant negative effect of this predictor on political activism in 2011, $B (SE) = -0.05 (0.01)$, $p < .001$, $\beta = -.18$, with political activism in 2008 controlled for. This finding, along with the

similar patterns of bivariate correlations (see Table 3), indicated a reasonable convergence in the effects of parenting indicators that were obtained from different informants in 2004 on offspring's later political activism.

Adding more control variables did not substantially change the effects of parenting on civic engagement in 2013/14 (see Table 4, Model 2). We proceeded to testing the permissive parenting hypothesis (see Figure 1c and Table 4), which predicted a statistical interaction between parental support and control or knowledge. In Model 3a, neither maternal control in 2004 nor its interaction with maternal warmth and support in 2004 had significant effects on civic engagement. Similarly, in Model 3b, maternal knowledge in 2004 and its interaction with maternal warmth and support had no significant effects. In Model 3a for volunteering and Model 3b for political activism, the main effects of perceived parental support in 2011 and maternal warmth and support in 2004, respectively, became nonsignificant when maternal control or knowledge and an interaction were added to the regression equation. This had to do with an increased standard error for each of these main effects (see Table 4) and had no substantive interpretation as the regression coefficients remained about the same. We checked whether maternal control or knowledge would have significant main effects on the outcome variables if the interactions were dropped; this was not the case. Altogether, these findings were not consistent with the permissive parenting hypothesis as no significant interactions with maternal control and knowledge were found.

Among control variables, significant predictors of residual change in civic engagement between 2011 and 2013/14 were personality (especially the beta factor, which had positive effects across types of engagement, but also the alpha factor, which predicted lower political activism), parental occupational status (a positive predictor of volunteering), having children (a negative predictor of political activism), and church belonging, which predicted lower political activism but more volunteering.

In terms of variance explained, political activism was best (up to 77% of variance) and volunteering was worst (up to 11% of variance) accounted for by our set of predictors. These drastic differences in the predictive power across the dependent variables could have technical, rather than substantive, explanations. First, political activism was modeled as a latent variable, so that only the variance shared by its five manifest indicators needed to be explained by the predictors. Second, both political activism and organizational involvement in 2013/14 were controlled for exactly the same variable measured in 2011, even though its rating scale was different. In contrast, volunteering in 2013/14 was controlled for prior scores on organizational involvement and political activism, because no information on volunteering was collected in 2011.

Robustness Check

We checked that bootstrapping versus robust maximum likelihood estimation led to virtually identical findings for Models 1 and 2. Furthermore, we repeated our analyses on the subsample of the participants whose

mothers participated in the study ($n = 231$) and found the same negative and significant effect of maternal warmth and support on later political activism. Although bootstrapping yields highly accurate standard errors and significance levels in the presence of outliers (Erceg-Hurn et al. 2013), we ran alternative analyses, where we removed two influential cases (i.e., in terms of their influence on the loglikelihood and Cook's distance) from the sample instead of using bootstrapping. These were two participants whose mothers reported unusually low warmth and support in 2004; checking both cases showed that their scores were valid and plausible. With these cases removed, the negative effect of maternal warmth and support on political activism was slightly reduced ($\beta \sim -.20$, $\Delta\beta = .04$) but remained significant. Finally, we checked for a possible nonlinearity of parenting effects by estimating the same models separately in the participants who scored below and above average on parenting measures. (We used raw mean scores on parenting and civic indicators to conduct these analyses.) The effects of maternal warmth and support in 2004 on offspring's subsequent political activism appeared to be primarily driven by the difference between those whose mothers reported low and those whose mothers reported average levels of warmth and support. In contrast, the negative effects of perceived parental support in 2011 on later volunteering were present at both higher and lower ends of the continuum.

Post-Hoc Analyses

As none of our explanatory hypotheses fully worked out, we conducted additional analyses to probe other explanations for the negative effects of supportive parenting on youth civic engagement. First, more “rebellious” types of civic engagement, such as political activism, may be partly motivated by psychological reactance, an aversive psychological state arising in response to freedom restrictions imposed by an authority and leading to oppositional behavior (Brehm 1966). Psychological reactance and defiance in adolescents have been linked to controlling parenting (i.e., trying to make the child feel, think, and behave in line with parental expectations), which is the opposite of autonomy supportive parenting (Van Petegem, Soenens, Vansteenkiste, & Beyers 2015). Using additional items from maternal reports on the CRPR collected in 2004, we attempted to test for this possibility. We found no associations between two items that specifically tapped into autonomy support (e.g., “I think it is important that my child expresses his/her own opinions, even if others disagree”) and offspring's later political activism or volunteering. Moreover, the psychological control scale (e.g., “My child should know how much I sacrifice for him/her”) was correlated positively, rather than negatively, with maternal warmth and support ($r = .37$, $p < .001$) and showed no significant effects on civic engagement. Thus, in our data, we found no support for the psychological reactance mechanism.

Second, warm and supportive parents may be socializing their children to pursue some other activities, which might be more adaptive or socially desirable in the Finnish context and which might “crowd out” civic

engagement (cf. Coleman 1961). We explored associations between parenting, civic engagement, and participants' favorite activities reported in the subsample of former comprehensive school students in 2013/14. In particular, participants were asked to specify their single favorite activity; their answers were coded into various activity types. No information on the number of favorite activities was collected. We used five major activity categories: sports, social, cultural, pet-related, and computer- or TV-related. We found that participants who reported to be politically active or to volunteer showed a slight preference for more "high-brow" or cultural (e.g., reading, music, theatre and the like) and less passive (i.e., computer- and TV-related) activities. However, none of the parenting indicators was significantly related to preferring any of the major activity categories.

Third, we looked into the relationship between parenting and achievement goal orientations. Finnish parents may emphasize educational and occupational success and impart to their children a strong achievement orientation, which, in turn, may be poorly compatible with civic engagement. All participants responded to items that tapped, among other things, into their intrinsic mastery orientation (e.g., learning new things), extrinsic mastery orientation (e.g., fulfilling some formal success criteria, such as good grades), and performance approach orientation (e.g., performing better than others) in their work or studies (Tuominen-Soini, Salmela-Aro, & Niemivirta 2012). Maternal control in 2004 and perceived parental support in 2011 positively and significantly predicted both intrinsic and extrinsic mastery orientations in 2013/14. Moreover, one significant interaction (out of six tested) emerged between maternal warmth and support and maternal knowledge in 2004: A higher maternal knowledge predicted a higher extrinsic mastery orientation when maternal warmth and support was also high. In turn, the three indicators of civic engagement in 2013/14 were consistently related to a higher intrinsic mastery orientation; political activism was additionally related to a lower extrinsic mastery orientation when intrinsic orientation was controlled for. This pattern of effects suggested that authoritative Finnish parents tended to encourage striving for educational and occupational *achievement*, whereas youth who were civically engaged showed a more intrinsic interest in *learning*. However, the negative effects of parenting on political activism and volunteering (see Table 3, Model 1) remained unchanged when we controlled them for achievement goal orientations.

Fourth, assuming that the effects of parenting might have to do with value socialization in the family (Flanagan 2003, 2013), we turned to the relationships between parenting, basic values (Schwartz 1992), and civic engagement. Basic values were assessed in 2011 in the subsample of former high school students. Consistent with prior literature (Vecchione et al. 2015), volunteering and political activism were associated with a higher value of universalism (i.e., concern for the welfare of all others). However, indicators of supportive parenting were not significantly related to universalism. Remarkably, adolescent identification with parental

family in 2004 and perceived parental support in 2011 were significantly associated with a lower value of self-direction (i.e., autonomy of thought and action) and a higher value of conformity (i.e., compliance with social expectations). In contrast, but in line with prior findings (Vecchione et al. 2015), political activism was positively related to self-direction and negatively related to conformity. Similar effects were not found for volunteering. Unfortunately, because of a reduced sample size, we could not test whether basic values explained some of the negative effects of supportive parenting on political activism.

Discussion

In the present study, we addressed an emerging controversy on the role of warm and supportive parenting in offspring's civic engagement. Influential theories of civic development (Flanagan 2003; Lerner et al. 2003, 2014) suggest that such qualities of parenting should foster civic engagement, especially community service and volunteering, as they foster all kinds of prosocial behaviors (Chase-Lansdale et al. 1995; Gagné 2003). Whereas many North American studies of adolescents found supporting evidence for this idea (Mahatmya & Lohman 2012; Fletcher et al. 2000; Lewin-Bizan et al. 2010; Pancer et al. 2007), other research yielded nonsignificant, mixed, or negative effects of warm and supportive parenting on civic engagement (Alesina & Giuliano 2011; Kanacri et al. 2014; Marzana et al. 2012; Omoto & Snyder 1995; Pavlova et al. 2015; Schmid Callina et al. 2014). Our objective in the present study was to investigate under which circumstances the effects of parenting on civic engagement might be negative (see Figure 1). We used data from the FinEdu studies that followed Finnish secondary school students into young adulthood and spanned 10 years (Wired Minds 2015).

We found that warm and supportive parenting predicted lower civic engagement, even if earlier civic engagement and a host of other variables were controlled for. Most impressively, warmth and support reported by mothers in 2004, when their offspring were aged 16–18, predicted lower political activism (e.g., petitioning or taking part in a demonstration or other political event) of the latter assessed almost 10 years later, at age 25–27. Furthermore, young individuals' own ratings of parental support in 2011, at age 23–25, predicted lower volunteering over the next two years. Effect sizes were small, but they compared favorably with findings from prior research. Two cross-sectional studies found the negative effects of perceived family support on civic engagement in the magnitude of $-.20$ to $-.30$ (standardized regression coefficients; Omoto & Snyder 1995; Pavlova et al. 2015). In longitudinal studies that control for prior assessments of the dependent variable, effect sizes for substantive predictors typically fall into the range between $.05$ and $.15$ (Adachi & Willoughby 2015). In the present study, we found the effect of maternal warmth and support on political activism to be greater than

what might be expected of a longitudinal effect ($\beta = -.25$) and the effect of perceived parental support on volunteering to be roughly of the expected size ($\beta = -.09$).

In the Introduction, we identified several reasonable possibilities for warm and supportive parenting to have negative effects on civic engagement. It appeared, however, that none of them could satisfactorily explain our pattern of findings. First, the self-selection hypothesis (Omoto & Snyder 1995) maintained that individuals with low family support may seek new sources of support through civic engagement. We assumed that in this case, general organizational involvement (e.g., participation in hobby-related associations) would be enough to establish new social contacts, and supportive parenting should have had negative effects primarily on this type of civic engagement. However, we found no significant effects of parenting on such organizational involvement.

Second, the type of engagement hypothesis predicted that warm and supportive parenting would hinder more confrontational and less directly helping activities, that is, political activism, but foster purely prosocial activities, namely volunteering (Alesina & Giuliano 2011; Pavlova & Silbereisen 2015). However, similarly to some prior studies (Omoto & Snyder 1995; Pavlova et al. 2015), we found a negative effect of supportive parenting on volunteering. Although this effect appeared to be weaker than that on political activism, this could be attributed to volunteering being measured with a single item and having less variance.

Third, the type of parenting hypothesis (Baumrind 1991; Chase-Lansdale et al. 1995) maintained that, if parental demands and control are lacking, parental warmth and support might lead youth to become excessively self- or family-oriented and therefore unlikely to get civically engaged. Contrary to this idea, we found that maternal control and maternal knowledge assessed in 2004 did not moderate the negative effects of maternal warmth and support on political activism, nor did they have any main effects on civic indicators. It could be argued that our analyses with maternal reports, which were available for only 231 participants, did not have enough statistical power to detect interaction effects. However, inspection of Table 4 shows that even if the interaction effects were significant, maternal warmth and support would have had a substantial negative effect on political activism already at mean levels of maternal control and maternal knowledge.

Fourth, yet another possibility, for which we could not test directly, was a family-oriented cultural context. For instance, in some Southern European or post-communist countries, family ties may undermine civil society, because family members are expected to stick together and help each other but may be distrustful and unhelpful toward strangers (Alesina & Giuliano 2011; Pavlova et al. 2015). Although the importance of family may be as high in Finland as elsewhere, as the responses of our participants indicate, Finland is not known as a family-oriented society in the above sense (Alesina & Giuliano 2011). We therefore reasoned that the negative effects of family support on offspring's civic engagement in the Finnish context could not be explained by the

cultural norm to prioritize family over other social connections and individual interests. However, it is still possible that cultural differences account for our findings in some other way.

The Role of Cultural Context

The type of engagement hypothesis, which was not corroborated by evidence, maintained that warm and supportive parenting might foster volunteering rather than political activism, because volunteering is a more prosocial type of civic engagement (Pavlova & Silbereisen 2015; Theiss-Morse & Hibbing 2005). However, it could be argued that supportive parenting will not necessarily foster volunteering in a cultural context where volunteering is less altruistic and more self-expressive, which might be the case in Finland. Civic engagement in social democratic and conservative welfare states, such as Finland and Germany, serves more to express personal values and to champion individual and group interests, whereas in liberal welfare states such as the US, volunteering involves more helping activities and is therefore more prosocial by nature (Salamon & Anheier 1998). To counter this argument, we should note that our measure of volunteering did seem to reflect a prosocial orientation as indicated by its positive correlations with socially desirable personality traits and church belonging. Nevertheless, it would be good to know the specific content of volunteering in order to distinguish between its more altruistic and more self-expressive types (e.g., providing eldercare versus organizing a sporting event). Unfortunately, prior studies that used samples from countries with less developed public welfare, such as Italy (Marzana et al. 2012; Kanacri et al. 2014) and low-income countries from all over the world (Alesina & Giuliano 2011), and found negative or nonsignificant effects of family support on civic engagement did not differentiate volunteering from other civic activities. As volunteering in such contexts is probably very much service-oriented, addressing the effects of supportive parenting on youth volunteering in these and other regions is needed to better understand the implications of culturally specific functions of volunteering.

Another source of cross-national differences in the link between parenting and civic engagement could be the relevance of civic engagement in the labor market (Handy et al. 2010). In the North American countries, volunteering and community service not only is widespread but also increasingly becomes a requirement and a matter of reputation. For US youth who aspire for a college education and a successful career, service experience is an important, almost indispensable addition to their CV (Handy et al. 2010). North American parents, especially those of White non-Hispanic origin, are probably well aware both of the plights of marginalized groups in their society and of career benefits associated with youth civic engagement. If they are good parents, they will encourage civic engagement in their offspring. By contrast, in Finland, as in many other countries, the relevance of civic engagement to one's educational and career progress is limited. Moreover, social inequalities are much smaller than in the US, and social services are largely covered by the state. As a

consequence, civic engagement, although quite widespread, is seen as neither morally obligatory nor essential to labor market success (Handy et al. 2010). Indeed, our supplementary analyses showed that youth who experienced a higher parental support (and control) reported a greater subjective importance of learning and, even more so, of educational and occupational success as young adults. However, there was no or negative link between such success orientation and civic engagement, although the latter was significantly and positively related to an intrinsic interest in learning. Civic engagement in Finland, albeit widespread, appears to be more a matter of personal choice than a universally valued experience that clearly improves one's labor market chances (cf. Handy et al. 2010).

The Role of Life Stage

One interesting aspect of our findings was that lower political activism was predicted by earlier indicators of supportive parenting, whereas lower volunteering was mainly predicted by its later indicator. That is, for political activism, maternal warmth and support and adolescent identification with the parental family at age 16–18 emerged as significant predictors. In contrast, for volunteering, perceived parental support at age 23–25 was a significant predictor, which also fully mediated the effect of adolescent family identification at age 16–18. These results might indicate certain life-stage differences in the effects of parental support on civic engagement.

In adolescence, some families undergo a phase of increased parent–adolescent conflict and authority struggle, which is reflected in decreased parental warmth and support (Collins & Laursen 2004; Guan & Fuligni 2016). In the extreme, such conflicts predict poor psychosocial adjustment in adolescents (Collins & Laursen 2004). However, it is also conceivable that adolescents who struggled for more autonomy in relationships with parents would be better prepared for political activism, which is, in essence, an effort to change power relations in the society. We can cite two additional pieces of evidence to support this idea. First, our supplementary analyses showed that warm and supportive parenting was associated with a lower value of self-direction and a greater value of conformity in the offspring, two value orientations that were also significantly related to political activism, but in the opposite direction. Second, in an Italian sample, Kanacri et al. (2014) found that not mutual parent–child support but filial self-efficacy in late adolescence (i.e., one's perceived ability to influence their parents' attitudes and behaviors in a constructive way) indirectly predicted higher civic engagement in young adulthood. All these findings suggest that parent–adolescent power struggles and negotiations, which often feel burdensome to parents (Collins & Laursen 2004; Steinberg 2001), may teach youth that questioning authority is possible and sometimes even effective.

In contrast, young adults' relationships with their parents are less characterized by the presence or absence of power conflicts, which are thought to subside as individuals transition into adulthood (Collins & Laursen 2004). Nevertheless, families differ in how much parents and their adult children interact, exchange support, and remain emotionally close (van Gaalen & Dykstra 2006). Emotional separation from parents during the transition to adulthood is often regarded as a prerequisite to young individuals' forming an interest in broader social issues and becoming concerned about the welfare of strangers (Chase-Lansdale et al. 1995). From this perspective, a pitfall of staying close to one's parents in young adulthood may be not caring for the world outside of one's own circle. This argument might explain the negative effect of perceived parental support in young adulthood on volunteering, an activity that aims to benefit strangers and communities at large. The fact that such a negative effect is found in a country like Finland, where family is not commonly prioritized over individual rights and interests and where civil society flourishes, suggests that this effect is more generalizable than previously thought (Alesina & Giuliano 2011; Pavlova et al. 2015) and that it may have more to do with at least partially unsuccessful tackling of age-normative developmental tasks (i.e., individuation; Grotevant & Cooper 1986) than with family-oriented cultural norms.

Strengths, Limitations, and Future Directions

The key strengths of our study were a long-term longitudinal design, the availability of data on parenting from two informants, a differentiated assessment of young adult civic engagement, and the possibility to control for key confounders of its relation to earlier experiences made in the family of origin. Using the data from Finland, which represents a different model of democracy and welfare state than the North American, South European, and post-communist regions, where most of prior research on the topic comes from, was also a clear advantage. However, there were also limitations, such as longitudinal attrition and the availability of maternal reports for only a small subsample of participants, which, however, represented planned missingness. We tried our best to circumvent these limitations by applying the FIML estimation algorithm in our statistical analyses, using a range of control variables, and employing alternative measures of parent-child relationships. Moreover, the time intervals between the measurement of the predictors and the outcome may be considered rather arbitrary to our research questions. In fact, these time intervals were determined by the main purpose of the FinEdu studies, which was to investigate educational transitions of youth. Furthermore, two of the civic engagement indicators were measured by single items, and the volunteering item did not provide details on specific activities. Hence, measurement error could influence our findings. We used general organizational involvement as a proxy to test for the self-selection of individuals with a low parental support into civic

engagement, whereas a direct question about one's motivations to get civically engaged would probably better serve the purpose. Finally, no measures of parental civic values and civic engagement were available.

As the relation between general parental support and activity-specific parental support for civic engagement may be key to understanding the discrepant findings from international research, in future studies, we recommend assessing both constructs. Furthermore, it may be worthwhile to investigate the effects of parental warmth and support experienced at different life stages (i.e., in childhood, adolescence, and young adulthood) on individuals' subsequent civic engagement. Despite the negative effects of positive parenting found in our study, it is still possible that warm and supportive parenting experienced earlier in childhood fosters prosocial behaviors of all kinds, including those toward strangers (Kanacri et al. 2014, arrived at the same idea; cf. Chase-Lansdale et al. 1995). To unravel the proximal mechanisms of parenting effects, future studies may need to identify psychological mediating variables, such as prosocial values in relation to significant others versus strangers or ways of dealing with conflict and power issues, which may influence the development of skills required for political activism. Finally, our study illustrates the need to systematically compare different cultural and institutional contexts and to explore the macro-contextual factors that may condition whether the role of warm and supportive parenting in offspring's civic engagement is positive, negative, or insignificant.

Conclusions

Our study brings the field one step further in providing suggestive longitudinal evidence from Finland that warm and supportive parenting experienced in adolescence and young adulthood can sometimes play a negative role in offspring's civic engagement. A systematic testing of various conditions under which such negative effects might occur showed that they pertained to both political (i.e., activism) and presumably nonpolitical (i.e., volunteering) forms of engagement, were not channeled through a general organizational involvement (e.g., in hobby associations), and could not be attributed to permissive (as opposed to authoritative) parenting. We suspect that such negative effects may result from a combination of cultural factors (e.g., Finnish parents and their offspring not seeing civic engagement as something relevant to educational and occupational success) and individual differences in resolving normative developmental tasks of the transition to adulthood (e.g., a lack of individuation in parent-child relationships). Although the negative effects of supportive parenting were by no means large, our findings expose a potentially huge problem: Good parenting is probably not enough to raise good citizens. Most likely, it is specific value messages that make the biggest difference to civic engagement (Flanagan 2003, 2013), and it should not be taken for granted that warm and supportive families will convey the values of caring for distant others and taking stances on political issues. Our findings

dispute the popular belief that all good things go together and call for more attention of researchers to potential ambivalences and trade-offs across multiple domains of development and to the role of cultural context.

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Table 1

Sample Description

Indicator	2004	2008/09	2011	2013/14
<i>N</i>	1,301	1,029	1,096	1,138
Present at 1 st wave, <i>n</i>	1,301	848	901	941
Present at 1 st wave, %	100.0	65.2	69.3	72.3
Response rate, %	75.8	60.0	63.9	66.7
Cooperation rate, %	75.8	65.2	71.3	73.8
Age, <i>M (SD)</i>				
Comprehensive school	16.0 (0.2)	20.0 (0.2)	23.0 (0.2)	25.0 (0.2)
Upper secondary school	18.0 (0.3)	22.1 (0.4)	25.1 (0.4)	27.1 (0.4)

Note. Numbers refer to usable questionnaires. Response rate = the proportion of respondents in all eligible to participate. Cooperation rate = the proportion of respondents in all contacted. Age was calculated as the difference between survey year and birth year.

Table 2

Scales Reliability and Validity

Scale	Source/Previous use	<i>N</i> items	Reliability	Evidence for validity
CRPR 2004	Aunola & Nurmi			The three scales were positively intercorrelated; authoritative parenting (high warmth and moderate behavioral control) predicted an improvement in spelling skills in Finnish
Maternal warmth and support	2004, 2005; Kiuru et al. 2012	11	$\alpha = .87$	children (Kiuru et al. 2012); higher maternal warmth and behavioral control both predicted
Maternal control (behavioral)		4	$\alpha = .82$	lower problem behaviors in Finnish children when psychological control was low (Aunola & Nurmi 2005) (psychological control was not used in the present study)
Maternal knowledge		2	$r = .72$	
Identification with the parental family 2004	–	2	$r = .83$	Correlated positively with perceived parental support 2011
Perceived parental support 2011	Dietrich & Salmela-Aro 2013	5	$\alpha = .85$	Correlated positively with family identification 2004; predicted lower controlled motivation and lower stress during career goal pursuit in young adults (Dietrich & Salmela-Aro 2013)
Civic engagement 2013/14				The three variables were positively intercorrelated; political activism was uncorrelated with
Organizational involvement	Andolina et al. 2003	1	–	being involved with the police in the past 3 years and correlated positively with voting
Political activism	ESS 2002	5	$\alpha = .72$	frequency in the past 2 years; all civic behaviors correlated positively with the beta factor
Volunteering	LSAY 2010	1	–	(extraversion and openness to experience); organizational involvement correlated positively and political activism negatively with the alpha factor (agreeableness, conscientiousness, and emotional stability); volunteering correlated positively and political activism negatively with church belonging

Note. CRPR = Child Rearing Practices Report. ESS = European Social Survey. LSAY = Longitudinal Study of American Youth.

Table 3

Descriptive Statistics and Bivariate Correlations

Indicator	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	
1. Maternal warmth 2004, 1–7	–																					
2. Maternal control 2004, 1–7	.41	–																				
3. Maternal knowledge 2004, 1–7	.46	.34	–																			
4. Family identification 2004, 1–7	.07	-.10	.02	–																		
5. Parental support 2011, 1–7	.06	.12	.15	.30	–																	
6. Org. involvement 2014, 1–5	-.04	-.01	.02	-.03	.04	–																
7. Political activism 2014, 1–5	-.22	-.13	-.21	-.11	-.08	.27	–															
8. Volunteering 2014, 1–5	.01	.00	.12	.01	-.07	.38	.33	–														
9. Org. involvement 2011, 0–1	-.07	-.06	-.01	-.07	.04	.43	.21	.17	–													
10. Political activism 2011, 0–1	-.04	-.04	-.11	-.17	-.09	.23	.66	.22	.27	–												
11. Female, 0–1	-.14	-.12	.04	.17	.00	-.03	.15	.05	-.05	.09	–											
12. Upper sec. school sample, 0–1	-.06	-.22	-.04	-.04	.04	.05	.10	.06	.07	.09	.15	–										
13. Parental occ. status 2004, 1–3	-.20	-.20	.02	-.07	.02	.10	.15	.08	.13	.11	-.01	.10	–									
14. Educational track 2011, 1–5	-.03	-.08	.02	-.07	.05	.24	.13	.06	.37	.15	.05	.30	.33	–								
15. Unemployed 2011, 0–1	-.06	.02	-.18	-.05	-.16	-.12	-.01	.03	-.15	-.07	-.09	-.07	-.10	-.25	–							
16. Fin. situation 2011, 1–5	-.03	-.04	-.16	-.05	-.13	-.04	.02	-.04	-.03	.03	-.02	-.09	-.08	-.12	.21	–						

17. Romantic rel. 2011, 0–1	-.14	-.11	-.03	.02	.00	.00	.03	.05	-.06	.01	.13	.14	-.04	.01	-.07	.01	–				
18. Has children 2011, 0–1	-.09	-.09	-.17	.01	-.04	-.09	-.10	.00	-.14	-.06	.05	.04	-.05	-.15	-.03	.00	.13	–			
19. Church belonging 2011, 1–5	-.06	-.04	.17	.13	.06	-.06	-.13	.08	-.04	-.06	.06	-.07	-.09	-.11	-.02	-.04	.06	.11	–		
20. Personality alpha 2008, 1–5	-.04	.05	-.06	.10	.18	.15	-.12	.06	.07	-.13	-.10	.05	-.05	.13	-.11	-.15	-.01	-.06	.06	–	
21. Personality beta 2008, 1–5	-.10	-.04	-.05	.11	.13	.20	.20	.18	.17	.17	.05	.03	.08	.14	-.08	-.09	.05	.01	.02	.36	–
% missing	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.9	3.5	7.1	7.1	7.2	2.5	2.2	0.6	0.0	6.6	1.2	0.1	2.1	0.3	0.5	5.5	5.0	5.0
<i>M</i>	6.2	6.0	6.3	6.3	5.7	2.6	2.0	1.7	.54	0.3	.55	.46	2.1	3.8	.05	2.8	.66	.08	1.6	3.5	3.5
<i>SD</i>	0.6	0.9	0.8	1.0	1.1	1.4	0.7	1.1	–	0.3	–	–	0.7	1.2	–	1.2	–	–	1.0	0.5	0.6

Note. For maternal warmth, control, and knowledge, $N = 231$. For other variables, $N = 978$ to 1,549. Correlation coefficients significant at $p < .05$ are in bold. Dash = not applicable. Proportion of missing values due to item nonresponse or coding difficulties (for parental occupational status) is shown. For binary variables, means represent proportions of cases and are rounded to two decimals. For multiple-item scales, mean scores were used to compute descriptive statistics.

Table 4

Multiple Regression Results

Predictor	Organizational involvement 2014				Political activism 2014				Volunteering 2014			
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3a	Model 3b	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3a	Model 3b	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3a	Model 3b
Estimated <i>N</i>	1,549	1,549	1,515	1,515	1,549	1,549	1,515	1,515	1,549	1,549	1,515	1,515
Org. involvement 2011	1.19*** (0.09)	1.05*** (0.12)	1.24*** (0.10)	1.22*** (0.11)	–	–	–	–	0.27** (0.08)	0.30** (0.09)	0.27** (0.08)	0.26** (0.09)
Political activism 2011	–	–	–	–	2.18*** (0.15)	2.00*** (0.16)	2.36*** (0.22)	2.04* (0.83)	0.72*** (0.16)	0.67*** (0.18)	0.71*** (0.15)	0.84*** (0.19)
Maternal warmth 2004	-0.08 (0.35)	-0.07 (0.41)	0.31 (0.77)	0.42 (0.60)	-0.32** (0.11)	-0.28* (0.12)	-0.26* (0.12)	-0.30 (0.18)	0.08 (0.20)	0.14 (0.22)	-0.04 (0.36)	-0.21 (0.47)
Family identification 2004	-0.04 (0.07)	-0.03 (0.07)	-0.05 (0.19)	-0.06 (0.07)	0.02 (0.04)	0.02 (0.04)	0.01 (0.07)	0.01 (0.04)	0.08 (0.06)	0.03 (0.06)	0.10 (0.10)	0.10 (0.06)
Parental support 2011	0.03 (0.05)	-0.03 (0.06)	0.00 (0.12)	0.02 (0.15)	-0.02 (0.03)	-0.03 (0.04)	-0.01 (0.07)	0.01 (0.07)	-0.10* (0.05)	-0.12* (0.05)	-0.11 (0.06)	-0.13* (0.05)
$\Delta\chi^2$ (df = 3) for parenting	0.82				15.09**				6.69			
ΔR^2 for parenting	.004				.066				.012			
Total R^2	.185				.718				.060			
Female		-0.04 (0.13)				0.09 (0.06)				0.10 (0.09)		
Upper sec. school sample		0.02 (0.10)				0.04 (0.06)				0.09 (0.08)		
Parental occ. status 2004		0.05 (0.11)				0.07 (0.05)				0.17* (0.07)		
Educational track 2011		0.06 (0.06)				0.00 (0.03)				-0.06 (0.04)		
Unemployed 2011		-0.22 (0.26)				0.05 (0.14)				0.40 (0.23)		
Fin. situation 2011		-0.01 (0.04)				-0.01 (0.03)				-0.03 (0.04)		

Romantic rel. 2011	0.01 (0.12)		-0.03 (0.06)		0.11 (0.09)	
Has children 2011	-0.26 (0.20)		-0.26** (0.09)		0.01 (0.16)	
Church belonging 2011	-0.08 (0.05)		-0.08** (0.03)		0.12* (0.05)	
Personality alpha 2008	0.20 (0.13)		-0.16* (0.08)		0.15 (0.11)	
Personality beta 2008	0.31** (0.10)		0.22*** (0.06)		0.24** (0.09)	
$\Delta\chi^2$ (df = 11) for control variables	39.79***		38.72***		36.79***	
ΔR^2 for control variables	.044		.049		.053	
Total R^2	.229		.767		.113	
Maternal control 2004	0.06 (0.63)		-0.05 (0.24)		0.07 (0.27)	
Maternal warmth x control	0.25 (0.13)		0.12 (0.32)		-0.08 (0.06)	
Maternal knowledge 2004		-0.06 (0.79)		-0.17 (0.23)		0.26 (0.18)
Maternal warmth x knowledge		0.23 (0.21)		0.15 (0.70)		-0.06 (0.12)
$\Delta\chi^2$ (df = 2) for control/knowledge and its interaction with warmth	1.43	3.00	0.39	0.00	1.09	4.64

Note. Cells show unstandardized regression coefficients with standard errors in parentheses. Parenting indicators and political activism were modeled as latent variables. For

Model 1, ΔR^2 refers to the difference from the model with civic engagement in 2011 as the only predictors. For Model 2, ΔR^2 refers to the difference from Model 1. For Models 3a and 3b, ΔR^2 was not available because of a different estimation algorithm.

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

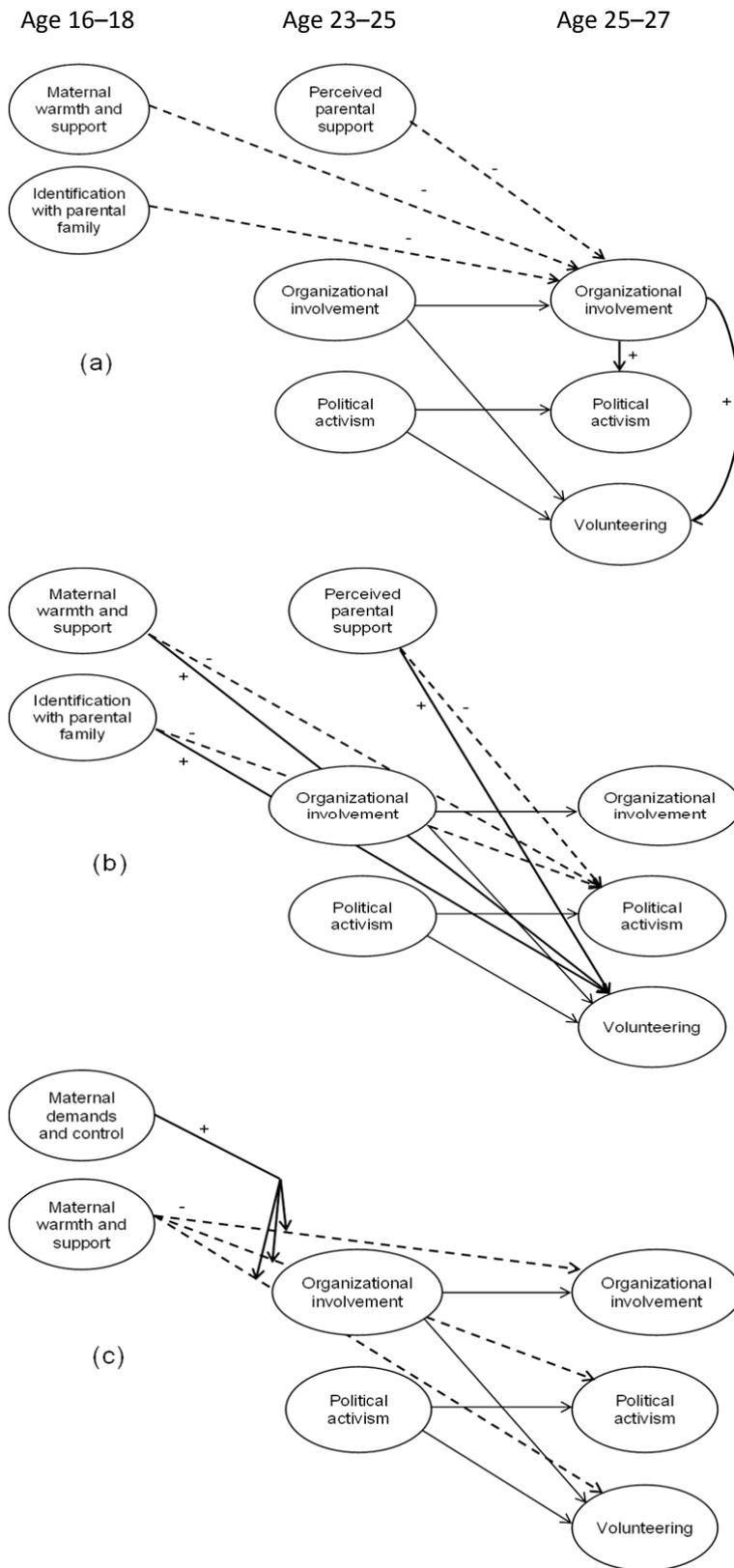


Fig. 1 Study design with the main predictor and outcome variables and hypotheses tested: (a) the self-selection hypothesis; (b) the type of engagement hypothesis; (c) the permissive parenting hypothesis. Solid lines show positive effects, dashed lines show negative effects