



**Stanford Center on Adolescence**

in conjunction with



**Civic Development Network**

a special interest group of the  
Society for Research on Adolescence

## Society for Research on Child Development Preconference Program

# Youth Civic Development: Theory, Constructs, Innovative Methods

Wednesday, March 30, 2011 2:00 – 5:00 p.m. Le Centre Sheraton, Montreal, Salon Kafka-Lamartine

### Opening Remarks

**Professor William Damon**

Director, Stanford Center on Adolescence



## Schedule

### Session 1

<b>2:00 – 2:20</b>	Welcome and Opening Remarks	William Damon
<b>2:20 – 2:40</b>	Roundtable discussions: Guiding questions 1	
<b>2:40 – 3:00</b>	Share ideas from roundtables with full group	Daniel Hart
<b>3:00 – 3:20</b>	Roundtable discussions: Guiding questions 2	
<b>3:20 – 3:40</b>	Share ideas from roundtables with full group	Connie Flanagan
<b>3:40 – 4:00</b>	Break	

### Session 2

<b>4:00 – 4:50</b>	Roundtable presentations of research ideas with facilitated discussion and feedback	
<b>4:50 – 5:00</b>	Closing remarks	William Damon

See following pages for guiding questions, presenters, topics and facilitators



# Session 1: Roundtable Discussions about Guiding Questions

## Guiding Questions for Roundtable 1

“Civic engagement” is the umbrella term most often used in research on youth civic development; it encompasses many components such as actions, attitudes, goals, and beliefs. This concept has had enormous positive impact on distinguishing civic development as a unique process worthy of study.

During this Roundtable, we will discuss the following question: At this point, is a “big construct” (for example, civic purpose or civic identity) needed to integrate the various components of civic engagement into a theoretical developmental framework?

If a “big construct” **is** needed ...

- What are some promising constructs that might integrate the multiple components (e.g., actions, attitudes, goals, beliefs, etc.) often associated with civic engagement?
- How will such a construct guide theory and research in youth civic development?
- How will such a construct be useful to practitioners working with youth to build civic capacities?

If a “big construct” **is not** needed ...

What components of civic engagement seem most important to focus on in youth civic development research and practice?

**Share ideas from roundtables with full group.**

**Facilitator: Daniel Hart**

## Guiding Questions for Roundtable 2

- What types of methods for understanding youth civic development have been most fruitful in past research?
- Which methods are under-utilized in the field of civic development?
- What are some promising new methods for studying youth civic development?
- What methods are used in other disciplines that might be applied to studying civic development in a productive way?

**Share ideas from roundtables with full group.**

**Facilitator: Connie Flanagan**



## Session 2: Roundtable Presentations

### Table A

**Joanna Geller**  
**Holly Wegman**  
*Vanderbilt University*

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**Facilitator:**  
**Daniel Hart**  
*Rutgers University*

#### **Collective Civic Engagement in Young Adolescents and Socio-Emotional Outcomes in Schools**

There is ample evidence that youth civic engagement predicts a host of desirable individual outcomes for participants. However, little is known about the benefits of youth civic engagement that accrue to schools. Does collective student civic engagement have an influence on school-level phenomena such as school climate? We use multi-level modeling to examine the effect of collective civic engagement in middle schools on disciplinary referrals, bullying, and school climate (e.g., teacher/student relations). This study offers quantitative evidence that a group of civically engaged young people may be able to positively alter their school environment and improve student outcomes.

### Table B

**Anne van Goethem**  
*Utrecht University*

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**Facilitator:**  
**William Damon**  
*Stanford University*

#### **Stimulating Adolescent's Morality, Identity and Volunteering through Service-learning**

In a previous study we tested a model in which adolescents' morality was positively related to their identity development which in turn was positively related to their volunteering. In our upcoming intervention study we will further study this model by examining the processes (e.g., reflection) by which service-learning influences adolescents' morality and identity, which in turn leads to volunteering. This study will compare three groups: adolescents who do not perform school-required community service, adolescents who perform school-required community service, and adolescents who participate in a required service-learning program at school.

### Table C

**Elizabeth White**  
*University of California*  
*Los Angeles*

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**Facilitator:**  
**Ellen Middaugh**  
*Mills College*

#### **Civic Engagement in the Upper Elementary Grades: An Examination of Teacher and Parent Practices and Children's Civic Identity**

This study explores children's emergent civic identity which includes notions of social responsibility, civic values, and political interest/efficacy. I also examine how teachers and parents foster civic engagement at the elementary school level, how these socialization practices are related to children's civic identity, and whether these experiences differ based on children's racial/ethnic or socioeconomic background. Survey data are currently being collected from 4th-6th grade students (recruitment target=400), their parents, and teachers (N=25) from schools in the Los Angeles area. Findings will highlight ways that parents and teachers can promote socially conscious, active citizenship among ethnically and economically diverse elementary school students.

## Session 2: Roundtable Presentations continued

### Table D

**Russell Toomey**  
*University of Arizona*

#### **Queering Social Justice: Youth Participation in Queer Movements**

**Facilitator:**  
**Connie Flanagan**  
*University of Wisconsin  
Madison*

The purpose of the proposed project is to examine the experiences of youth participation in queer social justice movements. Little to no information is available that documents how and why youth get involved with queer movements, what their experiences are like, and how these experiences impact their developing identities and are integrated with the other salient contexts in their lives (e.g., family, school, community). Using a mixed methods approach, the goal of this project is to contribute new information about the experiences of youth in queer movements aimed to destabilize dominant heteronormative structures in our society.

### Table E

**Thomas Piñeros Shields**  
*Brandeis University*

#### **Undocumented and Unafraid: The Emergence and Constitution of Undocumented Immigrant Students as Political Actors**

**Facilitator:**  
**Scott Seider**  
*Boston University*

Why and how did undocumented immigrant students emerge as political actors? It is hypothesized that public political ‘coming out’ performances may be explained by (1) participation in collective action networks; (2) collective identity formation; (3) situational contexts of supports for or barriers to participation; and (4) evolving and repeated contentious performances (referred to as repertoires) that shape future performances. Based on a two-year ethnographic observation and in-depth interviews with twenty-five undocumented immigrant youth (age 18-24) social movement actors, this dissertation seeks to contribute to social movement and youth civic engagement literatures.

### Table F

**Parissa Jahromi**  
*Stanford University*

#### **What Motivates Youth Civic Participation?**

**Facilitator:**  
**Mark Pancer**  
*Wilfrid Laurier University  
Waterloo*

Though the topic of youth civic involvement is increasingly popular in social science research, the question of *why* some youth are civically involved while others are not is not well understood. I will discuss results of a qualitative interview study addressing the questions: What motivations do youth report for civic involvement? How might motivations differ across school contexts? Results reveal distinct types of motivations and variations of motivations across contexts. I will discuss plans to translate these findings into a longitudinal survey study investigating motivations for youth civic involvement among diverse older adolescents.

