Trust in Schools: A Core Resource for Improvement

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Introduction: Social theory, economics, and political science about the role of social capital in the effective functioning of democratic government and large scale economics system and diverse social organizations. Common theme is the quality of social relations in diverse institutional contexts made and the differences in how they function. Theme CENTRALITY OF RELATIOMAL TRUST to school improvement, link measures of developing relational trusts over time within school communities with changes in the work life of these schools with measured improvements in school academic productivity during the last two decades. Part I: Ch. 1 & 2: considers social foundation of schools Part II: Chapters 3, 4, & 5: 3 deals with staff development in the urban center or cities. Part III Chapters 6 and 7; 6 refers to policy implications and 7 deals with how trust interacts with efforts for reform in our schools. P**ART I: Framing themes and Illuminating Theory: Chapter 1: the social Foundations of Schooling: An Overlooked Dimension for Improvement (**3). Today, a transformative moment in history for American Education. Just 2 decades ago, increase in student basic skills scores in Reading and Mathematics, was trumpeted, a reduction in H.S. dropout reform rhetoric now emphasizes “world class standards,” of academic attainment for all. Research now documents changes in economic returns to education during the last two decades. A two-tiered economy where formal schooling becomes a strict gatekeeper between those who gain access, and those who do not. Moreover, the new basic skills required for economic opportunity in the future are likely to be substantially higher than today. (4) The validity of effective political participation in the complex democratic society, & vitality of a democratic government depends of the social intelligence of its citizenry; form of public education that served adequately in the past is unlikely to suffice in the future. Countries with strong education systems are the ones most likely to prosper in the future. Comprehensive school REDESIGN, DECENTRALIZATION, CHARTERING, and CONTRACTING. Also, restructure organization of teachers’ and students’ work, intensive scrutiny of teachers’ knowledge and skills, and efforts to systematically introduce research-based practices into classrooms. Also, new policy initiatives aimed at advancing student learning has emerged around professional development, accountability, and assessment. 2 broad approaches to school improvement 1. Focus on structural change in efforts to promote governance reform and restructuring of work conditions in schools. 2. More immediate, direct focus on instruction, to transform teaching practices. Concerted effort to improve the knowledge and skills of current teachers, better preparation of their future colleagues, and support for continued development of the teaching profession.

(5). enhancing teacher competence, remind us that the classroom is the place to transform the intellectual dynamics of the classroom. But these 2 analyses are incomplete: the personal dynamics among teachers, students, and their parents, for example, influence whether students regularly attend school and sustain efforts on the difficult tasks of learning. THE DYNAMICS OF IMPROVING URBAN SCHOOLS: social relationships at work in school communities are a fundamental feature of their operations. The nature of these social exchanges, and the local cultural features that shape them, condition a school’s capacity to improve. In Chicago a broad base of trust across a school community lubricates much of a school’s day to day functioning and is a critical resource as local leaders embark on ambitious improvement plans. (6)A TROUBLE URBAN SCHOOL-COMMUNITY CONTEXT: Profound economic and social changes have swept over our nation’s major cities in the last 3 decades. Urban neighborhoods ravaged by loss of basic institutions: businesses, churches, banks, health and social service agencies, and community organizations, little of what we normally envision as communal life exists in poorest neighborhoods. As a result, urban communities are much less hospitable for raising children. Violence is high, the social fabric, normally considered a resource for child rearing, often is weak. Also, local policies aimed at promoting desegregation had unintended consequence of distancing schools from the communities in which they are located. As a consequence of large-scale changes, distrust exists, as social interactions that poor families have with local schools and other public institutions. Teachers see parents’ goals and values as impediments to students’ academic accomplishments. Parents in turn believe that teachers are antagonistic toward them and fail to appreciate the actual conditions that shape their children’s lives. This lack of trust between teachers and parents—often exacerbated by race and class differences—makes it difficult for these groups to maintain a genuine dialogue about shared concerns. Miscommunications reinforce prejudices; undermine constructive efforts by teachers and parents to build relational ties around the interests of their children. (7) STRIKING CONTRAST IN URBAN SCHOOLS: Social dynamics of effective urban schools derive its knowledge from prior research on urban Catholic Schools. Bryk, Lee and Holland (1993) found parents who placed their children in these schools were neither well educated nor held a well articulated conception of the academic experiences that they desired for their children. Parents selected a Catholic school because they trusted that these school professionals would provide their children with a good education. When it came to deciding what studens actually did in school parents relied on the judgment an expertise of the staff, who in turn worked under a moral obligation to act in the best interests of their students. INCITES FROM RECENT EFFORTS TO CHANGE URBAN SCHOOLS: Comer’s reform efforts, School Development Project focuses directly on the social misalignment between urban school professionals and poor parents. Comer organizes his school development work around a community mental health perspective, (8) less substantial attention focuses on strengthening the social relationships among the school professionals and parents, efforts at instructional improvement are unlikely to succeed. Deborah Meier (1995) devotes a whole chapter of her book, the power of their ideas, to reflections on the centrality of social relationships in the highly successful middle school she created in Harlem. By her account, building trust among teachers, school leaders, students and parents was essential academic mission of the school; provide challenging intellectual work for all studens. Significance of the social dimension to school improvement in results from a 5 year study of school restructuring efforts conducted by the center on School organization and restructuring at the University of Wisconsin at Madison. Longitudinal studies of restructuring Human resources-such as openness to improvement, trust and respect, teachers having knowledge and skills, supportive leadership and socialization-are more critical to the development of professional community than structural conditions.--need to improve the culture, climate, and interpersonal relationships in schools have received too little attention. Yet what is social trust? And what does it meaning he context of a poor urban school community? What effects are actually associated with it? This book seeks to answer these questions. (9) STUDYING TRUST IN CHICAGO PUBLIC ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS: CONTEXT OF DECENTRALIZED REFORM: 1988 Chicago to transform the operations of its public schools. Legislation of Local School Councils (LSCs) each of which consists of six parents, 2 community members, two teachers, principal, and for high schools, a student. Committee had authority, therefore the principal gained authority. A basic premise of reform was that improving schools required stronger social ties between local school professionals and parents and community whom they are responsible for serving by establishing school community governance and by devolving substantial resources and authority to it**. Although the reform created opportunities for improvement, it did not lay out an explicit blueprint for all schools to follow.** **Rather, an outburst of diverse local initiatives ensued**. (10) **By examining this variability among school communities in Chicago** in their processes of reform and its effects, we were able to glean insights about how local actors effectively engage one another around improving their schools. Chapter 2: RELATIONAL TRUST. (12) Role of social trust in improving schools in Chicago Elementary schools as they engaged in decentralization reform. Trust was NOT PRIMARY RESEARCH PRIORITY, BUT IT BECAME A POWERFUL CONCEPT SHAPING THE THINKING AND BEHAVIOR OF LOCAL SCHOOL ACTORS. Trust as it relates to social capital. Insights form a diverse array of fields, including philosophy, political science, economics, and organizational behavior helped them to construct a grounded theory of social trust in school communities. Through a combination of literature analysis and field note review, we developed an explicit focus on the distinctive qualities of interpersonal social exchanges in school communities, and how these cumulated in an organizational property that we term relational trust. Robert Putnam, drew ideas on these ideas to analyze the functioning (13) of democratic institutions. Harking back to Tocqueville’s analysis of the emergence of American democracy, Putnam reminds us that the effective functioning of democratic institutions rests heavily on the willingness of citizens to associate voluntarily with one another to redress collective concerns. He argues that such civic engagement depends on the nature of social ties among community members, in particular their levels of interpersonal trust. In the economic realm, Francis Fukuyama used a social capital framework to examine the contribution of social trust in the efficient operation of national economies. Variations in national culture, in particular, the degree of “spontaneous sociability,” contribute to their capacity to sustain complex economic relations. High levels of social trust among individuals and institutions create more efficient production arrangements than in situations where it is necessary to rely on direct monitoring and extensive legal mechanisms to regulate economic transactions. While Chicago’s 1988 School Reform ct regarded democratic localism as a lever for change, the ultimate aim was more effective schools. Where high levels of social trust exist, the cooperative efforts necessary for school improvement should be easier to initiate and sustain. BOTH PUTNAM’S AND FUKUYAMA’S RESEARCH DREW INSPIRATION FROM JAMES COLEMAN’S THEORY OF SOCIAL CAPITAL. Social capital, as a property of the relational ties among individuals, is within a social system. Nature of these relationships plays a key role in a wide range of social and behavioral phenomena. Like human capital, social capital is acquired through education and is developed around sustained social interactions. (14) 2 factors for high social capital: 1. Social network closure; high degree of interconnectedness among individuals makes it easier for members to communicate, Also, facilitating correction of any miscommunications. 2. Presence of dense relational ties makes it easier not only to communicate basic information, but also to articulate mutual expectations among various parties and to ascertain whether individuals are actually meeting their respective obligations--meaning trustworthiness. Rational choice theorists focus on conditions and incentives that motivate individuals to trust one another, and how individuals assess potential benefits and losses associated with actions they take in a given situation (individual Evaluates past benefits in relationship, assuming history of prior exchanges, in absence of directs exchanges. (15) a second strand-- social research based on group theory helped to expand conceptualization of micro dynamics of trust. When an individual sustains a relationship with another these long-term social connections take on value. Individuals dine themselves as connected to that person or organization. 3. Philosophical and religious writing on trust bring a third even more distinct view. The social exchanges now entail a moral-ethical dimension, where actions are justified in terms of an obligation to advance what is food or proper in some social setting . Individuals understand, by virtue of their socialization in families, religious institutions, and communities, that they have responsibility to “do what is right” and expect other sin their social group to do the same. Most basic level: self interest is directed toward securing some desired return, whether that is improved learning opportunities for children, more attractive work conditions for teacher or employment possibilities for poor parents. Social-psychological considerations play a major role as well. Schooling entails long-term social relationships that often are quire intimate. Parents hand over the nurturance, care and development of their children to school staff and depend on them to advance valued aims in their children’s behalf. (16) schools continue to serve important political, civic, and moral purposes, they contribute to the kind of society we are and will become. That moral considerations also shape social interactions among teachers, parents, and administrators therefore is not surprising. ALTERNATIVE FORMS OF SOCIAL TRUST; Organic trust and Contractual trust. Organic is predicated on the unquestioning beliefs of individuals in the moral authority of particular social institutions, and characterizes closed, small-scale communities, where individuals give their trust unconditionally, they believe in the rightness of the system, the moral character of its leadership and all other who commit the community. Organic trust creates strong social bonds among members, who share an ethnical responsibility for the consequences of their behaviors to themselves and others, strong sense of identity. Fundamentalist religious schools such as those by Louis Peshkin exemplify organic contemporary social institutions where organic trust operates. (17) community order and control much of the work of the schools staff. School is an integral part of total institutions and is explicitly designed to realize its moral precept. High level of trustworthiness. The applicability of organic trust rapidly breaks down, though, when we consider most modern institutions. A limited set on institutional purposed, rather than an all encompassng worldview, orders associative relations among participant. Few core beliefs because of diversity of am. Society. Contractual trust. Moore common in the modern institutions ind. And instritutions stand in a much more constrained relation to one another. Bias for social exchange is primarily material and instrumental . personal friendships may arise over time through repeated interactions. Social psychological motivations remain modest. And moral ethical dimension is weak. Social relations around schooling however do not fit well with this framework, aims of schools are multiple and interrelated. Education is not a single, product, good, parents expect schools to care for the safety and welfare of their children, as they might themselves. To teach basic academic skills, develop more complex intellectual capacities, nurture a diverse array of individual student interests, promote studens’ social and emotional development, an inculcate a core of values for responsible personal and civic life. **As a result, objective evidence on many of the desired outcomes of schoollng, which might form the e basis of a contract, cannot be easily attained. Contractual trust which is predicatedd either on specification to a particular product or outcome to be delivered, which does not readily apply to schooling., or on the use of established processes to affect some desired outcome. (19)**  even if best practice standards were established, to monitor whether such practices were regularly being used would be difficult in a logical sense. Schooling extends over a substantial period and many different contexts, much of this activity occur behind the privacy of classroom doors, where there is little external oversight. No easily accessible records exist from which it is possible to determine what is actually taught and how well it matches school aims and acceptable teaching practices. RELATIONAL TRUST: SCHOOLING, AN INRINSICALLY SOCIAL ENTERPRISE: (19) john Dewey said that a good school is more akin to a family than a factory. Participation in family life creates the deepest forms of personal meaning and identity. The quality of social exchanges that occur here, and how various parties understand d and interpret them, are of great human significance. They provide opportunities for self identification and affiliation around an enterprise of much social value. Even if we focus just on the technical core of instruction, research on effective schools points to he importance of social relationships here as well. Teachers, for example, rely on maintaining good sudents rapport as a resource for teaching. Teachers, also need parental support. (20) to promote their children’s sustained engagement in instruction. While principals hold formal authority over teachers, principals nonetheless remain quite dependent on teachers’ cooperative efforts to maintain the social order of the school and its reputations into eh community. Aims of schooling are multiple, and mechanisms for addressing them are complex, diffuse and not simply specified. Organizations operations under these circumstances demand frequent context-specific decision making and success depends heavily on cooperative efforts around local problem solving. The social dynamics of such workplaces are much more important, form a productivity perspective, than in settings characterized by a well-defined and reutilized reduction process. A complex web of social exchanges conditions the basic operations of schools. Embedded in the daily social routines of schools is an interrelated set of mutual dependencies among all key actors: student, teachers, principals, and administrators, and parents. These structural dependencies create feelings of vulnerability for the individuals involved. (especially poor parents and kids). **Theory overview**: relational trust views the socia lexchnages of schoollng as organized around a distinct set of role relationships: teachers with students, teachers with other teachers, teachers with parents. And teachers with parents and with principal. (21) in a sense, relational trust represents an intermediate case between the material and instrumental exchanges at work in contractual trust and unquestioning beliefs operative in organic trust. Rt requires expectations held among members of a social network e regularly validated by actions. Yet the criteria for drawing judgments about other now expand. A consideration enters here: instrumental concerns about achieving valued outcomes, hedonic concerns about self-esteem, social status, and institutional identifications and moral ethical concerns about advancing best interest of children. Similarly, a mix of motivations from self pinterestpbasked to takingintoacoung theneed and feelings of others, to enacting one’s moral duty==operates as well. (22) 3 levels of relational trust: 1. basic (intrapersonal) level relational trust is rooted in a complex cognitive activity of discerning the intentions of others. These discernments occur within a set of role relations (interpersonal level) that are formed both by the institutional structure of schooling sand the particularities of an individual’s school community, with its own culture, history and local understandings. 3. Finally, these trust relations culminate in irritant consequences at an organizational level, including more effective decision making, enhanced social support for innovation., more efficient social control of adults’ work, and an expanded moral authority to “go the extra mile.” For the children. Relational trust, is appropriately viewed as an organizational property in that it constitutive elements are socially defined in the reciprocal exchanges among participant in a school community and its presence has important consequences for the functgionaling of the school and cacti to engage fundamental change. Which are formed both by the institutional structure of schooling and by particularities of individual school community, with its own culture, history, and local understandings. (22) Criteria for discernment dynamic interplay among four considerations: respect, competence, personal regard for others, and integrity. Respect: for sustaining civil social interactions within a community. Competence: the ability to achieve desired goals. (25) personal regard for others: vital lifeline and consequently, important psychosocial rewards of belonging, Integrity: (26)new forms of instruction when addressing student learning, even though this entails additional work and risk of failure. Individual commitment to the core purposes of he school community. (27) Role set relations: Obligations, Expectations, Dependence, and Vulnerability: (32) ORGANIZATIONAL CONSEQUENCES OF RELATIONAL TRUST: Relational trust is important for organizations that operate in turbulent external environments, that depend heavily on information sharing for success, and whose work processes demand effective decentralized decision making. All 3 factors characterize the day-to-day functioning of schools. We see relational trust operating as a resource for school improvement in 4 broad ways. 1. Organizational change entails major risks for all participant. Presence of relational trust moderates the sense of uncertainty and vulnerability that individuals feel as they confront such demands. In this sense that individual engagement with reforms does not feel like a call for heroic action, rt is a catalyst for innovation. 2. Transaction costs associated with decision making are reduced in environment where individuals are predisposed to trust one another. Teachers and parents believe in the good intentions of school leadership in high trust. Rt. Facilitates public problem solving. 3. Obligations that are routinely reinforced in day-to-day behavior. Rt undergirds highly efficient system of social control where one does not need extensive supervision, successful change relies on voluntary initiative, nad goodwill of school staff. High relational trust increases the likelihood of broad-based high quality implementation of new improvement efforts. Finally, relational trust sustains an ethical imperative among organizational members to advance the best interests of children participants in schools with this relational trust enact an interrelated set of mutual obligations with one another.