Collegial trust and the organizational school context

- **Teacher trust in colleagues**
  - A complex and multidimensional concept
    - A teacher’s willingness to be vulnerable to the other teachers in school based on the confidence that the latter are benevolent, reliable, competent, honest, and open.
    - The importance of role expectations
  - The essence of organizational culture
    - Organizational members’ underlying basic assumptions
  - From assumptions to trust formation
    - Equal assumptions
    - Analogous interpretation of the work environment
  - Colleague development
  - Expectations being met
  - Similar behaviors

- **Homogeneity of organizational culture**
  - The degree to which members share assumptions, beliefs, norms, values...
    - e.g. Teachers holding similar teachability assumptions
  - Hypothesis 1: A homogenous teachability culture fosters trust in colleagues.
  - Schools as client-serving organizations
    - Working class students: to ignore or to adjust to teachers’ expectations?
    - Less divergent ideas about the students’ teachability will arise in elite schools
  - Hypothesis 2: The higher the social class background of the student body is, the more homogenous the staff’s teachability culture is.
  - Faculty trust is more fragile in socioeconomic disadvantaged schools:

- **Schools**
  - A composite measure of the school culture: collegial trust, teachability culture, prestige of the school’s clientele, and the school’s organizational context.

**Methodology**

- **Data**
  - EFLM Educational Assessment 2004-2005
  - 80 schools with > 5 teachers responding (cf. critical mass for aggregation)
  - 2,091 teachers & 11,872 students (third and/or fifth grade)

- **Measures**
  - Trust in colleagues (7 items) → Cronbach’s alpha = 0.89
  - Homogeneity of teachability culture:
    - Teachability assumptions (31 items) → Cronbach’s alpha = 0.94
    - ICC (BHS–WBS)/BHS of teachability assumptions = 0.92
  - A staff’s standard deviation on teachability assumptions * (1.1)–1
  - SES school composition: highest occupational prestige of father and mother

- **Data analysis**
  - Control variables:
    - School level: sector, size, ethnic composition, content of teachability culture
    - Teacher level: gender, SES, experience, subject, teaching hours
  - Multilevel analysis
  - Reso-mediational model testing

**Discussion**

- Contribution to educational research
  - School teachers holding similar assumptions about the students’ teachability facilitates the development of a teacher’s trust in colleagues
  - A homogeneous teachability culture is more likely to occur in elite schools
  - A homogeneous teachability culture explains why trust in colleagues is stronger in schools where the student body is marked with a higher social class background
  - Trust in colleagues is stronger in private schools: the role of sense of community?
  - Trust in colleagues is stronger when there is a mismatch in ethnic background between the student body and the teaching staff: category-based trust?
  - The organizational context of the teacher workplace affects collegial trust development within the teaching staff
  - A contribution to the theory on how SES composition influences school outcomes

- The backside of too much collegial trust
  - Autonomy is an important aspect of the teacher profession
  - A possible impediment to professional ties outside the school organization

- Limitations
  - A single approach of homogeneity of staff culture
  - A unidirectional measure of collegial trust

**Results**

- Descriptive statistics of and correlations among the school-level variables
  - Variables (N=80)
  - Teachability culture (Homogeneity)
  - 1. Teachability culture (content)
  - 2. SES school composition
  - 3. School sector
  - 4. School size
  - 5. Ethnic composition
  - 6. SES composition

- Model 1: Teachability culture (Homogeneity)
  - Mean = 0.343
  - SD = 0.316
  - 1. Teachability culture (Homogeneity)
  - 2. Teachability culture (content)
  - 3. School sector
  - 4. School size
  - 5. Ethnic composition
  - 6. SES composition

- Model 2: Teachability culture (Homogeneity)
  - Mean = 0.343
  - SD = 0.316
  - 1. Teachability culture (Homogeneity)
  - 2. Teachability culture (content)
  - 3. School sector
  - 4. School size
  - 5. Ethnic composition
  - 6. SES composition

- Model 3: Teachability culture (Homogeneity)
  - Mean = 0.343
  - SD = 0.316
  - 1. Teachability culture (Homogeneity)
  - 2. Teachability culture (content)
  - 3. School sector
  - 4. School size
  - 5. Ethnic composition
  - 6. SES composition

- Model 4: Teachability culture (Homogeneity)
  - Mean = 0.343
  - SD = 0.316
  - 1. Teachability culture (Homogeneity)
  - 2. Teachability culture (content)
  - 3. School sector
  - 4. School size
  - 5. Ethnic composition
  - 6. SES composition

- Model 5: Teachability culture (Homogeneity)
  - Mean = 0.343
  - SD = 0.316
  - 1. Teachability culture (Homogeneity)
  - 2. Teachability culture (content)
  - 3. School sector
  - 4. School size
  - 5. Ethnic composition
  - 6. SES composition

- Model 6: Teachability culture (Homogeneity)
  - Mean = 0.343
  - SD = 0.316
  - 1. Teachability culture (Homogeneity)
  - 2. Teachability culture (content)
  - 3. School sector
  - 4. School size
  - 5. Ethnic composition
  - 6. SES composition

**Conclusion**

- The role of the organizational school context for collegial trust formation
  - School leaders should focus on creating similar conceptions among their teachers about the teachability of the students in school in order to:
    - Strengthen the level of social capital within the teaching staff
    - Increase the successfullness of teachers’ professional development