



# Adolescent Development of Trust

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The purpose of this project was to gain a better understanding of dimensions of trust and their inter relationships during the adolescent years. Drawing from survey data collected at the beginning and end of a semester in eighty middle- and high-school social studies classes, we assessed the relationships between the following dimensions of trust: social trust, trust in elected officials, trust in the responsiveness of government to ordinary people, trust in the American promise, and trustworthiness of the media. We examined the stability of these beliefs over one semester, the correlations between various dimensions of trust, and the demographic and social factors associated with the various kinds of trust. The semester when these data were collected was in the fall of 2004, during the last presidential election.

Our decision to assess various dimensions of trust among adolescents was motivated by two observations. First, scholarly interest in trust as an attitude has burgeoned of late, yet there has been little work relating the multiple dimensions or targets of trust. Second, while there is a general belief that the foundations for trust develop prior to adulthood, there is no work examining dimensions of trust during adolescence. The availability of a rich data set measuring numerous dimensions of trust among adolescents makes such analyses possible.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The data were gathered from two waves of surveys with 1,670 students ages 12-19 from 80 social studies classes in the United States. Classes were recruited from a pool of teachers throughout one mid-Atlantic state who had expressed interest in training in an election-based curriculum. Teachers and students completed a pre-test at the beginning of the semester (early to mid-September) and a post-test at the end (late-November to mid-December) leaving a 2.5 to 3.5 month lapse between the points of data collection over the course of which the national election occurred. The student and teacher surveys used at both time points consisted of a combination of open-ended and Likert-type items. Items on the student survey were counterbalanced to ensure that all questions had an equal chance of being answered. Questionnaires were distributed to students during a 45-minute class period at each occasion of measurement. The study was originally designed as a randomized evaluation of a civics curriculum called Student Voices in the Campaign. For additional information on the project, see CIRCLE Working Papers 55 and 57.

## **PARTICIPANTS**

In total 80 teachers and 1,670 students completed surveys at the beginning and end of the semester. Fifty percent of the students were female and the mean age of students was 16.3 years. The ethnic background of the participants was 92% European-, 6% African-, 3% Hispanic-, 3% Native-, and 2% Asian-American. An additional 2% of the participants identified as being of some other ethnicity. (Note that percentages do not add up to 100% as several students indicated multiple ethnicities.) These ethnic breakdowns reflect the overall student population in the school districts in the study. Adolescents' socioeconomic status (SES) was calculated based on their reports of mother/ female guardian's highest educational level. Students reported that their mother / female guardian's highest level of education was: high school or less (43%), technical or vocational training (7%), 2-year college degree (12%), 4-year college degree (24%), graduate degree (14%). In summary, the sample was largely White and working class.

## MEASURES OF TRUST

Items measuring the trust constructs were administered at Time 1 (beginning of semester) and Time 2 (end of semester). Below we present a summary of each construct including the items, response format, alphas for the scales at Times 1 and 2, and factor loadings for individual items on these scales at each time point. Likert-type (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree or 1 = not at all trustworthy to 5 = very trustworthy) was the response format for all of the trust items.

<b>Trustworthiness of Media</b> ( $\alpha$ : T1=0.84; T2=0.87)	
<b>Stem:</b> <i>How TRUSTWORTHY do you think each of these media outlets is in their reporting of news, public affairs, and information about political candidates?</i>	
<b>Factor Loadings</b>	
T1= .68 T2= .70	Local Television
T1= .71 T2= .70	National Television
T1= .75 T2= .80	Newspapers
T1= .62 T2= .72	Radio
T1= .72 T2= .76	News Websites
T1= .59 T2= .66	Magazines

T1:  $\chi^2 = 333.163$ ,  $df = 9$ ,  $p = .000$ ; CFI = .912; RMSEA = .136

T2:  $\chi^2 = 333.216$ ,  $df = 9$ ,  $p = .000$ ; CFI = .912; RMSEA = .136

### Social Trust.

<b>Stem:</b> <i>Think about people in general. How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements?</i>	
<b>Correlation</b>	
T1: $r = .56^{***}$	Most people can be trusted.
T2: $r = .57^{***}$	Most people are fair and don't take advantage of you.

### Trust in the American Promise ( $\alpha$ : T1=0.84; T2=0.83)

<b>Stem:</b> <i>The following questions ask about your opinions. Indicate how much you agree or disagree with each statement.</i>	
<b>Factor Loading</b>	
T1= .69 T2= .70	Basically, people get fair treatment in America, no matter who they are.
T1= .88 T2= .87	In America you have an equal chance no matter where you come from or what race you are.
T1= .81 T2= .80	America is a fair society where everyone has an equal chance to get ahead.

**Trustworthiness of Elected Officials.** ( $\alpha$ : T1=0.77; T2=0.76)

**Stem:** *The next set of questions asks for your opinion of elected officials (e.g., senators, members of city council, governor, president). Indicate how much you agree or disagree with each statement.*

<b>Factor Loading</b>	
T1= .49 T2= .48	In general, elected officials cannot be trusted. <i>Reverse Coded</i>
T1= .59 T2= .63	Most elected officials listen to the citizens they represent.
T1= .65 T2= .65	In general, elected officials give a lot of their time to make the community a better place.
T1= .63 T2= .58	Generally, the only thing elected officials care about is money. <i>Reverse Coded</i>
T1= .82 T2= .78	In general, elected officials are concerned with serving their fellow citizens.
T1: $\chi^2 = 58.309, df = 5, p = .000$ ; CFI = .976; RMSEA = .074	
T2: $\chi^2 = 88.847, df = 5, p = .000$ ; CFI = .953; RMSEA = .093	

## Results

**Government Responsiveness to “the People.”** ( $\alpha$ : T1=0.74; T2=0.74)

**Stem:** *The following questions ask about your opinions. Indicate how much you agree or disagree with each statement.*

<b>Factor Loading</b>	
T1= .88 T2= .82	The government doesn't care about us ordinary people. <i>Reversed</i>
T1= .65 T2= .69	The US government is pretty much run for the rich, not the average person. <i>Reverse Coded</i>
T1= .58 T2= .58	The government really cares what people like my family and I think.

## RESULTS

### STABILITY OF TRUST OVER TIME

The first question we addressed was whether there were changes in various measures of adolescents' trust between Time 1 and Time 2. To address this question, we first ran repeated measures analysis of variance with time as the repeated measure. The results are presented in Table 1.

Table 1 Changes in mean levels of trust at Time 1 and Time 2

	Time 1	Time 2	Significance
Trust in the American Promise	2.72	2.69	.223
Trustworthiness of Elected Officials	2.97	2.96	.254
Trust in Government Responsiveness to Ordinary People	2.88	2.83	.020
Trustworthiness of Media	3.17	2.91	.000
Social Trust	2.51	2.56	.021

Generally, student mean levels of trust declined slightly from time 1 to time 2. While levels of Trust in the American Promise and belief in the Trustworthiness of Elected Officials did not change significantly, belief in the Trustworthiness of the Media among respondents declined dramatically and significantly. Perhaps participating in a social studies curriculum in the midst of a presidential election raised questions about the trustworthiness of the media. Trust in the Government's Responsiveness to Ordinary People also declined significantly but not as dramatically. Interestingly, general feelings of Social Trust increased among respondents and, while not dramatic, the increase was significant. Finally, based on a 1 – 5 response scale, it should be noted that all of these measures of trust are at or below the midpoint.

A correlation analysis of the relationship between time 1 and time 2 measures of trust (displayed in Table 2) points to moderate stability in most beliefs over the few months time. Belief in the trustworthiness of elected officials is the most stable measure (.619) with adolescents' feelings of social trust (.586) and belief that government acts in the interests of ordinary people (.557) correlated between the two survey periods. Paralleling the significant decline revealed in the repeated measures analysis, young people's belief in the trustworthiness of the media has the lowest (.433) correlation between time 1 and time 2. Each of these T1 – T2 correlations is moderate for a construct measured over a period of four months. This suggests that, although there is a considerable amount of stability in these beliefs, there also is room for change. Thus, educational interventions have plenty of room to impact these beliefs.

Table 2: Correlations of Trust Measures at Times 1 and 2

	Trustworthiness of media		Social Trust		Trust in the American promise		Trustworthiness of elected officials		Government for ordinary people	
	Time 1	Time 2	Time 1	Time 2	Time 1	Time 2	Time 1	Time 2	Time 1	Time 2
Trustworthiness of media: T1		.433**	.172**	.173**	.111**	.087**	.260**	.218**	.192**	.178**
Trustworthiness of media: T2			.149**	.226**	.121**	.153**	.248**	.260**	.209**	.181**
Social trust: T1				.586**	.300**	.212**	.387**	.307**	.295**	.279**
Social trust: T2					.233**	.302**	.367**	.396**	.264**	.357**
Trust in American promise: T1						.506**	.384**	.294**	.409**	.303**
Trust in American promise: T2							.312**	.397**	.337**	.419**
Trustworthiness of elected officials: T1								.619**	.618**	.524**
Trustworthiness of elected officials: T2									.487**	.650**
Government for ordinary people: T1										.557**

We next looked at the relationships between different types of trust at any given point in time. Table 3 displays the correlations between each of the trust constructs measured at one time point.

Table 3. Bivariate Correlations of Various Dimensions of Trust at Time 1

	Trustworthy Media	Social Trust	Trust in the American Promise	Trust in Elected Officials	Government Responds to Ordinary People
Media		.226	.153	.260	.181
Social Trust			.302	.396	.357
American Promise				.397	.419
Elected Officials					.650

Although all correlations are positive and reach significance, the strength of these relationships varies. We discuss the correlational relationships from the strongest to the weakest. Trust that the 'Government is run for ordinary people' is highly correlated with 'Trust in Elected Officials.' This suggests that the two constructs might overlap to a significant degree and perhaps represent the same underlying dimension. To investigate this possibility, we conducted a confirmatory factor analysis on the items representing these two constructs. This analysis revealed that, while they are correlated, they do represent two separate, underlying constructs. This conclusion was reinforced by a reliability analysis of the items which resulted in their aggregation into two separate scales.

Adolescents' beliefs that the 'Government is run for ordinary people' also is moderately correlated with their 'Trust in the American promise' and their 'Social Trust' and weakly correlated with 'Trust in the Media.' Similarly, 'Trust in Elected Officials' is moderately and positively correlated with these indicators (Social Trust and Trust in the American Promise') but weakly related to trust in the media. Trust in the American promise is moderately related to social trust and weakly related to trust in the media. In summary, with the exception of trust in the media, these moderate correlations between various measures of trust likely point to a dispositional bias underlying the inclination to trust, which Uslaner (2002) has referred to as an optimistic (glass half full) bias.

### **SOCIAL CORRELATES OF TRUST**

After investigating the relationship of our Trust constructs to each other, we added an additional set of social factors that we expected might also be related to their feelings of trust. These factors included: students' reports of discussing politics with parents, teachers, classmates, and friends (all indicators of the salience and interest in politics for individual students); students' reports of their commitments to various forms of civic engagement (electoral, unconventional, community service, parents' engagement) and general political interest; students' endorsements of different types of citizenship (participatory, justice oriented, and personally responsible); and students' perceptions of their school climates: whether they felt their classrooms were caring communities, whether students felt they had a voice in decisions at school or that students generally felt a sense of solidarity with their school; and two learning practices in classrooms – perspective taking opportunities and social analysis of issues.

To understand the relationships with dimensions of trust, we provide a representative item for the scales that are not self evident.

#### Political Engagement

- Electoral engagement (After high school, how likely would you be to "wear a campaign button to support a candidate")
- Unconventional Engagement (After high school, how likely would you be to "participate in a boycott against a company)
- Community Engagement (After high school, how likely would you be to "do volunteer work to help needy people)
- Parents' Civic Engagement (My parents/guardians are active in the community)
- Political Interest (I enjoy talking about politics and political issues)

### Types of Citizenship

Items for these scales were adapted from Kahne, Middaugh, & Schutjer-Mance, 2005. The scales and representative items include:

- Personally responsible citizen (I think it is important for people to follow rules and laws)
- Justice oriented citizen (After high school, I will work with others to change unjust laws)
- Participatory Citizen (Being actively involved in community issues is my responsibility)

### School Climates

- Student Solidarity (Students feel like they're an important part of this school)
- Student Voice (Students can disagree with the teacher, if they are respectful)
- Classroom is a Caring Community (My classmates feel like they're part of a community where people care about each other)

### School Practices

- Social Analysis of Issues (We learn about things in society that need to be changed)
- Perspective Taking Opportunities (I have opportunities to work on projects with people who are different from me)



Table 4 Social Correlates of Trust

	American Promise	Trust in Elected Officials	Government For Ordinary People	Trust the Media	Social Trust
<b>Political Communication</b>					
Discuss Politics w Teachers	.111	.227	.193	.267	.188
Discuss Politics w Parents	.097	.223	.211	.246	.215
Discuss Politics w Students	.085	.226	.193	.282	.171
Discuss Politics w Friends	.030	.189	.177	.238	.334
<b>Political Engagement</b>					
Electoral Engagement	.095	.231	.209	.226	.162
Unconventional Engagement	.008	.024	.042	.123	.068
Community Engagement	.101	.229	.209	.231	.179
Parents' Civic Engagement	.170	.237	.207	.190	.212
Political Interest	.128	.173	.202	.158	.155
<b>Types of Citizenship</b>					
Participatory Citizen	.166	.328	.292	.313	.286
Justice Oriented Citizen	.041*	.120	.020*	.215	.170
Personally Resp. Citizen	.082	.204	.145	.272	.231
<b>School Climates</b>					
Student Solidarity	.325	.419	.362	.262	.389
Student Voice	.104	.209	.165	.223	.209
Classroom is a Caring Community	.221	.296	.282	.255	.338
Social analysis of issues	.133	.235	.273	.237	.182
Perspective Taking Opportunities	.107	.145	.159	.200	.151

Table 4 displays the correlations between these social factors and our trust constructs. Although most correlations are low to moderate, they do reveal that different factors are related to different dimensions of trust. For example, political communication with adults and classmates is positively related to trust in elected officials and the media, less so to social trust. However, social trust is positively related to discussions of politics with friends, suggesting a likely (albeit small) association between interpersonal and social trust. With respect to forms of engagement, conventional, familial, and community engagement are positively related to trust in elected officials and the media, less so to social trust. In contrast, students who endorse unconventional forms of engagement are less likely to endorse any dimensions of trust.

We can think of the 'types of citizenship' that students report as the types of potential civic identities they imagine themselves assuming. Those who imagine themselves as participatory citizens (engaging in community affairs) show the most consistent positive reports of all dimensions of trust whereas those who endorse a justice oriented civic identity are not as likely to endorse the various dimensions of trust.

With respect to the school climate measures, perceptions of student solidarity and of one's classroom as a caring community show the strongest consistent relationships of any scales and across all of the dimensions of trust. This suggests to us that a sense of collective identity (a feeling of membership in groups that look out for one another) may be a dynamic underlying the disposition to trust. In longitudinal work following students for two years, we have found that feelings of solidarity with fellow students and with the institution of the school boost levels of social trust over levels in the prior year (Flanagan & Stout, 2008). Finally, practices in social studies classrooms including social analysis of issues and perspective taking had low but positive correlations with students' trust in elected officials, the media, and beliefs that government is responsive to ordinary citizens.

## **BACKGROUND FACTORS AND TRUST**

In addition to our analysis of the relationship between social factors and trust, we also looked at a number of background factors and our trust constructs: age, gender, parental education and ethnicity. All of these variables were calculated based on student reports. Because of the small number of respondents who categorized themselves into some ethnic categories, our analysis combined respondents into two general categories: European and non-European Americans.

Generally, there were few significant differences in feelings of trust based on our background factors. No clear patterns of significant differences in mean levels of trust based on student age or gender emerged. In some cases girls reported lower levels of trust than did boys, but not consistently. Higher levels of parental education were associated with higher reported mean levels of social trust and trust in elected officials. This was just the opposite of the pattern depicted by racial category. European Americans tended to report higher levels of trust than did minority Americans. These patterns might reflect lower levels of parental education among minority Americans.

## **PREDICTORS OF TRUST**

After analyzing the stability of our measures of trust over time and their relationship to one another at any one point in time, we turned our attention to identifying the social determinants of trust among adolescents. To accomplish this, we regressed three background factors (gender, age and parental

education) on each of our trust constructs. In each analysis we selected our Time 2 measure of the trust construct among our adolescent respondents as the dependent variable. Note that in all of the tables, we have displayed results for each of the background variables but only for those social factors that were significant.

In our first analysis, we entered Social Trust as the dependent variable. As expected, positive Classroom Climates had a significant impact on Social Trust. Parental education had a positive impact but was only a marginally significant predictor. Higher reported Parental Education among our respondents was associated with higher reported levels of Social Trust. Girls reported lower levels of social trust when compared to their male peers. Non-European students also reported lower levels. Interestingly, Communication with fellow Students about Politics was also associated with reduced feelings of Social Trust. Perhaps in the context of the 2004 election, discussions of terrorism were salient. Parental Engagement in Politics and displaying the values of a Participatory Citizen or values of Personal Responsibility were also related to higher levels of Trust, as were perceptions of solidarity and caring among students at school. In all, these factors accounted for about 20% of the variance in our Social Trust construct.

Table 5. OLS Regression: Social Trust

Dependent Variable: Social Trust					
	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
Constant	1.274	.422		3.021	.003
Gender	-.126	.056	.072	-2.241	.025
Age	-.030	.022	.042	1.353	.177
Parental Education	.033	.017	.052	1.963	.050
Ethnicity	-.116	.058	-.051	-1.991	.047
Comm. w Students	-.109	.051	-.119	-2.140	.033
Personal Responsibility	.114	.047	.102	2.419	.016
Participatory Citizen	.199	.059	.162	3.341	.001
Student Solidarity	.282	.046	.241	6.159	.000
Classroom Caring	.162	.042	.152	3.867	.000
	R	R <sup>2</sup>	Adj. R <sup>2</sup>	SEE	
	.470	.221	.202	.78449	

In our second analysis, we used Trust in the American Promise as the dependent variable. In this case, gender was again a significant predictor, with girls reporting significantly lower levels of Trust in the American Promise. Higher reported parental education was significantly associated with lower levels of Trust in the American Promise. Feelings of Student Solidarity and of Parental Civic Engagement were positive predictors of the Belief that America is an equal opportunity society but communicating about politics with friends negatively predicted this belief. Having the values of a Participatory Citizen was a positive predictor of Trust in the American Promise.

Table 6. OLS Regression: Trust in the American Promise

Dependent Variable: Trust in the American Promise					
	B	Std. Error	Beta		Sig.
Constant	1.965	.399		4.922	.000
Gender	-.191	.053	-.101	-3.636	.000
Age	-.014	.021	-.019	-.692	.489
Parental Education	-.051	.019	-.074	-2.715	.007
Ethnicity	-.085	.065	-.034	-1.299	.194
Comm. w Friends	-.112	.045	-.114	-2.472	.014
Parent Engagement	.101	.032	.096	3.198	.001
Participatory Citizen	.110	.055	.083	1.996	.046
Student Solidarity	.356	.043	.282	8.208	.000
	R	R <sup>2</sup>	Adj. R <sup>2</sup>	SEE	
	.388	.150	.138	.883	

Our next analysis focused on the Trustworthiness of the Media as the dependent variable. In this case, neither gender, age, ethnicity nor parental education was a significant predictor. Endorsements of Participatory Citizenship and the various School Climate factors were significantly associated with higher levels of trust in the media.

Table 7. OLS Regression: Trustworthiness of the Media

Dependent Variable: Trustworthiness of the Media					
	B	Std. Error	Beta		Sig.
Constant	1.041	.340		3.059	.002
Gender	.035	.045	.022	.772	.441
Age	-.001	.018	-.001	-.045	.965
Parental Education	.003	.016	.005	.163	.871
Ethnicity	.060	.056	.029	1.067	.286
Comm.: Classmates	.072	.041	.087	1.752	.080
Parent Engagement	.044	.027	.050	1.635	.102
Participatory Citizen	.190	.047	.171	4.061	.000
Student Solidarity	.090	.037	.085	2.440	.015
Classroom Caring	.068	.034	.071	2.010	.045
	R	R <sup>2</sup>	Adj. R <sup>2</sup>	SEE	
	.388	.150	.138	.883	

Finally, we looked at our two somewhat related constructs: Belief in the Trustworthiness of Elected Officials and that Government is for Ordinary People. In both cases, among our background constructs, only ethnicity was a significant predictor of our trust constructs with ethnic minorities believing less in the Trustworthiness of Elected Officials or that Government Responds to Ordinary People. Among our social factors, expectations of future Electoral Engagement were associated in a positive way and expectation of Unconventional Engagement in a negative way with both Trust in Elected Officials and Beliefs that the Government is Responsive to Ordinary People. Parental civic engagement is a low but positive predictor of both outcomes. The kinds of citizens that students imagine themselves to be shows interesting relationships with their trust in the government and elected officials. Those who imagine themselves as participatory citizens are more likely to endorse the government's responsiveness to ordinary people and to believe that elected officials are trustworthy. However, those who imagine themselves engaging in justice oriented political action are less likely to believe that the government is responsive to ordinary people. Finally, student solidarity is a positive predictor of both beliefs, alluding, in our view, to the role that schools play in nurturing diffuse support for the system by facilitating students' collective sense of identity.

Table 8. OLS Regression: Government for Ordinary People

Dependent Variable: Government for Ordinary People					
	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
Constant	1.530	.390		3.924	.000
Gender	-.024	.052	-.015	-.459	.646
Age	-.002	.020	-.002	-.078	.938
Parental Education	.033	.018	.055	1.777	.076
Ethnicity	-.135	.064	-.064	-2.104	.036
Electoral Engage.	.052	.029	.065	1.764	.078
Unconventional	-.103	.027	-.124	-3.859	.000
Parent Engagement	.050	.026	.056	1.922	.055
Participatory Citizen	.179	.045	.158	3.927	.000
Justice Oriented	-.188	.041	-.185	-4.599	.000
Student Solidarity	.259	.042	.241	6.137	.000
Classroom Caring	.075	.039	.076	1.937	.053
	R	R <sup>2</sup>	Adj. R <sup>2</sup>	SEE	
	.466	.217	.199	.72528	

Table 9. OLS Regression: Trustworthiness of Elected Officials

Dependent Variable: Trustworthiness of Elected Officials					
	B	Std. Error	Beta		Sig.
Constant	1.832	.216		8.495	.000
Gender	.014	.028	.013	.484	.628
Age	.002	.011	.005	.186	.852
Parental Education	.010	.010	.025	.974	.330
Ethnicity	-.121	.035	-.085	-3.429	.001
Electoral Engage.	.058	.019	.109	3.035	.002
Unconventional Engage	-.084	.017	-.150	-4.812	.000
Parent Engagement	.050	.017	.083	2.945	.003
Participatory Citizen	.138	.030	.181	4.648	.000
Student Solidarity	.230	.023	.316	9.812	.000
Perspective Taking	-.048	.021	-.069	-2.266	.024
	R	R <sup>2</sup>	Adj. R <sup>2</sup>	SEE	
	.499	.249	.238	.47662	

## SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Our results point to stability over several months time in adolescents' reports of various dimensions of trust but also to malleability and to directions for interventions that could boost trust. And it is noteworthy that the dimensions (possible civic identities and school climate) predicted a significant proportion of the variance in several dimensions of trust.

Our results also suggest that adolescents distinguish between various dimensions of trust but that there is very likely a 'disposition to trust' underlying the moderate to strong correlations between the various dimensions of trust. One conclusion is that there is a general 'diffuse support for the system' underlying these results. That is, youth who are disposed to trust humanity or people in general (Social Trust) also tend to see the government and elected officials in a positive light and also endorse the fundamental fairness of the principles of the system, i.e., believe that America is basically an equal opportunity society where anyone can get ahead by dint of hard work. This may point to an optimistic or trusting disposition underlying these relationships. However, as the early political socialization theories claimed, trust in the system is distinct from support for particular administrations in power at any one time (Easton & Dennis, 1967; see also Levi & Stoker, 2000).

None of our constructs asked youth about their trust in current elected leaders but only elected officials in general. Students from ethnic minority backgrounds were less likely than their ethnic majority peers to trust elected officials or people in general or to believe that the government was interested in ordinary people. However, ethnic minority students were not less likely to believe in the general tenets of the

American promise, i.e., that all people, regardless of background, had an equal opportunity to succeed in America. Aspects of the school climate and learning practices were associated with various dimensions of trust. Contemporary studies also have pointed to the predictors of adolescents' diffuse support for the system. Controlling for social class, age, and ethnicity, adolescents' trust in the American promise and their civic commitments are significantly predicted by the youths' proximate experiences of social inclusion in their communities and (especially for ethnic minority students) by their reports that their teachers practiced a democratic ethos at school, i.e., insisted on tolerance and respect and encouraged an open exchange of views between students (Flanagan, Cumsille, Gill, & Gallay, 2007).



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