

# THE ROLE OF VOLUNTARY ORGANIZATIONS IN BUILDING TRUST

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## Abstract

Voluntary organizations are crucial in promoting generalized social trust in a society. The aim of this study is thus to investigate the relationship between the generalized social trust and membership in voluntary organizations. We employ the World Values Survey data for 48 countries including Türkiye on trust and organizational membership for the years 2017-2020 (Wave 7). In addition to the overall organizational membership, this study also investigates the nexus between trust and membership in large numbers of voluntary organizations such as “sport or recreational organization, political party, art, music or educational organization, professional association, humanitarian or charitable organization, religious organization, consumer organization, self-help group, mutual aid group”. Our logistic regression estimates show that all of these membership variables are significantly related with the trust variable for the full sample. Thus, our results provide substantial evidence for the argument that membership in voluntary organizations is an important factor in building trust in a society. Our further estimations also imply that the positive association between organizational membership and trust holds regardless of the being active or inactive member. However, unlike the full sample, our results for Türkiye show that while overall organizational membership fails to raise trust, memberships to some voluntary organizations such as labor union, political party and aid organizations have even negative association with trust in Türkiye.

## Keywords

*Trust, voluntary organizations, world value survey, social capital, logit model*

## Introduction

Voluntary organizations membership is expected to sustain generalized trust through social relationships. These organizations can guide the formation of trust, as membership and trust act together, as well as voluntary organizations memberships drive human relationships. Our study mainly focuses on the role of membership in voluntary organizations in building trust because trust plays a vital role in social, economic and social relations. Trust is one of the main structures enabling societies to develop, building generalized trust among individuals in the society thus facilitates the environment for the sustainable economic and social development of countries in many ways.

United Nations (1997, p. 1-2) defines sustainability as “Development is a multidimensional undertaking to achieve a higher quality of life for all people. Economic development, social development and environmental protection are interdependent and mutually reinforcing components of sustainable development”. The concept of sustainability is closely related with social capital and trust. Therefore, social capital and trust are seen as the critical parts of social and economic sustainability. Hence, evolving or consolidation of social capital and trust could be seen as a mean for how the process of sustainable social and economic development could be formed and evaluated. Social capital consists of as bonding, bridging, and linking and can be measured not only area levels but also family, individual, organizational levels (Eriksson et al., 2021). Similarly, trust ensures both social development and social and economic sustainability. Moreover, the economic structure and the social structure act together. If we deepen the difference between these two structures, distrust may arise in the countries and the level of development of the countries is affected.

Fukuyama (1995, p. 26), defines trust as “the expectation that arises within a community of regular, honest, and cooperative behavior, based on commonly shared norms, on the part of other members of the community”. Although trust is a moral value, it is a product of the individual's independent experiences and the experiences gained from the organizations that the individual joins voluntarily, which is learned early in life (Uslaner, 2004). Trust is also a foundation of civil society since societies cannot function without trust (Fukuyama, 1995; Misztal, 1996; Tonkiss and Passey, 1999). Civil community is a form of civic involvement and social solidarity (Putnam, 1993).

Membership in voluntary organizations is higher in civic societies. Commission of the European Communities (1997, p. 1) defines as “Voluntary organizations are simply groups of people who have come together for some purpose or other”. Hauser (1997, p. 227) explains civil society as “development that meets independent of the state whose members, through social interactions that balance conflict and consensus, seek to regulate themselves in ways

consistent with a valuation of difference”. Civil society is commonly making out as the space outdoor the family, market and national (World Economic Forum, 2013). Non-governmental organizations began to become popular in the 1980s. Nowadays, non-governmental organizations are called various organizations such as unions, trade unions, social movements, online networks and communities (VanDyck, 2017). Thus, the prevalence of voluntary organizations in countries, the extent to which individuals take part in voluntary organizations and the voluntary service period of individuals in the activities of voluntary organizations are important criteria determining trust.

Membership in voluntary organizations supports trust in a society, which occurs over networks, values, norms and beliefs. Voluntary organizations members actually activate networks, values, norms, which building trust, especially by crafting cooperation and networks. Moreover, voluntary organization membership can lead to better governance, more tolerance, and better economic growth through trust. Putnam (2000, p. 137) explains this presumption as “...people who trust others are all-around good citizens, and those more engaged in community life are both more trusting and more trustworthy.... the critically disengaged believe themselves to be surrounded by miscreants and feel less constrained to be honest themselves. The causal arrows among civic involvement, reciprocity, honesty, and social trust are as tangled as well-tossed spaghetti.”

The aim of our study is to examine the reflections of the role of voluntary organizations in the formation of general trust level in the world and in Türkiye. Our main argument is that voluntary organization membership stimulates trust and in turn reduces transaction costs, which allows more sustainable institutions and societies. The relationship between trust and membership in each voluntary organization is investigated both totally and individually. Our logit estimates indicate that both overall and individual membership variables have significantly positive impacts on trust for the full sample. Our estimations also show that the strong relationship between organizational membership and trust holds regardless of the being active or inactive member. It seems that higher trust through membership in all voluntary organizations is more likely to mitigate transaction costs, thereby improving the performance of institutions, and enabling a more sustainable society. The role of voluntary organizations in building trust cannot thus be overlooked. A large number of demographic variables are also associated with the state of trust. Our results show that male, urban, educated, and married individuals have more trust. Compared to no religious denomination, almost all memberships in major religious organizations are negatively associated with trust. People with immigrant parents have more trust. However, unlike the full sample, our estimates imply that most organizational membership variables have no relationship with trust in Türkiye. Memberships in labor union, political party and aid organizations actually have inverse relationship with trust.

The remaining parts of this study are structured as follows. We review the literature in the section 2, explain our methodology, specification and data in the section 3, present and discuss empirical results in the section 4, finally conclude in the section 5.

## **Literature Review**

Trust is recognized as a vital factor to sustain economic and social relationship (Tonkiss andPassey, 1999). While Wolfe (1976) explains trust as a personal variable, Misztal (1996) defines it as a collective contribution to achieve organizational goals. Personalized trust comes from people's experiences of cooperation and repeated interactions with the immediate environment, such as family, community, and members of a voluntary association, and is also directed towards them (Yamagishi and Yamagishi, 1994; Uslaner,1996). Generalized trust, on the other hand, is a trust reaching beyond the boundaries of acquaintance rather than the relationship between kinship and friendships (Stolle, 1998). Trust makes cooperation and social interaction more possible in large regions and communities, it can thus be seen as one of the main indicators of social capital. Every social interaction, people's intentions and abilities are actually different forms of trust. If social trust levels continue to be low, individuals will have difficulty communicating and collaborating, and civil society expectations would decrease. Therefore, trust is an important part of a civil society.

Voluntary organizations generate the bonds of social solidarity that are the basis for civil society and democracy (Newton, 2001). Volunteering is the basis for membership in voluntary organizations. The obligatory membership in organizations is of little social importance. In some countries, membership in voluntary organizations is a part of society, while in others it is an alternative. Membership in civil organizations differs from country to country. The church and religiosity membership vary according to the religious structure of the societies. To fulfill religious obligations, Muslim societies do not require membership in a mosque or any religious association, while in Christian societies it may sometimes require membership in the church. We understand from this that while membership to religious organizations is a part of the society in some countries, it is an alternative in some societies. Party membership also varies from society to society, even among individuals living in the same society, rural or urban. Among individuals living in more civil society, we can expect less party membership than among individuals living in more civil society. This is because in civil societies, cooperation and solidarity are sometimes seen as necessary for survival. This shows us the character of political participation rather than its degree (Putnam, 1993). Membership in voluntary organizations strengthens trust by increasing communication between people. This communication network also creates trust between individuals and safely reduces transaction costs, which enables institutions and societies to develop economically and socially.

The nexus between voluntary organization membership and trust has seen important in various disciplines. This nexus can be explained by sociological, economic, and social capital approaches. According to the economic approach, trust is an important factor reducing transaction costs and voluntary organizations are a response to market failure. The sociological approach argues that trust is taken-for granted and socially constructed reliability. Voluntary organizations make usage of symbolic illustrations of preexisting trust institutionalized acting of trust habits. The social capital approach considers trust as the social capital or civil virtue. Voluntary organizations are incubators of values, civic attitudes, and styles of organizing. All three approaches describe the relationship between trust and voluntary organization in general. At the same time, it remains to explain the role of voluntary organizations, and how trust is generated in what situations (Putnam, 1993; Fukuyama, 1995; Warren, 1999; Uslaner, 1999).

There are a few studies in the literature (Bourdieu, 1979; Putnam 1993; Newton, 2001; Anheier and Kendall, 2002; Paxton 2007; Geys, 2012) that clearly demonstrate the relationship between trust and voluntary organization membership. In economics, voluntary organizations follow rational choice logic and are the product of the association of the demands of individual representatives in search of resolutions to information problems in free market economies. Voluntary organizations strategically guide whom they can and cannot trust under what circumstances (Anheier and Romo, 1992). Sociological approaches generally focus on the concept of trust and defines different concepts of trust. Luhmann (1988) argues that trust depends on shared values. Seligman (1997) considers trust and civil society in a fashionable basis, which enables us to understand both the potential and limitations essential. Relationships or communications among people and inter associational networks are basic sources of social, political and cultural innovation in countries (Sirianni and Friedland, 2001). In the social capital literature, voluntary cooperation depends on the level of social capital. Norms of reciprocity and networks of voluntary organization provide cooperation and trust for the reason that they decrease encouragements to defect, decrease uncertainty, and make available models for future cooperation. Trust is a feature of the social system as well as personal. Individuals' confidence through embedded social norms and networks (Putnam, 1993). Voluntary organizations take on an instrumental character by facilitating social connections and collaboration through repeated interactions. Voluntary organizations are intentional involving organizations forming trust among members (Coleman, 1990). The social capital literature claims that networks of relationships connecting individuals and organizations contain some components of trust. As trust and voluntary associations are gathered as time increases, social capital is understood as a resource not only for short run economic gains but also for long-term status competition and the pursuit of strategic influence (Bourdieu, 1979). Voluntary organizations turn out to be

instruments for the establishment of social capital. Voluntary organizations help networks and cooperation, and through repeated relationships they create trust among members (Anheier and Kendall, 2002). Social capital is positively associated with membership in organizations. Membership in voluntary organizations has positive effects on the trust. Thus, trust also plays an important role in reducing the costs of organizational transactions. This has a positive effect on the economic performance of countries.

The relationship between voluntary organization and trust has been investigated from different aspects in the literature. On the one hand, some studies examine the impact of trust on the voluntary organizations (Lee, 2008; Bekkers, 2012; Claibourn and Martin, 2000), and find mostly insignificant estimates. The relationship between social trust and membership in voluntary organizations in some western countries is generally statistically weak and fundamentally small (Torcal and Montero, 1996; van Deth, 1996; Dekker and Van den Broek, 1996; Newton, 2001). On the other hand, many other studies below assert that voluntary organizations affect trust positively. In these studies, the relationship between membership in voluntary associations and trust is a persistent, positive and significant. To contribute to this literature, we try to explain the relationship between voluntary organization and trust. Our main argument in this study is that membership in a voluntary organization by promoting trust could enhance sustainability because higher trust levels reduce transaction costs in every part of our lives, allowing for more sustainable institutions and societies.

Putnam (1993) argues that compact networks of voluntary associations are the key explanation for North Italy's economic development compared to South Italy. If horizontal networks of voluntary associations help members resolve dilemmas of shared action, then the more horizontally structured an organization, the more it would foster institutional success in the wider community. Membership in groups to like sports clubs, cooperatives, mutual aid societies, cultural associations, and voluntary unions (horizontally ordered groups) should be positively related with good governance. Political party membership should be unrelated with good governance, because the organizational realities of political parties diverge from region to region and party to party (vertical in some places, horizontal in others). Membership in organizations such as churches should be negatively related with good governance in Italy.

Fukuyama (1996) discusses that Japanese and US societies displays intense network of voluntary organizations. Groups in Japan are hierarchical and voluntary. The US, on the other hand, has a denser and more complex network of voluntary organizations than other western societies. Putnam (2000) claims that if civic engagement decreases, there is a decrease in the level of trust in the US society, which causes an increase in crime rates. People with strong group networks generally improve communication with socially similar people,



while weak group networks bring social distance (Blau, 1977; Marsden, 1988). The more diverse an organization and the tender the bonds between the members, the higher trust of member.

Anheier and Kendall (2002), using the European Values Survey data on 32 countries for 1999-2000, investigate the relationship between the number of associational memberships and interpersonal trust. He finds almost a linear relationship between increases in membership and the probability of trusting people. They reach this conclusion by only comparing the mean values of respected variables. Paxton (2007) examine the relationship between association memberships and generalized trust with a multilevel model for 31 countries. According to the study, at the national level, having more connected to voluntary associations increases trust, while having more isolated from associations decreases trust. Similarly, Geys (2012) investigates the voluntary organization and trust relationship using World Values Survey (WVS) data from the 1990 and 2000 waves in 29 countries. Their results show that voluntary association memberships remain positively associated with generalized trust. They also employ large number of explanatory variables such as country's democratic nature (education, age, marital status etc.), country's energy consumption, ethnic and religious fractionalization and indicator variable. Unlike Anheier and Kendall (2002), our study employs the econometric model to examine the issue. The last two studies are very close to our study but our difference from these studies is that we utilize different period (2017-2020) and more importantly examine both the disaggregated measures of organizational membership and membership status of people.

## Model and Data

We investigate the relationship between membership in voluntary organizations and general trust by employing the model below, which we closely follow the models in Paxton (2007) and Geys (2012).

$$TRUST_{i,c} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 SEX_{i,c} + \beta_2 URB_{i,c} + \beta_3 EDU_{i,c} + \beta_4 MS_{i,c} + \beta_5 INC_{i,c} + \beta_6 REL_{i,c} + \beta_7 RES_{i,c} + \beta_8 MIM_{i,c} + \beta_9 FIM_{i,c} + \beta_{10} VOM_{i,c}$$

where *i* denotes individuals, *c* refers to countries. URB is urban or rural residency. SEX is gender. EDU is education level. MS is marital status (married, single, divorced). INC is income level. REL is religion (Do not belong to a denomination, Roman Catholic, Protestant, Orthodox, Jew, Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist, Other Christian, Other Religions). RES is respondent citizen (1 if a respondent citizen, 0 not respondent citizen). MIM is Mother immigrant (1 if mother immigrant, 0 not mother immigrant). FIM is father immigrant (1 if father immigrant, 0 not father immigrant). VOM is the voluntary organizations membership.

All the data we used in this study are from the WVS wave 7 (2017-2020) for 48 countries including Türkiye. The WVS asks people, “Generally speaking, would you say that most people can be trusted or that you need to be very careful in dealing with people”? This study basically uses the individual answers to this question. In the literature, trust is measured with questions of trust in their environment (family), general trust, trust in neighbors, trust in people of the same nationality and foreigners, trust in local and central government, trust in the profession. The most widely used measure of trust is “general trust” (Anheier and Kendall, 2000). Therefore, we measure the trust variable with the question " Most people can be trusted" and the question that reflects the general trust level. Table 1 displays the descriptive statistics of all variables used in this study.

If a dependent variable takes two or more discrete values, the dependent variable in these regression models indicates preference or decision. The purpose of these models is to determine the probability of selection (Aldric and Nelson, 1984). One of the most used methods among these models is the “probit” or “logit” estimation methods. Since the OLS estimates have produced biased estimates when the independent variables are considered binary variables, we choose to estimate the equation above using the logit method (Probit estimates obtain the identical results. Due to the space considerations, not reported here but available upon request).

## **Empirical Results and Discussion**

The logit estimation results for the relationship between the overall membership in voluntary organizations and trust are reported in Table 2. The first column of Table 2 implies that overall membership is significantly associated with trust for the full sample. Almost all explanatory variables are also statistically significant. Trust increases as education and income level increases. Regarding the other explanatory variables, married, male, urban residents, immigrants and individuals with immigrant parents have higher trust levels. It seems that compared to “do not belong to a religious denomination”, almost all religion followers have lower trust levels though.

**Table 1.** Summary Statistics

<b>Demographic Characteristics:</b> 56,429 observations	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Dev.</b>	<b>Min</b>	<b>Max</b>
Trust	0.184	0.388	0	1
Gender (Male=1)	0.461	0.499	0	1
Urban (Urban=1)	0.672	0.469	0	1
Education				
Low (Reference level)	0.342	0.474	0	1
Middle	0.350	0.477	0	1
Higher	0.306	0.461	0	1
Marital status				
Married (Reference level)	0.581	0.493	0	1
Single	0.234	0.423	0	1
Divorced	0.036	0.186	0	1
Other	0.148	0.355	0	1
Income level				
Low (Reference level)	0.255	0.435	0	1
Medium	0.657	0.474	0	1
High	0.087	0.282	0	1
Religion				
Roman Catholic	0.200	0.400	0	1
Protestant	0.065	0.247	0	1
Orthodox	0.109	0.312	0	1
Jew	0.001	0.034	0	1
Muslim	0.315	0.464	0	1
Hindu	0.006	0.079	0	1
Buddhist	0.074	0.262	0	1
Other Christian (Pentecostal/Free church/ Jehova)	0.025	0.158	0	1
Other Religions	0.030	0.171	0	1
Do not belong to a denomination (Reference level)	0.200	0.400	0	1
Respondent Citizen	0.978	0.146	0	1
Mother Immigrant	0.093	0.290	0	1
Father Immigrant	0.095	0.294	0	1
<b>Voluntary Organizations Membership:</b>				
Church or religious	0.372	0.483	0	1
Sport or recreational	0.235	0.424	0	1
Art, music, educational	0.183	0.387	0	1
Labor union	0.141	0.348	0	1
Political party	0.120	0.325	0	1
Environmental	0.119	0.323	0	1
Professional	0.152	0.359	0	1
Charitable/humanitarian	0.161	0.368	0	1
Consumer	0.096	0.295	0	1
Self-help group, mutual aid group	0.137	0.344	0	1
Women's group	0.121	0.326	0	1
Others	0.114	0.318	0	1

For the full sample, the significantly and positively estimated coefficient, 0.275, on the overall membership indicate that membership in voluntary organizations improves trust. We then calculate the marginal effect for the overall membership. For the full sample,  $dy/dx$  is 0.039 and statistically significant. Being a member in any of these organizations increases the probability of having trust by almost 0.04 percentage points.

Our logit estimations show that the nexus between voluntary organizations membership and trust is strong and positive, as expectedly. Our results are consistent with the both theoretical and empirical literature. The role of voluntary organizations in building trust cannot thus be ignored. Other explanatory variables such as gender, income, education, and religion, immigration status also affect trust. One can argue that higher trust reduces transaction costs, thereby improving the performance of institutions and enabling a more sustainable society.

In the 2nd column of Table 2, logit estimation results for Türkiye indicate that most explanatory variables are insignificant. Overall membership variable has an insignificant variable, implying that organizational membership and trust is not associated significantly. Only do male and high-income individuals tend to have higher trust levels in Türkiye. These results are not unusual for Türkiye. In fact, membership in these organizations may not be incompatible but certainly not a major part of the social structure. Moreover, the insignificantly estimated coefficient for Türkiye is also consistent with the fact that compared to overall average (0.59) for the full sample, Türkiye has substantially lower average (0.26) of voluntary organization membership. Note that most of these members are also inactive members in Türkiye. As mentioned above, the voluntary membership in organizations is of little social importance in Türkiye because it seems that membership in voluntary organizations is not a significant part of the society. For example, while in Christian societies it may sometimes require membership in the church, to fulfill religious obligations, Muslim societies do not require membership in a mosque or any religious association.

Countries: Andorra, Argentina, Bangladesh, Armenia, Bolivia, Brazil, Myanmar, Chile, Taiwan ROC, Colombia, Cyprus, Ecuador, Ethiopia, Germany, Greece, Guatemala, Hong Kong SAR, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Japan, Kazakhstan, Jordan, South Korea, Kyrgyzstan, Lebanon, Macau SAR, Malaysia, Mexico, Morocco, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Pakistan, Peru, Philippines, Puerto Rico, Romania, Russia, Serbia, Singapore, Vietnam, Zimbabwe, Tajikistan, Thailand, Tunisia, Türkiye, Ukraine, Egypt, Venezuela. Voluntary organization member variables are put into the model one by one.

Since voluntary organizations with different missions such as social, political, educational or humanitarian purposes are more likely to affect trust in a

different way as discussed above, we then sequentially add each individual measures of membership in voluntary organizations into the regressions and report the logit estimates in Table 3. The 1st and 4th columns of Table 3 report the estimates for both active and inactive members. While the 2nd and 5th columns report the estimates for only active members, the 3rd and 6th columns report the estimates for only inactive members. In all of the regressions, the exact same explanatory variables are employed in the regressions, but not reported. Each membership variable is added to the model individually because they are mostly likely to measure the same concept. Estimates at the first column of Table 3 implies that being member (both active and inactive) of all organizations raises the probability of having more trust. Similarly, the estimates at the 2nd and 3rd columns provide the same conclusions and thus being active or inactive member do not matter much for the full sample.

**Table 2.** Logit Estimations: Overall Voluntary Organizations Membership and Trust

	All Countries	Türkiye
Overall membership	0.275*** (11.48)	-0.196 (-1.292)
Gender	0.052*** (2.348)	0.289** (2.233)
Urban	0.172*** (6.498)	0.141 (0.954)
Education: Middle	0.143*** (4.880)	-0.255 (-1.547)
Higher	0.510*** (17.44)	-0.240 (1.305)
Marital Status: Single	-0.180*** (-2.900)	-0.081 (-0.560)
Divorced	-0.249*** (-8.933)	0.390 (1.016)
Other	-0.327*** (-9.082)	0.358 (1.022)
Income: Medium	0.284*** (10.03)	-0.029 (-0.159)
High	0.481*** (11.17)	1.345*** (5.917)
Religions:		
Roman Catholic	-0.843*** (-22.63)	
Protestant	-0.378*** (-7.930)	
Orthodox	-0.812*** (-18.35)	
Jew	-1.019** (-2.524)	
Muslim	-0.716*** (-21.55)	1.098 (1.068)
Hindu	-0.423*** (-3.208)	
Buddhist	0.146*** (3.403)	
Other Christian	-0.534*** (-7.291)	
Other	-0.333*** (-5.208)	
Respondent Citizen	-0.310*** (-4.477)	
Mother Immigrant	0.282*** (4.778)	-1.705 (-1.085)
Father Immigrant	0.180*** (3.076)	1.814 (1.304)
Observations	56,429	2,132
Number of countries	48	-

**Notes:** Robust z-statistics in parentheses. \*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, \* p<0.1

Voluntary organization member variables are added the model one by one. Note that organizational membership at the first column considers both active and inactive member as members. The next two columns then consider active and inactive members, respectively. Each cell corresponds to one set of regression and the exact set of other explanatory variables listed in Table 2 are employed in all regressions. Observations columns of 2,3, 5, and 6 of table provide maximum and minimum values of all regressions.

The last three columns of Table 3 report the estimates for Türkiye. Unlike the full-sample estimates, none of the membership variables is significantly positive. On the contrary, memberships in labor union, political party, and self-help group, mutual aid group have significantly negative coefficients, implying that membership to these organizations are inversely related with trust levels. Estimates at the 5th column of Table 3 show that none of the active members of organizations has significant association with trust. We cannot even obtain estimations for the active members of some organizations because active member in these organizations are critically low. Thus, these negative estimated coefficients are mostly determined by the inactive members in Türkiye.

**Table 3.** Logit Estimations: Voluntary Organizations Membership and Trust

Voluntary Organizations:	1	2	3	4	5	6
Church or religious	0.162*** (6.241)	0.183*** (5.462)	0.128*** (3.990)	-0.0962 (-0.333)	0.034 (0.080)	-0.209 (-0.554)
Sport or recreational	0.342*** (13.43)	0.287*** (8.205)	0.389*** (12.32)	0.288 (1.318)	0.240 (0.663)	0.316 (1.195)
Art, music, educational	0.359*** (13.16)	0.347*** (9.315)	0.370*** (10.52)	0.163 (0.691)	0.037 (0.083)	0.217 (0.794)
Labor union	0.323*** (10.76)	0.375*** (8.170)	0.300*** (8.129)	-0.911** (-2.531)		-0.720** (-1.983)
Political party	0.372*** (11.57)	0.352*** (6.766)	0.390*** (10.09)	-0.692** (-2.544)	-0.518 (-0.977)	-0.755** (-2.454)
Environmental	0.353*** (10.98)	0.228*** (4.439)	0.432*** (11.06)	-0.239 (-0.754)	-0.933 (-0.985)	-0.172 (-0.513)
Professional	0.307*** (10.45)	0.241*** (5.804)	0.349*** (9.712)	-0.230 (-0.837)	-0.500 (-0.934)	-0.119 (-0.382)
Charitable/humanitarian	0.2867*** (9.931)	0.219*** (5.375)	0.341*** (9.292)	-0.146 (-0.513)	-0.915 (-1.265)	0.010 (0.033)
Consumer	0.297*** (8.391)	0.306*** (5.488)	0.305*** (6.940)	-0.456 (-1.105)		-0.251 (-0.620)
Self-help group, mutual aid group	0.223*** (7.211)	0.183*** (4.014)	0.261*** (6.665)	-1.043** (-1.970)		-0.934* (-1.755)
Women's group	0.290*** (8.765)	0.242*** (5.127)	0.331*** (7.715)	-0.557 (-1.328)		-0.373 (-0.887)
Other organization	0.328*** (10.04)	0.219*** (4.809)	0.435*** (9.890)	-0.872** (-2.283)		
Observations	56,429	53,373- 46,559	54,324-4 5,301	2,132	2,068- 1,997	2,124- 2,069
Number of countries	48	48	48	-	-	-

Our estimation results imply that voluntary organizations and trust are closely related. The role of voluntary organizations in building trust cannot thus be ignored. Age, gender, income, education, etc. demographic characteristics also affect trust. The positive relationship between voluntary organizations membership and trust implies that this positive effect reduces transaction costs for the society and individuals, thereby improving the performance of institutions and enabling a more sustainable society.

## **Conclusion**

The understanding on the relationship between membership in voluntary organizations and generalized trust is important in various disciplines because trust is one of the main structures that enable societies to develop and plays an important role in social, economic, and social relations. Therefore, building trust among individuals in the society develops the environment for the economic and social development of countries in many ways.

Membership in voluntary organizations influence trust among people through social relationships. While membership in voluntary organizations and trust act together, voluntary organizations can also guide the formation of trust, since memberships shape human relations. This study investigates the relationship between membership in each voluntary organization and trust both totally and individually. In our study, we measure the trust variable with the general trust level. Our logit estimations indicate that voluntary organizations membership substantially improves trust. Our results also imply that this positive association holds regardless of the being active or inactive member. The role of voluntary organizations in building trust cannot thus be overlooked. Almost all demographic variables are also associated with the state of trust. Male, urban, educated, married, citizen individuals have more trust. Compared to no religious denomination, almost all members of major religions have lower trust. People with immigrant parents have more trust. Increased trust is expected to reduce transaction costs, thereby improving the performance of institutions, and enabling a more sustainable society. The encouraging role of voluntary organizations membership in building trust both reduces transaction costs and prepares the environment for more sustainable institutions and society. However, from the perspective of Türkiye, while overall membership fails to affect trust, membership in labor union, political party, and self-help group, mutual aid group have negative association with trust.

In a sum-up, membership in voluntary organizations is quite vital in the formation of generalized trust. They not only foster trust but also facilitates the idea and coordination relationship between people. Trust regulates relations between individuals in society and provides sustainable social and economic relations. Since trust plays a role in the development of institutions, societies and economic activities, the main goal of countries should be to increase the general trust level of individuals in the society.

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