

ASSOCIATION MEMBERSHIPS AND GENERALIZED TRUST: A MULTILEVEL MODEL ACROSS 31 COUNTRIES

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This paper presents a large-scale, comprehensive test of generalized trust across 31 nations. I pay particular attention to the theory and measurement of voluntary associations in promoting trust, hypothesizing that voluntary associations connected to other voluntary associations are more beneficial for the creation of generalized trust than associations isolated from other associations. The theory is tested with a multi-level, cross-national model, including both individual-level and country-level variables to predict the placement of trust. At the individual level, I find that membership in connected associations creates more trust than membership in isolated associations. At the national level, having more connected voluntary associations increases trust, while having more isolated associations decreases trust.