

Determinants of Formal Giving in Turkey

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Abstract

This article shares the results of a recent study on individual giving to civil society organizations in Turkey. Using interview data collected from a random sample of 2,495 Turkish citizens in 2015, we estimate that about 12% to 13% of the Turkish population engage in giving, a relatively low figure compared to international giving. We find that being male, being educated, being satisfied with one's income, being satisfied with one's economic circumstances, being a rural resident, as well as one's level of religiosity, civic activism, and institutional trust are all positively associated with giving in Turkey. Our findings provide a foundation for understanding philanthropic giving in Turkey and contribute to ongoing research about determinants of individual giving across countries.

Keywords: Turkey, Philanthropy, Civil society

In recent years, scholars have pursued two related areas of research on philanthropy. One area of study has focused on the factors influencing individuals' giving behaviors with the goal of making specific claims that can be broadly generalized to different contexts. This well-developed area includes many empirical studies across a range of disciplines that address the demographic and social characteristics that shape philanthropic giving. Dutch researchers René Bekkers & Pamala Wiepking (2011a, 2011b, 2012) have provided a comprehensive summary of the state of knowledge, in a review that includes nearly 600 sources. The second line of inquiry examined the practice of philanthropy (and the related development of civil society) in individual countries (Salamon et al., 2013; Wiepking & Handy, 2015). This line of inquiry addressed the nature and extent of philanthropic giving in specific contexts, as well as the types of organizations that comprise the civil society sector and the philanthropic support they receive.

Despite the depth of knowledge we have acquired about individual giving and country-specific philanthropy, little has been published about the determinants of giving in developing countries. For example, *The Palgrave Handbook of Global Philanthropy* by Wiepking and Handy (2015) provides an excellent overview on the nature of and approach to philanthropy in many countries in the developing world; however, its focus is not on the determinants of giving. A review of the recent academic research on individual giving practices in developing countries yields only a handful of studies, that is, from Mexico (Butcher Garcia-Colin & Santiago, 2016), South Africa (Everatt et al., 2005), Sri Lanka (Osella et al., 2015), and Puerto Rico (Osili et al., 2016). Furthermore, researchers have only begun to examine whether what we have learned about giving behavior in particular settings is generalizable across countries and cultures. For example, it is unclear whether the current research on the demographic and social determinants of giving in developed countries explains giving behavior in other contexts. It is also unclear to

what extent cultural attitudes about philanthropy motivate giving and whether they are consistent with research conducted in other settings.

In this study, we contribute to the efforts being made to understand philanthropy in different contexts by drawing on the most recent data on individual giving to civil society organizations in Turkey (Çarkoğlu & Aytaç, 2016). We focus on the relationship between several socio-demographic and attitudinal factors and individual giving and seek to find out whether the factors that affect individual giving as identified in the literature are at work in Turkey as well. Our results show a relatively low level of giving to civil society organizations, with about 12% of the Turkish population reporting giving in the past month and 13% in the past year. These figures put Turkey in the bottom quintile for donating money to organizations from among 145 countries surveyed by and published in the Charities Aid Foundation's *World Giving Index* (2015). We find that for men the following are positively associated with giving in Turkey: education, income, satisfaction with one's own economic circumstances, being a rural resident, religiosity, civic activism, and institutional trust. Age also emerges as a positive predictor of individual giving, though not as robustly as other factors.

The profiling of Turkish giving behavior as reported here should help to extend our knowledge of individual giving practices around the world. The article is organized as follows. First, we briefly discuss the individual-level factors identified in the literature as determinants of giving. Next, we present our data and measures on individual giving in Turkey, followed by the results of our analysis. The final section discusses our findings from Turkey from a comparative perspective.

Determinants of Individual Giving

Research that addresses individuals' motivations for making philanthropic donations falls into two broad categories. One body of work emphasizes the demographic characteristics and facilitating conditions that make a person more likely to give. The second body considers how core beliefs affect attitudes toward giving. In the latter category, we focus on research on social trust.

The most helpful research on philanthropic giving behavior is the series of three papers written by René Bekkers and Pamala Wiepking, in which they synthesize current knowledge about giving determinants (Bekkers & Wiepking, 2011a, 2011b; Wiepking & Bekkers, 2012). Because their work captures the current state of knowledge, we draw on it heavily in our discussion. They divide the drivers behind giving into two categories, demographics (such as age, education, and income) and motivational mechanisms (including awareness of need, solicitation, and costs and benefits). Their analysis of earlier works yielded a long list of factors affecting giving and a set of theoretical frameworks about the relationships among those factors. In broad terms, they argue that giving mechanisms mediate demographic variables in explaining giving. For example, while education (a demographic variable) is positively associated with philanthropic giving, awareness of need (a giving mechanism) mediates it (Bekkers & Wiepking, 2011a).

Their review identifies several demographic and socioeconomic factors that researchers have consistently found to be positively related to philanthropic giving (Bekkers & Wiepking, 2011b; Wiepking & Bekkers, 2012). Those factors include religiosity, age (up to age 65), education level, owning a home, being married, having children, and having parents with either a high income, a high level of education, or a history of volunteering. Furthermore, they note that

studies have indicated that women are more likely to give than men but that men give larger amounts. The effect of income on philanthropic giving is more ambiguous; that is, although income level is consistently found to have a positive effect on the amount of an individual's donations, researchers have found mixed results when analyzing whether income is a predictor of giving in general. The factors that positively mediate the effects of these demographic and socioeconomic characteristics include whether a person is solicited for a donation, whether others know about the donation, awareness of community needs, and trust in charitable organizations, all of which may be products of social capital or of the demographic factors themselves.

Most of the studies Bekkers & Wiepking (2011a) used for their analysis came from the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, and the Netherlands. Studies conducted in different parts of the world have sometimes reached different conclusions. For example, two studies—one from Korea (Park & Park, 2004) and one from Taiwan (Wu, Huang, & Kao, 2004)—about education level and giving did not find a significant relationship. Also, the same Korean study and another conducted in Indonesia did not find the significant relationship between age and giving reported by Bekkers and Wiepking (Park & Park, 2004; Okten & Osili, 2004). The fact that the studies diverging from the consensus about these giving motivations are from outside the United States, Canada, and Western Europe raise questions about the role of culture, and related factors might play in shaping giving behavior and suggest the need for research from a wider range of settings.

Bekkers & Wiepking (2011a, p. 941) include “attitudes and values” among the mediating factors that affect individual giving decisions. They argue that prosocial values such as interpersonal social trust and trust in institutions contribute to individuals' giving decisions.

Because there is considerable variation across countries in the aggregate levels of both interpersonal social trust and institutional trust, their study might be valuable in accounting for between-country variations in giving. Trust is important in understanding giving behavior because giving to institutions (but also to individuals) reflects some level of trust by the donor in the recipient that the recipient will appropriately use the donation. As many scholars have noted, theories of civil society organizations argue that donors give to these institutions because of their legal status; that is, they are bound by the non-distribution constraint, which means they cannot distribute their profits at will (Bekkers, 2003; Salamon, 2012). As such, donors may give because they trust that these legal guidelines ensure that their donations will be used to advance an organization's charitable purpose.

In addition to prosocial values like trust, several researchers have examined social capital in order to gauge its relationship to giving. Some use social capital as a proxy for social trust (Brooks, 2005; Brown & Ferris, 2007), while others seem to distinguish between the two, arguing that the networks that define social capital are different from the psychological aspects of giving (Wang & Graddy, 2008). Despite these differences, using large samples of American adults, they all found a significant relationship between social capital and philanthropic giving. A study from Japan reached a similar conclusion by reporting that among the Japanese both interpersonal and institutional trust are positively associated with individual giving, with institutional trust being a better predictor (Taniguchi & Marshall, 2014).

Data and Measures on Individual Giving in Turkey

Our data are based on a nationally representative face-to-face survey conducted with 2,495 respondents from 68 provinces of Turkey between August 29 and November 29, 2015.¹ The sampling procedure started with the use of the Turkish Statistical Institute's (TUIK) NUTS-2 regions. The target sample was distributed according to each region's share of the urban and rural population, in accordance with the Address Based Population Registration System's current records. Next, TUIK's block data were used with the block size set at 400 residents. Probability proportionate to size sampling was used in distributing the blocks to NUTS-2 regions. The individual to be interviewed in each household was selected via a lottery method on the basis of the reported target population of 18 years or older in the household.

We asked our respondents about their giving behavior in two different ways. First, we used the exact question format employed in the *World Giving Index* annual reports of the Charities Aid Foundation (CAF).² CAF, in collaboration with the international polling organization Gallup, has been collecting data on basic philanthropic behaviors since 2010 to provide a comparative framework for evaluating variations across countries and time. The questions used by CAF are as follows (*CAF World Giving Index*, 2015, p. 3):³

Have you done any of the following in the past month?

¹ The survey was generously funded by the Third Sector Foundation of Turkey. The interviews were conducted by Infakto Research Workshop

² www.cafonline.org

³ Because our focus in this study is on giving to organizations, we do not analyze the questions on helping others and volunteering.

1. Helped a stranger, or someone you did not know who needed help?
2. Donated money to a charity?
3. Volunteered your time to an organization?

It should be noted that the CAF question format requires respondents to consider a rather short period (the past month) when thinking about their giving behavior. The decision to ask respondents to consider this short period has both advantages and disadvantages. A disadvantage is that it might fail to capture seasonal variations in giving behavior, and thus the results might be heavily dependent on the timing of the fieldwork. For example, surveys that are fielded just before and after the Christmas season might result in significantly different estimates of the prevalence of giving in Christian majority nations. Similarly, religiously motivated giving in Muslim majority contexts might increase significantly during religious holidays, and the survey results would again be heavily influenced by the timing of the fieldwork. This feature of the CAF approach makes it difficult to engage in cross-country and over-time (within a country) comparisons of the prevalence of giving behavior. A potential advantage of the CAF question format is that it should be easier for respondents to recall their giving behavior during the past month compared to a longer period. Therefore asking about giving behavior this way should result in a relatively small measurement error when estimating the prevalence of giving during the period considered.

Our second approach to measuring giving behavior involved presenting respondents with a comprehensive list of different types of civil society organizations (e.g., sports clubs, environmental organizations, alumni associations, and charity organizations) and asking them whether they had donated money to any such organizations during the *past year*. Using the whole year allowed us to capture seasonal variations in giving behavior, which was not possible

with the CAF questions. The use of a comprehensive list of different types of organizations was intended to mitigate this concern by helping respondents recollect their giving behavior.

We considered a range of variables to identify the determinants of giving behavior. The first set of variables relates to respondents' demographics—gender, age, years of formal education, marital status, urban residence, religious practice (frequency of prayer), and a dummy variable for Kurdish speakers.⁴ The second set of variables includes number of individuals in the household, household income, and satisfaction with economic conditions. Last, we considered respondents' level of interpersonal social trust (whether they think most people can be trusted), level of civic activism, and trust in civil society organizations in general.

The descriptive statistics of the sample for these variables are presented in Table 1. Our sample has perfect gender balance, and the average age of respondents is 42 years. The level of education, measured in years of school attendance, averages about eight years. The average household size is 3.5, and 81% of our respondents live in urban areas. We measured religiosity on a scale ranging from no religious practice (0) to participation in religious activities more than once a week (5). We also asked respondents to rate their satisfaction with their current economic condition on a scale from 0 (not satisfied at all) to 10 (very satisfied). We designated those individuals who rated their economic situation above 5 on this scale as “economically satisfied”—about 29% of our respondents fall into this category.

⁴ Kurds constitute a large ethnic minority group in Turkey, residing primarily in the Eastern and Southeastern provinces. Based on our data, we estimate the proportion of Kurds within the adult population of Turkey to be around 15%, a figure in line with what is reported in other recent research (e.g., Aytaç & Çarkoğlu, 2017).

Consistently low levels of interpersonal trust in Turkey have been well documented (Aytaç, Çarkoğlu, & Ertan, 2017); in line with those findings, only about 10% of our respondents agreed that most people could be trusted. We measured civic activism by asking how often the respondent gets together with his or her neighbors to discuss and find solutions to local problems, using a scale between “not at all” (0) to “very often” (3). The average value of this measure in our sample is about 0.9, reflecting a rather low level of civic activism in Turkish society. Finally, we asked our respondents how much trust they have in civil society organizations in general on a scale from 1 (not trusting at all) to 10 (fully trusting). The mean level of trust is 6.2 on this scale.

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics of the Sample

Variable	Min.	Max.	Mean	Std. Dv.
Female	0	1	0.50	0.50
Age	18	89	41.6	16.2
Education	0	15	7.96	4.41
Married	0	1	0.67	0.47
Urban resident	0	1	0.81	0.39
Kurdish speaker	0	1	0.15	0.36
Household size	1	15	3.49	1.77
Household income (Log)	0	4.30	3.16	0.33
Religious practice	0	5	3.80	1.72
Economically satisfied	0	1	0.29	0.45
Most people can be trusted	0	1	0.10	0.30
Civic activism	0	3	0.87	0.86
Trust in civil society organizations	1	10	6.21	2.45

Findings

First, we report the overall levels of giving behavior in Turkey. The *CAF World Giving Index* annual reports include information about levels of giving in Turkey from 2010 to 2014, and because we used the exact question format employed in these reports, we are able to present our 2015 results together with the CAF figures. Figure 1 presents the prevalence of giving in the *past*

month in Turkey from 2010 to 2015. We observe very little change over time in the prevalence of giving, with it fluctuating between 10% and 14% during the period from 2010 to 2015. In the latest available data point (2015), we estimate that about 12% of the Turkish adult population donated money to a civil society organization in the past month.

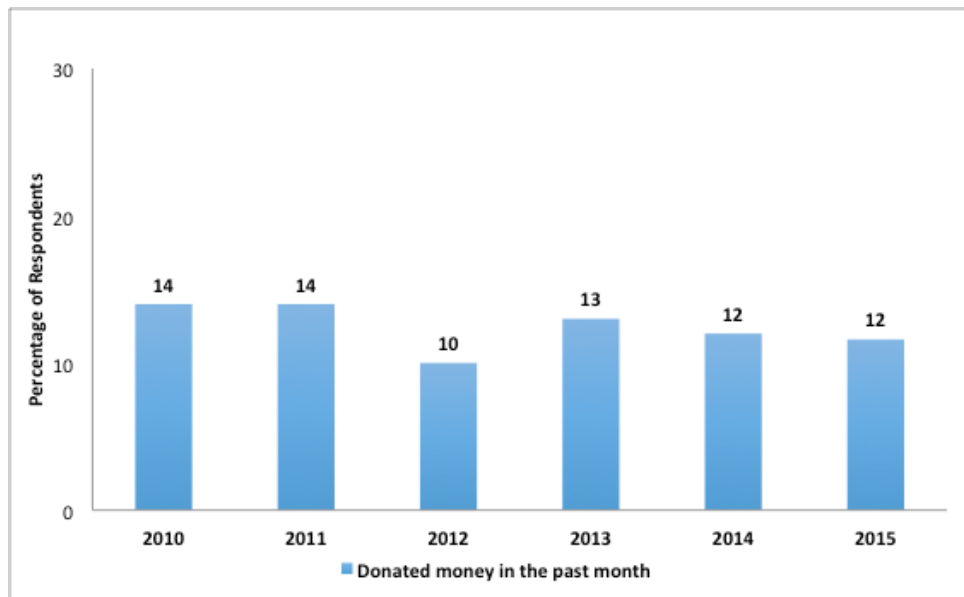


Figure 1. Prevalence of donating money in the past month in Turkey. *CAF World Giving Index* 2010–2014 and TÜSEV 2015 study. *Note:* The values for 2010 to 2014 are taken from *CAF World Giving Index*, whereas 2015 data are from the authors’ original survey that uses identical questions as the CAF index.

When we asked respondents about their giving behavior using our second approach (i.e., presenting a list of types of organizations and asking about the past year), we obtained similar results. In this case, about 13% of respondents reported having donated in the previous year. Thus our two approaches for measuring giving behavior in Turkey result in figures consistent with each other, suggesting that about 12% to 13% of the Turkish population engage in giving to organizations.

To analyze the determinants of individual giving in Turkey, we created a binary variable indicating whether a respondent donated money in the past month (the CAF question format) and

another binary variable for respondents who donated money in the past year (our own question format). Table 2 presents the results of logistic regressions taking these two binary variables as dependent variables and using the explanatory variables described earlier. The two question formats yield consistent estimates for the determinants of giving, so asking about different time periods did not make a significant difference in our case.

Among the demographic variables, gender, education level, religious practice, and urban residence have statistically significant effects on donating money to civil society organizations both in the past month (Model 1) and in the previous year (Model 2). Considering giving behavior in the previous year (Model 2), men are about 52% more likely than women to make donations. Education exhibits a positive effect—each additional year of formal education increases one’s likelihood to donate by about 7% percent, which means someone who graduates from eight years of primary school is on average about 56% more likely to have made a donation over the past year than someone who has not attended school. Individuals living in rural areas are about 67% more likely to make donations than individuals living in urban areas.

Religious practice, too, has a positive and statistically significant effect on individual giving. An individual who prays (*namaz*) more than once a week is about 40% more likely to have made a donation over the past year than someone who does not pray at all. Age has a positive and significant effect only in Model 2, where each additional year of age increases the likelihood of donating by about 1%. Marital status, speaking Kurdish, and household size do not seem to have an impact on the likelihood of individual giving.

Table 2

Determinants of Individual Giving to Civil Society Organizations

Dependent variable	Model (1)			Model (2)		
	Donating money in the <i>past month</i>			Donating money in the <i>past year</i>		
	B	Sig.	Exp (B)	B	Sig.	Exp (B)
Female	-.52	.00	.60	-.41	.01	.66
Age	.00	.93	1.00	.01	.01	1.01
Education	.05	.04	1.05	.07	.00	1.07
Married	.08	.69	1.08	-.16	.35	.85
Urban resident	-1.03	.00	.36	-.52	.00	.60
Kurdish speaker	-.13	.65	.88	.03	.90	1.03
Household size	.04	.45	1.04	.05	.28	1.05
Household income (log)	1.54	.00	4.65	1.02	.00	2.76
Religious practice	.10	.05	1.10	.07	.09	1.08
Economically satisfied	.46	.01	1.59	.35	.03	1.42
Most people can be trusted	-.31	.25	.73	.13	.57	1.14
Civic activism	.34	.00	1.40	.28	.00	1.33
Trust in civil society organization	.07	.04	1.07	.08	.01	1.08
Constant	-7.91	.00	.00	-7.01	.00	.00
-2 Log likelihood	1086.479			1274.805		
Cox & Snell R Square	.065			.053		
Nagelkerke R Square	.129			.096		
N	1708			1711		

Note: Logistic regressions. Bold entries indicate statistically significant effects ($p < 0.1$).

The fact that our sample showed that individuals living in rural areas are significantly more likely to make donations to organizations than individuals living in urban areas was somewhat unexpected. We also have data on the types of organizations to which individuals have donated their money, and many people in rural areas reported that they have donated to the mosque in their village. It is quite typical for the congregation of a mosque in Turkey to establish a voluntary organization to support the material needs of the mosque; it seems that such organizations are better able to solicit donations in rural areas. These donations to the mosques in villages push up the prevalence of donations in rural areas relative to urban areas, and therefore

we observe a positive relationship between donating and being a rural resident rather than an urban one.

Other variables with positive effects on giving behavior are household income, positive economic evaluations, civic activism, and trust in civil society organizations. It should not come as a surprise that those with higher household incomes and a positive outlook for their economic circumstances are more likely to donate, although as we noted earlier, the literature shows mixed results about income as a predictor of the likelihood of giving. The positive effects of higher levels of civic activism and trust in civil society on donations are also expected—the donations that we consider are made to civil society organizations, and individuals with higher levels of civic activism and trust in these organizations would be both more familiar and more comfortable with donating. We find interpersonal trust to play no role on the likelihood of individual giving to organizations.

Discussion

Our findings expand our knowledge about the determinants of individual giving in different contexts by providing data from a nationally representative survey in Turkey. The socio-demographic and attitudinal factors shaping individual giving in Turkey entail both similarities and differences with what has been reported elsewhere. Higher levels of education increase the likelihood of individual giving in Turkey, which is consistent with the previous literature (Bekkers & Wiepking, 2011b). More religious Turks are also more likely to give, and religiosity is also shown to be positively associated with giving in different contexts. We also find a positive association between income and likelihood of making donations. This finding is compatible with the broader literature as well, though some studies challenge the importance of income as a predictor of the likelihood of giving (Wiepking & Bekkers, 2012).

Age emerged as a significant and positive predictor of giving over a one-year period but not over a one-month period in our study. This mixed result resonates with research on individual giving in non-Western contexts. Studies from Indonesia and Korea, in contrast to Western studies, have not found that age is a determinant of giving (Okten & Osili, 2004; Park & Park, 2004). The non-Western setting is the only obvious difference between these studies and others that have reported age as a determinant of giving.

The effects of gender and marital status on the likelihood of giving in Turkey diverge from what other studies have reported. We find that men are more likely to give than women. This result differs from many studies in Western contexts that have reported women to be more likely to give than men, though men tend to give more (Wiepking & Bekkers, 2012). Although our finding merits further study, one explanation for this difference may be the persistence of traditional household gender roles in Turkey. We also report no relationship between the marital status of individuals and their likelihood of giving to organizations.

In our study, we distinguished between interpersonal social trust and institutional trust, and we find that while institutional trust is positively related to making donations, interpersonal social trust is not a significant predictor. The finding on institutional trust is consistent with determinants of giving identified among residents of Japan (Taniguchi & Marshall, 2014); however, interpersonal social trust was also positively associated with giving in that study and in U.S.-based studies discussed earlier. It is difficult to speculate about the insignificance of social trust; however, the association between institutional trust and giving to institutions seems intuitive, as does the related association between civic activism and giving. People give to institutions if they trust them. Furthermore, survey respondents who indicated that they engage

with fellow citizens in collective problem-solving may do so through civil society organizations. This participation may both cultivate and reflect the kind of trust that leads to making donations.

One area for further study that we do not consider here is informal giving, that is, general helping behavior and giving to family, friends, neighbors, and others directly without any intermediating organization. As noted, the Charities Aid Foundation surveys include data on these types of philanthropic behaviors, as does the survey we have drawn on. Given the relatively low levels of giving to organizations, which can be designated as formal giving, identified in this study, it would be worthwhile to explore whether informal giving is more common in Turkey and if so why. Most research in philanthropy, particularly given its Western context, emphasizes formal giving as a measure of philanthropic activity. A more complete understanding of giving behavior in Turkey would require more research about the nature and extent of informal giving. Future work should also explore the factors that are responsible for differences in individuals' preferences for formal vis-à-vis informal giving.

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