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## ДОВЕРИЕ К ГОСУДАРСТВЕННЫМ И НЕГОСУДАРСТВЕННЫМ ИНСТИТУТАМ В УСЛОВИЯХ ДОСТИЖЕНИЯ ЦЕЛЕЙ УСТОЙЧИВОГО РАЗВИТИЯ (НА ПРИМЕРЕ СЕРБИИ)

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Одним из ключевых условий устойчивого развития национального хозяйства является уровень доверия общества к формальным и неформальным институтам, направления эволюции которых определяют государственные и негосударственные акторы. Отталкиваясь от данного предположения, в данной работе проведено исследование уровня доверия граждан к государственным институтам и неправительственному сектору (на примере Республики Сербия). Проведенный социологический опрос позволил получить данные для статистического анализа, в котором в качестве зависимых переменных использовались результаты ответов на вопрос об институциональном доверии (к правительству, парламенту, судебной системе, правоохранительным органам, вооруженным силам, церкви, НКО, СМИ, учреждениям здравоохранения и образования), а в качестве независимых – характеристики респондентов (пол, возраст, уровень образования, статус занятости, личные доходы, доходы домохозяйств и ряд других). Кроме того, анализ результатов социологического опроса позволяет дать дополнительные обоснования к поиску связи между уровнем доверия к государственным и негосударственным институтам и перспективами устойчивого экономического роста в Сербии. Следует подчеркнуть, что более половины респондентов не доверяют государству и неправительственному сектору, тогда как наибольшим уровнем доверия характеризуются церковь и вооруженные силы страны. Кроме того, мы показываем, что уровень доверия/недоверия к государственным институтам и неправительственным организациям в значительной степени зависит от возрастных характеристик и уровня образования участвовавших в опросе граждан: относительно меньший уровень доверия отмечен у респондентов моложе 20 лет и респондентов с высшим уровнем образования.

*Ключевые слова:* государственные и негосударственные акторы, формальные институты, институциональное доверие, политическое доверие, устойчивое развитие, социологический опрос, Сербия.

### Introduction and literature review

In this paper, the basic aspects of the problem of the social trust in state and non-state institutions in the light of sustainable development are presented. All the efforts of the public and private sectors of a country in the direction of reaching a higher level of economic development constitute economic development. Some researchers emphasize (in order to achieve *sustainable economic development* aligned with the needs and limitations of nature) the need to establish a connection between economic policy and environmental improvement at all levels of social communities, in all sectors of the economy [1]. Many authors consider that the interference of the state and non-governmental organizations in the economy is present primarily thanks to the normative economy, where the importance of individual and state

responsibility for the effective implementation of the concept of sustainable development comes to the fore. Some researchers emphasize the importance of social capital for sustainable development goals [2; 3].

Given that the normative economy is conditioned by the inexorable administration of state institutions, it should encourage efficient economic development as a result of its own processes, positive economy and population. However, some researchers emphasize that „normative economics, although it can be useful in establishing and generating new ideas from different perspectives, cannot be the only basis for making decisions on important economic issues... because it does not take an objective angle of viewing the situation that focuses on facts, causes and consequences“ [4]. Relying on the knowledge and instructions of positive economics, we know

why certain economic processes and phenomena are important, and how they function, while normative economics teaches what should be done in practice and how to control and direct these phenomena and processes in order to achieve efficient economic development and obtain the desired benefits for the population and the state [5]. Regardless of the existence of their mutual differences in functioning, when it comes to sustainable economic development, synchronized functioning of positive and normative economy is necessary.

One of the global problems that must be taken into account, and which numerous environmental groups insist on, when it comes to sustainable economic development, is how not to provide economic growth without environmental degradation [6]. In developed economies, the focus is on new approaches to sustainable development: how to reduce environmental pollution and not slow down economic development, and the introduction of different environmental conservation measures like 'debt-for-nature' swaps [7].

A serious problem and obstacle to sustainable economic development is the gap between the socioeconomic and techno-economic spheres, which, in addition to negative effects on the natural environment, causes many other problems. It should be noted that developed countries, corporate alliances and supranational organizations seek solutions to economic problems through exploitation of less developed countries, especially of those from resource-rich regions [8]. According to one of the approaches, the sustainability of economic development can be viewed from different aspects, with three determining factors – the state, investors and management personnel. From the investor's point of view, sustainability implies the success of the investment; from the manager's point of view the aim is success at any cost and in the shortest possible time, while from the state's point of view, it has a completely different meaning – to respect the principles and other factors of the wider social community development [6].

Increasing global economic problems, especially the increase in social inequalities accompanied by the increase in poverty, point to sustainable development as a model that will contribute to amortization of these problems [9]. Indispensable support from the state is foreseen in The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, with the adoption of 17 sustainable development goals (SDGs) aimed at eradicating poverty, protecting the living environment, ensuring peace and prosperity. It is emphasized that the realization of these goals implies state support<sup>1</sup>.

The possible role and relationship of the state towards sustainable development could be illustrated in the terms of idea of a perfect state (the execu-

tive power as a factor on which all aspects of the establishment of a perfect state depend) [10]. Some authors argue that power of the state is a factor that determine an overall economic development potential [11]. As a serious obstacle to sustainable development one can mention the desire for profit of individuals and corporations, while the other authors consider the spatial asymmetry of prosperity and argue that the variation of the income between regions encourages all other social differences [12; 13]. One of the serious obstacles to sustainable development and the source of social inequalities is the control of the economy by large multinational corporations [8].

The study of the phenomenon of *trust* in social relations is based on an interdisciplinary approach that takes into account the methodology of sociology, economics, philosophy and other humanities. A. Giddens defines trust as “confidence in the reliability of a person or system, regarding a given set of outcomes or events, where that confidence expresses a faith in the probity or love of another, or in the correctness of abstract principles” [14; 15]. The importance of informal institutions in maintaining a high level of trust in society is also emphasized by F. Fukuyama, pointing out that trust is “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 that community” [16]. A number of researchers (A. Seligman and others) argue that trust is one of the main characteristics of a developed civil society, allowing for stable interpersonal connections with the least cost of creating and maintaining an institutional apparatus [17; 18].

Shabunova et al. (2021) indicates that taking into account the economic aspects of the phenomenon of trust allows us to distinguish three approaches to its definition. The first is associated with rational calculation and formal rules between the participants in the relationship [19; 20]. The second is based on the concept of moral norm – a high level of honesty and openness in relations between members of society, the importance of ethical values and willingness to help each other (see F. Fukuyama's definition of trust). Within the third approach, researchers distinguish between types of social interactions, which makes it possible to differentiate the concept of trust. For example, depending on the so-called radius of trust (the circle of people among whom cooperative norms are operative) one could distinguish interpersonal (particularized), institutional and generalized trust [21; 22]. Different authors assess the role of each type of trust differently: some point to the key importance of institutional trust (for example, the followers of Giddens), while others consider interper-

sonal trust to be the main one, since its presence distinguishes democratic societies from non-democratic ones, which are forced to rely on trust in political institutions [23].

In a more detailed form, interpersonal and generalized trust are combined into the category of horizontal trust, separately examining the features of indirect types of trust – institutional (trust in formal and informal norms) and political (trust in organizations operating within established institutions) [24]. A similar principle is used to distinguish between trust within a group and trust outside a group among members of society [25]. In the framework of this study, we are primarily interested in the features of political trust in Serbia.

### **Sociological surveys of institutional and political trust**

The level of institutional and political trust in society is studied through sociological surveys. As a rule, surveys of political trust involve research of respondents' opinions about such institutions as authorities at various levels (from the president and parliament to local governments), parties, the judicial system, law enforcement agencies and the army. As part of more general studies of attitudes towards formal institutions, the questionnaire includes small, medium and large businesses, non-profit organizations, media and religious institutions. In general, sociologists note a crisis of confidence in many of the above institutions in a significant number of countries. For example, Edelman Trust Barometer experts point to a decline in the level of public trust in governments, non-governmental organizations, media and business in the late 2010s and early 2020s<sup>2</sup>.

The methodology for studying the level of trust has been developed since the mid-20th century. It is characterized by the presence of different approaches to its assessment, used both at the national level and within the framework of international projects (like the World Value Survey, European Values Study, etc.) [26–28]. As for trust in state institutions, which is the main object of our research, a large number of modern works are based on data from sociological surveys in developed countries and widely use mathematical apparatus.

For instance, Sønderskov and Dinesen (2016) using Danish panel surveys containing measures of different types of trust find strong evidence that trust in state institutions have a causal impact on social trust while reverse relationship is insignificant [29]. Esaiasson et al. (2021) study the changes in institutional and interpersonal trust of Swedish citizens during the coronavirus period on the base of web-survey panel. Their main conclusion is that

the corona crisis led to a higher level of both types of trust, and those groups with distant relation to government authorities were characterized with more homogeneous reactions [30]. The recent study by Hitlin and Shutava (2022) on trust in the American federal government shows that a majority of citizens is distrustful of it: 53% feel the federal government has a negative impact on the USA, and nearly 2/3 believe that this political institution is not transparent or does not listen to the public [31]. Keating and Thrandardottir (2017) prove that such institution as NGOs has been experiencing academic and practitioner scepticism in the recent decades. The authors suggest to improve the accountability agenda (transparency and external oversight issues) by exploring the causal link between it and donors' trustworthiness [32]. Ward et al. (2016) focus on predictors and extent of institutional trust in government, banking sector, the media and religious organizations in six Asia-Pacific countries. They argue that healthy democracy relies not only on the trust in national government, but this trust should be mediated through other symbols of institutional power [33].

### **Methodology and data**

The aim of the research is focused on examining the correlation between sociodemographic variables (gender, age, educational attainment, employment status, monthly personal income of respondents, monthly personal income of the respondent's household, number of household members, and the number of household members earning income) and the opinions of the respondents regarding the trust they have in governmental institutions and the non-governmental sector.

The research is of a quantitative nature and was conducted through a questionnaire. In the first part, questions pertained to the socio-demographic information of the respondent, while in the second part, the group of dependent variables was operationalized through the Likert scale assessment. Within this framework, respondents evaluated the extent to which they agree with statements probing their opinions on the political situation in Serbia and the trust in governmental institutions and the non-governmental sector.

The data analysis and processing utilized: descriptive analysis (frequencies, percentages, mean), t-test, one-way analysis of variance, multiple linear regression, and Pearson's correlation coefficient. The level of statistical significance was set at  $p < 0.05$ , and all obtained data were processed using the SPSS software, version 19.

The independent variables in the study include characteristics of the respondents: gender, age, ed-

Table 1

**Respondents' opinions on their trust in governmental institutions and the non-governmental sector in Serbia**

Trust in	1	2	3	4	5	NR
1. Judiciary	50.9%	29.1%	16.4%	/	1.8%	1.8%
2. Police	38.2%	34.5%	12.7%	7.3%	3.6%	3.6%
3. Educational organizations	38.2%	25.5%	12.7%	14.5%	5.5%	3.6%
4. Government	63.6%	23.6%	9.1%	/	1.8%	1.8%
5. Parliament	63.6%	23.6%	9.1%	/	1.8%	1.8%
6. Church	38.2%	12.7%	18.2%	20.0%	9.1%	1.8%
7. Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs)	50.9%	25.5%	14.5%	7.3%	/	1.8%
8. Radio Television of Serbia (RTS)	45.5%	34.5%	12.7%	3.6%	1.8%	1.8%
9. Armed forces	30.9%	16.4%	18.2%	29.1%	3.6%	1.8%
10. Healthcare organizations	32.7%	29.1%	16.4%	14.5%	3.6%	3.6%

Note: \*1 – Strongly Disagree, 2 – Disagree, 3 – Not Sure, 4 – Agree, 5 – Strongly Agree, NR – No Response

educational attainment, employment status, monthly personal income, household monthly income, the number of members living in the household, and the number of household members earning income.

The dependent variables (presented in Table 1) investigated the opinions of the respondents regarding their trust in governmental institutions and the non-governmental sector. Respondents were presented with questions in the form of attitudes/statements on a five-point Likert scale, where they assessed the extent to which they agreed with statements attempting to address the main research question (whether and to what extent public trust in governmental institutions and the non-governmental sector affects sustainable development in Serbia), with 1 indicating complete disagreement and 5 indicating complete agreement.

### Sample characteristics

In the frames of research of developmental processes, especially market segmentation, several aspects stand out: geographical (region, country, size of the local environment), demographic (age, gender, family life cycle, annual income, occupation, race, religion), psychographic (social class, lifestyle, personality), and behavioral attitudes (e.g., towards products, purchasing readiness, loyalty, etc.) [34]. The sample characteristics were determined based on demographic, partly psychographic, and behavioral characteristics of the respondents.

Throughout the research and data collection, a total of 250 respondents were surveyed (with the majority having completed the interview), with 30 questionnaires being rejected during the analysis as unacceptable. Thus, 220 questionnaires were accepted and processed until the end of the research. Out of the total of 220 tests (220 respondents), 144 respondents (65.5%) were male, and 76 respondents (34.5%) were female. According to the age criteria, respondents were divided into six groups: 1.8% of respondents were below 20 years old,

5.5% were between 20 and 30 years old, then 32.7% were between 31 and 40 years old, 41.8% were between 41 and 50 years old, 10.9% were between 51 and 65 years old, and 7.3% were over 65 years old. According to the employment status in the sample, 70.9% were employed, 18.2% were unemployed, 1.8% were students, and 9.1% were retirees. Based on the level of education, the sample included 36.4% of respondents with completed high school, 50.9% with completed college or higher education, while 10.9% of respondents had a master's or doctoral degree.

Regarding personal monthly incomes, 6.2% of respondents stated that they did not have personal incomes, 41.8% earned up to 500 euros, 27.3% earned between 501 and 1000 euros, 12.7% earned between 1001 and 1500 euros, 3.6% earned between 1501 and 2000 euros, and 3.6% earned over 2000 euros per month. In addition to personal incomes, respondents were also asked about the monthly household income, and according to that, they were divided into several groups: 25.5% of respondents lived in households with incomes up to 500 euros per month, 29.1% stated that they lived in households with incomes from 501 to 1000 euros per month, 20% were in the category of incomes between 1001 and 1500 euros per month, 10.9% were in the category of incomes between 1501 and 2000 euros per month, 3.6% were in the category of incomes between 2001 and 3000 euros per month, while 9.1% of respondents lived in households with incomes over 3000 euros, and 1.8% of respondents stated that they were not familiar with this information.

Observing the number of household members, it was found that 12.7% of respondents lived alone, 36.4% lived in two-member households, 21.8% lived in three-member households, 21.8% lived in four-member households, 1.8% lived in five-member households, and 5.5% of respondents lived in households with more than five members. Regarding the distribution of respondents according to

how many members of their households generate income, it is shown that 36.4% of respondents only one member generates income, 54.5% of respondents two members generate income, 7.3% of respondents three members of the household generate income, while in households where four members generate income, 1.8% of respondents live.

### Results and discussion

When it comes to trust in governmental institutions and the non-governmental sector, the collected research results indicate that 80% of the respondents lack trust in the judiciary, while 72.7% do not trust the police, and 63.7% lack trust in educational institutions. Regarding the government, 87.2% of respondents express no trust, and the same percentage indicates a lack of trust in the parliament. Half of the respondents, 50.9%, state that they do not trust the Church, while 76.4% express a lack of trust in non-governmental organizations. A total of 80% of respondents do not trust the Serbian Broadcasting Corporation, 47.3% lack trust in the Serbian military, and 61.8% lack trust in the healthcare system.

The *t-test* was conducted to examine whether there are differences between women and men in responses regarding the dependent variables, which investigated their opinions on the trust enjoyed by governmental institutions and the non-governmental sector. Participants differ by gender in terms of trust towards non-governmental organizations  $t(214) = -2.438$ ,  $p < 0.05$ , indicating that women (2.00) have greater trust in NGOs than men (1.67). No statistically significant differences between genders were found for the assessment of other dependent variables.

#### The one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA)

One-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used to examine the influence of age, employment status, education, personal income and household income on opinion of respondents about their trust in governmental institutions and the non-governmental sector. In this regard respondents were divided into several groups (respectively): six age groups (under 20 years, 20 to 30 years, 31 to 40 years, 41 to 50 years, 51 to 65 years, and above 65 years), four groups according employment status (employed, unemployed, students, retirees), four groups according education level (elementary school, high school, college/university, master/doctorate), six groups in respect to personal income (up to 500 euros, 501 to 1,000 euros, 1,001 to 1,500 euros, 1,501 to 2,000 euros, over 2,000 euros, and those with no income) and seven groups

according to household income (up to 500 euros, 501 to 1,000 euros, 1,001 to 1,500 euros, 1,501 to 2,000 euros, 2,001 to 3,000 euros, over 3,000 euros, and those not familiar with household monthly income).

For example, a statistically significant difference among respondents with different level of education exists regarding trust in the judiciary  $F(2, 213) = 12.75$ ,  $p < .01$ , with results indicating that respondents with only completed high school have the least trust in the judiciary (1.40). The same analysis revealed a statistically significant difference among respondents regarding trust in the police  $F(2, 209) = 10.71$ ,  $p < 0.01$ , with results indicating that respondents with completed master's or doctoral studies have higher trust (2.50) in the police than other respondent categories. It is evident that a statistically significant difference among respondents exists concerning trust in educational institutions  $F(2, 209) = 9.01$ ,  $p < .01$ . The mean is lowest among respondents with only completed high school (1.75) and highest among the most educated (2.50), indicating that respondents with completed master's or doctoral studies express the least distrust toward the education system. Further analysis of the collected results shows a statistically significant difference among respondents regarding trust in the government  $F(2, 213) = 9.33$ ,  $p < 0.01$ , with results indicating that the ruling coalition is least trusted by respondents with intermediate education (1.20). A statistically significant difference among respondents exists regarding trust in the Church  $F(2, 213) = 9.71$ ,  $p < 0.01$ , with results indicating that respondents with completed master's or doctoral studies (2.83) trust the Church more than other respondent categories. Statistically significant differences among respondents were identified regarding trust in NGOs  $F(2, 213) = 11.31$ ,  $p < 0.01$ , with results indicating that respondents with completed college/university education (2.04) express less distrust in non-governmental organizations than other respondent categories. It is also found that a statistically significant difference among respondents exists regarding trust in RTS (Radio Television of Serbia)  $F(2, 213) = 9.99$ ,  $p < 0.01$ , with results showing that respondents with intermediate education trust RTS the least (1.45). The same analysis found a statistically significant difference among respondents concerning trust in the military  $F(2, 213) = 4.13$ ,  $p < 0.05$ , indicating that respondents with completed college/university education express the least distrust in the defense forces (2.79). The results show that a statistically significant difference among respondents exists regarding trust in healthcare  $F(2, 209) = 4.19$ ,  $p < 0.05$ , with results indicating that respondents with intermediate education (1.95) trust the

healthcare system less compared to other respondent categories.

### Multiple regression

Multiple regression was used to examine whether, based on a combination of predictors including gender, age, employment status, level of education, monthly personal income, household monthly income, number of household members, and the number of income-earning household members, one can predict respondents' opinions about their trust in state institutions and the non-governmental sector.

Regarding trust in the judiciary, the results indicate that trust can be predicted by this combination of predictors  $R^2 = 0.197$ ,  $F(8.207) = 6.361$ ,  $p < 0.01$ . As individual significant predictors, employment status  $\beta = -0.252$ ,  $t = -3.218$ ,  $p < 0.01$ , level of education  $\beta = 0.500$ ,  $t = 5.568$ ,  $p < 0.01$  and household monthly income  $\beta = -0.122$ ,  $t = -2.248$ ,  $p < 0.05$  were identified.

The results show that highly educated employed respondents with lower household monthly income express less distrust in the judiciary compared to other respondent categories.

Statistically significant prediction was also achieved for trust in the police  $R^2 = 0.182$ ,  $F(8.203) = 5.650$ ,  $p < 0.01$ . Significant individual predictors include respondents' gender  $\beta = -0.352$ ,  $t = -2.282$ ,  $p < 0.05$ , employment status  $\beta = -0.258$ ,  $t = -2.613$ ,  $p < 0.05$  and level of education  $\beta = 0.606$ ,  $t = 5.350$ ,  $p < 0.01$ . This means that employed highly educated males exhibit less distrust in the police compared to other respondent groups.

The results show that trust in educational institutions can also be statistically significantly predicted by this combination of predictors  $R^2 = 0.183$ ,  $F(8.203) = 5.695$ ,  $p < 0.01$ . As individual significant predictors, respondents' gender  $\beta = -0.366$ ,  $t = -2.034$ ,  $p < 0.05$ , employment status  $\beta = -0.461$ ,  $t = -3.994$ ,  $p < 0.01$ , level of education  $\beta = 0.612$ ,  $t = 4.622$ ,  $p < 0.01$ , and household monthly income  $\beta = -0.211$ ,  $t = -2.626$ ,  $p < 0.01$  were identified. Based on the results, it can be concluded that employed highly educated males with lower household monthly income are the least distrustful towards educational institutions.

Trust in the government can also be statistically significantly predicted by these predictors  $R^2 = 0.155$ ,  $F(8.207) = 4.750$ ,  $p < 0.01$ . As individual significant predictors, employment status  $\beta = -0.170$ ,  $t = -2.275$ ,  $p < 0.05$ , level of education  $\beta = 0.381$ ,  $t = 4.457$ ,  $p < 0.01$ , and personal monthly income  $\beta = -0.217$ ,  $t = -3.346$ ,  $p < 0.01$  were identified. This means that employed highly educated respondents

with lower personal incomes express less distrust towards the government compared to other categories of respondent.

It has been demonstrated that trust in parliament can also be statistically significantly predicted by this combination of predictors  $R^2 = 0.155$ ,  $F(8.207) = 4.752$ ,  $p < 0.01$ . As individual significant predictors, the level of education  $\beta = 0.372$ ,  $t = 4.345$ ,  $p < 0.01$ , and monthly personal income  $\beta = -0.242$ ,  $t = -3.739$ ,  $p < 0.01$  were identified. This means that highly educated respondents with lower monthly personal incomes express less distrust towards the parliament compared to other groups of respondents.

A statistically significant prediction was also obtained for trust in the Church  $R^2 = 0.162$ ,  $F(8.207) = 5.001$ ,  $p < 0.01$ . As significant individual predictors, the age of the respondents  $\beta = 0.343$ ,  $t = 3.429$ ,  $p < 0.01$ , employment status  $\beta = -0.467$ ,  $t = -3.615$ ,  $p < 0.01$ , level of education  $\beta = 0.632$ ,  $t = 4.264$ ,  $p < 0.01$ , and the number of household members  $\beta = 0.242$ ,  $t = 2.669$ ,  $p < 0.01$  were identified. Based on the results, it can be concluded that older, highly educated employed respondents living in households with a larger number of members have greater trust in the Church than other categories of respondents.

The results show that trust in NGOs can also be statistically significantly predicted by this combination of predictors  $R^2 = 0.138$ ,  $F(8.207) = 4.144$ ,  $p < 0.01$ . As significant individual predictors, the level of education  $\beta = 0.260$ ,  $t = 2.553$ ,  $p < 0.05$ , the number of household members  $\beta = -0.127$ ,  $t = -2.035$ ,  $p < 0.05$ , and the number of household members generating income  $\beta = -0.279$ ,  $t = -2.189$ ,  $p < 0.05$  were identified. The obtained results indicate that highly educated respondents living in households with fewer members and fewer members generating income express less distrust towards non-governmental organizations than other groups of respondents.

The trust enjoyed by RTS can also be statistically significantly predicted by these predictors  $R^2 = 0.184$ ,  $F(8.207) = 5.816$ ,  $p < 0.01$ . As individual predictors, the age of the respondents  $\beta = 0.148$ ,  $t = 2.274$ ,  $p < 0.05$ , work status  $\beta = -0.198$ ,  $t = -2.355$ ,  $p < 0.05$ , level of education  $\beta = 0.483$ ,  $t = 5.009$ ,  $p < 0.01$ , and monthly personal income  $\beta = -0.244$ ,  $t = -3.334$ ,  $p < 0.01$  were identified. Based on the results, it can be concluded that older, highly educated employed respondents with lower personal incomes express less distrust towards the public service of Serbia compared to other categories of respondents.

It is evident that trust in the military can be statistically significantly predicted,  $R^2 = 0.114$ ,

Table 2

**The results of the correlation matrix on citizens' trust in state institutions and the non-governmental sector**

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
1								1	.776**	.751**	.627**	.601**	.521**	.320**	.541**	.411**	.577**
2									1	.877**	.642**	.599**	.520**	.200**	.655**	.553**	.742**
3										1	.505**	.505**	.523**	.224**	.593**	.506**	.766**
4											1	.972**	.486**	.335**	.552**	.448**	.640**
5												1	.421**	.406**	.503**	.413**	.620**
6													1	-.072	.456**	.597**	.614**
7														1	.261**	.267**	.215**
8															1	.480**	.710**
9																1	.640**
10																	1

\*\* $p < 0.01$ ; \* $p < 0.05$ .

$F(8.207) = 3.323$ ,  $p < 0.01$ . As a significant individual predictor, employment status  $\beta = -0.355$ ,  $t = -2.905$ ,  $p < 0.01$  was highlighted, indicating that employed respondents have more trust in the military than other groups of respondents.

Statistically significant prediction was also achieved for trust in healthcare,  $R^2 = 0.132$ ,  $F(8.203) = 3.849$ ,  $p < 0.01$ . Significant individual predictors include the age of the respondents  $\beta = 0.178$ ,  $t = 2.069$ ,  $p < 0.05$ , and level of education  $\beta = 0.441$ ,  $t = 3.459$ ,  $p < 0.01$ . Based on the obtained results, it can be concluded that this linear combination of predictors proves to be significant for predicting all dependent variables in which we examined the opinions of respondents about their trust in state institutions and the non-governmental sector.

### Correlation

Using Pearson's coefficient of linear correlation, the mutual relationship between dependent variables, which examined respondents' opinions about their trust in governmental institutions and the non-governmental sector, was explored. The obtained results of the correlation matrix are presented in Table 2 and show that the highest degree of dependence was found between trust in the government and parliament ( $r = +0.97$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), meaning that with an increase in distrust towards the government, distrust towards parliament also increases and vice versa.

The results indicate a high degree of dependence between the following variables: trust in the police and trust in educational institutions ( $r = +0.877$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ); trust in the judiciary and trust in the police ( $r = +0.776$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ); trust in educational institutions and trust in healthcare ( $r = +0.766$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ); trust in the judiciary and trust in educational institutions ( $r = +0.751$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ); trust in the police and trust in healthcare ( $r = +0.742$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ); trust in RTS (Radio Television of Serbia) and trust in healthcare ( $r = +0.710$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ).

### Conclusion

Analysis of the research results collected by examining ten dependent variables on a sample of 220 respondents shows that there is significant distrust among the population in Serbia: more than 50% of respondents do not trust the state and non-governmental sector. At the same time, the analysis indicates that the church and the army enjoy the highest level of trust, which is more broadly visible in Table 1.

Furthermore, concerning the trust in the state and non-governmental organizations, a correlation between this variable and the age as well as education level of the respondents is observed. Specifically, higher distrust in the state and non-governmental organizations is noticeable among respondents under 20 years old and individuals with a high level of education.

Regarding the trust of the Serbian population in state institutions and the non-governmental sector, the collected research results show that 80% of respondents have no trust in the judiciary, 72.7% do not trust the police, and 63.7% do not trust educational institutions. A total of 87.2% of respondents have no trust in the government, and nearly the same percentage states that they have no trust in the parliament. About 50.9% of respondents do not trust the church, while 76.4% of respondents do not trust non-governmental organizations. Additionally, 80% of respondents do not trust the Radio Television of Serbia, 47.3% do not trust the Serbian army, and 61.8% of respondents do not trust the healthcare system. T-test analysis revealed that women have greater trust in the NGO sector than men.

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**TRUST IN STATE AND NON-STATE INSTITUTIONS IN THE CONTEXT  
OF ACHIEVING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS  
(THE EXAMPLE OF SERBIA)**

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One of the key conditions for the sustainable development of the national economy is the level of public trust in formal and informal institutions, the directions of evolution of which are determined by state and non-state actors. Based on this assumption, this research deals with the level of citizens' trust in government institutions and the non-governmental sector (on the example of the Republic of Serbia). The sociological survey allowed us to obtain data for statistical analysis, in which the results of answers to the question about institutional trust (in the government, parliament, judicial system, law enforcement agencies, armed forces, church, NGOs, media, health care and educational organizations) are used as dependent variables. The list of independent variables includes the characteristics of the respondents (gender, age, level of education, employment status, personal income, household income and a number of others). In addition, analysis of the results of a sociological survey allows us to provide additional justification for the search for a connection between the level of trust in state and non-state institutions and the prospects for sustainable economic growth in Serbia. It should be emphasized that more than half of the respondents do not trust the state and the non-governmental sector, while the highest level of trust is relevant to the church and the national armed forces. Besides that, we show that the level of trust / distrust in government institutions and non-governmental organizations largely depends on the age characteristics and level of education of the citizens participating in the survey: a relatively lower level of trust is found among respondents under 20 years of age and respondents with a higher level of education.

*Keywords:* state and non-state actors, formal institutions, institutional trust, political trust, sustainable development, sociological survey, Serbia.