

## **The Role of Civil Society Organizations in Institutional Social Responsibility Practices of Businesses**

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**ABSTRACT:** *Problems such as environmental pollution, global warming, inequality of income distribution, and social poverty increase and become increasingly complex. Despite all these negativities, the creation of a better world and society is at least important for every actor in society to ensure sustainability. These problems cannot be solved by individuals, non-governmental organizations or governments on their own. In order to minimize these problems or minimize their negative impacts, the studies which are started from the individual and developed with the sensitivity of the institutions and the cooperation are of great importance. In order to increase the social welfare and to reach the objectives of the studies to be carried out with the aim of raising awareness, it is necessary to allocate more tangible and intangible resources in this context and to use these resources more effectively. Unfortunately, since the most optimal solutions are not yet available, we are continuing to work on these concepts and to develop new models. As one of the developing approaches for this purpose, corporate social responsibility activities have a wide area covering local and international governments, enterprises, individuals and non-governmental organizations. In this study, the effectiveness levels of enterprise and NGO cooperation are tried to be determined in CSR applications with the perspective of associations and foundations.*

**KEY WORDS:** *Civil Society, Social Responsibility, Corporate Social Responsibility*

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### **I. INTRODUCTION**

Technological, economic and social developments in today's enterprises, who want to continue their activities are forced to develop new strategies that will differentiate themselves from their competitors. In today's technology where technology is rapidly spreading and access to technology is relatively easier, the success of enterprises is measured not only by the commercial criteria but also by their reputation in society. For this reason, enterprises need to show that they have an understanding of social responsibility in order to create an effective, strong and long-term corporate image. While Fortune magazine determines the most successful enterprises of America, the profitability as well as how well they serve their customers, how they behave towards their employees and their level of responsibility in the subjects of society, is one of the best indicators. It is seen that more than 80% of the enterprises that manage to enter Fortune 500 address issues related to corporate social responsibility on their websites. This situation shows that managers in today's global business world see their corporate social responsibility practices not only as a moral necessity but also as an economic necessity (Bayraktaroğlu, İlter, Tanyeri, 2009: 1).

Considering the organizational field related to corporate social responsibility (CSR), there are other actors who observe the state as a regulatory actor, who establish partnerships and sometimes gain importance in providing legitimacy to their practices. In particular, it is stated that corporate social responsibility activities should be evaluated together with non-governmental organizations (NGOs). The fact that CSOs are active in the organizational field ensures that enterprises establish partnerships with them in the sense of CSR and at the same time enable many different NGOs to produce policies. Professional organizations, chambers of commerce and chambers of commerce, foundations and other impact focuses are also effective in the institutionalization of CSR (Alakavuklar, Kılıçarslan, Öztürk, 2009: 124). Various factors are effective in the orientation of enterprises towards corporate social responsibility. These are divided into economic and institutional factors. While economic conditions are the determinants of corporate behavior, institutional factors are shaped by state, sectoral-professional associations and stakeholders (Ersöz, 2010: 88). The social responsibilities of the companies, which have been discussed since the beginning of the 20th century, are generally considered within the framework of the social dimensions of business ethics and the activities of the enterprises. The social expectations and the pressures of non-governmental organizations, especially since the 1990s, forced the enterprises to undertake social responsibilities.

Beginning in the year 2000 in Turkey, it is observed that gradually increase their CSR practices. However, CSR practices in Turkey and in western countries such as Enron, Nike, social movements of the face of scandals involving companies like Shell and as a result of public pressure on the company's agenda was to

enter the private sector. This atypical case of CSR practices in Turkey there are two grounds: the failure print companies because of their political and economic weakness of the first nongovernmental organizations, and other companies of international origin, pushing corporate social responsibility practices is the existence of other reasons. Of weakness by the civil society in Turkey, the company with the pressures of conducting civil society Western countries activities abroad should both within and abroad, as in has caused them to encounter (Göçenoğlu and Girgin, 2005: 7). In addition to the role of CSOs on the implementation of CSR practices, CSOs also have stakeholder roles. In this respect, the study revealed that NGOs are seen as less important than other stakeholders to evaluate the studies reveals that when viewed as an important stakeholder NGOs in Turkey are available to studies. However, it is expected that CSOs aiming to increase social welfare by being active in the areas where the resources are used effectively in accordance with the social needs and in the areas that the public cannot provide services due to the reasons such as resource restriction or prioritization will be more effective in this regard and will be perceived as an important stakeholder by the enterprises. From this point of view, in this study, it will be tried to determine the role and impact of CSOs in shaping the social responsibility understanding of enterprises and the perceptions of enterprises about their level of preparation and competence in becoming a stakeholder in CSR practices.

## **II. THE CONCEPT OF SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY**

The concept of corporate social responsibility (CSR) was first included in the 1953 American Socialist Howard Bowen's *Social Responsibilities of the Businessmen* (Businessman's Social Responsibilities). In this book, Bowen emphasizes that businesses should follow policies that overlap with the values of society (Aydede, 2007: 23). According to Bowen's definition, social responsibility is ve the need to make decisions about the values and goals of the society, to pursue policies and to carry out activities in this direction sorumluluk (Yamak, 2007: 28). Craig Smith, who stated that consumers around the world have witnessed the activism of the private sector as never before, in his article w *The New Corporate Philanthropy Corporate* which was published in *Harvard Business Review* in 1994, his kadar corporate social responsibility, in take long-term liability; to provide more than cash contributions; create funds from both business and its departments and from charity budgets; it has defined a change towards strategic mergers and all of this, as well as progress towards business goals (Smith, 1994). Philip Kotler defines the concept of corporate social responsibility, which aims to create a social benefit and to make a difference in society, as the obligation undertaken to improve the welfare of the society through the contribution of voluntary business practices and corporate resources (Kotler, Lee, 2006: 2). The concept of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is evaluated not only as a means of making profits, but also contributing to the social benefits of the society (Öztürk, Savaş, 2014: 6110).

The CSR, which was used to express the responsibility of businessmen at the time when it was first introduced, was later expanded to meet the expectations of the society and started to talk about a corporate responsibility. According to the definition of un *Business for Social Responsibility* (, which is one of the most important non-profit organizations in the USA, CSR is the ethical, legal and commercial behavior of the company. It also meets the expectations of the society (Özbay, 2013: 9). An important issue arises when businesses or managers emphasize social responsibilities. To whom will be held accountable? It is possible to point to six large groups on this subject;

- Shareholders, or business owners
- Employments,
- Customers (consumers),
- Local people,
- National society,
- International community. (Halıcı, 2001, 16)

As a result of the researches and experiences that have been carried out by the araç *Business and Social Responsibility* “, an organization that offers non-profit and information, education, tools and consultancy services to help companies to integrate the corporate social responsibility concept into their business strategies, CSR With the applications it has been found that companies have achieved a very important advantage. Some of these are listed as follows;

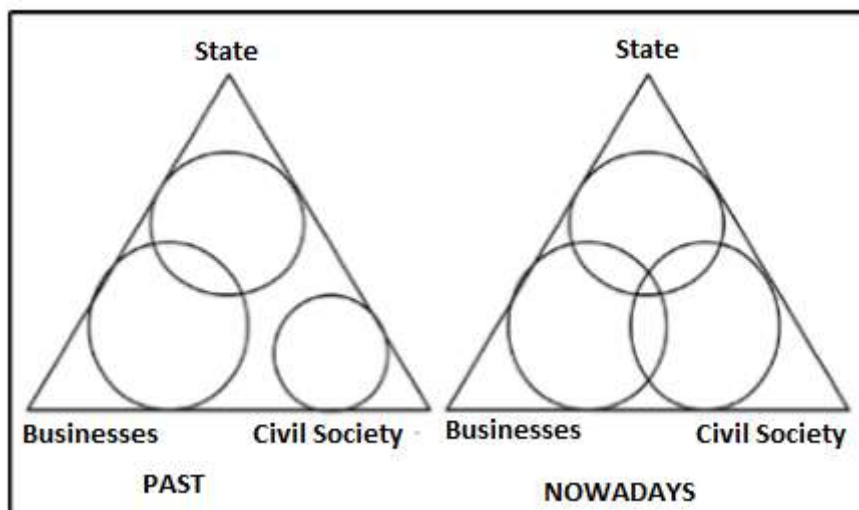
- Increase in sales and market share,
- Stronger brand positioning,
- Strengthening the corporate image and reputation,
- Empowering, motivating and retaining employees,
- Reduction in operating expenses,

Increasing company attractiveness in the eyes of investors and financial analysts (Kotler, Hessekiel, Lee, 2012; 22). The main actors that are active in the organizational field in terms of CSR are the conglomerates, large business groups and NGOs and foundations cooperating with these companies. In addition, increasing internationalization is an important aspect of the spread of practices. On the other hand, the

regulations of the state and the EU, the associations that emerged on CSR, and different actors have legally adopted the regulatory role. Since the 1990s, CSR has been institutionalized as a strategic company practice with the effects of these actors. CSR in terms of institutional change can be assessed development as a kind of spread in Turkey, because a new application (CSR) old values (charity) is institutionalized Unlike depends on the application (Alakavuk are Kılıçarslan, Ozturk, 2009; 130).

### III. STAKEHOLDER IN CSR AS A NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS WORKING IN TURKEY

In the past, macroeconomic targets have been accepted by governments in their areas of responsibility, and it is accepted that the way to achieve macro targets in today's world is through the realization of the micro-targets of enterprises. On the other hand, the role of enterprises in society has changed in the face of governments. It is seen that social and environmental responsibilities are shifted from governments to enterprises. Marrewijk (2003) describes this relationship as in Figure-1 (Marrewijk, 2003: 100);



**Figure 1:** Change in Social and Environmental Responsibility (Source: Marrewijk, 2003: 100).

CSOs are expressed in many terms that evoke different meanings in national and international fields. Er Voluntary Organization "in the United Kingdom,) Private Voluntary Organization" in the United States, "Voluntary Development Organizations" in some countries, and Kuruluş Citizens' Organizations ation in some countries. In some, Non-Governmental Organizations NGO's, Third Sector Organizations.Nonprofit Organizations. Independent Sector Organizations, Charities-Philanthropic Organizations. Grassroots Organizations, Organized Organizations (OUANGO), Elected or Local Councils, Commissions. Initiatives, Platforms, Citizen Actions, Initiations, Platforms, Citizen Actions, Neighborhood Initives (Doğanlı, 2015: 47).CSOs can also be organizations that work in the public interest and constitute public opinion in this respect, which are not for-profit, have a democratic functioning, are bureaucratic and lack voluntary organization. (Yigit, 2005: 31). NGOs vary widely in terms of structure, activity and type. These include science, technology, education, health, sports, development, religion and aid as well as private and public foundations, associations formed by various citizens, trade unions and various professional chambers. NGOs that can be seen as centers of education, culture and communication contribute to the intellectual development of people and change their thoughts. They lead the development of individuals who regard life as not only rights, but also the order of obligations, and the establishment of a culture of voluntary citizenship which is the most valuable asset for society (Doğanlı, 2015, 48).

CSOs develop democracy awareness, contribute to globalization, provide economic development, increase social life level, contribute to public services, fulfill economic tasks, meet the demands of individuals by creating public opinion, solve chronic problems, realize crisis management, communication, representation and they carry their goals (Akatay and Yelkikalan, 2007: 31-43).

CSOs undertake important functions in different areas such as education, health, social services, environment, rural-urban development, where public authority is lacking. In social service areas such as care of the elderly, protection of orphans and education of disabled people, the pioneer belongs to NGOs and can change according to changing conditions over time. The tasks, activities, and functions of CSOs can be gathered under four headings as socio-economic, political, cultural and individual (Doğanlı, 2015, 48).

Corporate Social Responsibility is a practice that encourages institutions to fulfill their environmental and social responsibilities, and that affects their marketing strategies and is voluntary. The important point here is that organizations contribute voluntarily for a better society and a better environment. These voluntary work carried out with the awareness of social responsibility are the activities that are shared by the community, bringing together the private sector, public institutions and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and directing them to act together for a specific purpose. In the face of the ever-increasing environmental, social, economic, cultural and political problems, which have emerged from the first years of industrialization to the present day, the enterprises that have the human and economic resources that can cope with these problems lie in this role with the non-governmental organizations and the government. ). One of the most important problems of non-governmental organizations, which is an important pillar of social responsibility projects, is creating resources naturally. From this point of view, social responsibility approach is an important application that brings together the non-governmental organizations and the private sector on the same plane. studies conducted in Turkey in recent years, the business of a number of activities shows that they start making along with civil society organizations. Activities such as directing their employees to some non-governmental organizations during working hours and providing them with help have started to enter the agenda of the enterprises, which is seen as the most important element of social responsibility projects. The most fundamental element of successful social responsibility projects in terms of private sector institutions is the inclusion of all employees in the project and in this way, benefiting from the personal knowledge and expertise of employees on the one hand and developing social responsibility awareness in employees (Saran, Coşkun, Aksoy, Zorel, 2011: 3736).

Attitudes towards CSR of civil society organizations in Turkey is a unique situation. It is very rare that civil society organizations force companies to be responsible in areas such as environment, law, health and human rights. In terms of corporate social responsibility, the situation is even more interesting. Companies call on NGOs to take responsibility and become a project partner. private sector in Turkey, without the pressure of stakeholders, basically intertwined pushing their corporate social responsibility activities can be mentioned three reasons. The first is that the increasing competition at the global level is forcing companies to engage in activities outside of traditional commercial activities in order to gain a relative advantage. Second, among the criteria for Turkey's EU harmonization process is required to provide to occupy an important place in corporate social responsibility. Because Turkish companies which cannot reach EU standards on corporate social responsibility will not be included in the EU market. Private sector in Turkey and the third important factor pushing their corporate social responsibility activities are increasing regulations in this area. The ILO conventions to which Turkey is bound, the United Nations provides Convention on Human Rights and the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises Directory as international regulations compelling if not particularly corporate governance an important contribution to and development on the agenda of the company's corporate social responsibility within the framework of Turkey (Hof, Hoştut, 2015: 5-6) civil society organizations in Turkey, companies are not active enough about the introduction of corporate social responsibility on the agenda if the widespread use of practices in this area and the promotion, growth and most importantly of public awareness, have been effective in studies such as the conduct of scientific research and reporting (Hof, Hoştut, 2015: 11).

Focused on their work with CSR and sustainable development issues in Turkey, there are only two associations. These associations "Turkey Business Association" and "Corporate Social Responsibility and Sustainable Development Association". Many other associations are working on CSR but addressing CSR as a sub-topic (KSSD, 2010: 15). In the research report made by KSSD; CSR perceptions of Turkey's society, strategies for their companies' corporate social responsibility practices and civil society organizations, approaches, expectations and cognitive status has been demonstrated. According to the data revealed by the survey, Turkey is approaching society within the framework of economic responsibility of the company mainly to the concept of corporate social responsibility; defines the concept of *tanımla* doing its job well, providing quality product-service, working honestly *kaliteli*. The non-governmental organizations associate the corporate social responsibility system of the companies with the projects, aid / support and sponsorship practices. It was observed that the support of the companies in favor of social activities was positive before all the stakeholders, while the sponsorship supports were received in a negative way. Civil society organizations have emphasized that there is a strong relationship between corporate social responsibility and advertising, and in this context, they demonstrate that they understand corporate social responsibility as a marketing strategy that turns into sales. The corporate social responsibility concept of the companies is seen within the framework of the research findings that they think in terms of corporate reputation and social benefit rather than advertising.

As previously mentioned, Turkey is seen that there are big differences in the perception of cooperation between NGOs and businesses within the scope of CSR. The following three studies have been examined as examples of the differences in perception.

- Özmutaf, Celikkol, Celikkol, according to TOBB data in 2015 according to the opinions of the managers of the top 100 for the year 2007 by taking the opinions of the managers in the field of social responsibility activities and determination of the business image: An Empirical Approach
- Corporate Social Responsibility-Oriented Hotel Business Applications, published by Trakya University Journal of Social Sciences in June 2010,
- The Corporate Social Responsibility Approaches of Aydın Organized Industrial Zone Enterprises from the Perspectives of Managers Made in 2016 in the Industrial Zone of Ersöz by Ersöz.

When the work done by Özmutaf, Çelikkol, Çelikkol is examined, the factor analysis of the answers of the executives participating in the interview is made and the analysis information is given in Table 1

**Table-1** Substances, Factors, Cronbach's Alpha Levels, Descriptive Statistics

Poll Items	Factors			Cronbach Alfa		For each item n=32	
	1	2	3	General		Min/Max	x ± s
.....we give importance				,941			
A participatory determination of the subject is....	,957	,175	,012	,865	,910	3-5	4.0 ± 71
The issue is of interest to shareholders.	,890	,218	,229	,871		3-5	4.0 ± 76
The relationship of the issue with state institutions.	,797	,022	,280	,901		2-5	4.0±80
The subject is consistent with the values of the society.	,796	,185	,159	,908		4-5	4.3 ± 48
The issue includes an important social problem.	,740	,366	,154	,905		3-5	4.2±79
Relation of the issue with non-governmental organizations.	,693	,291	,252	,907	,938	3-5	4.1 ± 90
The overlap of the business with the values of the enterprise.	,200	,918	,027	,933		4-5	4.4 ± 50
The issue is consistent with our mission.	,228	,910	,076	,898		4-5	4.5 ± 50
The overlap of our vision with our vision is.	,291	,888	,155	,898		4-5	4.5 ± 50
Providing high quality communication with the relevant media.	,023	,169	,925	,742	,869	2-5	4.0 ± 78
The relationship of the subject with competitors is well examined.	,118	,168	,877	,863		2-5	3.6 ± 86
Providing high quality communication with the target audiences about the media.	,093	,156	,836	,842		2-5	4.1±90
Factors	Eigenvalues					Explained variance	
	Total	Variance %		Cumulative %			
1	5.466	45.551		45.551		35.043	
2	2.439	20.324		65.874		23.937	
3	1.769	14.745		80.619		21.639	
<b>TOTAL</b>						80.620	

Source: Özmutaf, Çelikkol, Çelikkol, 2015; 5-6

The authors comment on the table in question: 1 Substances; stakeholders (F1) were grouped under three factors, namely corporate philosophy (F2) and media and competitors (F3) (Table 1). A positive, moderate-to-low, but advanced relationship was found between the stakeholder and corporate philosophy factors. In fact, the nature of social responsibility brings along with the stakeholders within the scope of corporate philosophy. Even corporate philosophy is created and developed with stakeholders (Munilla and Miles, 2005: 382; Panwar et al., 2006: 6). Yıldırım (2004: 197) states that they are partners and interact with private sector, government and NGOs within the framework of corporate philosophy. -Social responsibility activities affect the image of our business positively düzey and “stakeholders olumlu and“ media-opponents lar factor positively showed a moderate but low level of relationship (Table 7). According to TOBB data, it is not necessary to ignore that it is applied to the top 100 business executives in 2007 (Özmutaf, Çelikkol, Çelikkol, 2015: 8).According to the research conducted by Güzel, it can be seen that 30 enterprises are working independently in terms of the status of the hotel enterprises included in the research. It is seen that they work only with national chain enterprises and with a lower proportion of NGOs working in international chain hotels. Table 2 shows that the cooperation with stakeholders is quite low. Moreover, u When we look at the corporate social responsibility practices and implementation of enterprises, it is seen that many of these applications are limited to donating not only to a project but to various institutions. The answers to the questions asked about the activities carried out by the enterprises reveal this situation more clearly. These practices are often expressed as



assistance to orphaned children, providing environment for mentally handicapped people, tree planting work, landscaping, and cultural studies for protection of cultural values (Güzel, 2010; 300).

**Table2** Status of Businesses and CSR Implementation

	With Stakeholders	With NGO	Independent	Total
Independent	0	0	12	12
National Chain	0	8	9	17
International Chain	1	2	9	12
Total	1	10	30	41

Source: Güzel, 2010; 300

Table 3 shows the importance of Aydın Organized Industrial Zone (AOSB) enterprises given to their stakeholders in the Corporate Social Responsibility Approaches of Aydın Organized Industrial Zone Enterprises from the Perspectives of Managers made in 2016 by Ersöz in Aydın Organized Industrial Zone.

**Table 3:** The Order of Importance of AOSB Enterprises to Stakeholders

	Importance Rank No:	n	Min	Max	Avg.
Customers	1	35	1	4	1,69
Business Owners / Partners	2	35	1	8	2,74
Employees	3	35	2	6	2,83
Suppliers	4	35	1	8	3,46
Government / State	5	35	1	13	6,37
Local Government	6	35	4	11	6,97
Competitors	7	35	5	13	7,54
Environmentalists	8	35	4	13	9,40
Local community	9	35	5	13	9,46
Written and Visual Press	10	35	6	13	9,69
Investors	11	35	5	13	9,97
Unions	12	35	5	14	10,51
Civil Society Organizations	13	35	7	13	10,69
Others (Neighboring Enterprises)	14	35	7	14	13,69

Source: Ersöz, 2016: 10

#### IV. CONCLUSION

Non-governmental organizations are generally foundations and associations acting on a voluntary basis. Their aim is to fully support and help society. These organizations are non-governmental entities. CSOs often undertake the task of raising awareness of people on specific issues as well as helping the society. In addition, they help to bring some social problems to the agenda of the state. In this sense, it can be said that NGOs are composed only of volunteers who come together for this job. In addition to NGOs, they have social responsibilities in their businesses. Because businesses are located in the domain of the social groups they are in. For this reason, they bear the obligation to the society they are in. Businesses have to be sensitive to social problems, to be ethical and respect human rights. For whatever reason, businesses have no right to harm the environment or society. For this reason, social responsibility of enterprises is related to accountability to society. Turkey appears to be on the agenda of the social responsibility of business applications such as field of activity of NGOs is seen that settled until the 1990s. It should be noted that in the post-1990s the society evaluated the enterprises within the framework of these activities. Therefore, the existence of enterprises will also be realized in the context of their social responsibilities.

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