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**TÜRKİYE**

**Eylem MERCİMEK**

**116706002**

**Prof. Dr. Kenan ÇAYIR**

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CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR GENDER EQUALITY IN  
TURKEY

TÜRKİYE'DE TOPLUMSAL CİNSİYET EŞİTLİĞİ İÇİN KURUMSAL  
SOSYAL SORUMLULUK

Eylem Mercimek

116706002

Tez Danışmanı: Prof. Dr. Kenan ÇAYIR

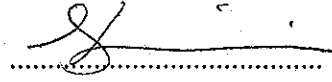
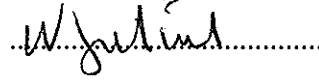
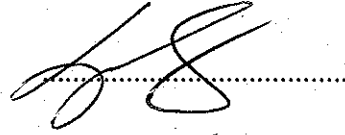
İstanbul Bilgi Üniversitesi

Jüri Üyesi: Prof. Dr. Nurhan YENTÜRK

İstanbul Bilgi Üniversitesi

Jüri Üyesi: Prof. Dr. G. Demet LÜKÜSLÜ

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## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

<b>AÇEV</b>	: Mother Child Education Foundation
<b>CC</b>	: Corporate Citizenship
<b>CED</b>	: Committee for Economic Development
<b>CS</b>	: Corporate Sustainability
<b>CSP</b>	: Corporate Social Performance
<b>CSR</b>	: Corporate Social Responsibility
<b>D&amp;I</b>	: Diversity and Inclusion
<b>GAD</b>	: Gender and Development
<b>GAP</b>	: Gender Action Plan
<b>GM</b>	: Gender Mainstreaming
<b>GRI</b>	: Global Reporting Initiative
<b>KOÇ-KAM</b>	: The Center for Gender Studies at Koç University
<b>NGO</b>	: Non-Governmental Organization
<b>OECD</b>	: Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
<b>SDG</b>	: Sustainable Development Goals
<b>TAPV</b>	: Turkish Family Health and Planning Foundation
<b>TBF</b>	: Transnational Business Feminism
<b>TBL</b>	: The Triple Bottom Line
<b>TURKSTAT</b>	: Turkish Statistical Institute
<b>UN</b>	: United Nations
<b>UNDP</b>	: United Nations Development Programme
<b>UNESCO</b>	: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
<b>WDR</b>	: World Development Report
<b>WEF</b>	: World Economic Forum
<b>WEPs</b>	: Women Empowerment Principles
<b>WID</b>	: Women in Development

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## **ABSTRACT**

This thesis explores gender equality-related corporate social responsibility activities carried out by holding companies in Turkey. It specifically focuses on the collaboration between business organizations, NGOs and experts in carrying out gender equality training programs.

In this study, gender-equality oriented corporate social responsibility activities of Koç Group and Borusan Group were analyzed. This work specifically analyzes how these two Groups organize in collaboration with NGOs or free-lance trainers to provide gender equality training for employees. In accordance with this purpose, in-depth interviews were held with two different groups of respondents. One group consists of the representatives of business organizations that carry out social responsibility activities on gender equality. The other group includes the NGOs and freelance trainers working on gender equality collaborating with business organizations in gender equality training programs.

Family owned conglomerates in Turkey have started to carry out philanthropic activities through revitalizing the waqf culture after the 1960s. Besides these activities, social responsibility has been institutionalized for the purpose of integrating into the global market economy. Companies take the ideas of the founders on social responsibility as a reference while adapting themselves with global developments in the field of CSR. Business organizations consider carrying out CSR activities essential to achieve sustainable economic, social and environmental development. Companies give importance to perform employee-oriented CSR activities that aim to transform the corporate culture. They focus on performing gender equality-related CSR activities with the motivation of keeping up with the global agenda, with the aim of promoting economic growth and development, and with the intention of creating a corporate culture based on diversity and inclusion. Gender equality training for employees is a new form of a strategic alliance between the private sector and non-governmental organizations based on cooperation, joint thinking and, mutual decision-making process.

**Key Words:** Corporate Social Responsibility, Gender Equality, Sustainability, Sustainable Development, Gender Equality Training

## ÖZET

Bu tez Türkiye’de şirketler tarafından iş yerinde toplumsal cinsiyet eşitliğinin sağlanması için yürütülen kurumsal sosyal sorumluluk faaliyetlerini ele almaktadır. Özellikle şirketlerin sivil toplum kuruluşları ve bağımsız olarak çalışan uzmanlar ile toplumsal cinsiyet eşitliği eğitimleri yürütmek için kurdukları iş birliğine odaklanmaktadır.

Çalışma kapsamında Koç Holding ve Borusan Holding tarafından yürütülen toplumsal cinsiyet eşitliği odaklı kurumsal sosyal sorumluluk faaliyetleri incelenmiştir. Özellikle sivil toplum kuruluşları ya da bağımsız olarak çalışan uzmanlar ile iş birliği kurarak şirket çalışanlarına yönelik sağlanan toplumsal cinsiyet eşitliği eğitimleri ele alınmıştır. Bu kapsamda iki farklı grupta derinlemesine görüşmeler yapılmıştır. Görüşme yapılan bir grup şirket temsilcilerinden oluşmaktadır. Diğer grup ise şirketler ile toplumsal cinsiyet eşitliği eğitimleri kapsamında iş birliği içerisinde olan sivil toplum kuruluşu temsilcileri ve eğitmenlerden oluşmaktadır.

Türkiye’de 1960’lardan sonra aile şirketleri vakıf kültürünü yeniden canlandırarak hayırseverlik faaliyetleri yürütmeye başlamışlardır. Bu faaliyetlerin yanı sıra küresel piyasaya dahil olmak amacıyla sosyal sorumluluk aktiviteleri kurumsallaştırılmıştır. Şirketler kurucularının sosyal sorumluluk hakkındaki fikirlerini referans alarak bu alandaki küresel gelişmelere uyum sağlamaktadırlar. KSS çalışmaları yürütmenin sürdürülebilir ekonomik, sosyal ve çevresel kalkınma için gerekli olduğu düşünülmektedir. Şirketlerin kurum kültürünü dönüştürmeyi amaçlayan, çalışan odaklı sosyal sorumluluk faaliyetleri yürütmeye önem verdikleri görülmektedir. Küresel gündemin etkisi, ekonomik büyüme ve kalkınmanın sağlanması, çeşitli ve kapsayıcı bir şirket kültürünün oluşturulması gibi nedenlerden dolayı şirketler toplumsal cinsiyet eşitliği ile ilgili KSS faaliyetleri yürütmeye odaklanmaktadır. Bu aktivitelerden biri olan şirket çalışanlarına yönelik toplumsal cinsiyet eşitliği eğitimleri özel sektör ve sivil toplum kuruluşları arasında karşılıklı iş birliğine ve ortak karar süreçlerine dayanan yeni bir stratejik ittifak biçimi olarak ortaya çıkmaktadır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Kurumsal Sosyal Sorumluluk, Toplumsal Cinsiyet Eşitliği, Sürdürülebilirlik, Sürdürülebilir Kalkınma, Toplumsal Cinsiyet Eşitliği Eğitimi

## INTRODUCTION

This thesis explores social responsibility activities carried out by group companies in Turkey which aim to promote gender-equality in business. Corporations in Turkey have developed various gender equality-related social responsibility projects, especially in the last two decades. These projects focus on a wide range of issues such as removing barriers to women's access to education, eliminating health problems of women and, combatting domestic violence against women. Besides the aforementioned issues, companies specifically focus on ensuring gender equality in business through corporate social responsibility projects which aims at increasing women's participation in employment and decision-making processes. Along with these responsibility projects on increasing women's labor force participation, companies carry out various activities to ensure gender equality in workplaces such as providing gender equality training for employees and developing gender-sensitive communication strategies which aim to eliminate discriminatory statements and behaviors.

This study focuses on gender equality-oriented responsibility activities of Koç Group and Borusan Group. These two prominent conglomerates of Turkey put gender equality and empowerment of women in business on their agenda and perform significant corporate social responsibility activities collaborating with non-governmental organizations and professionals. This work specifically analyzes how these two Groups organize in collaboration with NGOs or free-lance trainers to provide gender equality training for employees. Recently, gender equality training is adopted by Koç Group and Borusan Group as a new strategy to promote gender equality in the workplace. Koç Group collaborated with AÇEV, a non-governmental organization working in early childhood and adult education, in "I Support Gender Equality for My Country" "*Ülkem İçin Toplumsal Cinsiyet Eşitliğini Destekliyorum*" project and conducted "Awareness Raising Seminars on Gender" for its employees. Borusan Group also aims to provide this training for its workers through collaborating with AÇEV in 2019. The aim of this study is to

present how these two Groups frame gender-equality in business through their corporate social responsibility activities.

In recent years, there has been growing interest in the social and environmental aspect of corporate activities (Dillard & Murray, 2013). Corporate social responsibility is based on the idea that business organizations have responsibilities to society and the environment. Corporations are expected to operate by taking into consideration the demands of its internal and external stakeholders and the impact of their decisions on the natural environment. CSR is considered as a contract between business and society to build a trustworthy relationship. Through the globalization of the market, the pervasiveness of neoliberal policies, and the reduced role of governments, corporations come into prominence as significant actors to deal with various problems (Matten, Crane & Chapple, 2003). Companies are expected to perform CSR activities to achieve economically, socially and, environmentally sustainable development.

In the literature, CSR has started to be discussed in the 1950s within the framework of the social responsibilities of businessmen (Bowen, 1953/2013). This approach has changed in the course of time and companies as an institution has regarded as agents that have responsibilities to society (Yamak, 2007). In the 1970s, the social movements led business organizations to adopt a more action-oriented CSR perspective and new conceptualizations emerged in the CSR field such as corporate social responsiveness and corporate social performance (Carroll, 2008). From the 1990s, corporate sustainability has been widely accepted as a management approach and corporate citizenship has become a significant strategy to enable sustainable development.

Gender equality is regarded as an essential factor to enable sustainable development and economic growth (World Bank, 2012; United Nations Development Programme, 2012). Because women's participation in the labor force is considered as a means of enabling gender equality, increasing women's employment rate is usually determined as the objective of CSR activities of corporations. Corporations perceive women's empowerment within the framework

of women's engagement of market economy. This approach is entitled as "the business case for gender equality". In the literature, this approach of companies is criticized by various scholars in terms of incorporating feminist ideas and values into the neoliberal rationality. The gender-equality related CSR activities of business organizations are highly debated since they are claimed to contribute to the neoliberalization of feminism.

The historical roots of the idea of CSR in Turkey can be traced back to the philanthropic activities and waqf (charitable foundation) system which based upon the notion of *hayırseverlik* in the Ottoman period. Although the influence of waqfs has started to decrease after the establishment of the Republic of Turkey due to the emergence of the state as a new actor in social responsibility area, during the 1960s the waqf culture has been revitalized by the conglomerate owners. Holdings have begun to carry out social responsibility activities on education, health, and culture through their foundations in order to contribute the society. Along with the globalization, CSR has been widely accepted by business organizations in Turkey especially after the 1990s. According to van Het Hof, the motivations of corporations in Turkey to adopt CSR differentiate from the corporations located in Europe and the US. After certain social and environmental scandals arise from the operations of corporations, CSR has started to be acknowledged as a strategy to deal with the social pressures. However, it is argued that, because of the weakness of civil society, business organizations in Turkey did not face pressure and critique in this manner (van Het Hof, 2009). CSR has become an influential management practice among corporations in Turkey along with the globalization and national liberalization policy. Besides the traditional philanthropic activities carried out by its foundations, conglomerates in Turkey have embraced CSR practices in order to compete in the global market (Alakavuklar, Kılıçaslan & Öztürk, 2009).

This thesis explores the gender equality-related social responsibility activities carried out by holding companies in Turkey through specifically focusing on the gender equality training programs provided for the employees. I limit my study with the corporate social responsibility activities of Groups which aim to

promote gender equality in workplaces. Recently, gender equality training is adopted by Groups in Turkey as a strategy to promote workplace gender equality. They have started to collaborate with NGOs/free-lance trainers to provide training on gender equality. Several groups in Turkey such as Eczacıbaşı, Boyner, Borusan and Koç Group are engaged with gender equality training. In this thesis, I specifically focus on Borusan and Koç Group. These Groups are two of the most prominent and well-established conglomerates that perform social responsibility activities for many years in Turkey. They give importance to carry out gender-equality related CSR activities collaborating with NGOs and professionals and these groups aim to reach out to their employees with gender equality training programs to enable gender equality in workplaces.

The study adopted a qualitative approach based on in-depth interviews. The interviews were held with two different groups of respondents. One group consists of the representatives of business organizations that carry out social responsibility activities on gender equality. The other group includes the NGOs and freelance trainers working on gender equality collaborating with business organizations in gender equality training programs. Besides the fieldwork conducted, for the presented study; the secondary sources such as the websites, annual reports and sustainability reports of the business organizations were analyzed. The data acquired by the interviews and secondary sources were analyzed with the method of critical discourse analysis (Fairclough, N., 2003; van Dijk, T., 2003).

Following the selection of the participants through snowball and convenient sampling technique, five in-depth interviews were conducted. Interviews were held with one trainer who conducts gender equality training programs collaborating with corporations, one of the managers from Borusan and Koç Group who could provide information about gender equality-related corporate social responsibility projects carried out in their organizations, one manager from AÇEV who could give information about the collaboration with private sector through gender equality training programs and a management consultant/trainer whose areas of interest are

sustainable development, gender equality training programs, and NGO-public-private sector partnership building.

This work consists of three chapters. The first chapter of the thesis includes the conceptual framework of corporate social responsibility, the historical background of the concept and the analysis of the concept in the context of Turkey. This chapter includes discussions on the reasons for the emergence of CSR as an organizational practice. It presents the CSR models and theories that frame the social responsibilities of business organizations. It mentions the changes in the CSR perspective and new conceptualizations in the CSR field based on the developments in the socio-economic context. This chapter also includes the historical development of the idea of CSR in Turkey.

The second chapter of the thesis focuses on the relationship between gender equality and corporate social responsibility. In this chapter, gender equality-related corporate social responsibility activities are discussed within the framework of the theories on the neoliberalization of feminism. This chapter includes the debates on the harmonization of the idea of gender equality with neoliberal economic policies, neoliberal ideology, and neoliberal governance.

The third chapter of the study includes the findings of the fieldwork conducted. The analysis of the findings is based on the Groups' social responsibility perspective and the motivations of carrying out gender-equality related social responsibility activities. This chapter also includes the findings on gender equality training as a practice of collaboration of private sector organizations and NGOs/free-lance trainers.

## **CHAPTER I**

### **CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY**

#### **1.1. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK**

Corporate social responsibility (CSR) is an influential and widely used concept in the academic field, business, and civil society. Nevertheless, it is a contested term; it is not easy to state that there is a consensus on the definition and basic set of principles of the CSR. In the literature, one of the most referenced definitions of the CSR is as follows “it is a concept whereby companies integrate social and environmental concerns in their business operations and in their interaction with their stakeholders on a voluntary basis” (Commission of the European Communities, 2001, p. 6). Expectations from business organizations regarding their responsibility to society are effective for companies to engage with corporate social responsibility. Along with the rapid development of technology and industry, the natural environment has been severely damaged and various discussions begin on the insufficiency of natural resources and the possibility of transferring resources to future generations. According to Dillard and Murray (2013), besides the increasing crisis due to climate change and resource shortage, social issues such as corporate corruption and human rights violations have escalated and the role of business organizations in society has come into question. Companies as the powerful actors in society that consume natural sources for their operations and provide employment have encountered with a pressure to act in socially responsible ways (Dillard & Murray, 2013). Consequently, CSR has developed to “counter the consequences of an imbalance of corporate power” (Logsdon & Wood, 2002, p. 157).

Werther and Chandler (2011) categorize the arguments for CSR as moral, rational and, economic. The moral argument of CSR indicates the reciprocal agreement between society and business. Making profit to survive is the main motivation of business organizations and this financial gain is acquired by means of the workforce, consumer market and, legal and physical infrastructure provided

by the society (Werther & Chandler, 2011). In return for this support, the business has an obligation to act in responsible and to respect the moral principles of society. The reciprocal action between society and business leads to the emergence of CSR which is shaped by individual and societal ethics and values. The rational argument of CSR is closely related to moral reasons. The business should take ethical standards into consideration, violation of these standards is not solely inappropriate but may also lead to the emergence of social and legal consequences such as boycotts or fines (Werther & Chandler, 2011). The rational argument of the CSR is based on abstaining from these consequences. According to Werther and Chandler, rather than encountering with compulsory adjustments of the government, a business organization may consider taking voluntary action as a more cost-effective strategy. The economic argument of CSR is based on the idea that gaining an advantage in the competitive market. Considering the needs, demands, and concerns of stakeholders and establishing long term relationship with them through CSR activities strengthens the brand image, enables social legitimacy and economic stability (Werther & Chandler, 2011).

Studies related to business ethics and social responsibility are mostly the products of the twentieth century; especially after the 1960s, the concept of corporate social responsibility has started to take place in the management literature. According to Pasquero, there are philosophical, moral and pragmatic reasons for the emergence of the concept in the United States (as cited in Yamak, 2007). Because of the liberal policies, members of American society have started to doubt about the conformity between the benefits of society and the interest of the private sector. Companies have started to be accepted as responsible for the macro-economic crises however these developments did not change the common belief that free enterprise model is suitable for the society (Yamak, 2007, p. 14). Instead of keeping a distance from the liberal approach, it has preferred to reform and strictly control the strategies of business organizations (as cited in Yamak, 2007). The moral reason for the emergence of CSR in American society is explained in relation to religion and idealism. According to Yamak (2007), the company or the businessperson who serves the needs of the society through meeting the demands

of the market have been regarded as deserving to be wealthy and, in return for the economic well-being, the company or the businessperson are expected to do charity works for the members of society who enables this prosperity. The pragmatic reason for business organizations to invest in CSR is to eliminate the tension and discomfort in the society which drives from the operations of the business (as cited in Yamak, 2007).

The social responsibility model of Archie B. Carroll is one of the most referenced models in the CSR literature. According to this model, there are four kinds of social responsibilities which constitutes the whole idea of corporate social responsibility: economic, legal, ethical and philanthropic (Carroll, 1991). The hierarchy between these four responsibilities is depicted as a pyramid form:

**Figure 1.1:** The Pyramid of Corporate Social Responsibility



**Source:** Carroll, A. B. (1991). The Pyramid of Corporate Social Responsibility: Toward the Moral Management of Organizational Stakeholders. *Business Horizon*, 34(4), 39-48.

According to Carroll, economic responsibility which is the first and foremost responsibility of business organizations takes part in the base layer of the pyramid. Being profitable and efficient, and having a competitive position in the market are the main economic responsibilities of corporations (Carroll, 1991). The second layer of the pyramid consists of the legal responsibilities of business

organizations. Corporations should act in accordance with the laws and regulations which proclaimed by governments. Companies are expected to pursue their benefits within the framework of the law (Carroll, 1991). Ethical responsibilities which located at the third layer of the pyramid are formed by the practices that expected or prohibited by the members of society. These responsibilities reflect the norms and value judgments of society members which affects the actions of the firms. Even though these ethical responsibilities are not codified into law, for Carroll, this component has “dynamic interplay” with legal responsibilities (1991, p. 41). Ethical judgments of society compel businesspersons to perform beyond the level required by law. Philanthropic responsibilities take part at the top of the CSR pyramid. This component includes discretionary or voluntary activities which aim to promote the welfare of society such as investing to the arts and education (Carroll, 1991).

There have been developed various concepts and models related to the CSR. In the following section, the developments in the field of CSR will be evaluated historically.

## **1.2. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF THE CONCEPT**

### **1.2.1. The 1950s- 1960s – “Social Responsibilities of Businessman”**

Most of the scholars acknowledge H.R. Bowen’s book, “Social Responsibilities of a Businessman” which was written in 1953 as the starting point of the debates on corporate social responsibility. Bowen (1953/2013) states that the businessman in the United States has an essential role in society even can be considered as “the symbol of American culture” (p. 3). According to him, the decisions of the businessman have direct influences on products and services, prices of goods, the level of employment, economic processes such as inflation or recession, moral and cultural standards of society, international economic and social relations and individual lives and personalities (Bowen, 1953/2013). Businessmen should consider social consequences of their decisions and although their decisions are constrained by market competition, laws and regulations, they

should behave in a socially responsible way so as to continuation and prosperity of the free enterprise (Bowen, 1953/2013).

Bowen (1953/2013) concentrates on the question that “what responsibilities to society may businessmen reasonably be expected to assume?” (p. 5). For him, the main factor that determines the responsibilities of the businessman is the good of society because “business, like government, is basically of the people, by the people, and for the people” (Bowen, 1953/2013, p. 5). The welfare of society should be taken into account in order to be successful in business management. Bowen (1953/2013) states that a businessman should realize his responsibilities about social issues, take the economic and social consequences of his decisions into consideration and be able to change his decisions if they are not contributing to the public welfare.

Bowen evaluates certain criticisms raised against the idea that businessman has responsibilities to society. One of the criticisms is based on the idea that competitive conditions of market prevent a businessman from adopting the doctrines of social responsibility. Working for the welfare of society will increase the cost of production and businessman will fall behind of the rivals who do not equally prefer to work for the good of society. Therefore, it is regarded that only those businessmen who have monopoly power can come through the expenditures of engaging in socially oriented activities (Bowen, 1953/2013). Bowen (1953/2013) acknowledges that market competition has an influence on the decisions of businessman however, he does not accept the claim that competition retains a businessman from showing his goodness. Gains of a business should not only be used to produce more goods and services but also investing for the improvement of the conditions under which these goods and services are produced (Bowen, 1953/2013). The cost of a product may be higher for a consumer when the businessman prefers to improve the working conditions and status of the workers, but the loss of consumer will be far less than the gain of community in general (Bowen, 1953/2013). As another criticism of the doctrines of social responsibility, it is claimed that businessmen are profit-minded hence it is not

realistic to anticipate that they will prioritize social obligations (Bowen, 1953/2013). For Bowen (1953/2013), this argument has a certain degree of validity however considering the motives of businessmen only in terms of profit maximization is misleading. As a member of society, businessmen share the values of society, aware of the societal pressures and the importance of public opinion. In addition to these arguments, it is also claimed that social responsibility is used by businessmen in order to justify their power in society (Bowen, 1953/2013). According to Bowen (1953/2013), this is also a valid argument however it must be noticed that businessman is subject to social controls, procedures and institutions hence he is not the only arbiter of his social obligations. Socially accepted rules and standards have an influence on business operations.

Bowen proposes certain ideas to respond to social expectations and concerns such as “changing the composition of boards of directors, providing a representation of the social viewpoint in management, use of social audit, social education of business managers, development of a business code of conduct.” (p. 151). However, Carroll (2008) argues that it is not possible to see much evidence that any of these was accomplished in the 1950s. He states that businessmen at that era gave importance to “talk” rather than “action” (Carroll, 2008, p. 26). As the summary of the corporate social responsibility approach in the 1950s, Frederick highlights that there were three essential ideas in that term: “the idea of corporate managers as public trustees, the idea of balancing competing claims to corporate resources, and the acceptance of philanthropy as a manifestation of business support of good causes” (as cited in Carroll, 2008, p. 25).

In the 1960s, debates on CSR accelerated when Milton Friedman put forward his thoughts about the responsibilities of business managers in his famous book “Capitalism and Freedom”. According to Friedman, accepting that the corporate managers have social responsibilities beyond meeting expectations of their stockholders and members contradicts with the character and nature of the free market (1962/2002). Utilizing the resources in order to increase profit is considered as the only social responsibility of a businessperson. Friedman criticizes the

argument that business leaders should contribute to charitable activities and regards this kind of contribution as improper use of corporate funds in a free-enterprise society (1962/2002). Friedman believes that the decision on how to use the company's money belongs to the shareholders; investing the money of shareholders for socially responsible activities is an unacceptable strategy for business organizations.

Keith Davis (1960) defines social responsibility by referring to "businessmen's decisions and actions taken for reasons at least partially beyond the firm's direct economic or technical interest" (p. 70). According to Davis, there are two different aspects of social responsibility. On the one hand, businessmen are responsible for economic issues related to public welfare. On the other hand, developing human values such as cooperation, motivation and self-realization in work is the social obligation of businessmen (Davis, 1960). Davis (1960) states that social responsibility consists of both these "socio-economic" and "socio-human" obligations and the latter one is usually left out, however, the continuation of the existence of business depends on its acceptance of both socio-human and socio-economic responsibilities (p. 71). If business organizations are regarded as solely an economic unit, its responsibilities will be limited to economic aspects of social well-being such as the costs of unemployment and its financial consequences for the economy. Therefore, businessmen will not concern with the socio-human results of unemployment such as the "loss of human dignity and the social disorganization" (Davis, 1960, p. 74). For Davis (1960), it is not possible to separate economic and social aspects of life since they are interrelated and ignoring the responsibilities in the socio-human area will lead to the loss of power of business organizations.

In this period, social responsibility is discussed within the framework of the decisions and obligations of businessmen. In the following years, it is seen that social responsibility has been institutionalized. Especially with the influence of social movements, social responsibility has started to be perceived as an obligation of companies as an institution to meet the expectations of society.

### **1.2.2. The 1970s- 1980s CSR and New Complementary Themes**

In the 1970s, the idea of CSR was influenced by social movements. According to Freeman and Reed (1983), in these years “social movements related to civil rights, antiwar, consumerism, environmentalism and women’s rights served as a catalyst for rethinking the role of the business enterprise in society” (p. 88). As a result of these developments, some regulations for business organizations were needed to be implemented at the international level (Yamak, 2007).

Committee for Economic Development (CED) contributed to CSR discussions by a publication called “Social Responsibilities of Business Corporations”. This study was one of the significant advancements of the period which affects the corporate social responsibility perspectives of the business organizations. The statement aims to explain the responsibilities of business enterprises and to show them the ways of meeting the growing expectations of society. The committee claimed that through the support of the dynamics of the private enterprise system, the business has fulfilled the economic responsibilities and contributed to the economic growth by producing goods and services, and providing jobs for society (CED, 1971). In addition to these, it is argued that the members of the society have other expectations from business organizations related to the human values and qualitative features of life. These expectations of business are described as “three concentric circles of responsibilities” (CED, 1971, p. 15).

According to CED, the inner circle contains basic economic responsibilities of business organizations such as creating jobs, producing goods and promoting economic growth. The intermediate circle includes the responsibilities to carry out the economic tasks by taking social values and priorities into accounts such as environmental conservation and fair treatment to employees. The outer circle encompasses the responsibilities of business to deal with major social problems such as poverty and urban decay (CED, 1971, p. 15).

CED’s emphasize on the responsibilities related to societal issues may be regarded as a response to the social developments and movements that shape the

social thought of the era. Especially the outer circle of the model can be considered as a response to the demands of society. In the 1970s, the need of business organizations to meet the expectations of society led to the emergence of new complementary concepts such as corporate social responsiveness and corporate social performance.

### **1.2.2.1. Corporate Social Responsiveness**

According to Frederick, beginning around the 1970s, there has been a conceptual shift in management studies. Frederick defines this dynamic as a transition from the “philosophical-ethical concept of corporate social responsibility” which he defines as CSR<sub>1</sub> to the “action-oriented managerial concept of corporate social responsiveness” which he defines as CSR<sub>2</sub> (1994, p. 150). As one of the differences between these concepts, Frederick (1994) states that, while CSR<sub>1</sub> has abstract principles which cause reluctant and reactive attitudes in business organizations, CSR<sub>2</sub> has tangible and pragmatic principles which make firms more open and proactive. Frederick (1994) asserts that business firms which internalize the principles of CSR<sub>2</sub> give importance to anticipate and respond to social pressures immediately. While CSR<sub>1</sub> was generally dependent on the visions and decisions of managers and executive officers, CSR<sub>2</sub> approach place emphasize on institutionalized company policy (Frederick, 1994).

Frederick (1994) reviews the transition from CSR<sub>1</sub> to CSR<sub>2</sub> and asserts that this transition takes the “moral heat” of business: with the emergence of corporate social responsiveness it is expected that the less attention will be given to the moral and ethical standards of the corporation and more to its tangible and apparent activities. Frederick states that the practitioners of CSR<sub>2</sub> are in need of tangible ways to deal with the demands of society, therefore CSR<sub>2</sub> approach highlights the necessity of “tools, techniques, organizational structures and behavioral systems” for responsive business organizations (1994, p. 158). CSR<sub>2</sub> approach encourages business executives to do empirical research for having a certain degree of

knowledge in order to respond to social interest groups and government agencies (Frederick, 1994).

According to Ackerman and Bauer (as cited in Yamak, 2007), monitoring and comprehending the environmental conditions, considering the shareholders' demands, developing political policies in accordance with changing social conditions are the components of the corporate social responsiveness approach. This approach is a solution for business in order to respond to social pressures.

In the 1970s, the scope of the CSR was broadened with the concept of corporate social performance (CSP).

#### **1.2.2.2. Corporate Social Performance**

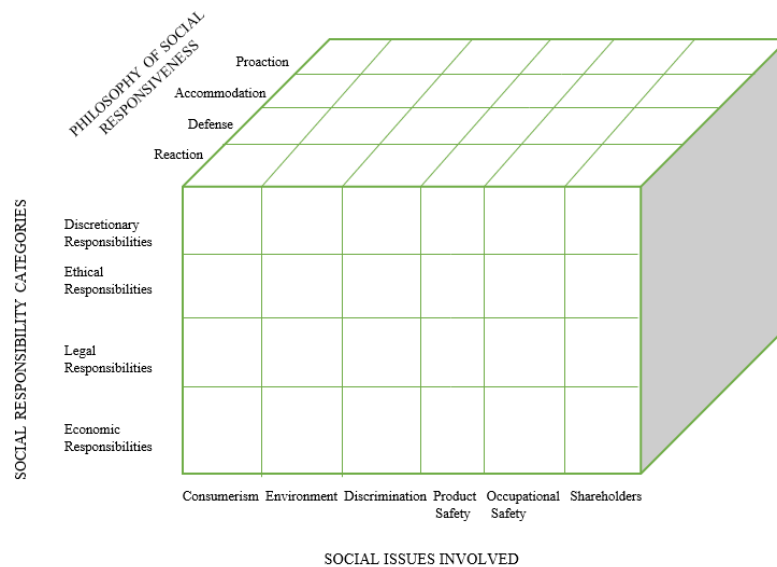
Sethi (1975) states that corporate social responsibility has been used in various contexts by different actors thereby these different perspectives and disagreements bring limitation and confusion in discussions. Therefore, he has developed corporate social performance (CSP) as a structural framework for the measurement and analysis of social activities of business organizations. This CSP model consists of social obligation, social responsibility, and social responsiveness.

Sethi (1975) defines social obligation as the activities of corporations respond to the necessities of market mechanisms and legal regulations for corporate legitimacy. Social responsibility is beyond social obligations and carries the corporations up to a level where it is congruent with social norms, values, and ideals (Sethi, 1975). Social responsibility does not mean to operate in a radically different manner however it is the adaptation of new patterns before they are legally forced to. According to Sethi (1975), social responsiveness is related with the connection between social problems and business activities such as “installing devices to remove pollutants from factory smokestacks or paying immediate and fair compensation to victims of pollution or product-related injuries” (p. 62). These short-term adaptations which aim to meet the needs of society are regarded as essential factors for the legitimacy of corporate behavior. According to Sethi, these

strategies are significant for corporations to respond to social pressures immediately as well as playing a long-term role in society. The business organizations are expected to “anticipate” the social changes and initiate programs or policies that will reduce the negative effects of their operations (Sethi, 1975, p. 63).

Another CSP model which consists of corporate social responsibility, social issues, and social responsiveness is developed by Carroll.

**Figure 1.2:** The Corporate Social Performance Model of A.B. Carroll



**Source:** Carroll, A. (1979). A Three-Dimensional Conceptual Model of Corporate Performance. *The Academy of Management Review*,4(4), 497-505.

As mentioned before, according to Carroll, social responsibility is categorized into four different groups as philanthropic, ethical, legal and economic responsibilities. Carroll (1979) asserts that these four categories are not mutually exclusive, these categorizations are simply made for to remind that an action of business organization can be considered as mainly one or another of these groupings. Business organizations have to identify the social issues which are closely relevant to these four social responsibility categories. Carroll (1979) emphasizes that these social issues constantly change and differ for different industries, however, “consumerism, preoccupation with the environment,

employment discrimination, product safety, occupational safety and health, and business ethics” can be regarded as certain social issues that come into the business agenda in years (p. 501). Social responsiveness, the third dimension of the model, refers to the strategy and philosophy of business to deal with social issues. According to Carroll (1979), social responsiveness gives importance to the level and kind of managerial action; business organizations may prefer to “react, defense, withdraw, bargain or compromise” as a strategy (p. 502).

In this period, the emphasis was placed on to advance CSR approach with theoretical studies and conceptualizations. Scholars have developed theoretical models of CSR that emphasize the necessity of the mobilization of corporations to meet the demands of various stakeholders. In this period, the debates about who the companies are responsible for, and who they are influenced by the decisions they have made have intensified.

### **1.2.2.3. Stakeholders**

The concept of stakeholder is a relatively new concept. It has long been believed that shareholders are the only actors that have rights over the profit of an enterprise however this idea has started to change by the effect of expectations of different groups in society. It has been noticed that not only shareholders but also various actors who interact with the company have to be taken into consideration for successful management. Freeman and Reed (1983) state that “by the late 1970s the need for strategic management processes to take account of nontraditional business problems in terms of government, special interest groups, trade associations, foreign competitors, dissident shareholders, and complex issues such as employee rights, equal opportunity, environmental pollution, consumer rights, tariffs, government regulation, and reindustrialization had become obvious” (p. 90). They assert that establishing strong relations with these actors will facilitate the realization of the objectives of companies.

Freeman and Reed (1983) define the stakeholder as “any identifiable group or individual who can affect the achievement of an organization’s objectives or who is affected by the achievement of an organization’s objectives. Public interest groups, protest groups, government agencies, trade associations, competitors, unions, as well as employees, customer segments, shareowners are stakeholders in this sense” (p. 91). According to van Het Hof (2009), if the stakeholders lost confidence on the corporate, they can give up do their duties; customers may not purchase products of the corporation, shareholders may sell their shares, workers may slack off. This led to the loss of the legitimization of corporate and if the business organization cannot compensate this lost, it eventually disappears (van Het Hof, 2009, p. 13). Strong relationships between corporations and stakeholders are based on trust, cooperation, and respect (Wilson, 2003).

### **1.2.3. The 1990s and onwards- Sustainability and Corporate Social Responsibility**

The current debates on CSR focus on sustainability and sustainable development. The most frequently referenced definition of sustainable development is presented in “Our Common Future” report of the World Commission on Environment and Development (1987) as “meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (p. 15). Since the establishment of the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development in 1992, sustainability has been regarded as an essential strategy to tackle ecological problems, to enable social and economic development of the countries. Corporations are perceived as a key actor to promote sustainable development. On the one hand, they are regarded as responsible for creating unsustainable conditions because of their operations. On the other hand, they are expected to enable sustainable development through utilizing their sources. Therefore, corporate sustainability is widely accepted as a corporate management approach.

### **1.2.3.1. Corporate Sustainability**

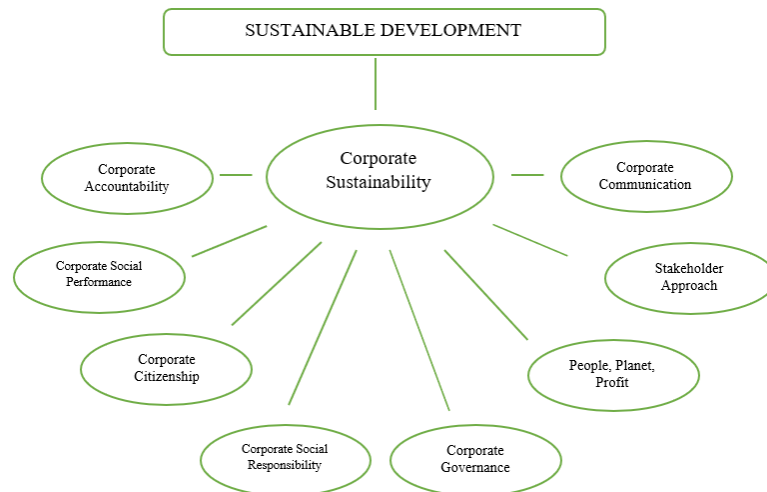
Sustainability is a commonly shared value of various organizations. Companies incorporate sustainability approach into their management strategies to deal with economic, environmental and social issues. Besides financial performance, corporations are expected to focus on environmental responsibility and creating social values. The triple bottom line (TBL) which associated with the phrase “people, planet, and profit” is a framework to measure the impact of the corporations on these three dimensions. The inventor of the term, Elkington states that companies should concentrate on social justice, economic prosperity and environmental quality in their sustainability agenda (1997, p. 70).

Corporations adopt sustainability approach due to the growing public awareness and concern for “more ethical, more humane and more transparent way of doing business” (van Marrewijk, 2003, p. 95). Customers and investors believe that producing quality goods and services are not solely enough to trust and support a business organization. Corporations have started to acknowledge that “social values are no longer solely materialistic but are moving beyond capital and finance to more spiritual and harmonious values such as social equity, social responsibility, and environmental protection” (Quaddus & Siddique, 2011, p. 1). Sustainability is perceived as a business case. In order to extend the long-term profit maximization of the companies, corporate sustainability is regarded as both a corporate value and part of the business strategy. Within the framework of sustainability, corporations perform social responsibility projects to ensure brand recognition, positive business reputation, customer loyalty, and better financial performance.

van Marrewijk and Were (2003) define corporate sustainability (CS) as “a company’s voluntary activities demonstrating the inclusion of social and environmental concerns in business operations and in interactions with stakeholders” (p. 1). Incorporating social values into business, advocating transparency and public disclosure and including stakeholders to the corporate management decisions are certain features of the approach. Corporate sustainability is used as an umbrella term for various other concepts which refer to the role of

business in society such as corporate social responsibility, corporate citizenship, corporate social performance, TBL, corporate governance, stakeholder approach and corporate social communication (Signitzer & Prexl, 2007).

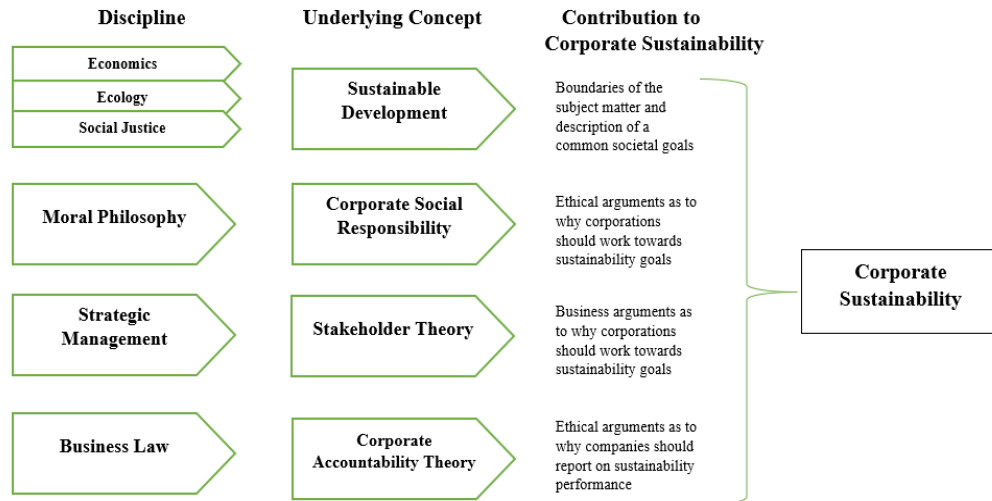
**Figure 1.3:** The Corporate Sustainability Model of Signitzer & Prexl



**Source:** Signitzer, B., & Prexl, A. (2007). Corporate Sustainability Communications: Aspects of Theory and Professionalization. *Journal of Public Relations Research*, 20(1), 1-19.

According to Wilson (2003), the four pillars of corporate sustainability as a new and evolving corporate paradigm are sustainable development, corporate social responsibility, stakeholder theory, and accountability. He states that CS is an alternative to the traditional growth and profit maximization model as this paradigm requires to companies to follow certain goals related to sustainable development- social equity and justice, economic development and environmental protection.

**Figure 1.4:** The Evolution of Corporate Sustainability



**Source:** Wilson, M. (2003), Corporate sustainability: what is it and where does it come from?, *Ivey Business Journal*, March/April, 1-6.

Recently, the number of initiatives which discuss, defines, monitors and measures the social responsibility activities of business organizations has increased. New international actors and non-governmental organizations have emerged as organizers, supervisors, and consultants of corporates for their social responsibility activities (Yamak, 2007). With the effect of globalization, new set of regulations and agreements have been needed for multi-national corporations. United Nations sponsored sustainability strategy, Global Compact, is one of the forms of these global norms. According to Vogel (2006), UN Global Compact is the first initiative of the UN to collaborate with business and its goal is to support business organizations to adopt its principles about human rights and environmental responsibility.

UN Global Compact (2015) asserts that corporate sustainability is closely linked with the value-systems and business principles of companies, for this reason, ten principles related to “human rights, labor, environment, and anti-corruption” are determined for business organizations to incorporate into the strategies and procedures (p. 11). According to the UN Global Compact, sustainable companies

must do five things, “they must operate responsibly in alignment with universal principles and take actions that support the society around them. Then, to push sustainability deep into the corporate DNA, companies must commit at the highest level, report annually on their efforts, and engage to where they have a presence” (2015, p. 7). UN Global Compact also takes strategic actions to promote UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) in the business organizations. In 2015, world leaders accepted 17 sustainable development goals to “end poverty, improve health and education, reduce inequality and spur economic growth” (United Nations, n.d.).

Business organizations are regarded as corporate citizens who should promote sustainability by embracing the goals and principles of the Global Compact. In the following section, the concept of corporate citizenship, which is widely used recently, will be evaluated.

#### **1.2.3.2. Corporate Citizenship**

According to Matten, Crane and Chapple (2003) from the 1990s onward, corporate citizenship (CC) began to “compete with and replace the traditional aspects of corporate social responsibility in the realms of management theory and practice” (p. 111). They state that there are three perspectives of corporate citizenship perspectives in the literature: “a limited view” that emphasize the philanthropic roles and charity activities, “an equivalent view” that equalize CC with CSR and, “an extended view” that reconsider the business-society relations. The top of Carroll’s (1991) CSR pyramid model which consists of philanthropic activities based on the idea of ‘putting something back to the society’ is regarded as an example of a limited view of corporate citizenship. Carroll (1998) defines corporate citizenship in another study and states that in order to be a good corporate citizen, a corporation should be profitable, should obey the law and fulfill its legal responsibilities, should take ethical values and practices into consideration and, should carry out philanthropic activities. Matten and colleagues regard this study of

Carroll as the equivalent view of CC as its definition is almost the same with his earlier definition of CSR. Related with the extended view of CC, they claim that because of states fail to provide citizenship rights to its members, corporate involvement in citizenship is a compulsory act rather than a voluntary one: “companies take over those functions with regard to the protection, facilitation and enabling of citizen’s rights, formerly an expectation placed solely on the government” (Matten et al., 2003, p. 116).

Windsor (2001) emphasizes the two significant phenomena which led to the emergence of CC. First one is “rising societal expectations of corporate benefits in an age of governmental cutbacks” and the second one is “strategic management aimed at value creation in all functions and activities of a firm” (2001, p. 238). He states that CC is a strategic investment of corporations to the social and natural environment for achieving corporate growth and sustainable development; corporate citizenship enhances CSR.

### **1.3. CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY IN THE CONTEXT OF TURKEY**

Philanthropy *-hayırseverlik-* is a significant notion to comprehend the historicity of social responsibility in Turkey. *Hayırseverlik* indicates emotions and religious beliefs; working for the wellbeing of the society is considered as a good deed (Alakavuklar, Kılıçaslan & Öztürk, 2009). In the Ottoman Empire era, *Ahi* organizations and waqfs (foundation) were the two institutions that influenced by the doctrines of philanthropy. *Ahi* is an occupational organization formed by traders which aims to organize business life and helps people in need by carrying out certain charity activities. A waqf is “a permanent endowment set up with property the income from which is to be used for charitable purposes” and this property is devoted to God as a gift to serve the purpose of the well-being of the society (Mandaville, 1979, p. 293). According to Çizakça (2006), one reason for wealthy Ottomans to establish a foundation was related to the protection of property rights.

Ottoman elites preferred to transform their personal property to a waqf which is acknowledged as the property of God, in order to avoid confiscation of their assets by the state. Founders of waqfs were considered as reliable and trustworthy people thereof earning social respect was another reason for the establishment of waqfs (Çizakça, 2006). Waqfs provided financial support for the construction of schools, hospitals, food banks, bridges, ports, and cisterns in the Ottoman Empire era (Çizakça, 2006). According to Çizakça (2006), through the support of these organizations, the property rights of citizens and the architectural heritage of Islam civilization were protected. At the beginning of the twentieth century, Ottoman ruling elites intervened the waqfs and appropriated their property to prevent the devastating financial effects of the dissolution of the empire. As a result of this policy, the number of waqfs declined a considerable extent (Alakavuklar et al., 2009). According to Ertuna and Tukul (2009), although the value-system of Ahi organization embodied most of the contemporary principles of the CSR, this traditional socio-economic model was removed because of the attempts for modernization and industrialization (p. 152). In 1924, Ahi organizations were transformed into “Chamber of Merchants and Craftsmen” and the activities of waqfs were centralized by the establishment of “Directorate General of Foundations”. According to Alakavuklar et al. (2009), these decisions represent that the state shaped the philanthropic activities in a coercive way and presented new norms and regulations as a dominant actor. The operations of these local organizations were centralized under state control.

After the foundation of the Republic of Turkey, the aim was to build a national and independent economic system. The state considered the private sector as a crucial actor who can enable economic development through industrialization. Therefore, the state began to put pressure on the private sector. According to Bugra, “the overwhelming significance of the state in determining the course of business life appears as a key determinant of the character of business activity in Turkey” (1994, p. 4). The fact that the state was a dominant actor in this period caused social responsibility to be associated with the state. Philanthropy which was regarded as an individual level activity in the empire era has started to become an institutional

notion. The state has started to support business organizations which will be the leading figures of social responsibility activities in Turkey.

In the 1960s, by virtue of the incentives of the state, holdings became a critical agent of the economy in Turkey. This period can be considered as the revitalization of the philanthropic activities and waqf culture. Holdings in Turkey have started to establish foundations to contribute the society through building hospitals, educational institutions and, art centers (Topal & Gurdag, 2009). Through the activities of the foundations, the traditional perspective which based on the idea that “the rich have a responsibility to help the poor” is included in the corporate structure of the holding companies. Holdings allocate a percentage of its profits to the foundation, donations are accepted only from the family-controlled business (Ararat, 2008). Most of the family-owned conglomerates in Turkey have foundations carried out philanthropic activities in the field of education, health, culture, and art.

**Figure 1.5:** Examples of Foundations of Family-Owned Conglomerates in Turkey

<b>Holding</b>	<b>Foundation</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Purpose</b>
Koç Holding	Vehbi Koç Foundation	1969	“To revitalize the custom of foundation dating far back, to carry out activities in the field of education, health, and culture for a modern and developing Turkey”
Sabancı Holding	Sabancı Foundation	1974	“To contribute educational, cultural and social development of Turkey, make a difference in the lives of individuals”
Eczacıbaşı Holding	Dr. Nejat F. Eczacıbaşı Foundation	1978	“To contribute education in Turkey, to support scientific researches, to protect and develop Turkish culture and art”

Borusan Holding	Borusan Kocabıyık Foundation	1992	“To carry out responsibility activities on education, training, and culture, to contribute the Turkish national education”
Doğuş Holding	Ayhan Şahenk Foundation	1992	“To carry out responsibility projects with children on education, health, culture/art”
Doğan Holding	Aydın Doğan Foundation	1996	“To solve social problems, to increase the level of education and culture, to support the economy through investing for the skilled workforce”

**Source:** Vehbi Koç Foundation (n.d.), Sabancı Foundation (n.d.), Dr. Nejat F. Eczacıbaşı Foundation (n.d.), Borusan Kocabıyık Foundation (n.d.), Ayhan Şahenk Foundation (n.d.), Aydın Doğan Foundation (n.d.)

It is argued that the dominant role of the state in social and economic life resulted in the lack of self-confidence of business organizations in Turkey which directed them to the social responsibility activities as a search for legitimacy. According to Ararat and Göcenoğlu (2006) “the drivers behind this phenomenon can be related to the need for gaining legitimacy and social acceptance for relatively new wealth in a country where duality in income levels is disturbing” (p. 5). According to Göcenoğlu and Girgin, because most of the business organizations in Turkey was family-owned enterprises and the public share was limited, companies didn’t give priority to accept transparency and accountability as business principles (as cited in van Het Hof, 2009). According to Ararat and Ugur (2003), the state’s heavy intervention in the economy resulted in corruption and opacity in business organizations and, increasing “private risks” made business organizations more dependent on the state (p. 10). Turker (2015) states that, considering the cases of frauds, tax evasion, and corruption, it might be stated that context of Turkish business did not adopt the ethical and moral responsibilities which Carroll (1979)

mentions, however, CSR conception in Turkey is largely built on the philanthropic activities.

In the 1980s, the military coup and liberalization policy has greatly influenced the business life in Turkey. Various economic reforms have been carried out to integrate into the global economic system, an export-oriented industrialization model has been set and the dominance of the public sector has gradually decreased. Companies focused on protecting their business profitability due to increased economic competition, therefore, they didn't give priority to perform CSR activities (Göçenoğlu & Onan, 2008). However, as business organizations have started to participate in international organizations and to accept international agreements, the interest in CSR has increased. According to Göçenoğlu and Onan (2008), especially the UN Conference on Human Settlements, Habitat II, in Istanbul in 1996, was a significant event for sustainable development issues to be discussed in Turkey. According to Ararat (2008), the external factors such as OECD membership and the EU harmonization process brought certain government regulations which shape CSR practices in Turkey. Corporate Governance Principles which were published by Capital Markets Board of Turkey is an important government attempt to promote CSR in Turkey (Ararat & Göçenoğlu, 2006). The purpose of publishing these principles related to shareholders, public disclosure, transparency and, stakeholders is to integrate business organizations in Turkey into the international market. According to the guideline, "the company should be considerate of its social responsibilities; should act in accordance with the company's ethical rules and respect to the environment, the consumers and the public health" (Corporate Governance Principles, 2003, p. 40). It is also emphasized that corporations should announce their activities performed within the framework of these principles in their annual reports.

The institutionalization of CSR practices in Turkey is related to the integration of the global market economy. Holdings in Turkey perform social responsibility activities to compete in the global market economy, to build a positive business reputation and to acquire social legitimacy. Ertuna and Tukul (2009) state that these activities can be evaluated as a *bricolage* which consists of

both traditional philanthropic activities and CSR activities that institutionalized with the influence of liberalization and globalization (p. 130). The harmonization of traditional and global perspectives of CSR indicates the distinctive character of the social responsibility approach in the context of Turkey.

## **CHAPTER II**

### **CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY AND GENDER EQUALITY**

In the first chapter, I focused on how social responsibility of business is perceived and how the concept of corporate social responsibility evolved historically. Especially after the 1990s, corporate social responsibility has become an influential strategy of corporations to enable sustainability and sustainable development. Corporations are expected to go beyond profit maximization and be sensitive to human rights and the environment. The fact that sustainability is regarded as a business case, corporations carry out responsibility activities related to social equality in order to promote sustainable development. To build a sustainable future, promoting gender equality is considered as a necessary strategy which can solve global governance problems such as sustainable economic development, the eradication of poverty and financial stability (True, 2015). Inter-governmental organizations integrate gender mainstreaming strategy into their policies to address these issues. Companies cooperate with inter-governmental organizations and incorporate gender equality perspective into their CSR activities which mostly intend to participate women in the workforce. According to True, “gender balance” in economic participation and decision-making is the new mantra for good governance and competitiveness in the global political economy” (2015, p. 330). Grosser (2009) states that the rising role of companies in citizenship processes within the neoliberal context has a significant impact on women in terms of their roles as employees and welfare beneficiaries.

The fact that corporations and inter-governmental organizations focus on gender equality lead to the emergence of certain debates on the relation between feminism and neoliberalism. In the literature, it is widely discussed whether feminist ideas and discourses are incorporated into neoliberal economic projects, governance strategies, and principles. According to Özügürlü (2012), these discussions are related to the legitimization of neoliberal policies that integrate

women's labor into the capitalist market with the support of feminist arguments. It is argued that feminist ideals such as economic independence and demand for autonomy have been instrumentalized for neoliberal goals. It is argued that the integration of feminist values into neoliberal policies and ideology is supported by the activities of international organizations such as the World Bank and the United Nations. Özügür (2012) emphasizes that women are "called" by these organizations for enabling economic development, ensuring more peaceful and democratic politics, creating a sustainable urban environment and reducing poverty (p. 129). In this chapter, I will follow the categorization suggested by Prügl (2014) to evaluate these debates and focus on the integration of the idea of gender equality into neoliberal economic policies, neoliberal ideology, and neoliberal governance.

## **2.1. GENDER EQUALITY AND NEOLIBERAL ECONOMIC POLICIES**

In the late 1970s when neoliberalism has started to become an influential economic doctrine which prioritizes marketization, privatization, and deregulations, women's movement had been criticizing the male-dominated labor market. Women's liberation through participation in the labor force was regarded as an essential aspect of gender equality (Akgöz, 2016). Over the years, with the rapid growth in the service sector, the demand of women to participate in the labor force has resulted: from the 1970s to the 2000s, 53 million new jobs were created in the service sector around the world and 60% of employees of these jobs were women (Eisenstein, 2005). Eisenstein (2005) claims that the "unfinished revolution" of the women's movement now seemed complete; the women in the middle class are not solely mother and wife but the significant agents of the competitive market (p. 498).

Eisenstein (2005) argues that women's engagement in paid labor was highly useful for capitalism. She considers this as a "dangerous liaison" between feminism and capitalism; even though capitalism benefits from women's labor for at least two

centuries, now the system utilizes the ideological and political labor of women and feminist values to strengthen and to legitimize the corporate globalization (Eisenstein, 2005).

Fraser (2009) focuses on the relationship between feminism and capitalism and claims that the cultural changes that the second wave has achieved have served to the structural transformation of capitalist society which is intrinsically in contradiction with the feminist ideal of equality. Second-wave feminism challenged the “economistic, androcentric, étatist and Westphalian” characteristics of the state-organized capitalism (p. 101). Fraser states that class-centric consideration of state-organized capitalism addressed social issues in terms of distribution; social issues and inequalities were perceived as a matter of class inequality. Second-wave feminism rejected the tendency of explaining social injustices with solely class maldistribution. With the slogan of “the personal is political” feminists redefined the meaning of justice. They have highlighted various injustices embedded in family, traditions, civil society and everyday life which were ignored or somehow rationalized. In other words, they have included not only the economic inequalities but also hierarchical roles and power imbalances located in various aspects of life into the concept of injustice (Fraser, 2009). The androcentric perspective of state-organized capitalism idealized the wage of the male workers however the earnings of women were considered as supplementary income of the family wage. Fraser states that “state-led capitalism placed the family wage on the basis of the state policy for welfare and development and by valorizing waged work, it decreased the social significance of unwaged care work and reproductive labor” (p. 102). Feminists called attention to the invisible labor of women. They revealed the connections between “the capitalist labor market which is divided in accordance with the gender roles and women’s unpaid caregiving, men’s domination of the political system and women’s subordination in marriage and personal life” (2009, 104). Feminists also refused the étatist character of state-organized capitalism which prioritizes the decisions of professionals and technocrats for designing policies and treats its members as taxpayers, clients and consumers instead of active citizens. Fraser states that consciousness-raising which is a new organizational

practice emerged as an alternative to the bureaucratic and top-down institutions and ideology of state-centered capitalism. Although second-wave feminism rejected economism, androcentrism, and étatism of state-organized capitalism it remained Westphalian because most of the feminists considered their “states as the primary addressees of their demands” (p. 106).

Fraser (2009) states that “the rise of second-wave feminism coincided with a historical shift in the characteristics of capitalism”, the movement flourished in the circumstances of the transition from state-organized to neoliberal capitalism (p. 107). As the second wave feminism was influenced by identity politics, it tended to underestimate the critiques of political economy; adopting the paradigm of recognition and becoming distant from the paradigm of redistribution led to the second-wave movement to detach itself from the critique of capitalism (Fraser, 2009). Moreover, neoliberal capitalism has undermined the ideal of family wage, this ideal has been replaced by the norm of the two-earner family. Women participated in the labor market however they faced with long working hours, low wages and, precarious employment. Disorganized capitalism has legitimized all these disadvantages by claiming women’s participation in the labor force is a necessity for the empowerment of women and ensuring gender equality (Fraser, 2009). The critique of family-wage of second-wave feminism has unintentionally created a two-sided result: one the one hand there are upper-middle-class women who struggle to get beyond the limits in working life and to “crack the glass ceiling”; on the other hand there are “female part-timers, low-wage service employees, domestics, sex workers, migrants and microcredit borrowers” seeking to improve their life conditions and emancipate from traditional authority (Fraser, 2009, p. 110). Either way, the ideal of women liberation is instrumentalized for capitalist accumulation. Fraser points out that the consequence of feminist anti-étatism is the proliferation of empowerment projects that prioritize local participation instead of top-down statist actions. NGOs and financial institutions collaborated and developed projects which aimed to eliminate women’s poverty. The perspective of feminist anti-étatism was appropriated by neoliberalism. When the state abandoned macro-level policies to eliminate poverty, the micro-credit

implementations for women based on local participation have become widespread (Fraser, 2009).

The arguments of Fraser are criticized in several ways. Kroik states that Fraser overemphasizes the influence of the second-wave feminism in the transition to neoliberalism however the policy decisions that bring about alterations in the international economy and structure of labor should also be taken into consideration in order to comprehend this transition (Kroik, 2014). Aslan and Gambetti (2011) state that the critiques of Fraser may be valid for a particular kind of feminist practice, however, “there are different forms of feminist practice, to claim that this is a global tendency is to disregard the differences between feminist movements in their cultural, political, and geographical contexts” (p. 132). Funk (2013) also suggests that Fraser misrepresents second-wave feminism and generalize socialist feminist critique to all feminist practices (as cited in Prügl, 2014).

According to Prügl (2014), the arguments of Roberts are “more sensitive to international diversity and variations within feminism” (p. 5). Roberts (2015) evaluates the relationship between feminism and neoliberalism through the concept of transnational business feminism (TBF). Roberts (2012) defines this concept as a “coalition of feminist organizations, capitalist states, regional and international funding institutions, NGOs and transnational corporations that converge on the need to promote women’s equality” (p. 87). According to Roberts (2015), TBF has some identifiable characteristics: “1- it is transnational in scope, 2- the ideological underpinnings are in the instrumental and marketized logic of the ‘business case’ for gender equality, 3- corporations have played an important role in defining its parameters, 4- it tends to pivot around the 2008 global financial crisis, 5- it is helping to link certain feminist ideas and interests to the interests of global capitalism.” (p. 211). TBF is a transnational project because it is guided by the initiatives of multinational corporations, NGOs and intergovernmental institutions such as the World Bank and the European Union. The ideology of 'business case for gender equality' of TBF is connected to the Women in Development (WID) approach: women’s participation in the paid labor force will ensure socio-economic

development of the countries. Corporations constitute the economic rationale of the TBF. Companies prefer to invest in women through micro-credits or other financial systems because they consider women as trustable borrowers who are more risk-averse and more inclined than men to use their gains for the interest of their children. Roberts state that the global financial crisis in 2008 was a crucial moment for TBF. The economic crisis weakened the legitimacy of global capitalism. As a result of this, business organizations focus on carrying out philanthropic activities to restore public trust (Roberts, 2015). Through CSR projects carried out for the empowerment of women, the relationship between feminist ideals and capitalist interests are consolidated.

Roberts (2015) criticizes TBF because of its “naturalized and essentialized view of women and gender relations that ignores the historical and structural causes of poverty and gender-based inequality” (p. 209). TBF reinforces both the apolitical/ahistorical gender equality perspective and the neoliberal policies that have created gender-based oppression through the global feminization of labor (Roberts, 2015). The “feminization of labor” indicates the women’s increased labor force participation since the 1980s. The economic deregulations have increased the women’s participation in labor however weakened their employment security and income level (Standing, 1989). The CSR projects as the products of TBF strive to engage women in the capitalist market however Roberts argues that the integration of women into labor markets does not directly mean their empowerment. Because the period when a considerable number of women have entered the labor force coincided with the time when the labor markets were becoming increasingly precarious. Roberts (2015) emphasizes that “entry into the paid labor force may improve gender equality, for many workers, pay and working conditions have become increasingly poor and rendered the social reproduction of themselves, their families and their communities more and more difficult” (p. 219).

In the following section, I will analyze the neoliberal ideology that reinforces the idea that gender equality is possible with the participation of women in the market economy.

## **2.2. GENDER EQUALITY AND NEOLIBERAL IDEOLOGY: “BUSINESS CASE FOR GENDER EQUALITY”**

It is widely believed that ensuring gender equality will bring various social and economic advantages. According to Prügl (2014), gender equality is regarded as a valuable goal because it “promotes economic growth, fosters development, and reduces hunger; it enables better company management, a better understanding of customer needs, and thus increased profit; it reduces excessive risk-taking and thus increases financial stability” (p. 6). Corporations have developed various projects and produce “particular business-oriented and market-based knowledge about women and gender relations” to support the business case for gender equality (Roberts, 2015, p. 210). This neoliberal ideology of corporations is enhanced by the strategies of various actors such as the World Bank and the UN (True, 2015).

### **2.2.1. The World Bank- “Gender Equality as Smart Economics”**

As a significant inter-governmental actor, the World Bank (2006) designed its policy agenda on gender issues and developed 2007- 2011 Gender Action Plan (GAP) with the title of “Gender Equality as Smart Economics”. The quotation from the Economist magazine in the report may be evaluated as the summary of the arguments of the Bank: “Forget China, India and the internet: economic growth is driven by women” (“Women in the Workforce”, 2006). The objective of the action plan is defined as to advance women’s economic empowerment in the World Bank Group client countries in order to promote shared growth and accelerate the implementation of Millennium Development Goal 3- promoting gender equality and women’s empowerment” (World Bank, 2006, p. 9). This objective is based on the idea that women’s empowerment will reduce poverty and contribute to the economic growth of the country. On account of the empowerment of women, not only women but also men, children, and society will benefit from this improvement. Therefore, increasing women’s economic opportunities is perceived as smart economics. For the implementation of the plan, World Bank (2006) encourages civil society, private sector organizations and client governments however it is

important to state that by “proposing to develop the business case, strengthen staff expertise and measure the development impacts of gender mainstreaming in the economic sectors” the Bank gives the priority to private sectors to achieve its objectives (p. 3).

In 2012, the Bank published its annual World Development Report (WDR) and the topic of the report was “Gender Equality and Development”. In this work, the World Bank (2012) states that gender equality matters due to two reasons: “ on the one hand gender equality matters intrinsically, because the ability to live the life of one’s own choosing and be spared from absolute deprivation is a basic human right and should be equal for everyone, independent of whether one is male or female; on the other hand, gender equality matters instrumentally, because greater gender equality contributes to economic efficiency and the achievement of other key development outcomes” (p. 3). The WDR states that the outcomes of gender equality are enhancing economic efficiency, producing positive outcomes for the next generation and affecting the institutions and decision-making processes. As it is seen in the first outcome, the approach of smart economics is emphasized once again in the WDR: eliminating barriers which prevent women to participate in the labor force and to access education will increase the gains that ensure the competitiveness of the country in the global economy. It is stated that the inability to utilize women’s labor, skills and talents result in a high economic cost for the country. As a result of the labor force participation, women will have more authority on the household incomes which they would spend for the well-being of their children. Therefore, investing in women will have a positive impact on the next generation. Additionally, empowerment of women as a political actor will contribute to the representation of different views which will transform the institutions and policies.

The ideology of smart economics is criticized for several reasons. Critics state that reports and activities of the World Bank consolidate the existing stereotypes of men and women and maintains the unequal gender relations by depicting women as mothers who are responsible for the well-being of their

children. In the WDR it is frequently emphasized that the women are more inclined than men to invest their earnings to the next generations. According to Roberts and Soederberg (2012) women are conceptualized as “rational and autonomous workers” who will devote their money for the prosperity of their children, however “the construction of gender and women’s empowerment is tension-ridden, as women are sufficiently rational and autonomous to work, but, ultimately, their labor is motivated by love” (p. 955). Women are considered as reliable and productive actors of the market who should be invested in. The Bank frequently emphasizes that the investment made for women will be the propulsive force for economic development. According to Chant (2012), gender is solely identified with women; men are noticeably absent in the campaigns and reports of the Bank. She argues that the Bank might presume that the returns of the investments made for men may be less than invested for the women. According to Chant (2012), if that’s the case, it is significant to ask to what extent this assumption contains the “essentializing oppositional stereotypes of male ‘egoism’ and ‘irresponsibility’ versus female ‘altruism’ and ‘self-sacrifice’” (p. 202). According to Chant and Sweetman (2012), the essential question is whether the aim of the female investment is to promote gender equality and empowerment of women or to facilitate development and economic liberalization with the support of cheap labor of women. Chant (2012) argues that, although in the GAP report of the Bank, the purpose of “making markets work for women” was frequently restated, the emphasis on investing in women to enable economic growth and to eliminate poverty shows that the purpose is more about “making women work for markets” (p. 202). Especially the conditional cash transfer programs and microfinance initiatives of the Bank which aims to integrate poor women into the market economy for economic development support this argument. Chant (2012) asserts that the ideology of smart economics is ‘smart’ for the development agencies, corporations and other private organizations however it is less ‘smart’ for the poor women. Instead of promoting large-scale policies which involve different institutions and actors, women are considered as rescuers from poverty: the investment projects leave the responsibility on the shoulders of the women (Chant & Sweetman, 2012).

### **2.2.2. The United Nations Women Empowerment Principles – “Equality Means Business”**

Women Empowerment Principles (WEPs) were launched on International Women’s Day in March 2010 by UN Women in collaboration with the UN Global Compact. WEPs are a code of conduct for business organizations to empower women in the workplace, marketplace, and community. The fact that the subtitle of WEPs is “Equality Means Business” indicates that principles are established in accordance with the ideology of “business case for gender equality and empowerment” (Bexell, 2012). The principles are,

- 1- “establish high-level corporate leadership for gender equality”
- 2- “treat all women and men fairly at work”
- 3- “ensure the health, safety, and well-being of all women and men workers”
- 4- “promote education, training and professional development for women”
- 5- “implement enterprise development, supply chain and marketing practices that empower women”
- 6- “promote equality through community initiatives and advocacy”
- 7- “measure and publicly report on progress to achieve gender equality”.

According to UN Women and the UN Global Compact, empowerment of women in economic life is indispensable for “building strong economies, establishing more stable and just societies, achieving internationally-agreed goals for development, sustainability and human rights, improving quality of life for women, men, families and communities, propelling businesses’ operations and goals” (UN Women and the UN Global Compact, 2011). WEPs recommends corporations to include internal and external stakeholders in company policies and programs to create a corporate culture which advances inclusion and equality. It emphasizes the importance of giving equal pay to women and men, implementing gender-sensitive recruitment practices and enabling participation of women in decision-making processes. WEPs state that corporations should provide safe

working conditions, implement zero-tolerance policy towards all forms of violence at work and try to provide health insurance or other needed services for workers including for survivors of domestic violence. Companies should invest in training programs to develop the knowledge, skills, and abilities of women. WEPs highlights that companies should invest in social responsibility activities to enhance company engagement to equality, human rights, diversity, and inclusion. WEPs also underlines that corporations should measure and publicly report their gender equality-related plans and activities.

WEPs are criticized for supporting the idea of achieving gender equality only within the framework of participation in the capitalist market economy. According to Roberts (2015), even though these principles may be significant for improving the lives of women, it also naturalizes and normalizes the idea of promoting gender equality and empowerment of women within the capitalist labor market which is increasingly precarious. The other problematic aspect of the WEPs is to evaluate empowerment through cost-benefit calculations (Bexell, 2012). It is argued that “the cost of intimate partner violence in the United States alone exceeds US\$5.8 billion per year in for direct medical/health care services and productivity losses; in Canada, the cost of violence against women is approximately \$1.17 billion per year and, in Asia gender equality gap in employment costs \$47 billion annually” (UN Global Compact & UN Women, 2011, p. 10). Roberts criticizes the market-based logic of corporations which highlights the monetary costs of gender inequality. She states that the business case “quantifies complex historical and power-ridden relations” and prioritizes profitability through the instrumentalist approach of gender equality (Roberts, 2015, p. 213).

### **2.3. GENDER EQUALITY AND NEOLIBERAL GOVERNANCE**

Governance emerges as a concept in the ‘post-statist’ period of the 1980s when the economic policies were determined within the neoliberal framework and the role of the state in the global economy was re-examined (Rai, 2004). The

neoliberal economic perspective is influential in global governance. The neoliberal discourse of governance underlines “the efficiency, welfare, and freedom of the market, and self-actualization through the process of consumption” (Gill, 1995, p. 401). Corporations and inter-governmental organizations internalize the neoliberal discourse of governance and come into the prominence as leading actors to solve various governance issues. Enabling gender equality is considered as a necessary condition for sustainable development and economic growth. For this reason, gender mainstreaming is acknowledged as an influential strategy for global governance.

### **2.3.1. Gender Mainstreaming**

The idea of gender mainstreaming is related to the development approaches. In the early 1970s, Women in Development (WID) approach focused on poverty and aimed to improve material conditions of women for their own development instead of dealing with gender subordination and unequal gender order (Waal, 2006). As an alternative to WID, the Gender and Development (GAD) approach has emerged in the 1980s emphasized the need to challenge the gender roles of both men and women and the necessity of women’s labor to make development more efficient (Waal, 2006). The concept of gender mainstreaming (GM) appeared for the first time in international texts after the United Nations Third World Conference on Women in Nairobi in 1985, in relation with the discussion on the role of women in development however gender mainstreaming was introduced and endorsed as a governance approach and as a policy for gender equality after the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995 (Council of Europe, 1998). The Platform for Action which was established after the conference declared commitments about critical areas of concern such as women and poverty, education, economy, decision making, media, environment and violence (United Nations, 1996). Gender mainstreaming is an essential concept referenced in the report frequently while explaining strategic objectives about these concerns. The Platform for Action states that in addressing these issues “governments and other actors

should promote an active and visible policy of mainstreaming a gender perspective in all policies and programs, so that, before decisions are taken, an analysis is made of the effects for women and men, respectively” (United Nations, 1996, p. 27). Gender mainstreaming is defined by Council of Europe as “the (re)organization, improvement, development, and evaluation of policy processes so that a gender equality perspective is incorporated in all policies at all levels and at all stages, by the actors normally involved in policy-making” (1998, p. 15). According to Grosser and Moon (2005), GM integrates technical and political processes, “the technical systems include the tools of gender-disaggregated statistics, gender impact assessment, gender proofing, gender equality training, and the development of equality indicators; the political aspect of GM is related to the agenda-setting opportunities to enhance the inclusion and participation of women in decision-making and to reduce or eliminate gendered barriers to such participation” (p. 328). Gender mainstreaming is regarded as integrating gender equality perspective in all aspects of life. The critical point is the rising role of the private sector and international / inter-governmental actors for gender mainstreaming. Gender mainstreaming has been endorsed not only by European governments but also by significant actors such as the World Bank and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). The World Bank asserts that the Gender Action Plan (GAP) is built on the lessons learned from the Bank’s previous experiences with gender mainstreaming, so the aim of the plan is designed to “develop business case, strengthen staff expertise and measure the development impacts of gender mainstreaming in the economic sectors” (2006, p. 3). Because the desire of the Bank is to advance the implementations of gender mainstreaming, the GAP of the Bank creates a four-year road map to apply GM strategy to the economic sectors.

According to Koray (2011), even though the feminist movement and demands contribute to form the equality policies, in the mainstreaming of this policy it is aimed to benefit from women’s labor force to ensure development within the global economic context. The fact that the policies of the UN and projects of the World Bank focus on enabling gender equality through the employment of women is related to this perspective. According to Koray (2011), equality policies

aim to create a change in society, but the limits of the economic system are accepted as the boundaries of the equality policies. Gender mainstreaming policies intend to increase the participation of women in paid employment however the priority is given to the advantages of this situation which will provide in terms of the global economic system and neoliberal policies. Therefore, Koray (2011) asserts that gender mainstreaming policies “instrumentalize” rather than “actualize” feminist demands and ideas (p. 20).

According to Grosser and Moon (2005), CSR is a component of gender mainstreaming strategy and a new system of societal governance. Women are considered as pre-eminent figures of global governance and corporate-led development; “CSR projects of business organizations have coincided with the emergence of women as the public faces of international development” (Calkin, 2015, p. 655). In the literature, CSR projects which focus on gender equality and women’s empowerment such as the Girl Effect project of Nike Foundation, the Shakti project of Unilever and, the HERproject of Levi Strauss are criticized in terms of the neoliberalization of feminism (Calkin 2015, Calkin 2016, Prügl 2014, Yeager & Goldenberg 2012).

Nike Foundation as a significant proponent of the ‘Smart Economics’ supported to launch the GAP of the World Bank in 2007 and established the Girl Effect Campaign which focuses on ending poverty through investing in adolescent girls in the global South (Calkin, 2016). The Girl Effect gives monetary support to the organizations which collaborate with girls. The project also runs an online media campaign focused on raising brand image and social awareness. The argument of the campaign is to empower adolescent girls to become entrepreneurs who will be the solution to the problem of development and poverty (Wilson, 2015). According to Wilson, the Girl Effect persistently describes adolescent girls as at risk from ‘cultural’ practices like early marriage however the discourse of the campaign hardly questions the structural causes of poverty and the unequal gendered division of labor (2015, p. 19). Rather than to criticize and change the social and economic structures which lead to poverty and deprivation, corporations

and development agencies lay the burden on the shoulders of the young women. Calkin (2016) states that the Girl Effect campaign help to distract attention from other inequalities in Nike's supply chain: "given the history of labor practices used by Nike Inc. and the continues accusations made against the corporation of use of child labor, worker abuse, and other forms of unfree labor, the Girl Effect campaign also functions as a diversionary tactic which aims to rehabilitate the image of Nike Inc. through the work of its philanthropic foundation" (p. 168).

The Shakti project of Unilever aims to enlarge the market for its products in South Asia by creating a network of women who sell the Unilever goods to the consumers in the villages of India. The company asserts that it provides financial support to develop economic conditions, self-esteem and social status of the "Shakti Amma (empowered mothers)" or "Shakti entrepreneurs" (Prügl, 2014, p. 8). According to Prügl (2014), the idea to expand the global capitalist market in the countryside and to create a connection between rural consumers and products of multinational corporations is considered as a means for enabling social well-being however this strategy is promoted by the neoliberal ideology. This ideology regards Shakti Amma as responsible to improve the conditions of society and to promote economic growth. Neoliberal ideology describes the empowerment of women related to entrepreneurship. According to Prügl (2014), Shakti Amma "embodies neoliberal governmentality because she is the product of an effort to govern women in the countryside" (p. 9).

HERproject which was financially supported by the Levi-Strauss Foundation was initiated in 2007. The project is coordinated by Business for Social Responsibility which is a global nonprofit organization with 250 associate companies. The aim of the project is to "connect these MNCs with local NGOs in the countries where the corporations have supplier factories in order to deliver health-care services and increase health awareness among women garment workers" (Prügl, 2014, p. 12). Levi-Strauss carries out HERproject in its supplier factories located in China, India, Pakistan, and Egypt. This empowerment project aims to low-income women employed in the global supply chains. Based on a peer-

to-peer model, the factory workers are trained by human resources staff and clinic nurses to inform their peers about “sexual and reproductive health, family planning and prevention of sexually transmitted infections, nutrition, hygiene, pre-and postnatal care, infectious diseases, malaria and harassment and violence” (Yeager & Goldenberg, 2012, p. 26).

According to Prügl (2014), HERproject reflects the win-win perspective of CSR: a study for a Levi-Strauss subcontractor in Egypt shows that because the project reduces employee turnover rates of business organizations, the project wins four dollars in return for every dollar invested. From this point of view, HERproject is another CSR example of “business case for gender equality” however Prügl asserts that this project also increases the women’s agency for social change. Peer-to-peer education model enables women workers to connect with each other, to develop bottom-up knowledge and solidarities (Prügl, 2014). The project views women outside their economic roles. Providing education on childcare and reproductive health affects women’s relations outside the workplaces and the broader social dynamics. Dealing with issues such as sexual harassment and domestic violence leads to questioning of patriarchal power (Prügl, 2014, p. 12).

### **2.3.2. Empowerment of Women**

As it is seen from the cases above, the idea of empowerment of women is a basis for the gender equality-related CSR activities. It is argued that the narrative of the “empowerment” of women in the neoliberal context is detached from the feminist conceptualization. According to Batliwala (2007), in the mid-twentieth century, the term was adopted by the feminist movement which struggles for a more equitable, participatory and democratic social life however after the 1990s “management gurus” discovered the concept and utilized it for the practices of the corporate world such as profit maximization and competing in the market (p. 558). Gender equality and the empowerment of women are embraced by feminists to deal with structural inequalities. The supporters of the “business case”, on the contrary,

perceive the empowerment of women as a matter of incorporating women into labor markets maintained by unequal practices and rules.

Most of the CSR projects regard women's empowerment as a mean to enable social and economic development. The current usage of empowerment within the field of CSR requires a sacrificial and caring woman who should lift herself and others out of poverty in order to promote development (McCarthy, 2017). CSR projects on women's empowerment turn women into a microfinance entrepreneur (Wilson, 2011). The notion of "entrepreneur woman" is a product of the neoliberal rationality. According to Brown (2003), neoliberal political rationality is a mode of governance which produces "subjects, new forms of behavior and citizenship, and a new organization of the social" (p. 37). Hence Rottenberg (2014) argues that the neoliberal political rationality which incorporates the feminist ideas creates a particular kind of feminist subject: "using key liberal terms, such as equality, opportunity, and free choice, this neoliberal feminism forges a feminist subject who is not only individualized but entrepreneurial in the sense that she is oriented towards optimizing her resources through incessant calculation, personal initiative and innovation" (p. 422).

Consequently, the fact that inter-governmental organizations and corporations focus on gender equality in their activities become a controversial topic. On the one hand, promoting gender equality is regarded as a solution for global problems such as poverty and financial instability; CSR activities which aim to participate women in the workforce are considered as necessary strategies to enable sustainable development. It is frequently emphasized by various actors that promoting women's economic empowerment can be a win-win situation for business and women. On the other hand, this approach is criticized for legitimizing neoliberal policies that integrate women's labor into the precarious capitalist market. It is argued that certain CSR activities that aim empowerment of women consolidate existing gender stereotypes and reinforce the idea of "entrepreneur women" who should take responsibility for promoting economic development and solving global governance problems.

## CHAPTER III

### RESEARCH FINDINGS

#### 3.1. BUSINESS ORGANIZATIONS SELECTED FOR RESEARCH

In this chapter, I will focus on social responsibility activities of Koç and Borusan Group. Firstly, I will mention the gender equality-related activities of the Groups briefly. Then, findings of the research related to the corporate social responsibility perspective of the Groups and their motivations to carry out CSR activities will be evaluated. The reasons that orient Groups to focus on gender equality in these CSR projects will also be analyzed. Finally, I will focus on gender equality training for the employees which is one of the practices of collaboration between the private sector and NGOs/ free-lance trainers.

##### 3.1.1. Koç Group

As the first conglomeration of Turkey, Koç Group was founded in 1963 and since then it has been operated in the energy, automotive, consumer durables and finance sectors. The family-owned waqf of the conglomeration, Vehbi Koç Foundation, was founded by Vehbi Koç in 1969. As it is stated in its website, the foundation which one of the first foundations in the Turkish Republic was established with the purpose of “revitalizing the tradition of foundation dating far back.” (Vehbi Koç Foundation, n.d.). The Foundation carries out activities in the field of education, health and culture, and establishes facilities such as schools, dormitories, libraries, and clinics. Koç Group has social responsibility projects such as “For My Country” “*Ülkem İçin*”, “Vocational Education: A Crucial Matter For the Nation” “*Meslek Lisesi Memleket Meselesi*”, “Istanbul Biennial” and “Koç Sports Fest”.

“For My Country” is one of the most prominent social responsibility projects of Koç Group. This project is carried out by the sustainability department of the Koç Group since 2006. The aim of the project is stated as to promote the idea

of social responsibility in group companies, employees, dealers, and suppliers for developing projects to deal with various social problems (Koç Group, n.d.a). The theme of the project changes every two years. In this study, I will specifically focus on the term from 2015 to 2017 when gender equality was selected as the theme of the project. Koç Group states that the aim of the “I Support Gender Equality For My Country” “*Ülkem İçin Toplumsal Cinsiyet Eşitliğini Destekliyorum*” project is to create gender-sensitive workplaces through the gender equality seminars given to managers, employees, and dealers; to take actions to increase the percentage of women employees in Koç Group companies; to raise gender-equality awareness of stakeholders and to enhance their capacities with the social responsibility projects of the dealers at the local level; to disseminate gender-equality sensitivity through local and national communication strategies (Koç Group, 2015). The partners of the project are Mother Child Education Foundation (AÇEV), Turkish Family Health and Planning Foundation (TAPV), United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), and The Center for Gender Studies at Koç University (KOÇ-KAM) (Koç Group, 2015). It is reported that through this project, 350 employees and 90 distributors of Koç Group trained by the members of AÇEV on gender equality to be trainers. Through the “awareness seminars” held by these trainers, 84.000 people have reached out in Koç Group companies (Koç Group, 2017a).

Group companies are expected to develop a project on gender equality after receiving this seminar. The “Honeybees Become Engineers” “*Bal Arıları Mühendis Oluyor*” project of Ford Otosan, the “The Miracles of Sprouts” “*Filizlerin Mucizeleri*” project of Türk Traktör, and “The production line for women” project of Arçelik LG are some of the gender equality related-projects of the Group companies. The aim of the “Honeybees Become Engineers” project which was carried out between the years 2015-2017 is to increase the number of female engineers in the industrial sector. Ford Otosan states that the goal of the project is to point out the gender stereotypes in occupational choice. In accordance with this purpose, seminars were conducted to encourage female vocational high school students to choose engineering as a future profession. In this project, female

engineers working in Ford Otosan were selected as mentors and they shared their experiences about the occupation with the students, families, and teachers. Ford Otosan also offers an internship to the female students who prefer to study engineering (Ford Otosan, 2017). “The Miracles of Sprouts” project of Türk Traktör aims to increase women’s employment in agriculture and automotive sector. In line with this objective, seminars were given to inspire female students to work in the automotive sector, and training was provided to support female farmers in the production processes of agricultural goods. Besides, the project intends to eliminate gender discrimination in the workplace and create a “women-friendly company” (Türk Traktör, 2019). “The production line for women” project of Arçelik LG is based on the idea that to allocate one air-conditioner assembly line to women for production. The aim of the project is to increase the number of female workers in the factory of the Arçelik LG.

Koç Group is also an active member of the UN Women’s HeforShe movement which aims to encourage men to support gender equality and empowerment of women. The IMPACT 10X10X10 initiative of UN Women launched in 2015 to achieve this goal through the activities of different key actors from governments, corporations, and universities around the world. The initiative expects “Impact Champions” to develop three impressive commitments for gender equality (Koç, 2017). The former Chairperson of the Board of Directors of Koç Group, Mustafa V. Koç was selected as the Impact Champion in 2015. The three commitments of the Koç Group are determined as “to mobilize 4 million supporters of HeforShe in Turkey via funding the campaign, to reach 100.000 people with ‘gender sensitization training’ by 2020 and to strengthen gender-sensitive workplaces” (Koç, 2017).

Koç Group also aims to incorporate gender equality perspective into their communication strategies. They prepared “A Guide to Gender Equality in Communication” which offers a methodology and checklists for Koç Group companies and representatives who work in marketing, advertising, event management, and social media communications. Koç Group states that as the visual

and written materials set the limits of thoughts and attitudes of individuals, the management of these communication materials is a necessary strategy for enabling gender equality in society (Koç Group, 2017b).

### **3.1.2. Borusan Group**

Borusan Group was established as a conglomeration in 1972 which comprised of the companies operate in heavy industry and the Group's business segments are renewable energy, the production of iron and steel, distribution of automotive and power systems of industrial machines, and logistics. Borusan Group carries out social responsibility projects in the area of education, culture, and arts by "adopting the fulfillment of the duty of loyalty to the community as one of its principles" (Borusan Group, n.d.a). Therefore, Asım Kocabıyık Culture and Education Foundation was founded by Asım Kocabıyık in 1992 to contribute the national education and culture of Turkey. Named as Borusan Kocabıyık Foundation after 2007, some of the responsibility projects of the foundation are building schools, awarding scholarships for students, and providing training for parents and teachers. In addition to these activities, the foundation also carries out works in culture and art, especially in classical music via Borusan Culture and Art Center (Borusan Kocabıyık Foundation, n.d.).

Borusan defines contributing to the community as one of its corporate values. It is stated that the primary goal of the Group is to enhance the educational and cultural level of the society. In order to achieve this goal, the employees of the Group are encouraged to participate in social responsibility projects. The Group emphasizes that they operate with the awareness of responsibility to society and the environment. This awareness is stated as a reason to take part in social responsibility projects and to evaluate the impact of their decisions on the environment as the companies of the Group mostly operate in heavy industry (Borusan Group, n.d.b). It is stated that human resources departments, corporate communication units and occupational health and safety units of the Borusan Group are responsible for the

social sustainability performance of the Group. Corporate social responsibility activities of the Borusan Group are carried out by the corporate communication unit of the Group and Borusan Kocabıyık Foundation (Borusan Group, 2017).

The gender equality-related CSR projects of Borusan Group are “My Mom’s Job is My Future” “*Annemin İşi Benim Geleceğim*”, “Supporting Women’s Entrepreneurship- Microcredit” “*Kadın Girişimciliğinin Desteklenmesi- Mikrokredi*” and “Let’s Code Girls!” “*Haydi Kızlar Kodlamaya*”. “My Mom’s Job is My Future” project aims to increase women’s employment rate in the industry by providing childcare facilities in organized industrial zones located in ten different cities in Turkey where Borusan operates (Borusan Group, n.d.c). The purposes of opening child daycare facilities named “Borusan Joy Factories” are specified as to provide employment opportunities for women who are unable to work because of childcare and to establish an educational environment for children who would not benefit from the opportunities of pre-school (Borusan Group, n.d.c). “Let’s Code, Girls!” is another CSR project of Borusan Group. Through this project, eight weeks coding education was given to employees’ daughters aged between 7-14 with the intent of “raising girls in Turkey as strong future leaders who have self-confidence, analytic thinking skills and who can create quick solutions.” (Borusan Kocabıyık Foundation, 2016). Besides these two projects, Borusan Group states that they support woman entrepreneurs through microcredits. The Group has microfinance branches which provide microcredits for women in their business such as beauty salons and bakeries (Borusan Group, n.d.d).

In addition to these social responsibility projects, Borusan Group established a social equality platform in 2015 called “Equal Borusan” “*Borusan Eşittir*”. The aim of the platform is defined as building a successful future in which social roles and perceptions do not prevent equality and diversity in society. Equal Borusan has started “Love Begins with Language” “*Sevgi Dilde Başlar*” campaign to support gender equality in the workplaces. The main purpose of the campaign is stated as to raise awareness on “prejudiced language, expressions and behavioral patterns fostering discrimination between women and men” (Borusan Group,

2017). “A Guidebook for Avoiding Statements and Behaviors suggesting Gender Discrimination at Work Place” was published by the platform to draw attention to the discriminative statements and attitudes in business life (Borusan Group, n.d.e).

“No Job Too Tough For Women” “*Kadına Güç İş Yok*” project of Borçelik, one of the companies of Borusan Group, is the gender equality-related social responsibility project of Equal Borusan platform. The aim of the project is to provide employment for women to work as crane operators in the Borçelik. After providing specific technical training related to the profession, 26 women were employed in the heavy industry in 2018 (Borçelik, n.d.).

### **3.2. FRAMING CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY**

As discussed in the theoretical chapter, social responsibility perspective of business organizations in Turkey has been influenced by both local and global dynamics. After the 1960s, business leaders in Turkey have started to perform activities which continues the tradition of *hayırseverlik* through revitalizing the waqf culture. Today, these family foundations carry out responsibility projects on various social issues. Besides, new debates and practices at the global level on social responsibility of business have encouraged companies to move beyond the traditional philanthropic activities. Corporate social responsibility and sustainability departments are established in holdings to carry out responsibility projects along with the activities of the foundations. Globalization processes and international trends have an impact on social responsibility perspective of the Groups. While social responsibility in Turkey has been institutionalized with the impact of these dynamics, the motivation for carrying out CSR activities is still connected with the individuality, in other words, the vision of the founder. In the following section, I will explore the relationship between the social responsibility perspectives of Groups and the ideas of the founders.

### **3.2.1. Social Responsibility as The Vision of the Founder**

Opinions of the founders have an impact on the motivations of the corporations for carrying out social responsibility campaigns and projects. The perspective of the founder is regarded as a guideline by Groups to set their objectives. Koç Group takes the ideas of the founder, Vehbi Koç, as a reference to define its sustainability philosophy and motivations for carrying out CSR projects. The Group points out Vehbi Koç's thought which connects the prosperity of the company with the prosperity of the country and declares that with the intention of becoming a global leader, their aspiration is to elevate Vehbi Koç's vision on a global scale: they believe their prosperity is connected to the prosperity of the world (Koç, 2017). The interviewee from Koç Group evaluates the relationship between the vision of the founder and social responsibility perspective of Koç Group as follows:

“...corporations define specific values for themselves, if they behave in accordance with those values, they create a strong impression and reputation in society, if they don't, they cannot build trust. Corporate social responsibility activities take a significant place within those values. There are maxims of Vehbi Koç such as ‘I exist as long as my country exists and prospers’. There is this value coming from the vision of family, like paying debts to society. Therefore, when you say that these are our values and you constitute your activities according to those values, then you are consistent. I think that these activities are central for describing the company itself...”

This statement illustrates that the vision of the founder is considered as one of the corporate values of the Koç Group and acting in accordance with this value through carrying out CSR activities ensures to build trust in society and improves corporate reputation. The same factor is noticeable for Borusan Group's social responsibility perspective. Borusan emphasizes that the “principles and values of Asım Kocabıyık, Borusan's founder and honorary chairman, form the backbone of the Group's identity as a responsible company” (Borusan, 2017). The Group states that his vision of “returning what he gained from society back to the community via social projects” is adopted by each member of Borusan and this approach is

“embedded in the DNA of the Group’s corporate culture” (Borusan, 2017). According to the interviewee from Borusan Group, the ideas of the founder constitutes a basis for their social responsibility projects:

“...actually, the starting point of the social responsibility activities is the founder of the Borusan, Asım Kocabıyık. He is a philanthropist; he had set his heart on this issue. He was always saying that, it was like his motto, “I owe a debt of gratitude to the society, I have worked my whole life to pay this debt.” It means that he considers all the works he has done as paying a debt. He thinks he has a responsibility toward society...Actually, the main reason for the activities that Borusan has done so far is Asım Kocabıyık’s vision, his desire to pay his debt of gratitude. We perform social responsibility projects in line with his approach...”

As discussed in the theoretical chapter, it is emphasized that businessman achieves success and acquires wealth by virtue of the society, for this reason, he is considered accountable for the well-being of the society. Social responsibility activities of businessman are closely linked with this reciprocity. The establishment of the Vehbi Koç foundation and the Borusan Kocabıyık foundation can be considered as a result of this relation. On the other hand, it is important to underline that the state regulations are the essential factors which determine the social responsibility activities of the businessmen in Turkey. According to Bugra (1994), businessmen in Turkey know that their success and failure are related with the state, they are also aware of that “it is to the state that they owe not only their wealth but also their position in society” (p. 5). She claims that businessmen in Turkey rarely display pride for their success however they frequently attempt to justify their business by giving reference to its social value. They frequently emphasize that they invest their wealth for the benefit of the country. The idea of businessmen “to give back what they received from society” through philanthropy is a significant dynamic which shapes the social responsibility approach in Turkey (Turker, 2015). According to Yamak (2007), it is an interesting similarity that businessmen in Turkey and the US give prominence to their contribution to society; the fact that businessmen in the early period of American business life emphasized

social responsibility to defend their wealth show that social responsibility was used as a tool to gain social legitimacy.

Therefore, it is possible to state that Groups frame social responsibility retrospectively. They continue to maintain the legacy of their founders while adapting themselves to the developments on the global scale. They follow the new trends and dynamics in the social responsibility area, such as changes in terminology and practices, and adjust themselves to these shifts. In the following section, I will analyze the impact of global developments on the Group's social responsibility perspective.

### **3.2.2. Following Global Dynamics**

At the global scale, corporate sustainability has started to be accepted as a management paradigm. This management perspective is an alternative to the traditional management approach which based on the economic growth and profit maximization (Wilson, 2003). Corporations are expected to promote social equality and to protect the environment through social responsibility activities. The management consultant/trainer that I interviewed explains this management approach as follows:

“...large companies in Turkey now have sustainability departments, corporate communications departments, or the departments which focus on brand management, corporate reputation and reputation management. These companies wonder their rankings in the international reputation indexes. The motivations of both national and international investors to invest in a company changed... Investors expect corporations to be not only profitable but also respectful to the environment. They expect companies to contribute the society. They also expect corporations to care its own sustainability, to mind stakeholder involvements in corporate management processes...”

This narrative illustrates that global dynamics lead business organizations to institutionalize social responsibility. Companies give importance to be recognized as socially responsible organizations and the reputation indexes which

are closely related to CSR activities are the significant determinants that enable companies to compare themselves with the rivals. Global organizations such as Reputation Institute which is a reputation measurement and management services firm publishes researches that analyze social responsibility activities of business organizations worldwide. For instance, the CSR RepTrak of the Reputation Institute is an annual study which presents the best CSR practices of the top companies globally with the highest reputation scores (Reputation Institute, n.d.). As another example, a yearly report called “The Leaders of Corporate Social Responsibility” has been publishing by Capital Magazine, a national monthly business magazine, in corporation with GfK Research Company since 2005. These reports present findings of the yearly researches that reveal the public attitudes towards companies’ social responsibility efforts in Turkey. The reports include rankings of the most successful business organizations in corporate social responsibility, the most successful CSR projects and the most successful business leaders in the social responsibility field. According to the research carried out in 2018, Koç Group was ranked as the most successful business organization in terms of corporate social responsibilities (GfK, 2018). It is possible to state that these indexes are significant for business organizations in order to monitor their position in the global and also the local competition. Carrying out CSR activities is regarded as an essential strategy to compete with the other multi-national corporations.

Corporations adopt CSR perspective in order to meet the expectations of society through being a sustainable business organization. As discussed in the theoretical chapter, stakeholders are one of the components of corporate sustainability paradigm (Wilson, 2003). The demands of customers and investors influence the operations of corporations. The interviewee from the Borusan Group emphasizes the significance of international stakeholders on their social responsibility perspectives as follows:

“...so we have investors and partners from abroad, we have a responsibility to them. Our sustainability approach is related to this, we are the signatory of Global Compact. We integrate into the international area, we must. We have a responsibility; we feel this responsibility. We want to show this outside...”

According to Wilson (2003), building strong relationships with stakeholders help the company to meet its business objectives. Groups pay attention to the demands of international investors to enable corporate sustainability. Companies closely monitor the global agenda to meet the expectations of both internal and external stakeholders on social responsibility. Pursuing global improvements in sustainability practices and implement them through social responsibility activities are regarded as a prestigious sign by corporations. Companies give both national and international investors and customers a message that they are reliable and responsible organizations. Companies are engaged in social responsibility projects in order to compete with rivals, to come into prominence as a critical actor both in the local and global market, to create a corporate reputation by enabling trust.

It is also significant that the corporate sustainability philosophy of Groups is shaped by global actors. As argued in the theoretical chapter, with the effect of globalization, certain initiatives have emerged to monitor and measure the corporate social responsibility activities of business organizations. UN Global Compact is one of those influential initiatives which determines the set of principles and practices of social responsibility. The interviewee from AÇEV points out the global actors as one of the factors that shape the social responsibility perspective of the companies in Turkey:

“...there is an agenda determined by the UN Global Compact. UNGC encourages companies to accept certain principles for being socially responsible. Companies who sign these principles, prepare the sustainability reports of their organization according to those standards. Sustainable Development Goals indicate what can be the actions of corporations by offering them a suggestion list...”

It appears that Borusan and Koç Group give importance to act in accordance with this global agenda. Their CSR activities are closely linked with sustainability and sustainable development approach. Both Groups are the members of Global Compact and determine their responsibility activities according to the UN Sustainable Development Goals. Borusan Group states that they conduct surveys which employees and customers of the Group companies participated to determine their annual strategies. The Group focuses on SDGs and selects certain goals through these surveys in order to create a road map. Their aim is to be able to identify the issues that their key stakeholders are interested and to determine their plans and strategies within the framework of these issues (Borusan, 2017, p. 30). In the same way as Borusan, Koç Group specifies that they conduct workshops with Group companies, interviews with general managers and researches with external stakeholders such as NGOs and universities to determine the focus areas related to the SDGs (Koç, 2017, p. 8). Monitoring and measuring sustainability activities are significant for the Groups, they declare that their sustainability reports are prepared in accordance with the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) standards, an independent international organization working on sustainability reporting, has which can be regarded as their intention to be a part of global links. The respondent from Koç Group points out the influence of global dynamics as follows:

“...this is a community on the road to globalization. Therefore, global trends are very closely monitored. The activities of the World Economic Forum are monitored, there are relations with the IMF... So, you are talking about such a large structure that has already one-to-one relations with international institutions, means that there are collaborations that are carried out without the need of the state to establish relations. We are also trying to follow the global vision and bring it here. Our focus is more on sustainability. But now everything that the global vision speaks about is sustainability-related, the underlying issues of environmental, social and financial sustainability...”

This statement illustrates that the companies are regarded as the leading figures to promote economic, social and environmental sustainability. With the impact of globalization and neoliberalization, corporations have come into

prominence as powerful actors and the role of the state has started to decrease which lead business organizations to establish “one-to-one” relations with the international actors. The interviewee from Koç Group continues as follows:

“...a crucial responsibility is given to the private sector in this field. What has been told the private sector all around the world is: ‘You are a significant stakeholder for sustainable development’. I think Koç undertakes this responsibility in all areas of sustainability. In addition to that, Koç has a mission to be a pioneer and driving force for development in Turkey....Being a leader in the country. Being a leader for social change...”

Corporations regard themselves as responsible corporate citizens to enable the sustainable development of the countries. As it is seen in the website of Koç Group, “utilizing resources more effectively is not only a requirement for a prudent and responsible business but is also the obligation of a responsible citizenry” (Koç Group, n.d.c). As discussed in the theoretical chapter, according to Matten, Crane, and Chapple (2003), corporate citizenship is to enable and protect the citizenship rights of the members of society by business organizations. It is possible to state that Groups regard themselves as essential actors for promoting sustainable development in the country by adopting corporate citizenship philosophy.

It is significant to note that the sustainability approach alters the social responsibility perspective of the corporations. In Koç Group, the name of the corporate social responsibility department is changed as the sustainability department. Alakavuklar and colleagues (2009) point out that holdings in Turkey use the term CSR rather than the term *hayırseverlik* (philanthropy) in their websites. Recently, it is possible to see that holding companies prefer to use the concept of sustainability more than the concept of CSR in their websites and reports. The interviewee from Koç Group states that the revision of the department name is more suitable for developments in the social responsibility literature and changing trends:

“...social projects were carried out outside in the past. Corporate social responsibility is something that externalizes the issues a little bit. Carrying out projects for society through collaboration with NGOs.

When it comes to sustainability, yes, you are carrying out these projects however you also aim the internal transformation of your corporation. Besides carrying out projects outside, such as the projects which aim high school students, women, or fathers, you also monitor the statistics in your company, and you set goals for your company...”

This narrative indicates that sustainability is perceived as a more inclusive concept. The sustainability approach leads the Groups to focus on their organization hence their employees. The CSR categorization of Ponte, Richey, and Baab provides insight into the notion of “carry out social projects outside”. According to Ponte and colleagues (2009), there are two different types of CSR activities called engaged and disengaged. The location of CSR activity beneficiaries is also divided into two as proximate and distant. The engaged CSR directly affects the company operations such as the relations with suppliers and management of the labor force. The disengaged CSR, on the other hand, is similar to the traditional corporate philanthropy or charity which is not directly linked with the operations of a company (Ponte et al., 2009). The proximate CSR activities take place within the company, in connection with the issues involving its own labor force such as “equal opportunities, pay benefits and treatment in relation to gender and sexual orientation of workers” (Ponte et al., 2009, p. 303). The distant CSR activities, in contrast, deal with the problems of the community where the company is not present (Ponte et al., 2009). It seems that to adopt a sustainability approach directs Groups to perform “engaged and proximate” CSR activities. The interviewee from the Borusan Group emphasizes that they give importance to reform the internal processes of their business organization:

“...we want to create the transformation inside. That’s why it takes a little longer. We want to give training to our employees and managers. We prepare checklists that they can follow. We are trying to change the hiring processes, human resources activities. So, this is a policy. We want to change the policy...”

“The Love Begins with Language” campaign of Equal Borusan and the intention to collaborate with AÇEV for the training of employees on gender

equality can be interpreted as the Borusan Group has an “engaged-proximate” CSR perspective. The gender equality training of “I Support Gender Equality for My Country” project of Koç Group can also be regarded as an example of this type of CSR. It appears that to enable corporate sustainability, Groups give importance to “internal CSR” which is defined by Mory, Wirtz, and Göttel (2015) as a socially responsible behavior by a corporation towards its employees. According to Mory and colleagues, the employee-oriented CSR activities such as “fostering employment stability, a positive working environment, skills development, diversity, work-life balance, and empowerment” reflect the approach of internal CSR (2015, p. 2). The global dynamics lead the Groups to focus on the internal dynamics of their organizations. They have started to engage with the conditions of their employees, in other words, their internal stakeholders.

In the following section, I will continue to analyze how the Groups frame corporate social responsibility in the context of gender equality.

### **3.3. CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY IN THE CONTEXT OF GENDER EQUALITY**

In this section, I will evaluate the motivations of Groups to engage with gender equality-related social responsibility activities. It appears that the impact of the global agenda, promoting the economic growth and sustainable development and creating a corporate culture based on diversity and inclusion are the reasons for Groups to engage with gender equality-related social responsibility activities.

#### **3.3.1. Global Agenda**

As discussed in the previous chapter, the agenda which is created by global institutions influences the perspectives and activities of the Groups. Especially the initiatives of the UN such as determining “Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women” as one of the Sustainable Development Goals and establishing WEPs as a

code of conduct are effective to orient business organizations to engage with gender equality-related issues. The interviewee from Koç Group points out the influence of the international organizations on their social responsibility activities as follows:

“...in 2015, the theme of the For my Country project was decided as gender equality. The global agenda was very important, there were close relations with UNWomen...In addition to that, the HeforShe partnership was established. By the year of 2015, gender equality-related activities have started intensively...”

Koç Group refers to these global factors to answer the question of why the theme of the “For My Country” project was selected as gender equality in 2015. In the website of the project, Koç Group states that they are one of the signatories of WEPs which is the product of the collaboration between UN Women and UN Global Compact and they are selected as one of the Impact Champions of HeforShe campaign carried out by UN Women (Koç Group, n.d.b). Koç Group frequently mentions these global links while explaining their activities on gender equality. Likewise, it is seen that being a WEPs signatory and being a “first and only company from Turkey to be invited to join UN WEPs Leadership Group” are significant reference points for Borusan Group to define their strategies on gender equality (Borusan, 2017). Groups also emphasize being a signatory of Declaration on Equality at Work which was formed by the Turkish Ministry of Family and Social Policies by collaborating with World Economic Forum in 2013. The following words of the interviewee from Borusan show that the relationships established with the global actors are valuable for the Group:

“... “My Mom’s Job is My Future” was selected as an exemplary project by the UN in 2013. By the way, the UN has a group called WEPs, we are also a member of WEPs, we are even in the leadership group...International Finance Corporation which is a member of the World Bank gave place to our project in their report. Last year, they published a report which focuses on activities of ten different companies around the world about child-care. Then this report was presented in one of the meetings of IMF. That was a nice representation for us...”

This narrative illustrates that taking part in international reports is significant in terms of corporate reputation and brand value. Carrying out a social responsibility project on gender equality enables Groups to come together with the other actors in the international arena. The interviewee from AÇEV also points out the global dynamics that lead business organizations to focus on gender equality:

“...corporations have a strong interest in carrying out activities on gender equality, they are enthusiastic about this issue. The global agenda pushes corporations... There are UN Global Compact working groups established within the companies. These groups discuss certain issues such as how should they provide childcare services to increase women’s employment...”

It appears that business organizations in Turkey are influenced by the global agenda on gender equality which is mostly shaped by inter-governmental organizations such as the World Bank and the European Union. As discussed in the theoretical chapter, the ideas of these organizations are criticized for various reasons. For instance, the perspective of the World Bank presented as “Gender Equality as Smart Economics” is criticized for consolidating gender stereotypes because women are perceived as trustable mothers and workers who will devote their earnings to their children, and also reliable actors to promote economic growth and development of the country (Roberts & Soederberg, 2012). The Bank is also criticized for facilitating development and economic liberalization through the support of the cheap labor of women (Chant & Sweetman, 2012). The WEPs initiative of the UN Women is criticized in a similar manner. It is argued that these principles support the idea of achieving gender equality only within the framework of participation in the capitalist market economy which is increasingly precarious (Roberts, 2015).

These actors emphasize the idea that investing in gender equality is a “win-win” situation. It is stated that women’s participation in the market economy enables them to be economically productive and to provide better opportunities for their children. This also facilitates the economic growth and the development of the countries.

### **3.3.2. Promoting Economic Growth and Development**

Groups believe that women's participation in the labor force is an essential factor for achieving development and economic growth of the country. In the website of the "My Mom's Job is My Future" project, the starting point of the project is explained in relation to the development of industry sector which will provide the economic development of the country. It is stated that women's labor force participation is essential for the development of the industry sector. Because the childcare is regarded as "one of the biggest obstacles in the way of women's employment", the project is designed to support women's labor force participation through providing child-care facilities to them (Borusan, n.d.c).

Koç Group indicates the relation between gender equality and economic development to explain why the theme of the "For My Country" project was selected as gender equality. Koç Group explains the reason as follows: "various researches show that maintaining equality between men and women via combatting the prejudices against them will provide great benefit for society. For example, in a research conducted by the OECD, it was determined that the economies of OECD countries could grow by 12% more than their current potential by 2030 if gender equality was achieved in the workplaces in the next 20 years. Within the framework of the 9<sup>th</sup> Development Plan of Turkish Republic, the increase in female labor force participation and employment rate from 24% to 29% is predicted to lead to a decrease of 15% in poverty." (Koç Group, n.d.b).

It can be interpreted as the perspectives of Groups are closely related to the idea of "business case for gender equality". As discussed in the theoretical chapter business organizations consider women's participation in the labor force as a crucial factor to promote sustainable development. In the website of the "Miracles of Sprouts" project of Türk Traktör, the aim of the project is explained as to "draw attention to the significant role of the women in the sustainable development in Turkey" (Türk Traktör, 2019).

The economic return of engaging with gender equality-related social responsibility activities is one of the most obvious motivations for corporations. The significance of women's participation in the labor force for the growth of the economy is emphasized frequently by various actors and this perspective leads to motivate business organizations to focus on social responsibility activities related to gender equality in business. The interviewee from AÇEV states that:

“...for instance, there are researches of McKinsey called Women Matter which basically asserts that investments in women increase profitability. Researches that speaks the language of numbers which the private sector understands have started to come to the fore. Therefore, companies have perceived and treated gender equality as a ‘business’, concepts such as good business, smart business emerged...”

This narrative indicates that the neoliberal ideology of “business case for gender equality” of international actors affects the corporations. However, the interviewee from AÇEV states that the economic return of carrying out gender-equality activities in business organizations can be used as an argument to draw the attention of business leaders on this issue:

“...this has become a social movement that's why there is not only one point of view on this issue...increasing profitability was a starting point however now this is not the only explanation. Most of the time, this argument is used to convince the senior managers, to create an opportunity for engaging these activities in corporations. Emphasizing economic development is still the way to bring forward social issues...”

It appears that contributing to the economic growth of the country is one of the motivations of Groups to carry out gender equality-related activities. In the websites and the reports of the Groups, it is stated that the carrying out gender equality-related projects contribute the economic development. It is also significant to note that there may be other factors that lead corporations to perform activities on gender equality and this motivation may remain in the background. The perspectives of the actors who are responsible for the gender equality-related projects in companies or collaborate with business organizations in these projects may be influential.

As discussed in the theoretical chapter, the critics of the neoliberalization of feminism emphasize that feminist ideals such as economic independence, autonomy, and empowerment are utilized to strengthen the neoliberal economic system. It is argued that women are expected to contribute the economic growth and the development of the countries through participating in the capitalist labor market which is increasingly precarious. It is stated that neoliberal rationality produces the notion of “entrepreneur woman” who is expected to take the responsibility to contribute the economic growth and development of the countries. The interviewee from Koç Group evaluates these criticisms as follows:

“...there is the fact that this is considered as an issue related to the white women who have a higher level of education and socio-economic status... the fact that it is appropriated by the supporters of neoliberalism...Feminism evaluates the inequalities between men and women with a multi-level point of view, for instance feminists discuss the issues related to the female workers or black women. Neoliberal point of view associates the feminist values solely with the white-collar female workers who have senior positions in companies, because this makes the other debates related to other women invisible...on the other hand, we should consider the realities of Turkey, we should make an effort for social change and we should also aware of these criticisms...”

The management consultant/trainer also emphasizes the conditions in Turkey while commenting on these criticisms:

“...the cultural codes in Turkey are so different... there are policies developed to keep women at home, that restrain the participation of women in the labor...through these CSR activities, you actually undermine the patriarchy in here...”

It is possible to state that the participants of the study emphasize the significance of taking the dynamics related to gender equality in Turkey into consideration while evaluating the criticisms on the neoliberalization of feminism. According to the Global Gender Gap Report of the World Economic Forum, Turkey has ranked the 130<sup>th</sup> among 149 countries in terms of gender equality (WEF, 2018). The data in the “Women in Statistics 2018” report of the Turkish Statistical Institute shows that female labor force participation in Turkey is 28.9 percent (TurkStat,

2019). The respondents underline that there is “a long way to go” to enable gender equality in Turkey and certain CSR activities of business organizations may contribute the lives of women. Therefore, it is stated that utilizing the sources of the private sector organizations for supporting women and promoting gender equality can be regarded as a valuable effort in Turkey.

### **3.3.3. Diversity and Inclusion**

Corporations nowadays give importance to create policies which relate to diversity and inclusion (D&I) in the workplace. It is asserted through various researches that supporting D&I is “good for business” because it reinforces the financial performance of corporations. For instance, McKinsey, a management consulting firm, states that “companies in the top quartile for gender diversity on their executive teams are 21% more likely to experience above-average profitability than companies in the fourth quartile. The companies who provide ethnic and cultural diversity in the workplace are 33% more likely to show better financial performance” (McKinsey&Company, 2018). Corporations have begun to regard D&I as a necessary strategy for increasing productivity and competing in the global economy.

Borusan and Koç Holding believe that the corporate culture based on diversity and inclusion will promote more productive and cooperation-based working environments. D&I is a component of Koç Group’s sustainability approach. Koç Group states that “diversity and inclusion cover many dimensions, but all are good for business. Organizations, where everyone feels valued, have higher employee engagement scores, which in turn results in increased productivity... At Koç Group, we are committed to provide equal rights to all employees regardless of their religion, sexual orientation, language, ethnicity, race, beliefs, faith, disability or any other personal attribute protected by law” (Koç, 2017)

The interviewee from Borusan Group refers to the relation between productivity and D&I as follows:

“...the debates on the inclusive culture, diversity, and inclusion have increased all around the world...currently our aim is to create an inclusive corporate culture. If there is not a structure that sustains equal opportunities for everyone to participate in decision-making processes, these decisions represent only one group. Studies show that workplace diversity increases productivity. When men, women and LGBTI work together, more efficiency is provided. Because every individual represents a different view. After you bring them together, then you truly serve a collective idea...”

Besides increasing productivity, it appears that companies give importance to create a corporate culture based on diversity and inclusion to incorporate younger employees into their workplaces. For the “young generation” who aim to have a career in the private sector, a corporate culture based on diversity and inclusion is a reason for preference. It appears that the expectations and demands of the “young generation” are essential factors which affect the corporations to redesign organizational structures. It is stated that companies are expected to perform CSR activities. The management consultant/trainer explains the expectations of the ones who will begin to work in companies as follows:

“...if we give examples about the new graduates, in the past, the human resources representatives would ask the candidates how they would be useful for the corporation. Recently, this tendency has started to become reversed. Now candidates are asking those questions to the corporations: do you have fringe benefits, what are the policies for your employees, how do you create benefit for society, do you pollute nature, how is your waste management, do you support NGOs, do you conduct corporate social responsibility programs... Now they are asking this question to corporations ‘why should I prefer to work with you?’...”

The respondent from AÇEV also refers to this point while explaining the reasons for corporations to aim their internal transformation:

“... for achieving the adaptation of young generation in corporate culture, being socially responsible is significant for corporations. The generation Y care about their corporations’ culture and the values that

their firms are advocated for. Corporations feel the need to have those values... The possibility of voluntary activities of corporations is regarded as a reason for preference by the young generation. Being an egalitarian working place, supporting the women's empowerment projects can be the reasons for preference..."

It appears that carrying out gender equality-related CSR activities can be a reason for preferring companies. Ensuring gender equality in the business organization is perceived as one of the dimensions of the inclusive corporate culture. Holdings state that they pay attention to include gender equality perspective in employment processes. The interviewee from the Borusan Holding explains this as follows:

"...does employees, woman or man, receive equal pay? How many women are employed? Is there a female candidate in the last two applications? We are asking these questions to ourselves while we are reconsidering policies of human resources to facilitate organizational transformation..."

It appears that Equal Borusan platform is established to create this inclusive culture:

"...we do not call these as corporate social responsibility however there are some activities that we have done for our internal transformation, related to supporting gender equality... We are doing some projects in order to contribute the society. These are great projects however when we turn to the inside of our corporation, we ask the question of what are we doing for Borusan? The number of female workers in Borusan is very low. So, it turned out that there is a need for transformation and this transformation is about the mindsets of people... Therefore we have established the Equal Borusan platform in 2015 to change the employment policy of corporation and mindsets of people..."

With the purpose of creating an inclusive corporate culture, holdings develop and implement gender equality-related communication strategies. "Love Begins with Language" campaign of Borusan is the product of this communication strategy. The interviewee of Borusan Group explains the activities of the campaign as follows:

“... the corporate communication department started the campaign to change people’s mindset about gender equality. A guidebook for avoiding discriminative behaviors in the workplace was prepared and distributed to all group companies. Posters were hanged to the walls of restrooms and elevators. We created a video and our employees took part in it... We will continue these activities to create an inclusive corporate culture by collaborating with universities and NGOs...”

It is stated in the Gender Equality in Communications Guidebook of Koç Group that “since gender equality is very much influenced by existing stereotypes and it is a multi-dimensional subject, it is recommended to ensure diversity and inclusion in the teams and to avoid subjective evaluations.” (Koç Group, 2017b). Checklists in the guide are prepared to create gender-sensitive communication strategies. Through asking various questions such as “Is the number of women and men balanced in communications materials?” and “Have sexist proverbs, idioms, and terms been avoided?” the communication strategy of Koç Group companies is aimed to be compatible with the inclusive and diverse corporate culture (Koç Group, 2017b).

Gender equality training is a strategy that Groups prefer to create a diverse and inclusive corporate culture through enabling their internal transformation. Groups collaborate with NGOs and freelance trainers in order to provide this training to their employees. In the following section, I will focus on the gender equality training programs conducted in companies.

### **3.4. GENDER EQUALITY TRAINING**

One of the activities of companies to create inclusive corporate culture is the gender equality training given to their employees. Corporations have recently started to provide this training. From 2015 onwards, the commitment of corporations to comply with WEPs, the establishment of UN Global Compact Turkey working group on gender equality, the guidebooks and reports published by various organizations on gender equality in business have been effective to orient

companies towards this activity. Corporations have started to cooperate with NGOs or freelance trainers to prepare and carry out the training programs.

It is possible to state that the CSR perspective of Groups has started to change. Besides supporting a disadvantaged group in society through CSR activities, Groups have begun to carry out social responsibility activities for their own workers. This shift affects the collaboration practices of Groups and NGOs. The collaboration between business organizations and NGOs is regarded as a necessity to achieve sustainable development. According to Berlie (2010), these actors have comprehended that they are not adequate alone to fulfill the complex demands of sustainability and to solve social or environmental problems. Business organizations seek to integrate sustainability into their organizational strategy and consider the collaboration with NGOs as a means to this end. NGOs have recognized that it is not easy to find sustainable solutions without the involvement of corporations. As a result of these factors, a new collaborative action called as strategic alliance between business and NGOs began to emerge after the 1990s (Berlie, 2010).

According to Berlie, a corporate-NGO alliance indicates collective work, joint thinking, pooling of resources to achieve common goals, therefore, this type of alliance moves further than the conventional notion of philanthropy which means business funding NGO activities (Berlie, 2010). The narrative of the interviewee from AÇEV shows that their relationship with business organizations can be regarded as an example of this kind of alliance:

“...so far, the relationship between AÇEV and the private sector was based on the idea that the private sector should be the sponsor of AÇEV's projects, however, the process which has started with the collaboration with Koç Holding has changed this *transactional* relationship with the private sector to the *transformative* one. We have started to establish a new kind of partnership... This relationship isn't just about asking for financial support from the private sector for our projects. We want to establish a relationship based on joint work for enabling the internal transformation of the corporation...”

This statement illustrates that the sustainability approach affects collaboration practices of NGOs and business organizations. As corporations aspire to integrate sustainability perspective into their management strategy, they focus more on the inside dynamics of their organizations. Therefore, rather than establishing cooperation which is solely based on the financial sponsorship of private sector, AÇEV seeks to contribute to the decision-making processes of corporations. The interviewee from AÇEV states that sharing knowledge with corporations is a significant part of the alliance that they aim to build with the private sector:

“...NGOs have the know-how, however, there is a limited transfer of this knowledge to the private sector. There are agencies that companies prefer to work with when they need support. Companies tend to collaborate with communication agencies on CSR whereas there are NGOs which have accumulated knowledge. Both sides need to communicate with each other. We have started a new process to enable this communication...”

This narrative indicates that sharing knowledge and experiences are essential for private sector-NGO collaboration. Companies need the knowledge and experience of NGOs on certain issues. According to Berlie (2010), NGOs bring an outside vision to the companies through their know-how, act as “barometers of society” which enabling companies to catch social and political trends. Therefore, the expertise of both organizations is significant to establish a strategic alliance. The interviewee from Borusan refers to this factor as follows:

“...and the expertise of course. The NGO should be an expert in its field. AÇEV, for instance, conducts researches, conducts training programs...This is one of the important points for us. That’s why we want to collaborate with them...”

As discussed in the theoretical chapter, gender equality training is a technical strategy for gender mainstreaming (Grosser & Moon, 2005). It appears that gender equality training is a way of establishing a strategic alliance between the private sector and NGOs to mainstream gender perspective in business

organizations. AÇEV is one of the NGOs which provide this training for private sector organizations. The foundation was established in 1993 to develop and scale-up the Mother Child Education Program which aims to support 5 years of age children and their mothers with a home-based educational program (AÇEV, n.d.a). AÇEV focuses on early childhood development and supports parents through various activities such as literacy programs for mothers and the Father Support Program which aims to raise fathers' awareness on child development and parenting (AÇEV, n.d.b). By the year of 2015, especially through the collaboration with Koç Group, AÇEV has started to develop education models on gender equality to transform the private sector organizations.

AÇEV conducts gender equality training with companies in two ways. One of them is to provide seminars on special days such as March 8<sup>th</sup> - Women's Day, November 25<sup>th</sup> - International day for the elimination of violence against women, Mother's Day and Father's Day. The other one is the long-term activities specific to the needs and demands of companies such as 2 hours awareness raising seminars, workshops, and training of trainers on gender equality. AÇEV collaborated with Koç Holding through this model in the "For My Country" project.

AÇEV constructs the narrative of the seminars based on the concepts of discrimination and equality. It is emphasized that due to the discriminatory practices, policies and ideas it is not possible for certain people to have equal rights and to benefit equal opportunities. In these seminars, the message that "each individual can be different but equal" is given to the participants. Afterward, the gender socialization process of individuals is handled. It is emphasized that gender-based discriminatory attitudes and beliefs encountered and internalized from childhood to adulthood are reproduced in intimate relationships, parenthood processes and working life.

The interviewee from AÇEV explains the gender perspectives of the seminars as follows:

“...we strive to avoid approaching the issue with binary division... We’re trying to explain that even gender itself is a debated concept today; it’s a scale, the femininity and masculinity take part in the two different ends of this scale, and people are exposed to discrimination when they challenge the attributed gender roles ... sometimes some of the participants ask whether their son will be gay if he constantly plays with pots and pans. We strive to eliminate these prejudices... we haven’t presented a seminar from a queer perspective yet. However, we’re trying to use an inclusive language, for instance, we’re saying ‘relationship with partner’ rather than ‘relationship with opposite-sex’. We focus on these topics in detail in the training of trainers. We explain what masculinity, femininity, gender identity, sexual orientation is to the trainers...”

AÇEV’s seminars are carried out by both male and female trainers. The interviewee from AÇEV explains the reason for this design as follows:

“...the activities on gender equality are often perceived as activities related to women. Yes, women face various disadvantages, they are not able to reach opportunities in equal ways, that’s clear. In addition to this, we are trying to explain that inequalities also affect men. As the trainers are also the role models when a male trainer gives these messages it makes the message easier to be taken by male participants...”

It appears that the issues handled in these seminars are also related to the experiences of males. The management consultant/trainer that I interviewed attaches importance to approach the gender equality issue in this way as well:

“... a right-based point of view, and to emphasize that not only women but also men are exposed to discrimination in society, these are indispensable for me to create the content of the seminars...explaining these issues makes it very easy for people to empathize with each other...”

These statements show that the gender equality perspective is constituted by taking different experiences of both men and women into consideration. The

trainers give importance to address the gender-based stereotypes which constrain both men and women.

In order to explain gender equality in business, the trainers mention the concepts of horizontal and vertical segregation, glass ceiling and glass elevator. It is emphasized that temporary special measures are necessary for women's participation in the labor force. It is important to underline that these seminars do not focus on gender equality only within the framework of business life. It appears that the gendered division of domestic labor is one of the topics discussed with participants in these seminars. The trainer said that the issues related to the responsibilities for domestic work and childcare are most of the times raised in the seminars. The narrative of the trainer below shows one of the examples of the arguments of participants in the seminar:

“...one of the workers of an automotive factory asked me ‘why shouldn't my wife prepare breakfast for me? I'm waking up early every morning to go to work and she doesn't have a job...’ I said to him that we can't interfere with this however I believe that the main question is ‘Do both of you consider yourself as equals at home? When it comes to the decisions on the budget of the house, raising children or earning money, does any of you feel restricted? If one of you feel this way it will cause problems in the relationship. One of you may feel worthless or left out... We cannot say that preparing food at home, man or woman does not matter, is against equality unless there is violence or humiliation...”

The argument of the trainer shows that having equal rights and not to be exposed to discrimination are the premises of the gender equality perspective. The trainer explains the reason to emphasize these concepts as follows:

“...to present a point of view instead of suggesting a type of behavior is more valuable, that's why we focus on discrimination. Because otherwise, participants may bring forward other paradigms such as traditions...”

The interviewee from AÇEV explains the motivation of companies to carry out gender equality training for employees as follows:

“...most of the time the motivation of business organizations to collaborate with us is related to their plans to increase women’s employment. When you increase female employment in male-dominated working places, this creates a kind of conflict...for instance, when a male and female worker go out to drink tea together, some other workers are spreading rumors about them...We are trying to make them think about this kind of assumptions they have. Men and women can work together. We are trying to contribute to creating a nice working environment that everyone works together...”

This narrative illustrates that one of the motivations of business organizations to collaborate with NGOs is related to the purpose of increasing employment of women. However, this strategy arises disputes in some workplaces due to certain prejudices of employees. Gender equality training is considered as a solution to workplace discrimination.

It is significant to note that organizational structure and the perspective of NGOs may have different impacts on the collaboration dynamics with the private sector. AÇEV has a board of trustee that some of the members are the businesspersons, representatives of the corporate sector. Besides, the foundation specializes in the educational programs for children and parents; it is not a feminist women’s rights organization. It is noteworthy to underline that these factors may have affect cooperation practices and perspective of the gender equality training of the foundation.

## CONCLUSION

This thesis explores gender equality-related corporate social responsibility activities of business organizations in Turkey. Business organizations are one of the actors that influence the debates on gender equality. Corporations have recently put workplace gender equality on their agenda and carry out various activities collaborating with NGOs or free-lance experts in line with this objective. This work focused on corporate social responsibility activities of Koç and Borusan Group that aim to enable gender equality in their organizations. It specifically analyzed gender equality training provided for employees which is one of the collaboration practices of business organizations and NGOs/free-lance professionals.

Koç Group collaborated with AÇEV in “I Support Gender Equality for My Country” “*Ülkem İçin Toplumsal Cinsiyet Eşitliğini Destekliyorum*” project and seminars on gender equality for employees took place in Koç Group companies in the years between 2015-2017. Group companies have developed CSR projects which support the employment of women and gender equality in the workplace such as the “Honeybees Become Engineers” “*Bal Arıları Mühendis Oluyor*” and the “Miracles of Sprouts” “*Filizlerin Mucizeleri*” projects which aim to increase the women’s employment in industrial sectors through conducting seminars for female high school students. Borusan Group carries out gender equality-related social responsibility activities such as the project called “My Mom’s Job is My Future” “*Annemin İşi Benim Geleceğim*” which aims to increase women’s employment rate in the industry through providing childcare facilities in organized industrial zones. Along with these CSR activities, the Group intends to provide gender equality training for its employees collaborating with AÇEV. In order to understand how the Groups frame gender equality as social responsibility, interviews were held and the materials of the Groups such as reports, and websites were analyzed.

The social responsibility perspective of business organizations in Turkey has been influenced by local and global dynamics. The notion of philanthropy - *hayırseverlik*- which is based on the emotions and religious beliefs of individuals

to serve for the wellbeing of the society shaped the social responsibility activities in the Ottoman Empire Era. Waqfs were the institutions which organize and financially support the activities for the good of the society in this period. After the 1960s, social responsibility activities based on *hayırseverlik* has been revived by the waqfs of family-owned conglomerates in Turkey. The founders of the Koç and Borusan Groups maintained the waqf culture and continued the tradition of *hayırseverlik* through several activities. Vehbi Koç Foundation was established in 1969 by Vehbi Koç to carry out social responsibility activities in health, education, and art such as building schools, dormitories, health clinics and museums. The aim of the establishment of the foundation is explained as to “revitalize” the custom of waqf. Asım Kocabıyık Culture and Education Foundation was established by Asım Kocabıyık, the founder of the Borusan Group, in 1992 to contribute the national education and cultural activities in Turkey through building schools and libraries, providing scholarships for students and training for parents. The vision of the business leaders based on the idea of “giving back to the community” through *hayırseverlik* activities is a significant local dynamic which shapes the social responsibility perspective of business in Turkey.

The institutionalization of social responsibility activities in Turkey is related to the integration of business organizations with global market economy. In order to gain a competitive edge in the global market and come into prominence as a prestigious company, business organizations in Turkey have started to put carrying out CSR activities on their agenda. It is also argued that external factors such as the criteria for the accession of Turkey to the European Union affect companies to engage with CSR in order to comply with the standards of the European market. Corporate Governance Principles published by the Capital Markets Board of Turkey is regarded as a significant government regulation which motivates companies to adopt CSR. These principles are based on OECD guidelines and aim to integrate business organizations in Turkey into the international market. Along with the impact of the globalization, social responsibility has become a business strategy for increasing corporate profitability, gaining corporate reputation, competing in the market and building strong relationships with investors and

customers. Performing CSR activities enables business organizations in Turkey to connect with international actors and to improve international recognition.

Social responsibility of business organizations in the context of Turkey consists of the traditional philanthropic activities mostly carried out by the waqfs of the organizations and the CSR activities managed by the conglomerates. Social responsibility activities of Koç and Borusan Group illustrate this combination. Global integration leads Groups to move beyond the philanthropy and adopt the principles and practices of CSR as a “business case”. It appears that carrying out CSR activities is essential for companies to compete with rivals, to enhance corporate reputation and develop a strong relationship with the stakeholders. The social responsibility perspective of the Groups is influenced by the vision of the founders of the organizations. The idea of “giving back to the community” which is at the core of the vision of the founders form a basis for the CSR activities of the Groups. Groups acknowledge the ideas of the founders as a corporate value and carry out activities in accordance with this vision. They maintain the legacy of their founders while adjusting themselves with the global dynamics in the CSR field.

At the global scale, the current debates on CSR are related to sustainability and sustainable development. It is widely acknowledged that beyond the goal of profit maximization through the production of quality goods and services for customer satisfaction, business organizations have responsibilities to the environment and society. Corporate sustainability is promoted as a management strategy and business organizations are expected to perform activities that enable social equality and justice, environmental protection and economic development. As sustainability and sustainable development are the essential components of the global social responsibility perspective, it is seen that Koç and Borusan Groups also give importance to arrange their social responsibility activities in accordance with this perspective. Groups align their strategies with initiatives such as Sustainable Development Goals and the UN Global Compact. They give importance to measure and report their sustainability performances, create policies and strategies for their organizations. Through adopting the corporate citizenship approach, Groups regard

themselves as essential actors for promoting sustainable development in the country. They perform CSR activities to achieve sustainable social, economic and environmental development.

Adopting sustainability perspective has started to change the social responsibility practices of the Groups. Besides carrying out activities for the external stakeholders of the organization, Groups has started to focus more on their internal stakeholders. They give importance to carry out CSR activities within the company on the issues about their employees. The aim of the Groups is to enable their internal transformation through conducting these social responsibility activities. Developing an employee-oriented corporate policy is regarded as a necessary strategy for creating a transformation inside the company. It is possible to state that global factors have led the Groups to focus on their own business strategies.

Recently, it is frequently emphasized by various global actors that enabling gender equality is a necessary strategy for sustainable development. Corporations are specifically encouraged to focus on gender equality in their social responsibility activities. Following the global dynamics motivate the Groups to engage with gender equality-related corporate social responsibilities. Groups are the signatories of the UN Women Empowerment Principles and adopt “Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women” which is one of the Sustainable Development Goals in their sustainability strategy. They are influenced by the ideology of “business case for gender equality” which emphasizes that empowering women to participate in economic life for economic growth and sustainable development. The Groups also aim to transform their corporate culture through carrying out activities for enabling gender equality in the workplace. They give importance to create a corporate culture based on diversity and inclusion. Promoting the participation of women in labor force and decision-making processes are regarded as strategies to enable the diverse and inclusive business environment. Groups emphasize that these strategies are essential in order to increase productivity, promote cooperation-based working environments and compete in the global economy.

Gender equality training is one of the activities that adopted to create a diverse and inclusive corporate culture. As mentioned before, the Groups focus on their internal dynamics and give importance to create policies which promote equality in their organizations. Gender equality training for employees is regarded as a significant social responsibility activity to create a workplace based on equality and cooperation. This activity is one of the practices of collaboration between business organizations and NGOs. It appears that the intention of the corporations to focus on their business strategies has started to change the dynamics of the collaboration between the private sector and NGOs. This collaboration is not solely based on the financial sponsorship of the business organizations to NGOs for carrying out social responsibility projects. A new strategic alliance between NGOs and business organizations has started to establish which is based on co-decision, joint working and sharing knowledge. Gender equality training in companies is an example of this new strategic alliance.

The gender equality training models that analyzed in this study embrace a right based approach and prioritizes to construct a narrative to eliminate gender-based discrimination. The aim of the trainers is to enable participants to internalize the gender equality perspective and act in accordance to promote equality. It is notable that the issues addressed in these seminars are not only related to the actions to be taken in order to ensure workplace gender equality. Trainers mention the gendered division of domestic labor and examples of unfair treatments in relationships based on gender stereotypes. It is emphasized that gender equality should be supported through the decisions and actions in everyday life.

It is significant to take the conditions peculiar to Turkey into consideration in the evaluation of gender equality-related corporate social responsibility activities. It should not be ignored that the responsibility activities which aim to create job opportunities or to eliminate gender-based discrimination in workplaces may positively impact the lives of women in Turkey. Therefore, the academic studies which focus on the experiences and evaluations of women who participate

in these activities will contribute the debates on gender equality and corporate social responsibility.

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**ETİK KURUL DEĞERLENDİRME SONUCU/RESULT OF EVALUATION BY  
THE ETHICS COMMITTEE**

(Bu bölüm İstanbul Bilgi Üniversitesi İnsan Araştırmaları Etik Kurul tarafından doldurulacaktır /This section to be completed by the Committee on Ethics in research on Humans)

**Başvuru Sahibi / Applicant:** Eylem Mercimek

**Proje Başlığı / Project Title:** Gender Equality as Corporate Social Responsibility

**Proje No. / Project Number:** 2019-20045-01

1.	Herhangi bir değişikliğe gerek yoktur / There is no need for revision	XX
2.	Ret/ Application Rejected Reddin gerekçesi / Reason for Rejection	

Değerlendirme Tarihi / Date of Evaluation: 7 Ocak 2019

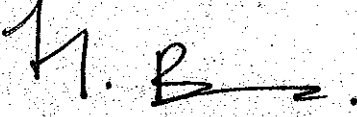
Kurul Başkanı / Committee Chair

Doç. Dr. İtir Erhart



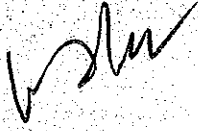
Üye / Committee Member

Prof. Dr. Hale Bolak



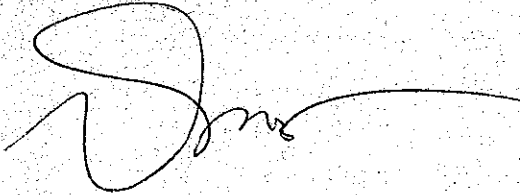
Üye / Committee Member

Prof. Dr. Koray Akay



Üye / Committee Member

Prof. Dr. Ayhan Özgür Toy



Üye / Committee Member

Prof. Dr. Aslı Tunç



Üye / Committee Member

Prof. Dr. Turgut Tarhanlı



Üye / Committee Member

Prof. Dr. Ali Demirci

