

Social Entrepreneurship Practices: The Example of Ahi Organization

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ABSTRACT

In this study, the relations between social entrepreneurship and the Ahilik Organization were examined in the context of the practices implemented in the Ahilik Organization, which has an important place in Turkish history. In the first part of the study, the concept of social entrepreneurship was explained, and in the second part, the Ahilik Organization was discussed in detail. The third part evaluated the practices implemented in order to explain the relationship between the two structures in terms of similarities and differences. Among the most important findings of the study is that every Ahi is also a social entrepreneur, but not every social entrepreneur is also an Ahi. In addition, it was emphasized that the value-based practices implemented by these institutions should be an example for today's civil society organizations.

Key Words: Entrepreneurship, Social Entrepreneurship, Ahi Order, Ahi Organization

JEL Classification: I25, L26, L31

Sosyal Girişimcilik Uygulamaları: Ahilik Teşkilatı Örneği

ÖZ

Bu çalışmada, sosyal girişimcilik ile Ahilik Teşkilatı arasındaki ilişkiler, Türk tarihinde önemli bir yere sahip olan Ahilik Teşkilatı'nda gerçekleştirilen uygulamalar bağlamında incelenmiştir. Çalışmanın ilk bölümünde sosyal girişimcilik kavramı açıklanmış, ikinci bölümde ise Ahilik Teşkilatı detaylı bir şekilde ele alınmıştır. Üçüncü bölüm ise, her iki yapı arasındaki ilişkiyi benzerlikler ve farklılıklar bağlamında açıklamak üzere yapılan uygulamaları değerlendirmiştir. Araştırmanın en önemli bulguları arasında, her Ahi'nin aynı zamanda bir sosyal girişimci olduğu ancak her sosyal girişimcinin aynı zamanda bir Ahi olmadığı yer almaktadır. Ayrıca, bu kurumlar tarafından yerine getirilen değer temelli uygulamaların günümüz sivil toplum örgütleri için bir örnek teşkil etmesi gerektiği vurgulanmıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Girişimcilik, Sosyal Girişimcilik, Ahilik, Ahilik Teşkilatı

JEL Sınıflandırması: I25, L26, L31

INTRODUCTION

While the concept of entrepreneurship, whose importance increased with the industrial revolution, only referred to establishing a business and engaging in commercial activities before 1980, today it focuses on the value created rather than the profits obtained. Although there is value creation in all types of entrepreneurship, the value offered in social entrepreneurship differs from other types of entrepreneurship.

The concept of social entrepreneurship has two basic dimensions: "entrepreneurship" and "social mission" (Martin and Osberg, 2007; Tishler, 2018).

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While the entrepreneurship dimension includes elements such as creativity, evaluating opportunities and taking risks, the social mission dimension targets social problems (Aldawood, 2020; Kargin et al., 2018). While Leadbeater (1997) defines social entrepreneurship as the use of entrepreneurial behavior for social purposes or the use of the profit for disadvantaged groups, Drayton (2002) explains this concept as a tool of change that focuses on the solution of social problems. Martin and Osberg (2007) define social entrepreneurship as efforts to identify social injustices and provide a better future for society.

Although social entrepreneurship is new as a concept, it is old as a phenomenon. There have always been social entrepreneurs in history, but they were not called social entrepreneurs. The concept of social entrepreneurship came to the fore in the 1980s when Bill Drayton founded Ashoka, an organization that provides worldwide funding to social entrepreneurs (Kılıç, 2013). Social entrepreneurs are non-profit individuals and act with a focus on solutions to social problems. Their main goal is not to make a profit, but to discover the potentials within the society, thus reducing unemployment and poverty, increasing the level of personal income, and thus positively affecting the social balance (Demirel, 2017).

The Ahi Organization, an important institution in Turkish history, played an important role in identifying and eliminating social injustices. The Ahi Organization is an organization that regulates the training, operation and control of tradesmen and craftsmen operating in various cities, towns and villages of Anatolia from the first half of the 13th century to the beginning of the 20th century (Çağatay, 1981).

The word Ahi means brotherhood or generosity in Arabic (Kaya, 2013). It is stated that in Turkish, it is derived from the word "Akı" and includes meanings such as bravery, heroism and generosity (Bayram, 1991). From the early 13th century until the late 19th century, when it was implemented, Ahi Order functioned as a consultation center and support point for individuals in need of help in social life, community services, foreigners and poor tradesmen. In this process, Ahiism was accepted as an element of balance in social life (Gök, 2021).

METHODOLOGY

The research was designed according to the case study design, which is one of the qualitative research designs. Merriam (2013) defines the case study as a comprehensive description and analysis of a specific system. On the other hand, Creswell (2007) defines the case study as a qualitative research method in which the researcher examines one or more limited situations in depth over time using multiple data collection methods (observations, interviews, audiovisual materials, documents, reports). This approach includes a detailed examination of the situations and the themes related to these situations. The literature review method was also used as a data collection method in the research. According to Balcı (2013), the literature review is the summary, synthesis and examination of the literature on the information related to the research problem. The literature includes the following sources: Professional journals, reports, scientific books and monographs, government documents, theses. All these sources can help clarify the

research problem or the situation addressed in the research in many ways. In this research, the relationship between the Ahi organization and social entrepreneurship was discussed and evaluated in the context of similarities and differences.

RESULT

SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP

The concept of social entrepreneurship was first introduced in Europe in 1990 in the Italian magazine “*Impresa Sociale*”. The origin of the concept is based on new cooperative-like initiatives that emerged in the late 1980s, especially in response to unmet needs in the areas of work integration and personal services. Work integration social enterprises (WISEs) have come to the fore in Europe since the mid-1990s and have been associated with social entrepreneurship. In the USA, the concept of social entrepreneurship dates back to the late 1970s, when small communities and religious groups consisting of individuals sold homemade products and established markets to support voluntary donations. The economic downturn, the decline in welfare and significant cuts in federal funding during this period caused non-profit organizations to expand their commercial activities and close the gap in their budgets. These developments contributed to the establishment of the concept of social entrepreneurship in the USA (Defourny and Nyssens, 2010).

Social entrepreneurship was born as a response to complex social needs (Jiao, 2011). With the establishment of the Ashoka Foundation, social entrepreneurship has three main approaches. The first approach defines social entrepreneurship as the combination of commercial entrepreneurship with social impacts. The second approach views social entrepreneurship as innovation for social impacts. The third approach limits social entrepreneurship to positive businesses, direct services and facilitating associations. However, there is no universal definition for social entrepreneurship (Tan et al., 2005).

Social entrepreneurship refers to the process of finding solutions to social problems by using entrepreneurial characteristics (Ashoka Foundation, 2020). Social entrepreneurship is a process that combines economic values in order to create social value (Özdevecioğlu and Cingöz, 2009). According to this definition, economic and social criteria are used together. In social entrepreneurship, from an economic perspective, the aim is to achieve continuous production of goods and services, a high degree of autonomy, taking significant economic risks and obtaining more economic output with a minimum number of employees, while from a social perspective, it is aimed to have a determined social goal, an initiative initiated by a group of citizens. Presence, participatory decision making and limited profit distribution (Mulgan et al., 2007). Social entrepreneurship can be defined as any commercial enterprise carried out by a business with the aim of creating a social purpose or social value in line with economic discipline, innovation and determination. Social enterprises can also be structured as an independent department or a non-profit subsidiary within an organization (Alter, 2007). In this context, social enterprises can be defined as a collaboration between non-profit non-governmental organizations (NGOs) outside of government institutions and

private sector enterprises that seek profit. Thanks to their flexible boundaries, social enterprises can carry out both profit-oriented and non-profit activities (Işık, 2013).

Social entrepreneurship emphasizes the aim of pursuing opportunities, using innovation and creativity, and creating social value by focusing on the solution of social problems. Social value can be realized in the form of reducing costs or increasing benefits for society. It can also occur through the provision of goods and services, the creation of missing institutions, or the reshaping of existing institutions (Roundy, 2013). In this context, social entrepreneurship includes activities undertaken to achieve the social mission of an organization (Ojeda, 2021).

Abu-Saifan (2012) defines social entrepreneurship by listing characteristics such as mission leadership, emotional, change agency, thought leadership, social value creation, social sensitivity, management, visionary and responsible. Social entrepreneurship covers an area that concerns all segments of society, not just at the local level. The focus of social entrepreneurs is the solution of unmet or unexpressed needs such as poverty, social inadequacy and environmental problems (Mair, 2010). Bandinelli (2017), on the other hand, states that social entrepreneurship aims to include a social dimension as a part of economic behavior. Therefore, the social contribution provided by social entrepreneurs is important.

Social entrepreneurship was first used as a tool for commercial entrepreneurship to carry out social activities. However, in recent years, it has been observed that non-profit organizations also engage in social entrepreneurship activities for the purpose of providing social benefits and financial resources (Paksoy, 2002). The use of the concept of social entrepreneurship has gone beyond the fact that entrepreneurship not only emerges in social fields, but also involves creative human activities and has social externalities. The main purpose of social enterprise is to improve society and eliminate inequalities (Bandinelli, 2007). Social enterprises are structures that emerge due to reasons such as the inadequacy of the free market or government institutions in providing services or the inability of customers to evaluate certain services correctly. Such enterprises aim to produce "added value", which is a mixture of economic and social values (Dart, 2004). Social enterprises are a combination of cooperatives that produce economic value and charities that provide social value. An ideal social enterprise conducts its economic activities with the aim of creating social impacts (Somerville, 2012). In this context, it can be said that the essence of social enterprises requires the integration of social welfare and commercial purposes (Wry and York, 2015). In short, social enterprises can be seen as a strategic response to environmental challenges and various problems faced by non-profit organizations (Dart, 2004).

Social entrepreneurs can be defined as people who listen to the voice of the society, identify needs and provide the resources necessary to produce appropriate solutions to these needs (Özdevecioğlu and Cingöz, 2015). In social entrepreneurship activities, elements such as desire for social needs, creating social value, innovation and effective use of resources are important (Kaya İnceplik, 2018; Besler, 2010). The main task of a social entrepreneur is to recognize a problem that exists in society and develop appropriate solutions. The social

entrepreneur identifies the source of the problem, convinces the society of new approaches, and contributes to solving the problem by changing the system. Social entrepreneurs are not satisfied with just giving fish or teaching how to fish; On the contrary, they work with determination to revolutionize the fish industry (Denizalp, 2009; Erşen et al., 2010).

The characteristics of social entrepreneurs are listed by Dees (1998) and Mort, Weerawardena and Carnegie (2002) as follows: Social entrepreneurs aim to create and develop social value by acting in line with the mission they have determined. To achieve this mission, they constantly seek new opportunities and pursue these opportunities with determination. They also serve as change agents and are constantly engaged in the process of innovation, adaptation and learning. They operate boldly, do not rest content with the resources at hand, and exhibit high levels of accountability behavior. They exhibit virtuous entrepreneurial behavior and a balanced and harmonious behavior between their goals and activities. They pursue and evaluate opportunities, are innovative, proactive and tend to take risks in important decisions. According to Cannon, social entrepreneurs have three basic motivations: devoting income from different sources to a future social cause, organizing employees with a socially objective support system, and ensuring that new generations are aware of social areas (Cited by Erturgut and Soyşekerçi, 2012).

The increasing complexity of social problems necessitates intersectoral collaborations in the process of producing solutions. In this context, it has been observed that an intensive network of relationships has been formed between non-profit organizations and businesses in recent years. The importance of such collaborations is increasing in terms of carrying out social entrepreneurship activities effectively and providing more added value for both society and organizations. These collaborations allow organizations in different sectors to develop more sustainable solutions to social problems by bringing together their own unique resources and capabilities (Sarıkaya, 2010). Social entrepreneurs create lean and flexible organizational structures with both paid and volunteer employees. One of the most distinctive characteristics of social entrepreneurs is their ability to bring individuals, organizations and complex networks together (Özdemir, 2010). From this point on, social entrepreneurship is not about providing aid, but about the support of the institutions that will provide aid to the institutions that will receive aid through sponsors in order to be exempt from tax.

Social entrepreneurship activities can be found in almost every period of human history because the right of individuals and local communities to self-govern is seen as more important than the right of the central government to govern. In ancient times, among the first people who earned their living by gathering and hunting, there are examples of social entrepreneurship such as helping each other, solving common problems and doing things collaboratively.

Social entrepreneurship emerged as a field of literature in the Anglo-American academic world in the early 1900s (Erturgut and Soyşekerçi, 2012). The history of social entrepreneurship in the Western world dates back to long periods. For example, there were significant periods of social entrepreneurship in Great

Britain in the 12th and 13th centuries. Hundreds of voluntary churches established by churches attract attention in this period. Vinoba is among the social entrepreneurs worldwide who make significant contributions to society. Bhava, Mahatma Names such as Gandhi and Martin Luther can be counted (Abolarin, 2014).

Florence Nightingale in the 19th century Names such as became pioneers in the field of social entrepreneurship by establishing nursing schools. Similarly, in the 20th century, Maria Montessori set an example in the field of social entrepreneurship. Additionally, in the 19th and 20th centuries, projects to address social problems, such as centers to combat alcohol and drug addiction, were carried out in both the United States and Great Britain (Bornstein and Davis, 2010).

Worldwide, the history of social entrepreneurship is full of important names and organizations. For example, the Anti-Slavery Society founded by William L. Garrison in the fight against slavery in America and the Hull House founded by Jane Adams to help the poor are among these important names. Similarly, Grameen Bank, founded by Muhammad Yunus to provide financial support to the poor in Bangladesh, became an important turning point in the field of social entrepreneurship (Mair and Martí, 2006).

Examples of social entrepreneurship can be seen in Turkish history along with the development of social activities. The establishment of foundations and Ahi organizations during the Seljuk period and the existence of Ahi orders and Guild organizations during the Ottoman Empire are examples of social entrepreneurship. For example, the solidarity and educational activities of Ahis within the society are the steps that form the basis of social entrepreneurship. Additionally, solutions to various social problems were produced through the foundations established in the Ottoman Empire (Coşkun, 2015).

Examples of social entrepreneurship in Turkish history are also seen in areas related to health and disadvantaged groups. Organizations such as Zeynep Kâmil Hospital, founded by Princess Zeynep Kâmil, and Darüşşafaka School, founded by Yusuf Ziya Mr, are among the leading examples of social entrepreneurship in Turkey (Denizalp, 2009).

The high level of welfare of the society in developed countries is attributed to the fact that social entrepreneurship started in these countries in the early periods and its legal basis is clearly defined. However, despite the increasing importance of social entrepreneurship in Turkey, the fact that its legal framework is not fully determined remains a deficiency. Although targets related to the concept of social entrepreneurship were set especially in the 10th and 11th Development Plans, it is seen that targets related to social entrepreneurship are not included in the 12th Development Plan covering the years 2024-2028 (Aktaş and Akdeve, 2024).

AHI ORGANIZATION

Craftsmen that existed in Anatolia from the 13th century to the 20th century. Although it was inspired by the Futuwwa organization, Ahiism actually stands out as an organization specific to Anatolian Turks (Andaç, 1994; Bayram, 2012). While Fütüvvet means helping each other in business and supporting each

other, Ahiism is the developed and changed version of this concept. In Anatolia, people with futuwwa characteristics were called "Ahi" (Andaç, 1994; Çağatay, 1981; Kaya, 2013).

The origin of the term futuwwa, "feta", is an adjective used in the pre-Islamic Arab society for generous, hospitable and helpful people as well as noble and brave people. This meaning continued during the Islamic period, but it led to different interpretations as a result of different cultural interactions in different regions where Islam spread. With the development of Sufism under the influence of Turkish and Persian cultures in the 10th and 11th centuries, new meanings were added to the concept of "feta". During this period, the ideal "feta" type was defined as a person who was extremely honest, generous, worked for others, helpful, had broad tolerance, forgave faults, was merciful, feared God, was good-natured and elegant. With this evolution, the ideal type of "ahi" emerged as opposed to the ideal of "feta". According to one view, the fact that people who entered the path of Sufism addressed each other with the Arabic word "ahi" led to the term "ahi" being used in Anatolia to mean "brother". This shows that the term "ahi" emerged outside Anatolia, especially in the 10th and 11th centuries. With the development of Sufism, the terms "feta" and "ahi" began to be used together. Another view states that the word "ahi" is derived from the Turkish word "akı", which means "openhanded" and "generous" in sources such as *Divanu Lugati't-Türk* and *Atabetü'l-Hakayık*. In this case, the letter "k" in the word "akı" was replaced by the letter "h" as a result of a widespread sound change in Turkish and took the form of "ahi" (Hacıgökmen, 2012).

The Ahi Organization, which initially operated in the leather and shoe industry, expanded over time to include all tradesmen in the region (Akgündüz, 2014; Gündüz et al., 2012). Akhism adopted moral values, business order and solidarity and played an important role in Turkish history as a religious, economic and social structure. It was founded in Anatolia in the 13th century under the leadership of Ahi Evran and developed under the influence of social, cultural, political and commercial conditions (Göksel and Yüksel, 2020). The organization aimed to produce solutions to problems with its internal dynamics and to regulate the relations between various segments in a harmonious way (Akgündüz, 2014; Göksel and Yüksel, 2020; Gündüz et al., 2012; Köprülü and Köprülü, 2015).

The influence of Sufism on economic activities emerged through the craft structures, which were pre-capitalist production organizations. It is possible to talk about Ahilik as the first manifestation of this channel in the historical development in Anatolian geography. According to Ülgener (1991), the social and political characteristics of medieval Anatolia cannot be isolated from religion and Sufism. Similarly, issues such as work ethics, becoming a tradesman, moving away from trade and inefficiency cannot be evaluated outside of Sufism. In this context, Ülgener (1991) states that understanding these elements without a Sufi perspective is insufficient.

The Ahi organization, which was based on the foundations of the Futuwwa organization and reshaped in the specific socio-cultural conditions of Anatolia, is a

structure born from the harmony of Turkish and Islamic cultures. Initially having a mystical character, the Ahi organization acquired a political character in the second half of the 13th century, and a military character in the period of the principalities that emerged with the collapse of the Seljuk administration at the end of this century. In the mid-15th century, when the Ottoman central administration was strengthened, the Ahi organization entered a historical development process in which professional characteristics were at the forefront (Demirtaş, 2021).

According to Bayram (2012), Ahiism aims to act with a solidarity spirit that will ensure that people are at peace in this world and the afterlife. According to Gündüz and et al (2012), Ahiism is an organization that has adopted social solidarity and cooperation as its basic principles. According to Battuta, he states that there were Ahi tribes everywhere where Turkmens settled in Anatolia lived and that they were effective in hosting foreigners who came to their cities, taking care of them, providing them with food and accommodation, and saving them from bandits and profiteers (Cited by Bozpinar, 2020). In this context, the Ahi Organization undertakes the task of providing mutual social assistance and security by establishing the mutual aid fund, also known as the middle fund. The basic principles of Ahiism; Humanity, seeking solutions to the problems of young people, prioritizing education and accepting it as a lifelong process, providing educational activities in the military field, providing social service activities, seeing economic independence as real independence, undertaking services that the state cannot reach in the public sphere, private enterprise and It includes the characteristics of accepting ownership, working to keep economic life alive, cooperatives and unionism (Bayram, 2012; Kaya, 2013). Gölpınarlı (1954) lists the qualities that an Ahi should have as being generous, not postponing prayers, being modest, keeping one's hands off the world, earning lawful income, being knowledgeable and not going to the door of lords.

The Ahi Organization has practices similar to some of the activities carried out by non-profit organizations today. The fact that the ancient Turks generally lived a nomadic lifestyle made it difficult for them to accumulate great wealth. However, if there were individuals in the society who became extremely rich, they were allowed to distribute some of this wealth back to the society (Durak, 2013). The spirit of Ahism reflected the solidarity and community understanding in working life and manifested itself in the covered bazaars, guilds and bazaar stalls in Anatolia, Istanbul and Rumelia. This spirit managed to maintain its existence in the lifestyle and mentality of merchant communities for centuries, even though the institutions it was based on changed over time (Ülgener, 2006). Although there are some practices of the Ahi Organization that are reflected today, they began to disintegrate for various reasons starting from the 16th century (Ekinci, 1989).

This organization, which has an important influence in the social and economic fields as well as in the moral, military and political fields, has fulfilled the functions of today's social security institutions, chambers of tradesmen and craftsmen, cooperatives, unions and municipalities. However, beyond these, it has also played a remarkable role as an institution that shapes business ethics. This

function has perhaps a quality that does not have a direct equivalent today (Öztürk, 2002).

Ahilik, as an organization specific to Turkish culture, played an important role in protecting consumers in Anatolia and in rooting Turks in the region. Ahilik, which continued its existence as a structure specific to Muslims until the 17th century, transformed into a new organization called "gedik" that allowed people from different religions to work together with the expansion of the Ottoman Empire's sovereignty. Gedik is a Turkish term meaning "monopoly and privilege" and was officially used in 1927. During the Tanzimat period, monopoly and the gedik system were abolished because they were thought to hinder the development of trade. In the 18th century, Ahilik reached its peak during the Ottoman period and the maintenance and security of trade routes were ensured with the support of the state. However, with the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, the Ahilik system also degenerated and the guilds were corrupted. In 1912, the guilds were completely abolished, thus the Ahilik system became history. Efforts to solve the problems experienced by tradesmen and craftsmen during the Union and Progress period were unsuccessful and the Ahi system collapsed (Marşap, 2023).

AHI ORGANIZATION AND SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP

The Ahi Organization played an important role in organizing the social life of Anatolia (Andaç, 1994; Gündüz et al., 2012; Kaya, 2013). He carried out various activities to solve social problems and prevent unemployment. Today, organizations such as village chambers can be seen as an extension of the Ahi tradition. Ahiism primarily aims to ensure that people do not face hunger and poverty (Bayraktar, 2005).

According to Gölpınarlı (1954), the aim of Ahilik is to establish good relations between the rich and the poor, the producer and the consumer, labor and capital, the people and the state and to achieve social justice. Social entrepreneurship is the support of the institutions that will provide assistance to the institutions that will receive assistance through sponsorship. At this point, it is possible to say that the aim of Ahilik and the aim of social entrepreneurship are similar.

The Ahi Organization was a structure operating in the leather and shoe sector in Anatolia in the 13th century, but it has become an application covering all sectors throughout history. This organization has become a structure with professional characteristics at the forefront. This structure, which was organized in a structure specific to Muslims until the 17th century, underwent structural changes with the expansion of the Ottoman state's sovereignty and transformed into structures such as "foundations", "gediks" or "guilds". It could not compete with the developing technology with the industrial revolution and ended its existence within the capitalist system. Social entrepreneurship, on the other hand, has historically been based on activities such as helping each other, solving common problems, and doing business by cooperating among the first people who made a living by gathering and hunting in ancient times, but it emerged as a field of

literature in the Anglo-American academic world in the early 1900s (Erturgut and Soyşekerci, 2012).

One of the important similarities between social entrepreneurship and the Ahi Organization is that they are shaped around the principle of altruism and volunteerism. Studies carried out to bring solutions to social problems in areas such as health, education, culture and economy are of critical importance for both social entrepreneurship and the Ahi Organization. Social entrepreneurs are defined as individuals who have gained respect in society and have a special motivation. Similarly, Ahis, who have a respected position in the society in the Ahi Organization, have become prominent people of the society with a special motivation. Therefore, it can be said that every Ahi is a social entrepreneur (Bayram, 2012).

The specific weight of social entrepreneurship is “competition”, while that of Ahilik is “solidarity” (ikbal, ecstasy, affection). The Ahilik Organization emphasizes the importance of higher quality and socially beneficial products, not competition in production (Şimşek, 2002). In the Ahi tradition, while quality and social benefit are at the forefront in production, the ambition for profit is kept in the background. However, in social entrepreneurship, competition is also in favor of the activity providing social benefit and creating social value. In this respect, there is a harmonious relationship between Ahilik and social entrepreneurship.

Social entrepreneurship activities generally come to the fore in situations where the state is not fully sufficient, especially when various problems are experienced in areas such as disadvantaged groups, health and education. The Ahi Organization is organized as a non-governmental organization operating in every field needed by the state, including military services. Civil initiative and social solidarity are important in both organizational models.

Another common point between social entrepreneurship and the Ahi organization is sharing the profits with the members of the society. While in social entrepreneurship the profit is generally spent on reactivation, in the Ahi Organization there is a tradition of sharing a certain point of wealth with other members of the society. This practice contributes to the general well-being of society in line with social entrepreneurship.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Social entrepreneurship is a type of entrepreneurship that begins with the evaluation of unmet needs in society as opportunities and aims to provide social benefit through activities carried out on a voluntary basis in areas such as education, health, economy, environment and culture. This definition shows that the origins of social entrepreneurship date back to ancient times. In the early ages when people formed societies, helping each other, attempting to solve common problems and doing things together can be considered the first examples of social entrepreneurship.

The Ahi organization also coincides with this understanding and principles. In Ahi, practices such as helping the poor, treating the sick, and providing shelter, nutrition and employment support to the unemployed and disadvantaged are

concrete examples of the principles of social entrepreneurship. In this context, it is possible to say that every Ahi is also a social entrepreneur. However, due to the Ahi's connection with Sufism and Futuwwa, it is not possible to say that every social entrepreneur is an Ahi. Today, Ahi Culture Week is celebrated with various events every year, and the successes and moral principles of tradesmen and craftsmen are rewarded. Ahilik has formed the basis of organizations such as public banks, surety cooperatives and Bağ-Kur, and has great importance among tradesmen and craftsmen.

At this point, it should be emphasized that the main thing in social entrepreneurship is not to provide aid, but to ensure that the institutions that will provide aid to the institutions that will be provided with aid through sponsorship in order to be exempt from tax. In the Ahi organization, there is no such sponsorship, but the production of quality goods within the solidarity of tradesmen. When evaluated from this perspective, there are differences between the Ahi organization and social entrepreneurship.

The Ahi organization has become archaic today. It exists in name as it was implemented in the past, but it does not exist in substance. Of course, there are those who have replaced this organization throughout history, but it is not possible to evaluate them as if they still existed in a pre-capitalist system. Based on the fact that individuality has increased with the advancement of technology, it should be accepted that there is no need for solidarity organizations today. Instead, what is needed are social entrepreneurs who can ensure that people who will provide aid reach the people or institutions that will be provided aid.

Social entrepreneurship and organizations such as the Ahilik Organization are civil society organizations that focus on eliminating deficiencies by operating in areas where public services are inadequate. Institutions such as the Ahi Organization, which has an important place in Turkish history, constitute the basic starting point of the civil society that offers examples of social entrepreneurship today. This shows that social entrepreneurship activities have taken the Ahi tradition to a new dimension in the 21st century.

In this research, the Ahilik Organization was tried to be explained with examples as an example of social entrepreneurship practice and the relationship between them was tried to be determined by revealing the similarities and differences. In the future studies, examples of social entrepreneurship can be examined in the context of foundations, guilds and tradesmen organizations that have an important place in Turkish culture such as the Ahilik Organization. Examples of social entrepreneurship leadership presented by these organizations can be examined. In addition, it can be suggested as a result of this study that legislative studies should be included that will pave the way for social entrepreneurship organizations to develop a policy in line with the Ahilik tradition in their activities.

Research and Publication Ethics Statement

Throughout the entire process of the article, we have adhered to the research and publication ethics principles of the Journal of Management and Economics.

Author Contributions

The entire article was written by Assoc. Prof. Dr. Hamza ÖZ.

Statement of Interest

The author has no conflict of interest with any person or organization.

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