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## ***A Look at the “Neighbourhood Cooperatives” Concept through the Main Principles of the “Akhy System” to Develop Sustainable Social Structure<sup>1</sup>***

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### ABSTRACT

*The term of “sustainability”, which was rooted at the beginning of the 18th century, is also as old as history of humanity and it has reached an effectiveness where it can affect the public policies as well. The term that we may also abstract as human endeavours to sustain its own organism and civilisation, today, has been expounded with different terms far beyond the term of ecology. Cooperatives, one of the most significant actors playing a great role in the field of economy, are not defined as the concept, which meet only the economic needs of their members. The concept is ascribed a meaning with social, cultural and even political meanings. In this regard, cooperatives are a strategic tool that can incorporate all the key components of the term sustainability in their own right.*

*In this paper, the possibility of whether it would be possible to transfer the Akhy system, which was a socio-economic phenomenon in the past, and its principles to the new concept of “Neighbourhood Cooperatives”. The scope of the paper is limited to the neighbourhood scale considered the smallest administrative unit. Reviewing the literature, obtaining statistical data from the institutional web page of the agencies and performing in-depth-interview techniques with the authorised people of some cooperatives have been chosen as the method of the work.*

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Today almost half of humanity live in cities and by 2030, approximately 60% of the population will be living in urban areas based on data (UN, 2017) provided by the UN. In addition to this 95% of urban expansion is predicted to take place in developing countries. While some people in developed countries live in prosperity with healthy housing facilities and services provided others (828 million people) live in slums in unhealthy conditions or circumstances and the number unfortunately keeps rising. The urbanisation process and its speed is exerting pressure on natural resources such as water, soil, air and the living environment and urban health. Another data from the source of the UN, while the urban areas occupy only 3% of the Earth's land, however, they account for 60-80% of energy consumption and 75% of carbon emission.

Regarding economic issues, the unfair economic system dictated by the global capital and its heavy consequences resulted in extreme poverty with approximately 850 million people across the world. According to the UN data, nearly one in five people in developing countries particularly majority of these people in Southern Asia and sub-Saharan Africa live on less than \$1.25 per day. These poverty issues concern their governments. One in nine people (approx. 795 million) living particularly in developing countries are undernourished in today's world according to the UN. Asia has the hungriest people with two thirds in this context. On the other hand, nutrition is another problematic issue in children such that 45 percent of deaths under five years is resulted by insufficient nutrition according to the UN. One in four children (one in three in developing countries) also suffer from stunted growth. And the final statistics are that 66 million primary school-age children attend classes hungry in developing countries, of which 23 million students are in Africa (UN, 2017).

Agriculture takes a great part in an economy of a country and food security is another issue in the context of sustainability. According to the UN, 40% of people's livelihood in the world is by agriculture. This means that agriculture is the largest employer providing income and jobs for poor rural households. 500 million small-scale farms fulfil approximately 80% of food consumed in developing countries. Better use of agricultural biodiversity can contribute to more nutritious diets, enhanced livelihoods for farming communities and more resilient and sustainable farming systems. In addition to this, 1.4 billion people mostly living in rural areas of developing countries suffer from lack of electricity worldwide. Lack of energy can be a barrier to reducing hunger beside that it can cause the needs not to be met.

As can be seen the problems experienced throughout the world are becoming more complex and global. The concept of sustainability comes more into prominence and governments keep it on their agenda. The solutions to the problems require holistic approaches, which unfortunately make it difficult in practice.

In a general inductive approach, the health of a living being or in other words its biotic sustainability is directly proportional to its cell health. Therefore, the health level of the cell is an essential element affecting tissue, organ, systems and whole body of an organism. Social structure and its institutions are similar. In case of establishing the smallest social unit and its administrative dimension on a health basis, it would not be a wrong point of view to say that it will have positive effects on the whole social structure. In this context, it can be said that the first and most important condition of sustainability of living beings depends on its cellular sustainability.

The term of "sustainability" that we may also abstract as human endeavours to sustain its own organism and civilisation has now been a concept, which may be ascribed different meanings to. At the beginning, the term was only used in the forestry field by referring to ecology science, now the term, as a reflection of the paradox between "development" and "environment", has become a representative of these terms including sustainability of social, cultural, economic and administrative structures by harbouring them. The effects of the globalisation process on the concept cannot also be denied such that it has reached effectiveness to the point where it can affect the public policies of the states.

One of the most important consequences of globalisation has been on the services delivered by the states. The vertiginous development experienced in information technologies and its social, economic and political effects have forced the states to be withdrawn from particular services such as economic. These services, which the states have left, have been replaced by different organisations. One of these organisations has been cooperatives. Cooperatives consisting of people, who come together voluntarily to protect and develop their individual economy, play a great strategic role in sustaining not only economic structure of countries but also its social aspect.

Hence in the process it is ascribed a meaning to the concept with social, cultural and even political meanings. In this regard, cooperatives are a strategic tool that can incorporate all of the key components of the term sustainability in their own right. Nowadays cooperatives performing technical and social services effectively and efficiently, clinch the role with at the least 250 million-employment capacity, 1 billion members and 2.2 billion USD turnovers in the world.

The changes in the cooperative concept have also improved the concept of community-based cooperatives such as "Kibbutz", "Moshav", "Sovkhoz" and "Kolkhoz". We can see these cooperatives as rural type that their members, consisting of people gathered together in order to live in a common ground, established an eco-system for themselves. Thus, cooperatives have been transformed into the settlement units.

It is also considered that these rural community-based cooperatives may take place by transforming their functions in urban areas such as in neighbourhoods with the name of "Neighbourhood Cooperatives". The main function of these cooperatives is nothing but to increase the level of happiness of their members first and then locals by meeting not only their economic needs but also others with social partnership, sharing and solidarity awareness. In this context, when the concept of cooperative is overlapped with space bordered and administrative hierarchy it is considered as a new approach that the neighbourhoods perhaps may be seen as the "Neighbourhood Cooperatives".

Cooperatives, as a result of their mission, are the socio-economic units with their main characteristics such as solidarity, equality, being democratic, taking responsibility and so on. However, the main factor sustaining them undoubtedly is moral values that their members have. It is clear that where there are such moral values, forming adhesive bond of the system such as honesty, openness, respect for the rights of others, social structure, will then be sustainable. In this regard, the role played by cooperatives is vital in building social structure.

The concept that moral values find application in socio-economic structure in the past periods in the Ottomans is "Akhism". The basic principles of "Akhy System" have contributed to the formation of an effective socio-economic structure in the beginning of the Ottoman period. The system did not only keep the social order under control but it also helped the Ottomans to survive for centuries by preventing -the state from being damaged. The system basically did not only regulate the working principles of the artisans and craftsmen or their economic relations with people but it also played a strategic role in forming a "sustainable social structure".

In this paper, it is discussed whether it would be possible to transfer the Akhy system, which was a socio-economic phenomenon in the context of sustainable development in the past, and its principles to the new concept of "Neighbourhood Cooperatives". The scope of the paper is limited to the neighbourhood scale considered the smallest administrative unit. The evaluations and recommendations were made in this context. Reviewing the literature, obtaining statistical data from the institutional web page of the agencies and performing in-depth-interview techniques with the authorised people of some cooperatives were chosen as the method of the work.

## **1. The Term Cooperative and its Relationship with Sustainable Development**

When considering the concept of cooperation, it can be said that the term is as old as history of humanity. Human beings, gaining economic benefits with cooperation based on

partnership, have tried to find solutions to their problems by coming together in the works that he could not accomplish alone. Hence, they have preserved and implemented the precious idea of cooperation for thousands of years.

When looking at the term of cooperative, it is possible to see that there are many approaches developed by scholars to the term besides its dictionary meaning. As we know, the origin of the term was passed to French after Latin etymologically. Then it passed to other languages (EtimolojiTürkçe, 2017). Cooperatives are the autonomous (Harun and Mahmud, 2012) organisations or social groups (Ifenkwe, 2012) of which members come together voluntarily with loyalty and commitment (Casaburi, 2015) in order to achieve their objectives including raising their living standards (Harun and Chin, 2015) and to fulfil their needs with a participatory management (Verhess et al., 2015) approach. Cooperatives are not only economic organisations but also they are social organisations (Mori, 2014; Butcher and Xu, 2014; Picciotti, 2014). Their social aspect has also increased their role in achieving sustainable social structures. Some researchers such as Zaimova et. al, (2012) and Segu'i-Mas (2015) deal with cooperatives in the light of sustainability and they pay attention to their strategic role. Cooperatives are not enterprises that have only economic objectives but they also have social and cultural objectives using democratic principles in order to establish a new generation social order (Kanlı, 2016).

Cooperatives are the most vital stakeholders of sustainability when considered the terms of liveability, durability and resilience. They are not only the symbols of cooperation and solidarity but they are also resilient at the local level and representatives of power at the global level due to their partnership model containing many people based on the principle of "Union is strength". They are not the enterprises aiming only profit yet to develop cooperation in social, cultural and even political area.

The particular problems aroused in recent years such as environmental disasters, food problems, hunger etc. have introduced the world to new concepts. One of the popular concepts that come into our life not only in political field but also in other fields such as economic and social is sustainability. Comprehension and perception that global problems can be solved in global efforts and cooperation brought together important global meetings hosted by the United Nations (Table 1). In general, in the point of view of sustainability concept, economic and social structures should be dealt with the environment as a whole. It is considered that the opportunities through sustainable development may provide present and future generations to use natural resources in equitable manner.

The concept of sustainable development dates back a long way but it was at the UN Conference on Human Environment (Stockholm, 1972) that the international community met for the first time to consider global environment and development needs. The Conference led to the formation of the UN Environment Programme UNEP (ESBF, 2017).

The United Nations General Assembly convened the Habitat I conference in Vancouver in 1976, because governments began to recognize the need for sustainable human settlements and the consequences of rapid urbanisation, especially in the developing world (HABITAT, 2017).

In the 1980's the UN set up the World Commission on Environment and Development, also called the Brundtland Commission. They produced "Our Common Future", otherwise known as the Brundtland Report, which framed much of what would become the 40 chapters of Agenda 21 and the 27 principles of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development. It defined sustainable development as development which; *"meets the needs of present generations without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs"* (WCED, 2017).

The 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Stockholm took place in 1992 in Rio de Janeiro. The UN Conference on Environment and Development, the "Earth Summit", agreed Agenda 21 and the Rio Declaration. These documents outlined key policies for achieving sustainable development that meets the needs of the poor and recognises the limits of development to meet global needs.

“Needs” was therefore interpreted not solely in terms of economic interests but also to be those of a fully functional, harmonious, global system that incorporates both people and ecosystems (ESBF, 2017).

The Vancouver commitments were reconfirmed twenty years later, at the Habitat II conference in Istanbul. World leaders adopted the Habitat Agenda as a global plan of action for adequate shelter for all, with the notion of sustainable human settlements driving development in an urbanising world (HABITAT, 2017).

In 1997 the progress was assessed at Rio+5 (New York) and a number of gaps were identified, particularly with regard to social equity and poverty.

**Table 1: Global Meetings hosted by the UN in the context of Environmental Issues and Sustainable Development**

DATE AND PLACE	NAME OF MEETING	PRINCIPLE THEMES
<b>5-6 June 1972</b> <i>Stockholm</i>	United Nations Conference on the Human Environment	Environment and Human <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “to serve as a practical means to encourage, and to provide guidelines ... to protect and improve the human environment and to remedy and prevent its impairment”</li> <li>• The Stockholm declaration containing 26 principles concerning the environment and development</li> <li>• UNEP established</li> </ul>
<b>31 May-11 June 1976</b> <i>Vancouver</i>	United Nations Conference on Human Settlements ( <b>Habitat I</b> )	Rapid Urbanisation and its Consequences and Magnitude <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Vancouver Declaration on Human Settlements having a National Action Plan consisting of 64 recommendations</li> </ul>
<b>3-4 June 1992</b> <i>Rio de Janeiro</i>	United Nations Conference on Environment and Development ( <b>UNCED</b> )	Environment and Sustainable Development <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agenda 21</li> <li>• The Rio Declaration on Environment and Development</li> <li>• The Statement of Forest Principles</li> <li>• The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity</li> </ul>
<b>3-14 June 1996</b> <i>Istanbul</i>	Second United Nations Conference on Human Settlements ( <b>Habitat II</b> )	Adequate Shelter for all and Sustainable Human Settlements <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Habitat Agenda</li> <li>• Istanbul Declaration</li> </ul>
<b>23-27 June 1997</b> <i>New York</i>	Earth Summit +5 Special Session of the UN General Assembly ( <b>Rio+5</b> )	Reviewing and Appraising the Implementation of Agenda 21 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Urgent Problems of Environmental Protection and Socio-economic Development</li> <li>• Establishing the Commission on Sustainable Development</li> </ul>
<b>26 Aug-4 Sep 2002</b> <i>Johannesburg</i>	The World Summit on Sustainable Development ( <b>Rio+10</b> )	Strengthening the Global Commitments on Sustainable Development: Improve Lives While Preserving Earth's Resources <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Kyoto and Biosafety Protocols</li> <li>• Agreements of Persistent Organic Pollutants and on Migratory and Straddling Fish Stocks</li> </ul>

<p><b>20-22 June 2012</b> <i>Rio de Janeiro</i></p>	<p>United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (<b>Rio+20</b>)</p>	<p>Political Outcome Document: Future We Want</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)</li> <li>• Sustainable development financing strategy</li> <li>• Green economy policy guidelines</li> </ul>
<p><b>17-20 October 2016</b> <i>Quito</i></p>	<p>United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (<b>Habitat III</b>)</p>	<p>Reinvigorating the global commitment to sustainable urbanization</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• focusing on the implementation of a New Urban Agenda, building on the Habitat Agenda of Istanbul in 1996</li> </ul>

**Sources:** United Nations, [www.un.org](http://www.un.org), [www.un.org/geninfo/bp/enviro.html](http://www.un.org/geninfo/bp/enviro.html), [http://legal.un.org/avl/pdf/ha/dunche/dunche\\_e.pdf](http://legal.un.org/avl/pdf/ha/dunche/dunche_e.pdf), <http://habitat.igc.org/vancouver/van-decl.htm>, <http://www.un.org/esa/earthsummit/coverage.html>, <http://www.un.org/events/wssd/summaries/envdevj1.htm>, [March 14, 2017]

The 2002 Summit brought environment and development issues firmly into the public arena. Along with the Rio Declaration and Agenda 21, it led to agreement on two legally binding conventions: Biological Diversity and the Framework Convention on Climate Change. It also produced a Statement of Forest Principles. The Earth Summit gave rise to a number of positive responses including the emergence of thousands of Local Agenda 21 initiatives and an enhanced political profile of environmental issues.

**Table 2: The Key Elements of Agenda 21**

ELEMENTS	ISSUES
<p><b>Social and Economic dimensions to development</b></p>	<p>Poverty, Production and Consumption, Health, Human Settlement, Integrated Decision - Making</p>
<p><b>Conservation and management of natural resources</b></p>	<p>Atmosphere, Oceans and Seas, Land, Forests, Mountains, Biological Diversity, Ecosystems, Biotechnology, Freshwater resources, Toxic Chemicals, Hazardous Radioactive and Solid Wastes</p>
<p><b>Strengthening role of Major Groups</b></p>	<p>Youth, Women, Indigenous Peoples, Non-Government Organisations, Local Authorities, Trade Unions, Business, Scientific and Technical Communities, Farmers</p>
<p><b>Means Implementation of</b></p>	<p>Finance, Technology transfer, Information, Public Awareness, Capacity Building, Education, Legal Instruments, Institutional Frameworks</p>

**Source:** <http://www.earthsummit2002.org/Es2002.pdf>, [March 15, 2017]

Rio+20 resulted in a focused political outcome document, which contains clear and practical measures for implementing sustainable development. Member States decided to launch a process to develop a set of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which will build upon the Millennium Development Goals and converge with the post 2015-development agenda. The Conference also adopted ground-breaking guidelines on green economy policies (UN, 2017).

Regarding Habitat III, in Resolution 66/207 and in line with the bi-decennial cycle (1976, 1996 and 2016), the UN General Assembly decided to convene the Habitat III Conference in Quito to reinvigorate the global commitment to sustainable urbanisation. The main theme was to focus on the implementation of a New Urban Agenda (NUA), building on the Habitat Agenda of Istanbul in 1996 (HABITAT, 2017). The conference had the adoption of a NUA, which is an action-oriented document, setting *“the global standards of achievement in sustainable urban development, rethinking the way we build, manage, and live in cities through drawing together cooperation with committed partners, relevant stakeholders, and urban actors at all levels of government as well as the private sector.”* (HABITAT, 2017).

The Quito implementation plan consists of two main sections, which are *commitments* and *implementation*. When considered the content of the plan, we clearly see that there are close relationship between the concepts taking part in the plan and cooperatives in the context of their aim and objectives. One wants to achieve while other fulfils it.

**Table 3: The Main Sections of the Plan**

<b>Transformative commitments for sustainable urban development</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sustainable urban development for <b>social inclusion</b> and <b>ending poverty</b></li> <li>• Sustainable and <b>inclusive urban prosperity</b> and <b>opportunities</b> for all</li> <li>• Environmentally <b>sustainable and resilient urban development</b></li> </ul>
<b>Effective implementation</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Building the <b>urban governance structure</b>: establishing a supportive framework</li> <li>• <b>Planning</b> and <b>managing</b> urban spatial development</li> <li>• Means of implementation</li> </ul>

Source: [http://nua.unhabitat.org/uploads/DraftOutcomeDocumentofHabitatIII\\_en.pdf](http://nua.unhabitat.org/uploads/DraftOutcomeDocumentofHabitatIII_en.pdf) [March 15, 2017]

For instance, one of the issues that we will see is that the relationship between sustainable development and cooperatives was emphasised and highlighted in the outcome document of the conference particularly in article 10. It says ([www.nua.unhabitat.org](http://www.nua.unhabitat.org), 2017):

*“The NUA acknowledges that culture and cultural diversity are sources of enrichment for humankind and provide an important contribution to the sustainable development of cities, human settlements and citizens, empowering them to play an active and unique role in development initiatives. The New Urban Agenda further recognizes that culture should be taken into account in the promotion and implementation of new sustainable consumption and production patterns that contribute to the responsible use of resources and address the adverse impact of climate change.”*

All the concepts mentioned in the article are almost the aim and objectives and/or principles of cooperatives.

**Table 4: The Key Elements for Implementing the New Urban Agenda**

<b>Governance Structures</b>	The NUA is anchored in participatory urban policies that mainstream sustainable urban and territorial development as part of integrated development strategies and plans, supported by institutional and regulatory frameworks linked to transparent and accountable finance mechanisms.
<b>Social Inclusion</b>	Development must protect the planet and enable all inhabitants, whether living in formal or informal settlements, to lead decent, dignified, and rewarding lives, and to achieve their full human potential.
<b>Spatial Development</b>	Balanced territorial development that accounts for different scales of cities and human settlements, strengthens their role in food security and nutrition systems, puts housing at the centre, builds infrastructure and services, facilitates trade, and connects farmers and fishers across value chains and markets.
<b>Urban Prosperity</b>	Inclusive and sustainable economic growth, with full and productive employment and decent work for all, is a key element of sustainable urban development where people can live healthy, productive, prosperous, and fulfilling lives.
<b>Environmentally Sustainable</b>	Unsustainable consumption and production patterns, loss of biodiversity, pressure on ecosystems, pollution, natural and man-made disasters, and climate change and its related risks, undermine efforts to end poverty and to achieve sustainable development.

Source: <http://nua.unhabitat.org/>, [March 15, 2017]



In the United Nations Sustainable Development Summit on September 25<sup>th</sup>, 2015 in New York (UN, 2017), countries adopted a set of goals to end *poverty*, *protect* the planet, and ensure *prosperity* for all as part of a *new sustainable development agenda*. Each goal has specific targets to be achieved over the next 15 years under the partnerships of all parties including governments, private sector, NGOs and even an individual person (UN, 2017).

In addition to the Habitat III conference outcome document, the UN sustainable goals and their targets clearly reveal the relationship between two phenomena. Some of the targets of goal 11 under the title of "*Sustainable Cities and Communities*" claim that ensuring accessible, adequate, safe and affordable housing, green and public spaces and transportation services, enhance participatory and integrated planning and management. In addition, they claim to protect the poor and people in vulnerable situations and support positive economic, social and environmental links between urban, peri-urban and rural areas by 2030 (UN, 2017).

Besides these global conferences, the contribution of the ILO (International Labour Organisation) on cooperatives with the recommendation 193 (R193) (ILO, 2017) should not be forgotten when considered the issues regarding sustainable development and providing employment.

**Table 5: The UN Sustainable Developments Goals**

<b>No poverty</b>	End poverty in all its forms everywhere
<b>Zero Hunger</b>	End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture
<b>Good Health and Well-Being</b>	Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages
<b>Quality Education</b>	Ensure inclusive and quality education for all and promote lifelong learning
<b>Gender Equality</b>	Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls
<b>Clean Water and Sanitation</b>	Ensure access to water and sanitation for all
<b>Affordable and Clean Energy</b>	Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all
<b>Decent Work and Economic Growth</b>	Promote inclusive and sustainable economic growth, employment and decent work for all
<b>Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure</b>	Build resilient infrastructure, promote sustainable industrialization and foster innovation
<b>Reduced Inequalities</b>	Reduce inequality within and among countries
<b>Sustainable Cities and Communities</b>	Make cities inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable
<b>Responsible Consumption and Production</b>	Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns
<b>Climate Action</b>	Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts
<b>Life Below Water</b>	Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources



<b>Life on Land</b>	Sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, halt and reverse land degradation, halt biodiversity loss
<b>Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions</b>	Promote just, peaceful and inclusive societies
<b>Partnerships for the Goals</b>	Revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development

Source: United Nations, <http://www.un.org>, [March 10, 2017]

We know that cooperatives are member-owned and controlled businesses operating for the mutual benefits of its members. Co-operatives come in all shapes and sizes and all sectors of the economy in the world including agriculture, food distribution and retailing, childcare, credit unions, purchasing, worker-owned, housing, healthcare, energy and telecommunications and so on. They promote the participation in the economic and social development of all people and are a major economic driven force in developed countries and a powerful business model in developing ones (HIS, 2017). Cooperatives cannot provide the whole answer to global poverty and economic injustice, but they may be a part of the solution.

It is an accepted fact that cooperatives are the vital elements for not only their members but also the countries' economy. Their role in preventing economic crises is undeniable. Reducing poverty and ensuring rural development are just a few of them. The share of cooperatives in GDP are raising today's world. For instance, this share in Brazil was 40% and 45% in Kenya in 2009. Today Europe has approximately 130 thousand cooperatives having 70 million members (Özdemir et. al., 2011). This is important in the context of showing us the strategic influence within the economy. Cooperatives employ 250 million people in the world, and generate 2.2 trillion USD in turnover while providing the services and infrastructure society needs to thrive. There are 2.6 million cooperatives having approximately 1 billion members. Cooperatives are playing strategic role in countries' economies by providing and maintaining employment opportunities. In Finland 72% of the population is a member of a cooperative. In the US, there are 40,000 cooperatives with 350 million members and in Canada, 50% of the population are members of cooperatives (ICA, 2017).

Regarding Turkey, Şemsi Bayraktar, the president of the Union of Agricultural Chambers of Turkey, summarises the situation in the best way in Turkey by stating that (UACT, 2017)

*"Cooperatives in Turkey have a less membership structure. That is why our cooperatives are more behind in the world when considered the applications of developed countries in the context of the main characteristics of cooperatives providing scale economy, cooperation, solidarity, forming synergy. There are some handicaps in front of the cooperatives such as the lack of management skills and capacity, the lack of technical knowledge and the global private sector considering cooperatives as the main competitors. We need strong cooperatives run professionally in our country so that they fulfil the needs of not only their members but also the community. Do not forget that cooperatives are the key organisations providing food safety and employment opportunity."*

Cooperatives as social and economic enterprises should be taken part of the economy due to the reason for the national integrity and economic independence of countries. Otherwise, the global capital will become the only authority who governs not only their economies but it also interferes with their political structure. Hence, cooperatives play a strategic role in an economy besides helping in achievement of sustainable development. That is why the United Nations celebrated the 20<sup>th</sup> International Day of Cooperatives with the main theme of "Co-operative enterprises achieve sustainable development for all" in 2014 when considered the successes in struggling for poverty of cooperatives like locomotives. In addition to this, cooperatives claim that they can undertake a strategic role in struggling with the problems caused by human beings and climate change in the context of sustainable environment.

Development should not be considered just as the perception of the improvement of economic data of a country; it is the concept of having social, cultural and economic development

simultaneously. When considering the goals of sustainable development determined by the UN, we clearly see that cooperatives as in the core of this movement, can play a significant role in achieving sustainable development by fulfilling the most of the goals above-mentioned, which are already of interest to work of cooperatives. In addition, many types of cooperatives in the world already serve in these fields.

## **2. The new Concept: Neighbourhood Cooperatives**

The cooperative concept today is not defined as the idea of fulfilling of not only the economic needs of its members but it also undertakes the social, cultural and even political meanings just as the concept of sustainability, which has been used in the field of forestry since the 1700s. As the reflection of the changes experienced in the cooperative movement, we realise that the new community-oriented cooperation movement has begun such as "Kibbutz", "Moshav", "Sovkhoz" and "Kolkhoz" through the farms in rural areas. We can say that cooperatives almost transformed themselves and then became settlement units.

The term "**Neighbourhood Cooperatives**" is a new concept, which has been developed by İ. B. Kanlı in 2016. According to the concept, neighbourhoods and cooperatives as the main actors have been overlapped functionally. Hence spatial and administrative characteristics of the neighbourhoods have come together with the social, economic and cultural aspects of cooperatives so that the obstructions staying in front of the sustainability term should be removed. The concept suggests that neighbourhoods may be called as "**Cooperative Units**" from now on. Another important aspect of the concept is that it provides a holistic framework to sustainability by dealing with its main characteristics including social, economic, cultural and even governance dimensions. In this context, the main objective of the concept is to construct the shortest path going to liveable spaces where humanity will be happy to live in. In order to fulfil the objective, the concept wants to transform neighbourhoods into a liveable organism. Hence:

- All public and even private services in neighbourhoods will be provided by cooperatives as if it is the key element of administrative system.
- The services provided will be effective and efficient and they will be of good quality. Locals will benefit from the highest level of services including economic, social, cultural and governance due to the cooperative approach and its principles.
- The concept will provide full partnership for all locals
- It will contribute to the formation of solidarity and consciousness
- It will transform social structure by maximizing the level of education of locals

When considered both concepts, cooperatives and neighbourhoods, it can be seen that they describe each other or complement each other. In other words, the intersection set of these concepts are the common elements such as governance, social, economic and cultural structures which are already the vital parts of sustainability.

In the neighbourhood cooperatives model suggested, economic, cultural and social, governance activities and services will be provided through the "neighbourhood cooperatives" (Table 3).

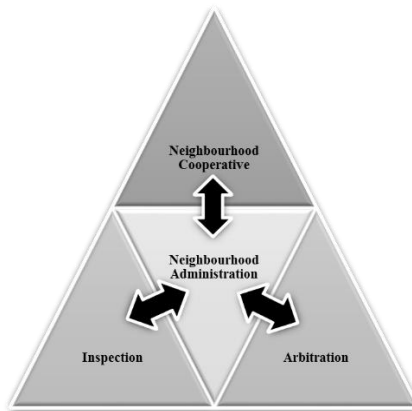
**Table 3: Neighbourhood Cooperatives**

THE MAIN SERVICES SUGGESTED IN NEIGHBOURHOOD				
ECONOMIC	SOCIAL	EDUCATIONAL	CULTURAL	TECHNICAL
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Shopping Centre</li> <li>- Insurance</li> <li>- Banking</li> <li>- Micro Finance</li> <li>- Etc.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Healthcare</li> <li>- Sports and Recreation</li> <li>- Childcare and Day care</li> <li>- Rest home and care for seniors</li> <li>- Disabled care</li> <li>- Solidarity</li> <li>- Human Resource Management</li> <li>- Funeral</li> <li>- Etc.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Pre school</li> <li>- Primary school</li> <li>- Middle School</li> <li>- Vocational training</li> <li>- Religious Etc.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Cinema, Theatre, Exhibition</li> <li>- Library</li> <li>- Music</li> <li>- Art</li> <li>- Etc.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- IT</li> <li>- Plumbing</li> <li>- Real Estate</li> <li>- Security</li> <li>- Etc.</li> </ul>

Source: (Kanlı, 2016)

These services can be fulfilled by cooperatives separately provided that they establish a roof cooperative by coming together or under one large single cooperative. The main administrative system and its three sub-systems will play a significant role in the model, which are inspection, arbitration and neighbourhood cooperative (Figure 1).

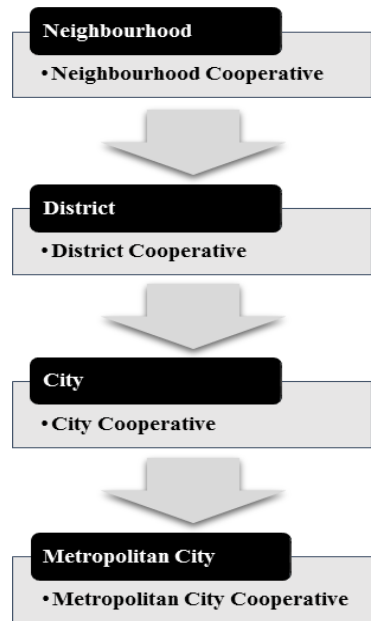
**Figure 1: The Relations Amongst the Subsystems**



Source: (Kanlı, 2016)

Another key factor in the model is that the cooperative system has a hierarchic structure. While local services can be carried out by neighbourhood cooperatives on the other hand the rest will be provided by the other cooperatives based on their scales (Figure 2).

**Figure 2: Administrative Hierarchy and Their Cooperatives**



Source: (Kanli, 2016)

Undoubtedly, the “**Neighbourhood Cooperatives**” model providing services under five main titles explained above will colour up the locals’ lives. It is clear that the model adventurously claims a new economic and social life within a new governmental structure. It considers neighbourhoods as a “**Social Cell**” which is the smallest integral part of an organism. Unless a cell is healthy, it is not possible to say that the whole organism is healthy. Because it is a known fact that the cancer cells may destroy the tissues and then organs and the whole systems in the process. Hence the first step in establishing a healthy “**Social Cell**” is vital for liveable communities.

When looking at Turkey’s past, neighbourhoods were the spaces where different beliefs and cultures lived together in harmony. It is vital to have a structure, which will serve both worship and faith in order to enable them to sustain their lives within the context of freedom of conscience. Hence, it is considered that “**Neighbourhood Cooperatives**” will play a strategic role in this mission provided that it has a proper “adhesive mortar” for the system, which we consider to be the “**Akhy approach**” and its principles.

### **3. The Importance of the Akhy System and its Main Principles for Developing Sustainable Social Structure**

The Akhy system is a life style beyond philosophy including social, economic and cultural issues, besides military and political issues. The seeds of the system were sowed in the 12<sup>th</sup> century in Anatolia by an Islamic Scholar Akhy Evran. His original name is Sheik Nasîrüddin Ebü'l-Hakâyık Mahmud bin Ahmed el-Hoyî. He was a leader of tanner handicraftsmen chambers and 32 other different chambers. Not only did the system play a strategic role in developing the Ottoman state with the Sultans such as Orhan Ghazi and Sultan Murad (Özerkmen, 2004; Kılınç, 2010), but it also became the inspiration of today’s institutions in Turkey such as *Social Security Organisations to Trade Organisations, Worker’s Unions, Craftsman’s Unions and Associations* and so on. The almost eight century-success of the system proves that the system should be reconsidered in order to establish today’s sustainable structures.

#### **3.1. The Akhy System and its Main Principles and Importance**

The roots of Akhism are based on Islam. “**Hisbe**” (*Islamic-Ottoman office for public regularity*) and “**Futuwwa**” (Arabic: فتوة, “*young-manliness*” or “*chivalry*”), which may be said that they were the previous form of Akhy system, were the institutions developed by

Islamic belief just as the Akhy system (Atik, 2011; Öztürk, 2017). The Hisbe organisation was established in the first years of Islam religion while the Futuwwa movement was pioneered by en-Nasır li-Dinillah, who was the thirty-fourth Abbasid Caliphate in the time of Anatolian Seljuks (Gunduz et al., 2012). Both organisations were inspired by the Qur'an in particular by the verses ([www.quran.com/3](http://www.quran.com/3), 2017) stating that "...enjoining what is right and forbidding what is wrong..." (Al-i-Imran 104 and 110). The word "**Akhy**" is derived from the word "*my brother*" in Arabic. There is one more meaning of the term which is derived from the Turkish word "**Aki**" meaning "*generous*" (Özerkmen, 2004).

Research shows us that the Akhy organisation was first established in Kayseri during the Seljuk period at the beginning of the 13<sup>th</sup> Century. Then it was spread throughout Anatolia. In particular, in the period of Sultan I. Alâeddin Keykubat, the Akhy movement was spread throughout Anatolia and took part in the state structure. Such that the security and municipal services were provided through this movement (Özerkmen, 2004; Temel, 2007). The greatest work of Akhy Evran is the Akhy system willing to establish liveable community by focusing on peace and harmony in social relations, social order, morality, and solidarity and social security issues. Also, the system prevented Turkish youth from being influenced and/or getting involved in bad habits by enabling them to work and to have an occupation.

The mission of the system is to raise a perfect generation, establish excellent societies, build up trust and serve to humanity. This requires the Akhy people to be good persons (Karaca, 2015). Providing perfect services to the community was one of the main responsibilities of the system. Their services include industrial, commercial, military, social and cultural activities. In the beginning years of the system, it had a hierarchy level and consisted of nine level Akhy people starting with "**valiant**", "**helper**" - assistant apprentice and then continue with "**apprentice**", "**foreman**", "**master**", "**dervish**", "**sheik**" and "**master of sheik**". However, in time there were some changes in the hierarchical level. Therefore some were eliminated from or added to the system (CTTC, 2017).

The system, basically, consisted of the "**Akhy fathers**". All cities had an Akhy father who was the leader of Akhies living in that city such as the Istanbul Akhy father and they were appointed by the president of Akhies, who is called "**Sheik**". Akhy Evran (1172-1262) lived in Kırşehir located in Anatolia and was the leading Sheik of the system besides being an Islamic scholar. "**Deputy of Akhy father**" was called "**Yiğitbaşı**". While Sheiks, Akhy fathers and their Deputies consist of the management level of the system, rest of them such as "**Masters**", "**Foreman**" and "**Apprentices**" were the members (Kayadibi, 2000; CTTC, 2017). The soul of the Akhism is based on the Futuwatnamas (which is a kind of a constitution of the guilds), which is based on the Qur'an. The Futuwatnamas have the rules including the main principles to be practiced by all members (Özerkmen, 2004). These principles are related to members' daily life focusing on education, moral values, vocational training and so on.

In the works of Akhy, moral values come into prominence. These rules are so strict that only Muslims are allowed to become a member. Akhy Evran and his friends adapted these moral values and rules from Islamic belief. A young man was prohibited to do some actions when he intended to join this organisation. It was expected that he protect his eyes from ill gotten, to close his mouth to ill-gotten words and to tie his hands for cruelty. On the other hand, it was expected that he open his door to guests, his moneybag to his needy Muslim brothers and his dinner table to all hungry people (Kayadibi, 2000). However some people who were rebellious against their state, had low moral values, were unidentified, and unreliable were also accepted to the organisations, even if they did not reflect the Islamic values. One reason for this was to not exclude these people from the society and to educate them. The structure of the Akhism system lasted until the 17<sup>th</sup> century. When the Ottoman Empire expanded its lands, it came face to face with different countries and cultures. Working with people of different religions was an obligation. Hence, a new organisation was required, called "**Gedik**". It was the same organisation with the Akhy system except it accepted all religions.

If someone wanted to join the system, he had to participate in a ceremony called "**Putting on Belt**", which was the crucial part of becoming a member. In this ceremony the candidate

member drank salty water first, wore the belt and salwar. Salty water symbolizes wisdom, belt symbolizes bravery and salwar symbolizes honour (CTTC, 2017).

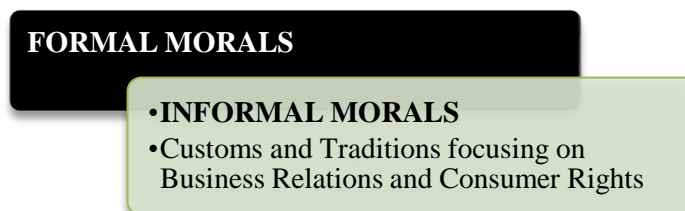
The Akhy system has a social aspect besides its individual gains. Its power comes through the brotherhood concept through the Holy Book Qur'an, focusing on social inclusion, cooperation and solidarity. Hence, the Akhy community protected the poor people and people excluded by society. The social rules and regulations were composed of more than 740 principles to be obeyed. Mazak (2017) in his article states that:

*"Futuwwat is like a great tree which is cultivated, foliated and grown in the heart of a valiant person. The foundation of this tree is truthfulness. Its bole is human being. Its snag is hygiene and its leaves are decency. The root of this tree is to know Allah (c.c.) its fruits are like the chat of saints and its water is like mercy."*

He also states that the principles of futuwwatnamas can be grouped under four main titles, which are General Rules, Business Ethics and Consumer Rights and Brotherhood in Futuwwat, Restrictions for Futuwwat. According to Mazak (2017) the moral of Akhy system can be grouped under two titles which are the Formal Akhy Morals and the Informal Akhy Morals. Akhism dealt with work, worship and honesty as a whole and it gave great importance to morality. According to Akhism, where there is good morality there is brotherhood, equality, freedom, love, right and justice (Temel, 2007).

The formal Akhy morals initially composed of general morals coming from the futuwwatnamas. All the Akhy community have to present etiquette consisting of minimum 124 principles (Demirci, 2011) regarding dining, speaking, dressing, shopping, walking, visiting someone etc. On the other hand, being honest, generous, modest, exhorter, forgiver, selflessness and realistic are the crucial parts of the moral values. In the process, they focused on business and working morals, including the morals regarding becoming an artisan and gaining a profession (Kılınç, 2010). Customer relations, product quality and assurance, employee and employer relations are also important in the informal moral system. Thus the informal moral system of the Akhy community was set. There are customs and traditions behind the background of the formal morals and values, which played a significant role in shaping and sustaining the community like a sticking mortar.

**Figure 3: Morals of the Akhy System**



The informal rules of Akhy system basically consisted of five main principles:

**Table 4: The Informal Rules**

<b>Skill, Ability</b>	An Akhy person must have a unique job and he should have a skill/craft
<b>Specialisation</b>	An Akhy must concentrate on one job or craft suiting best to his ability
<b>Honesty</b>	An Akhy must be trustful and not pursue unfair profits or gains
<b>Respect</b>	An Akhy must be connected to his Sheikh deeply and he must take him as an example regarding his skill/craft, behaviours and lifestyle
<b>Social Responsibility, Solidarity</b>	An Akhy must have the consciousness of solidarity. He must help people who are poor and unemployed



The moral values were so vital that if an Akhy member was to lose some of the values he would also lose membership. In the system, moral behavioural disorders were seen as a disaster and were struggled with such as; Drinking alcohol, Committing adultery, Homosexuality, Backbiting, Sowing discord, Arrogance, Jealousy, Enmity, Lying, Dishonour one's word, Treachery, Finding Fault, Calumny, Robbery, Getting something illegally or illegitimately (Demirci, 2011; Kılınç 2010). Beside the moral values mentioned above, there were also the etiquette rules such as dining, drinking water, chatting etc. For instance, entering home consisted of five items including informing household members, using the right foot, salutation, not looking around and reading *Besmele* (*besiege*). The Akhy system kept the society sustainable with them.

**Table 5: Some Etiquette**

	ETIQUETTES	ITEMS
<b>INDOOR</b>	Entering home	5
	Dining	12
	Drinking water	3
	Wearing clothes	4
	Getting out of the house	4
	Sitting	4
<b>OUTDOOR</b>	Chatting	4
	Walking	8
	In the neighbourhood	4
	In the bazaar	6
	Shopping	3
	Bringing something home	3
	Guest	3
	Visit of patients	5

**Source:** Adapted from Temel, 2007

As seen, the disasters and the lack of etiquettes may lead to the disorder of a community and then may result in the corruption of it. Hence, the disasters were explained and their remedies were taught to the members of the Akhy community by the sheikhs in Zawiyas (Demirci, 2011). The Akhy system was open to everyone who had a good character of person and moral values. However, there were some precautions to protect the community. For instance, some people were not granted membership in relation to their belief, lifestyle or the characteristics of their professions such as non-believers, astrologer, parsimonious, hunters, butchers, surgeons etc. The reason for this was that some of them were committed to blood (butchers) and to cheat (hunters). The professions mentioned above carry the features, which may destroy the feelings and characteristics of a human being that the Akhy system wanted to develop. For instance, butchery may destroy mercy, surgery may destroy the pain sensation, and hunting may develop cheating feelings in the human mind due to hunters laying traps for their preys and so on. Paying attention to the context, the Akhy system and its moral values made no compromises due to achieving its sustainable social and economic structure (Kayadibi, 2000).

The main objectives of the Akhism can be grouped under four titles (Durak and Yücel, 2010):

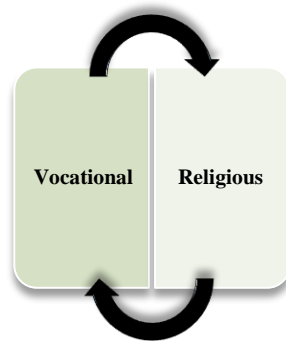
- To raise honest, decent and productive individuals
- To nurture individuals having vocational and handicraft skills
- To build extra military power for homeland security and defence
- To nurture masters on culture and handicraft

Thus the apprentices were taught the morality and virtues of the society initially and then passed over to vocational training. The training of Akhism had the integrated structure and it aimed at covering the daily activities and jobs that an Akhy person would perform. Therefore, the person will be nurtured and gained skills through systematic trainings and education based on his creation purpose. The following rules in training were important (Kayadibi, 2000):



- A human being was treated as a whole. Vocational, religious and social knowledge were given at the same time.
- On-the-job training was integrated with the training performed outside of the job.
- Training was considered as lifelong learning
- Lectures must be given by the appropriate and competent lecturers
- Everyone benefits from training that was free of charge

**Figure 4: Integrated training system in Akhism**



Dewey claimed that the development of morality is associated with the training of a person (Anderson 2014; Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy, 2017). He dealt with the development of morality in three stages.

**Table 6: Development of Morality**

STAGE	LEVEL	EXPLANATION
First	Pre-traditional	The stage containing ethical behaviour motivated by biological and social impulses (Hunger, thirst, love etc.)
Second	Traditional	The stage in which an individual adopts the values of the group that they are in (School, family, friends etc.)
Third	Autonomous	The stage in which an individual's behaviour is formed by his own reasoning and decision-making, by examining the standards of the group in which the individual is involved

In Akhism an individual was surrounded by his school, family, forerunner and road brothers before the individual stepped into adulthood. Therefore, the traditional level was experienced a little early. An individual has the correct moral point of view towards a younger age due to the values approved by their own society is also the values of Islamic belief. When an individual becomes a master or sheikh or the sheikh of the sheikhs, he has understood the reasons for the accepted values and the consequences in terms of society. Hence, he can develop new moral perspectives.

According to Piaget, the moral development of an individual is parallel to his mental development. Piaget has dealt with the moral development on two levels; Dependency Period and Autonomous Period. The dependency period is the period in which the children set their moral judgments based on outside until the age of 10. The children in this period accept the rules set by adults or the authority without questioning. The penalty of the crime is determined based on the consequences. Regarding the autonomous period, after 11, children's moral values begin to gain relativity (Wood et. al., 2001). They conceive the function of rules.

A child who starts to work as valiant in Akhism, now he is the autonomous period in the context of his point of view. The period is the time when he formed his own moral judgements. He can understand value judgements as he begins to think abstract. Morality education in the Akhy

system begins at the right age. It encumbered the child by giving him a task in the society. The values taught at night were implemented in the daytime business environment. Thus, the Akhy moral education gave a quicker and more positive result. Maintaining the balance between the social structures, making the individuals productive with education and training and finally forming a society having good morality was the main purpose of Akhism. Enjoining what is right and forbidding what is wrong, developing moral values, forgiveness were at the core of the system.

It is highlighted above that there is a strong connection between moral development and education (Table 6). Morality may play a role in establishing the building block. Piaget’s cognitive development stages show us that the stage between birth and 11 years are significantly important in order to place moral values through education in a community. That is why we can say that the Akhy community gave full importance to settle morality in its system.

**Table 7: Piaget’s Cognitive Development Stages**

<b>COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT STAGES</b>			
<b>Sensorimotor (Birth – 2 years old)</b>	<b>Preoperational (2 – 7 years old)</b>	<b>Concrete Operational (7 – 11 years old)</b>	<b>Formal Operational (Adolescence – Adulthood)</b>
Knowledge is limited in this stage, because it is based on physical interactions and experiences.	Children engage in make believe and can understand and express relationships between the past and the future	Intellectual development in this stage is demonstrated through the use of logical and systematic manipulation of symbols, which are related to concrete objects	Adolescents can think about multiple variables in systematic ways, can formulate hypotheses, and think about abstract relationships and concepts

**Source:** Adapted from Wood et. al., (2001)

Social responsibility is a lifestyle for the Akhy community. Caring for each other and solidarity are the major issues in order to provide public benefit in the moral system of the Akhy community. Training, perhaps, it will be better to say lifelong learning, is another life style for the community. All the community members must be successful as a lifestyle and hence they have to hold these trainings. There were two types of trainings. One of which was job training provided by the masters to foreman and apprentices in order to develop the Akhy peoples’ skills. Other was the outside training provided by Zawiya, which was the small Islamic lodge located in urban and rural areas. The Zawiyas were the place where the community members received training, held Sufistic conversations and meetings and religious ceremonies and worship (Kayadibi, 2000; Demirci, 2011).

In addition, the Zawiyas served accommodation services for three days to the guests. In the process, the Zawiyas transformed into vocational schools, teaching ethics. The Akhy system also had women workers. Fatma Bacı, who was the wife of Akhy Evran, pioneered the movement by including women to economic life. She grouped women under the name of “Bacıyan-ı Rum” (Özerkmen, 2004). The women in this group sold their products produced in the bazaar called “woman bazar” afterwards.

The Akhy system was so effective and so attractive for communities during 500 years until 1727 that Europeans were affected after the Crusades. The Turkish Guild was imitated in their cities and this caused the birth of the bourgeois class. In addition, the Akhy system took part in the core of the establishment of today’s Turkish institutions such as chambers of commerce, tradesmen and craftsmen, employers’ unions, chambers of industry, labour unions, training organisations, Turkish Standard Organisation, social security organisations (Öztürk, 2017).

## **EVALUATION AND CONCLUSION**

The Akhy system was the unique ecosystem formed by both the States of the Seljuk and the Ottoman. The system dealing with human being as a whole with all its dimensions including physical and spiritual was targeted to form a perfect human being and the perfect society, in order to sustain its socio-economic ecosystem. Hence, not only was vocational training provided to individuals but also the knowledge of moral values and etiquettes and arrangements for social life were provided by the system. In this respect, the system can also be described as a system of thought as well as an organisation. Such that this system expended its energy to nurture the Akhy individuals having honest, hardworking, charitable characteristics.

On the other hand, the system tried to establish social welfare and peace by developing good relations between the social partners such as rich and poor, producer and consumer, labour and capital etc. It was possible to see today's universal values at those times such as respect for human rights, consumer rights and protection, women's rights and their roles, hospitality, solidarity, unity etc. It is obvious that the system played a strategic role in building economic power, social justice and sustaining an individual and the state.

One of the reasons why the Akhy system was a strategic phenomenon, which was developed and implemented in order for the religion to reflect itself to the social structure as a life style, may be that trainings both vocational and spiritual were the core of the system, providing lifetime learning facility to the community. It was dealt with as an integrated like twin sisters. The Akhy system believed that they were inseparable components setting up a system. The mechanism also consisted of undeniable actors, which were the Zawiyas. Not only did they provide religious educations to their members but also offered educational programmes to the people living in the same region indirectly. They trained the trainers and also they educated people as well.

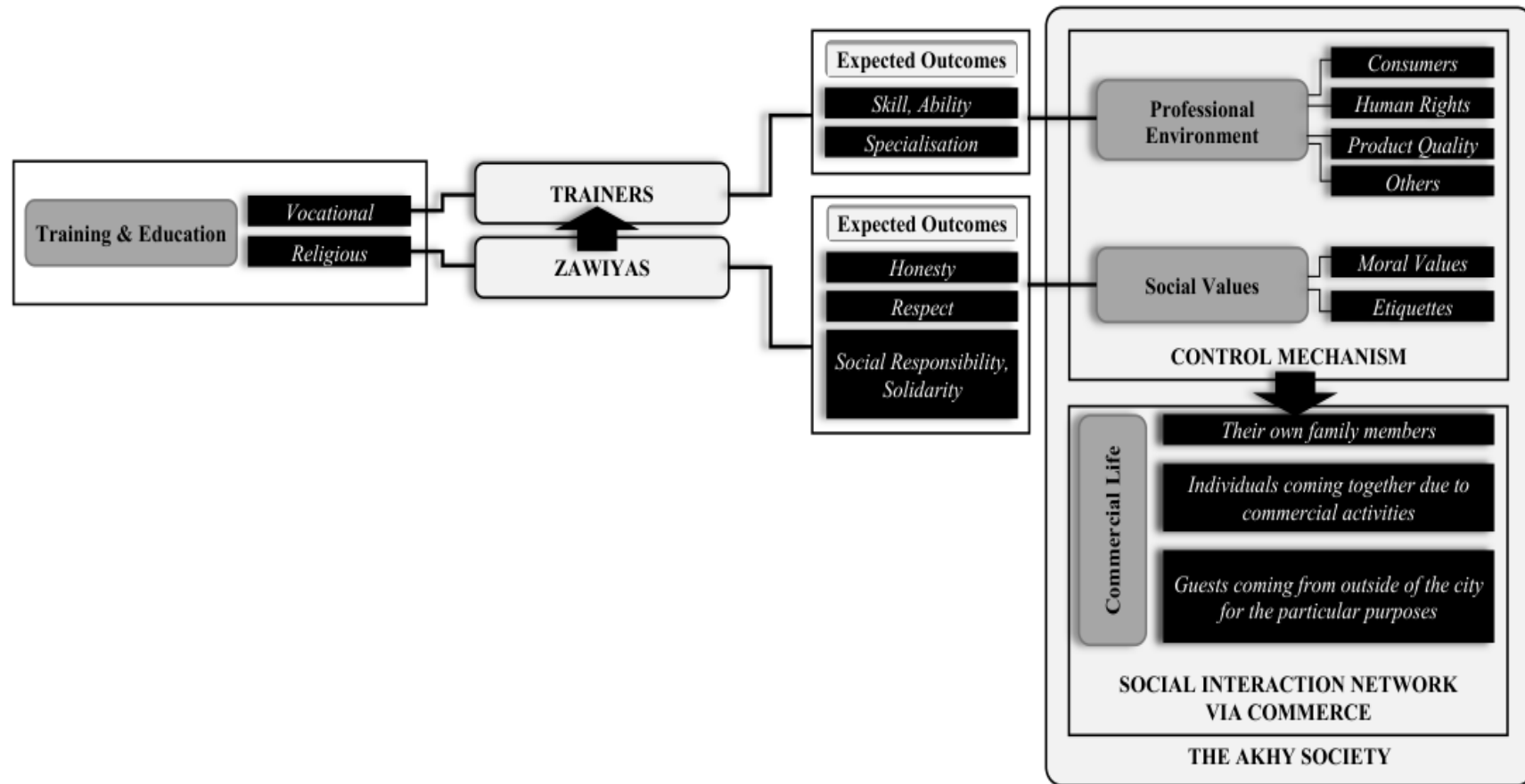
By giving the vocational trainings to their members, they aimed at providing specialisation opportunity and gaining the abilities and improving their skills. Hence, they provided high quality services and products taking into consideration human rights focusing on consumer rights. On the other hand, while religious education provided the appropriate environment for the activities taking place in the commercial area it also became a control mechanism over the social and economic life as a whole. Religious education performed these activities via moral values.

Morality is a somewhat agglutinant for the Akhy system regulating social relations of people, providing social trust, peace, order and happiness. It is also rules, determining what is good and bad for people. The Akhy members strongly believed that the most important step of building a clean society was probably morality. They also claimed that an individual without morality could not contribute a positive effect to his society. In addition, solidarity was a key in the system. This resulted in developing the social interaction network meaning "sustainable structure" via commercial life. In short, the Akhy system built up, ordered, and administered the "social cell" via economic structure (Figure 5). Thus, they developed the strong and long-running organisations in achieving sustainable social structure. Religious sensitivities including moral values and traditions played a great role in shaping the system. This ensured an auto-control mechanism in the social system. Perhaps this was the only way making the system sustainable.

Youth in the society was always the priority of the Akhy system. It considered them like a generator producing the energy of sustainability. It invested in itself future by training them both ways because youth was perceived as the building blocks of the society. It was not the only purpose of the system to train individuals for improving their vocational skills and abilities in order to raise and control the quality of craft and business life. It was the purpose that these activities should be performed by the youth trained. Forming a virtuous society for the Akhy society always became a fundamental principle and they pioneered it. In this regard, they undertook an honourable mission like building a "humanity school".

Another issue was the socialisation of the individuals. It means that to prepare and to make a member of the society, which was the developing and rising social group. By giving trainings to them, the members of the society were prepared in advance in order for them to adapt to social structure. In addition, it should not be forgotten that the extensive solidarity was the key concept in the Akhy system.

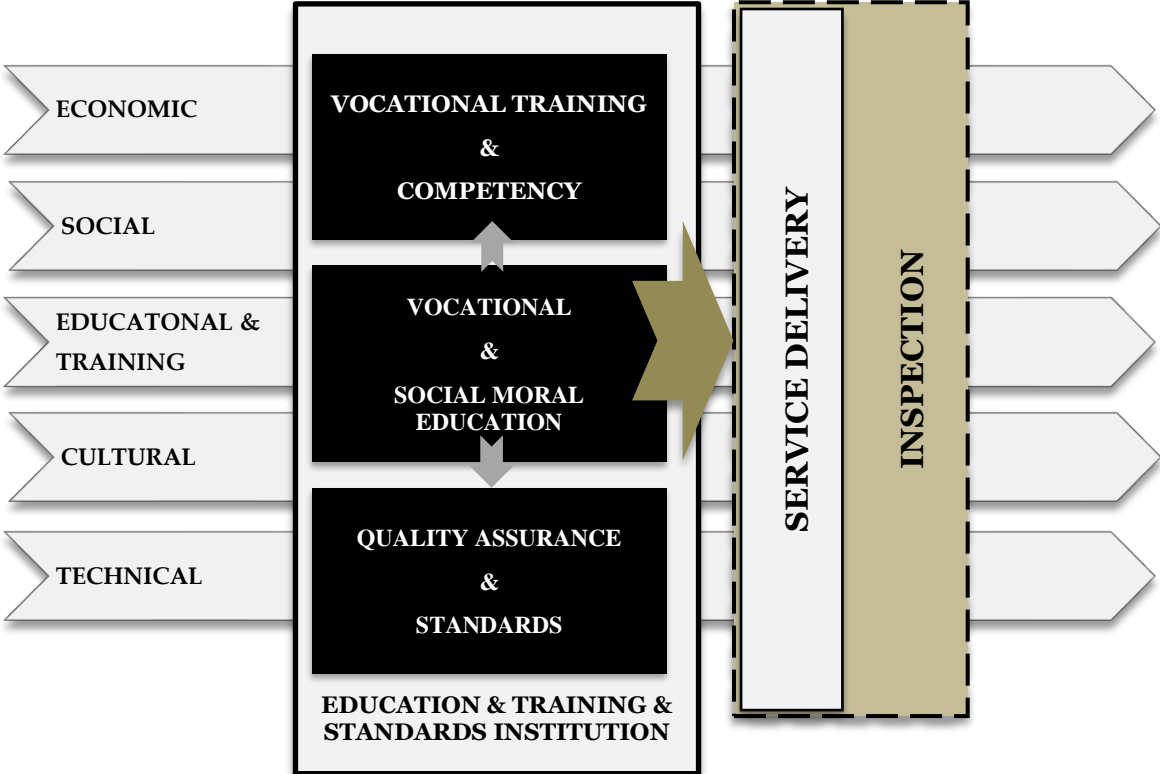
It is thought that establishing a similar structure in the neighbourhood cooperatives structure is possible. Although the neighbourhood cooperatives have training services, they should not be limited to their members or customers. Training and education based on vocational and morality should surround all the social structure based on lifelong learning approach. As a control mechanism, this can increase not only the morality level of individuals but it also can develop their vocational abilities so that the quality of products and services can fulfil the needs of society. This may be one of the ways of achieving sustainable social structure.



**Figure 5: The Basic Framework of the Akhy System**

In neighbourhood cooperatives, an institution can perform the functions consisting of vocational training and competency, vocational and social moral education and quality of assurance and standards. Hence, at the local level, “social cell”, it will be possible to form a control mechanism trying to maintain its system (Figure 6). In this mechanism, trainings and educations to be provided will be free of charge if possible and based on volunteerism and lifelong learning approach through the professional experts having competencies and moral values.

**Figure 6: A Suggestion of an Institution for the Neighbourhood Cooperatives**



Perhaps the most significant themes and outcomes of the global meetings held in the 21<sup>st</sup> century starting with the Stockholm Conference consisted of particular basic concepts such as “sustainable development”, “struggling against poverty” and “not wasting natural resources” (Table 1). It is clear that the main target of these conferences was to develop a road map to establish “liveable spaces” and “sustainable social structures”. In particular when looking at the key elements of Agenda 21 (Table 2), the Quito Implementation Plan (Table 3 and 4) which was the outcome of the final Habitat Conference and even the UN Sustainable Development Goals defined for the future 30 years (Table 5), we think that neighbourhood cooperatives may play a strategic role in coping with all problematic fields.

Basically when these fields are classified (Table 6) it is clear that there may be a solution to each problem or to achieve the goals in the “neighbourhood cooperative” model. As seen in the table below all SDGs can be embraced under the umbrella of a neighbourhood administrative unit, “social cell”, with the support of neighbourhood cooperatives just like a mitochondria in a cell. On the other hand, the solution of environmental problems and the use of natural resources can be basically the subject to education and training.

**Table 6: The Matrix of Matching of the UN Goals**

<b>The UN Sustainable Development Goals</b>	<b>Dimensions</b>	<b>Types of Cooperation based on Neighbourhood Cooperatives</b>
<b>No poverty</b>	Social/Economic	Economic
<b>Zero Hunger</b>	Social/Economic	Economic/Social
<b>Good Health and Well-Being</b>	Social/Economic	Economic/Social
<b>Quality Education</b>	Social	Education and Training
<b>Gender Equality</b>	Social	Social/ Education and Training
<b>Clean Water and Sanitation</b>	Economic/Educational	Economic/ Education and Training/Inspection Mechanism
<b>Affordable and Clean Energy</b>	Economic	Economic
<b>Decent Work and Economic Growth</b>	Economic	Economic
<b>Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure</b>	Economic/Technical	Economic/Technical/ Education and Training
<b>Reduced Inequalities</b>	Social	Social/ Education and Training
<b>Sustainable Cities and Communities</b>	Social/Economic/Environmental/ Governance	Social/Economic/Cultural (Neighbourhood Administration)
<b>Responsible Consumption and Production</b>	Economic/Educational	Economic/ Education and Training
<b>Climate Action</b>	Environmental	Education and Training/Inspection Mechanism
<b>Life Below Water</b>	Environmental	Education and Training/Inspection Mechanism
<b>Life on Land</b>	Environmental	Education and Training/Inspection Mechanism
<b>Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions</b>	Governance-Social	Social/Economic/Cultural/ (Neighbourhood Administration)
<b>Partnerships for the Goals</b>	Social	Social

In conclusion, today, we strongly believe that there are some important parallels between the Akhy system and today's concepts and institutions such as professional associations, stock exchange and ethics, social responsibility, quality assurance, customer satisfaction, transparency, participating in management and mentoring etc. The Akhy thought can be reflected to today's concepts and values through some institutional structures to be established in neighbourhood cooperatives in order to achieve sustainable social structure. Education and



training based on lifelong learning approach, embracing the social cell entirely, will play a strategic role in the success of sustainability.

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