

## NORMS OF RECIPROCITY AND COMPENSATION AMONG TURKISH STUDENTS<sup>1</sup>

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The significance of norms in shaping social life is undeniable; and among the most significant norms are those that govern the outcomes due to participants in an interaction—that is, the norms that define justice.

The form that justice norms assume seems to have varied through different stages of societal development. Anthropologists, such as Malinowski (1932) and Levi-Strauss (1949), have stressed that reciprocity is the governing norm in so-called primitive societies. This norm has been given its most concise formulation by Gouldner (1960) : one should help those who have helped him, and one should not hurt those who have helped him.

Lenski's (1970) treatment of the norm of reciprocity makes clear that this norm is especially important and widely applicable in primitive societies, but shows that it loses some of its scope of application and indirectly its importance during the course of societal development.

During this development, it appears that the norm of reciprocity ceases to be the governing principle, being supplanted by the norm of equity. In its simplest form, this norm is the prescription that a person's outcomes or rewards should be proportional to his investments. The equity norm has been the subject of considerable theoretical and empirical work by contemporary social scientists (e.g., Homans, 1961; Adams, 1965; Sampson, 1969). The empirical findings confirm that equity is widely applicable within modern industrial societies.

The equity norm is apparently not observed in "primitive" societies. However, even though it is overshadowed by the equity

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norm, the norm of reciprocity persists in modern society, as noted by Gouldner (1960) and Levi-Strauss (1949). This persistence of the reciprocity norm is also supported by recent data from both American and Turkish subjects (see Aral and Sunar, forthcoming).

The present authors believe that this transition in the basic norms of justice, brought about by societal development, can be explained by a transition in the basic modes of interaction. The norm of reciprocity applies only to a certain type of interaction: that between two relatively independent actors (systems), whether these are individuals, groups of individuals, or institutions. In this type of interaction, what one party gives (contributes, invests) is exactly what the other party receives. Logically, then, if there is to be interaction or exchange, the other party must give in return something of equal value: thus the rule of reciprocity, which prescribes that both parties give, and therefore receive, equally valuable goods, whether economic or social in nature.

The other distinct and basic type of interaction is that which takes place between actors who are members of the same system, i.e., who are sub-systems in a larger system. The norm of reciprocity does not apply here, mainly because what is given by one party is not received by the other party. On the contrary, in this type of interaction, that which is contributed by all subsystems undergoes processing by the system, and the product obtained after processing is then divided among the subsystems. The form this distribution should take is governed by the norm of equity.

It follows from the above argument that as intra-system interactions increase relative to inter-system interactions, as is the case in the process of socioeconomic development, the norm of reciprocity would lose its scope of application, and indirectly its importance, while the equity norm would become more widely applicable and indirectly more important.

The observation of Gouldner and Levi-Strauss, noted above, that reciprocity continues to apply in modern society, can be explained as a result of the fact that inter-system interactions are never totally replaced by intra-system interactions.

Although the norm of reciprocity continues to be relevant in modern society, its application in the behavioral structure is complicated by another trend brought about by societal development. This is the emergence of a multidimensional reward structure in place of

a unidimensional one (Weber, 1946). This emergence makes it possible to realize the norm in the totality of the rewards exchanged, despite violations in the exchange of any specific kind of reward, thereby allowing a much greater variety of exchanges. This mechanism, which allows a violation of the norm on one reward dimension to be made up for by another violation along another reward dimension, or by the realization of the norm along another reward dimension, is referred to as the compensation mechanism (Gouldner, 1960; see also the formulations of the emergence of status and power in Blau, 1964).

In a multidimensional reward structure all reward dimensions are not equally important. Some carry more weight while others carry less. For example, in most developed societies, income and prestige associated with a social position constitute widely recognized reward dimensions, with income usually being considered more important than prestige. The hierarchy of importance of reward dimensions may vary depending on stage of socio-economic development and culture. However, we believe it would be safe to assume that material rewards are considered more important than nonmaterial rewards in most contemporary societies. This pattern can be accounted for if one considers the ease with which material rewards, especially money, can be translated into other types and dimensions of reward, and the fact that material rewards, being tangible, are much more readily assessed for relative value.

The existence of a hierarchy of importance in reward dimensions has specific implications for justice and compensation mechanisms. The rules of justice will be looked for especially in the distribution or exchange of rewards that are considered important, and violations of the justice rule will be more easily tolerated in the distribution or exchange of less important rewards.

Since in a single interaction it is not possible to compensate for a violation of the norm by another violation in the same reward dimension, if compensation is to be achieved it must be in another dimension. However, if the original violation is in the more important material reward dimension, it seems likely that compensation in the non-material reward dimension will be only partially effective.

The purpose of the present study was to investigate the specific form of the reciprocity norm in Turkey, including normatively approved compensations between material and non-material reward dimensions.

The above discussion of the relationship between the type of social interaction and the applicable justice norm leads to **Hypothesis 1**: Regardless of which type of social interaction may predominate in a society, when there is intersystem interaction, reciprocity will be preferred to non-reciprocity in all reward dimensions.

If, as pointed out above, material rewards constitute the more important reward dimension, then we may predict, as **Hypothesis 2**: Violation of the reciprocity norm with regard to material rewards will be judged more unjust than violation of the norm with regard to nonmaterial rewards.

A corollary to the differential value of different reward dimensions would be that manipulation of the nonmaterial reward dimension can provide only partial compensation for nonreciprocity in the material dimension. However, it could be predicted that different types of manipulations would have differential effectiveness in achieving compensation. Specifically, **Hypothesis 3**: A counter-violation of reciprocity in non-material rewards can compensate for a violation in material rewards more effectively than the maintenance of reciprocity in the nonmaterial dimension by the party who violates material reciprocity.

## METHOD

**Design.** There were two independent variables : (1) material rewards, equal or unequal (reciprocated or not reciprocated); and (2) nonmaterial rewards, equal or unequal (reciprocated or nonreciprocated). These variables were combined in short stories involving two actors (see **Materials** below) to produce the following five conditions:

Condition 1. Reciprocity in both material and nonmaterial rewards.

Condition 2. Reciprocity in material rewards and nonreciprocity in nonmaterial rewards.

Condition 3. Nonreciprocity in material rewards and reciprocity in nonmaterial rewards.

Condition 4. Nonreciprocity in both material and nonmaterial rewards (the nonreciprocity falling to the disadvantage of the same actor in both reward dimensions).

Condition 5. Nonreciprocity in material rewards and a counter nonreciprocity in nonmaterial rewards (the nonreciprocity falling

to the disadvantage of one actor in the material reward dimension and to the disadvantage of the other actor in the nonmaterial reward dimension).

In terms of these conditions, the hypotheses can be operationally restated as follows :

Hypothesis 1. The mean justice score in Condition 1 will be highest, and that in Condition 4 will be lowest, with mean scores in the other conditions falling between.

Hypothesis 2. The mean justice score in Condition 3 will be lower than the mean justice score in Condition 2.

Hypothesis 3. The mean justice score in Condition 5 will be higher than in Condition 3, while the mean justice score in Condition 3 will be higher than in Condition 4. That is, the conditions will be ranked in terms of mean justice scores such that  $5 > 3 > 4$ .

**Subjects.** Subjects were male and female students in the senior class at Ankara Özel Yükseliş Kojeji. Subjects were randomly assigned to the experimental conditions, each subject responding to a single story. A total of 73 subjects participated in the experiment.

**Materials.** The independent variables were manipulated through five short stories portraying dyadic interaction. In these stories, inter-system interaction is represented by two actors (Murat and Kerim) working independently as architects. In each story, one of them does a favor or favors for the other, which is or is not reciprocated. Material reward is a sum of money which accrues to the actor as a result of the other's action, i.e., doing the favor. Nonmaterial reward, on the other hand, is the prestige that accrues to the actor as a result of public recognition given him by the other actor. Each of the two types of rewards may be equal, resulting in reciprocity, or unequal, resulting in nonreciprocity. An example of the stories is presented below. In this example, both material and nonmaterial rewards are reciprocated.

"Murat and Kerim are two architects specializing in the design of office buildings. They have both been working in Ankara since their graduation eight years ago. Recently, Murat has begun to take an interest in the design of hotels, and Kerim has become interested in apartment buildings.

About six months ago, a contractor approached Kerim for the design of a hotel. However, since he had heard about Murat's new interest, he referred the contractor to Murat, who took the contract and can expect to earn about 150,000 TL. from the job.

A month or so later, Murat met an apartment builder who was looking for an architect to design his latest project. Remembering the favor Kerim had done for him, he told the builder about Kerim. Kerim contracted with the builder to design a large apartment complex, and he expects his profits to be close to 150,000 TL.

During these last several months, Murat has taken advantage of several opportunities to point out the high quality of Kerim's work to other architects, and Kerim has done the same for Murat. As a result, both of them have become somewhat better known professionally."

(A Turkish translation of this story can be found appended to the Turkish summary at the end of this article.)

Subjects responded to these short stories by evaluating the justice of the social situation depicted in the story. This evaluation of justice (the dependent variable) was measured by means of a nine-point scale anchored by the words "haklı" (just) and "haksız" (unjust). In addition, each subject responded to several open-ended questions regarding his judgment of the actions portrayed in the story.

**Procedure.** The stories were presented to the subjects in the classroom, during a class hour. They were distributed in random order, one story to each subject. The subjects were instructed to read the story. They were then asked to rate the justice of the situation depicted in the story on the scale, and to answer the questions on the following page. Papers were collected and subjects' questions were answered. The whole procedure took approximately 20 minutes.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In accordance with prediction, justice scores were highest in Condition 1, and lowest in Condition 4 ( $t=3.68$ ,  $p<.05$ ), thus supporting Hypothesis 1 (see Table 1 for mean justice scores in each of the experimental conditions).

TABLE 1 — Mean Justice Scores

	C O N D I T I O N				
	1	2	3	4	5
Mean Justice Score	6.2 (N=14)	4.2 (N=15)	3.8 (N=15)	3.4 (N=14)	4.7 (N=15)

Also in accordance with prediction, the mean justice score in Condition 3 was lower than the mean justice score in Condition 2, although the difference was not statistically significant.

Similarly, the order of conditions,  $5 > 3 > 4$ , predicted by Hypothesis 3 is observed; that is, justice scores were highest in Condition 5 and lowest in Condition 4, with justice scores in Condition 3 in between. However, the differences were not statistically significant.

Hypothesis 1 received further support from the responses to the open-ended questions. Of these responses, 80% made direct reference to the norm of reciprocity. Also, comments on whether or not the actors behaved correctly in the situations depicted in the stories paralleled ratings on the justice scale. In Condition 1, 78% of the subjects approved of the actors' behavior, whereas in Condition 4, 78% of the subjects disapproved of the nonreciprocating actor's behavior. In the other conditions, such disapproval ranged from 67% to 73%.

Data from the open-ended questions also supported Hypothesis 2. In Condition 3, 73% of the subjects disapproved of the nonreciprocating actor's behavior, while 67% of the subjects in Condition 2 showed such disapproval.

The order of disapproval is that which would have been predicted by Hypothesis 3: Condition 5, 71%; Condition 3, 73%; Condition 4, 78%. However, the differences are rather small.

It can be seen, then, that the norm of reciprocity continues to be current and applicable among Turkish students. Reciprocity is clearly perceived as the most just pattern of action in a situation of direct interaction. In addition, violation of the reciprocity norm is apparently considered more serious — i.e., is perceived as producing greater injustice — when it involves material rather than nonmaterial rewards. Finally, it seems that nonreciprocity in material rewards can be partially compensated by an opposite non-reciprocity in the nonmaterial dimension: that is, by a kind of negative reciprocity.

A natural extension of the present work would involve comparing the status of the norm of reciprocity in urban Turkey with that in rural Turkey. Theoretical considerations presented in this paper would lead to the prediction that among the rural population the reciprocity norm would be more firmly established and applied to a larger range of interaction types.

In order to establish the evolutionary developmental pattern, a similar comparison should be made between the results from the Turkish sample and those from a comparable sample of subjects from a society which is further advanced in the process of socio-economic development. Work on this latter type of comparison has already begun. For a comparison of Turkish and American subjects see Aral and Sunar (forthcoming.)

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## Ö Z E T

Toplumsal yaşantıda normların, ve özellikle kişiler arası ilişkilerde her kişinin hak ettiği payı saptayan normların - adalet normları - önemi açıktır.

Şimdiye kadar yapılan incelemeler toplumsal gelişmenin değişik evrenlerinde değişik adalet normlarının belirginleştiğini göstermiştir; ilkel toplumlarda özellikle karşılıklılık (reciprocity) ve endüstrileşmiş toplumlarda da özellikle oranlarda eşitlik (equity) normları kişiler arasındaki ilişkileri idare eder. Karşılıklılık normu kısaca kişinin kendisine yardım etmiş olan kişilere yardım etmesini ve kendisine yardım etmiş olan kişilere zarar vermemesini önerir. Oranlarda eşitlik normu ise birbirleri ile ilişki içinde bulunan kişiler için, ilişkiye yapılan katkının o ilişkiden alınan paya oranının her kişi için eşit olmasını önerir. Örneğin, üç kişilik bir ilişkide;

K = ilişkiye katkı

P = ilişkiden alınan pay

$$\frac{K_1}{P_1} = \frac{K_2}{P_2} = \frac{K_3}{P_3}$$

Antropolojik ve sosyolojik çalışmalar göstermiştir ki oranlarda eşitlik ilkel toplumlarda bir norm olarak ortaya çıkmadığı halde karşılıklılık normu gelişmiş ve gelişmekte olan toplumlarda da oranlarda eşitlik normu ile yan yana görülmektedir, yalnız kapsamı toplumsal gelişme sürecinde giderek azalır.

Burada geliştirilen teorik çerçeve, değişme içinde görülen bir adalet normundan bir diğerine geçişi kişiler arasındaki temel ilişkilerin değişmesi ile açıklamağa çalışmaktadır: Karşılıklılık normu bağımsız aktörler (kişiler, guruplar, kurumlar) arasındaki ilişkilerde uygulanır. Bu ilişki tipinde bir aktörün ilişkiye olan katkısı olduğu gibi diğer aktörün ilişkiden aldığı payı meydana getirir; ilişki içinde katkı veya pay ne azalır ne de artar. Bu durumda karşılıklılık normu ilişkinin devam etmesi için gereklidir.

Oranlarda eşitlik normu ise aynı sistemin birbirine bağlı parçaları olan aktörler arasındaki ilişkilerde uygulanır. Bu durumda, dağı-

tilan payların tümü, sistemin katkıları işleyişi sonucu, toplam katkıdan daha fazladır ve normatif sistem payların dağıtımının katkıların dağılımına göre yapılmasını önerir.

Bilindiği gibi toplumsal gelişme sistem içi ilişkilerin yoğunluğunu ve tüm ilişkiler arasında önemini artırır. Oranlarda eşitlik normunun görelî olarak belirginleşmesi de ilişkilerdeki bu değişikliğin doğal bir sonucudur. Diğer yandan gelişme sürecinde bağımsız aktörler arası (sistemler arası) ilişkilerin yok olmayışı karşılıklılık normunun gelişmiş toplumlardaki geçerliliğini açıklar.

Gelişme süreci sonunda ortaya çıkan bir başka husus da dağıtılan payların niteliği ile ilgilidir. Bilindiği gibi ilkel toplumların tek boyutlu pay strüktürü modern toplumlarda yerini çok boyutlu bir pay strüktürüne bırakır. Dolayısı ile pay dağılımının adaletli olabilmesi için önemli olan tüm boyutlarda dağılımın normlara uygun olmasıdır; her bir boyuttaki dağılım tek başına düşünülüğünde adalet normlarına aykırı olsa bile bütün boyutlar bir arada göz önüne alındığında normlara uygun bir dağılım görülebilir. Diğer bir deyişle bir boyutta hak ettiğinden fazla pay alan kişi bir başka boyutta hak ettiğinden az alırsa dağılım adaletli olacaktır. Bir pay boyutunda meydana gelen adaletsizliğin bir başka boyutta aksi yönde bir adaletsizlikle dengelenmesi ödünleme mekanizması (compensation mechanism) olarak bilinir. Biz burada yalnızca pay boyutlarında maddi-maddi olmayan ikilemi ile ilgileniyoruz.

Araştırmanın amacı bugünkü Türk toplumunda karşılıklılık (reciprocity) normunun maddî ve maddî olmayan pay boyutları arasında ödünleme mekanizması ile nasıl gerçekleştirildiğini incelemektir. Özellikle aşağıdaki üç hipotez kurulmuş ve denenmiştir.

1. Sistem arası ilişkilerde, her pay boyutunda, karşılıklılık karşılıksızlıktan daha adaletlidir.

2. Maddî pay boyutu, maddî olmayan pay boyutundan daha önemlidir. Bunun sonucu olarak maddî pay boyutunda karşılıksızlık maddî olmayan pay boyutunda karşılıksızlığa göre daha az hoşgörü ile karşılanır.

3. Maddî pay boyutundaki bir karşılıksızlık maddî olmayan pay boyutunda aksi yönde bir karşılıksızlıkla kısmen ödünlenebilir.

Veriler üç hipotezi de destekleyecek niteliktedir, ancak .05 seviyesindeki istatistikî anlamlılık yalnız birinci hipotez için bulunmuştur.

