

CORRECTIVE JUSTICE:  
STAFF DISHONESTY AS A RESPONSE TO  
PERCEIVED UNFAIR CHANGE IN THE WORKPLACE

Thesis submitted for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

at the University of Leicester

by

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April 2017

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Staff dishonesty as a response to perceived unfair change in the workplace  
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A core issue in criminology is to examine why humans engage in dishonest acts. The subject of this study is an examination of a situational motivation to offend which is detached from opportunity, thus having a focus on intrinsic situational offender motivation. This study hypothesises that employees who perceive their employer of treating staff unfairly hold more tolerant attitudes towards staff dishonesty. Consequently, this hypothesis implies that staff dishonesty can become an employee's perceived justified means to even the score against an employer who is perceived of acting unfairly, which is referred to as corrective justice in this thesis.

The thesis begins with an examination of the core concepts, staff dishonesty and injustice perceptions. With reference to staff dishonesty, property deviance, production deviance and the willingness to engage in whistle-blowing are focussed on. In order to conceptualise injustice perceptions of employees, this thesis will derive the dimensions of distributive injustice, procedural injustice and interactional injustice from the literature and conceptualise a further dimension of moral injustice.

With the aim to test the research hypothesis, a self-completion online questionnaire was published in a large European company in the Information and Communications Technology (ICT) sector - and answered by 463 respondents in the research setting. The first half of the questionnaire items measured perceptions of unfair treatment in the four injustice dimensions, while the second half of the questionnaire measured tolerance levels towards staff dishonesty.

The findings of the subsequent statistical analysis show that up to 11.8 % of rises in tolerant attitudes towards staff dishonesty result from perceived unfair treatment in the course of reorganisations. This proven existence of a corrective justice effect is finally discussed with reference to its implications for business and criminological theory.

## Acknowledgements

First and foremost, I would like to thank my supervisors Adrian Beck and Hillary Jones for their continuous inspiration and support in the past six years.

I would also like to thank my wife Djuka for her patience and understanding - and her energy in taking care of our family in order to give me the space to work on this study. I also owe many thanks to my children Lukas, Gabriel, Leonard and Martha for allowing me to conduct and finalise this thesis whilst falling asleep without me on many evenings.

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## **Chapter One: Introduction**

An ancient Greek dictum is that “nothing endures but change” (Heraclitus, quoted in Kanter, Stein and Jick, 1992, p. 9), and in this regard, change was even considered to be the only constant in life. Hence, change was perceived as a pervasive element which affects all aspects of life in the ancient Greek culture. In accordance with this idea of pervasiveness, change forms a crucial element in the present study as well, which seeks to examine forms of change and their consequences in business life. A reasoning that change is pervasive is still applicable in the 21<sup>st</sup> century where an increased pace of change is visible in particular business sectors. This pace of change is explained as being a result of change forces like increased global competition and new technologies, to name but a few (Mullins, 2005).

As a consequence of these external change forces, several contemporary business organisations are facing increased internal change, which encompasses internal reorganisations such as headcount reductions, budget cuts, changes in employees’ daily tasks and the need to continuously train employees in order to adapt to new technologies, for example. Accordingly, in particular business sectors in a close connection with the information age and internet technologies are affected by these change forces, like the research setting of this thesis; a European provider in the Information and Communications Technology (ICT) sector.

In connection with the increased pace of change, change in organisations can provoke several forms of resistance on the part of employees which either prefer stable organisations because they are perceived as comfortable and secure, regard the need to adapt to new situations as an inconvenience, or mistrust the unknown outcomes of change in a company and seek to avoid uncertainty as much as possible (Hofstede, 2001; Mullins, 2005).

In this regard, resistance to change is also relevant from a criminological perspective, as it is possible that the resistance of employees manifests itself in forms of dishonest behaviour. A core issue in criminology is to examine why humans engage in dishonest acts. Accordingly, the potential effect of change in organisations on staff dishonesty is worthwhile being considered, and the present study hypothesises that staff

perceptions of unfair change in the workplace lead to an increase in tolerant attitudes towards staff dishonesty among employees.

Pertaining to this hypothesis, the subsequent sections will set the scene firstly with a look at the speed of change in the ICT sector, and secondly with an assessment of existing explanations for the motivation to engage in staff dishonesty.

## **1.1 Setting the Scene**

### **1.1.1 Nothing Endures but Change in the ICT-Sector**

The need for reorganisations in companies and the challenges in dealing with change pressures are described as a continuous influence, whilst referring to different change “factors which create an increasingly volatile environment, such as: uncertain economic conditions; globalisation and fierce world competition; the level of government intervention; political interests; scarcity of natural resources; rapid developments in new technology and the information age” (Mullins, 2005, p. 909). Accordingly, a variety of pressures exist which force companies to adapt organisationally, and these pressures can either act independently, or occur in combination with other change pressures, as the subsequent examination of the contemporary ICT sector shows.

Apart from the scarcity of natural resources, a look at the annual reports and management reports of three big European ICT providers, British Telecom, Orange, and Telefonica, confirms that each of the above mentioned change factors is applicable to the ICT sector, which indicates the intensity of change pressures in this sector already. With reference to the aforementioned companies, the subsequent sections will specify how change pressures are described from an ICT-company’s perspective.

British Telecom for example reports that the company operates “in markets which are characterised by: high levels of change; strong and new competition; declining prices and, in some markets, declining revenues; technology substitution; market and product convergence; customer churn; and regulatory intervention to

promote competition and reduce wholesale prices” (British Telecom Strategic Report, 2015, p. 44). This shows that most of the change factors described as factors leading to organisational change are mentioned by British Telecom already. Furthermore, the annual report of British Telecom even emphasises the need and readiness for change as one of the five core values of the company (British Telecom Annual Report, 2015), which underlines both the high attention towards organisational change and the perceived necessity to involve employees in the management of change. In the same manner, Orange confirms change pressures originating from forced competition and technological change, highlighting that “The rapid growth in broadband use (fixed or mobile) allows global players of the Internet sector the opportunity to establish a direct link with telecommunications operators’ customers, thus depriving the latter, including Orange, of a share of their revenues and margins” (Orange, 2015, p. 36). Thus, ICT companies invest in networks which allow competitors to cannibalise profits made with traditional calls. Consequently, this development leads to pressures to adapt organisationally, both in terms of costs and know how, and thereby demonstrates a particularly severe manifestation of the change factor brought about by “globalisation and fierce world competition” (Mullins, 2005, p. 909) in the ICT sector.

While British Telecom and Orange only referred to declined revenues, Telefonica clearly states that “The explosion of the digital market and entry of new players in communications market, such as...Internet companies or device manufacturers, may cause the loss of value of certain assets, and affect the Group’s ability to generate income” (Telefonica, 2015, p. 242) and that “New products and technologies arise constantly, and their development can render obsolete the products and services the Telefonica Group offers and the technology it uses” (Telefonica, 2015, p. 242). Hence, a scenario with obsolete products and services and an obsolete technology in use describes a situation at which a company is increasingly unable to generate income – which goes beyond change, and may even challenge the existence of the business case of traditional telephone services.

Beyond these references to the triggers of organisational change, Orange reports a particularly harsh consequence of change as well, “a major crisis relating to psycho-

social risks and anxiety at work...following a number of employee suicides” (Orange, 2015, p. 38). This severe scenario underlines that reorganisations can trigger a variety of consequences, and that a rise in tolerant attitudes towards staff dishonesty is only one possible consequence of reorganisations. In the context of dealing with workplace anxiety, Orange mentions a variety of measures including “the organization of restructuring conferences, the signing of several agreements with representative unions, and the roll-out of an employee satisfaction survey” (Orange, 2015, p. 38), which indicates that the perceived fairness of reorganisations is in focus as well. Moreover, a series of suicides following reorganisations demonstrates how strongly employees can perceive the burden of organisational change. Unfortunately, a subsequent risk assessment of the Group states that the efforts to manage the psycho-social risks “could however come into conflict with certain cost-cutting plans” (Orange, 2015, p. 38). Accordingly, Orange does not only confirm severe change pressures in the ICT sector, but also refers to severe impacts in terms of cost-cutting and workplace anxiety among affected staff.

In sum, a look at these large European ICT providers shows that declining revenues and fast technological change lead to an enormous pressure to adapt organisationally. Beyond these company perspectives which rarely display internal reorganisations in their annual financial, strategic or management reports, several studies have already addressed why change in the ICT sector takes place (Rodine-Hardy, 2015; Curven and Whalley, 2009; Rieck and Doan, 2009; Biewener, 2008). In one study, Biewener also examined how the ongoing changes affect the workplace experience.

The study on the reorganisation of Pacific Bell in the US telecommunications market states that

The most common observation about the industry’s employment strategy is the use of cost-cutting practices associated with automation, consolidation, and downsizing measures. This approach to organizational restructuring among traditional telecommunications service providers is considered likely as

telecommunications markets are increasingly deregulated and service providers experience enhanced competitive pressures. (Biewener, 2008, p. 104)

Accordingly, declining revenues lead to cost cutting on the part of ICT providers, as already mentioned in the Orange report (2015). In this regard, consolidation and downsizing describe scenarios where regional centres are closed and a small number of central data centres remain, because digital opportunities for cost cutting are related to a centralisation of the network architecture (Biewener, 2008). Hence, employees are forced to either leave the company or to change their geographical place of work, as a regional structure is not required anymore in a digital network. In terms of cost cutting, this also means that fewer employees are required to maintain the centralised network architecture.

Furthermore, the type of work and the skills required to maintain the technological platform change as well. With reference to jobs in network operation centres, “The skill requirements for these jobs are becoming shallower as analytical and interpretive aspects of the jobs are being eroded by the intelligence of the company’s information system itself” (Biewener, 2008, p. 169). This trend can be explained by the growing potential of digital technology itself, as “technological advances are being designed to simplify and reduce labor content of jobs” (Biewener, 2008, p. 173) which finally results in layoffs; less labour content describes a scenario with less jobs for humans.

Finally, even the remaining tasks are described as being less stable, which constitutes another facet of the workplace experience in times of reorganisations. Process engineering is used as a method to organise the way employees execute their tasks, and in the American research setting

The method emphasized eliminating inefficiencies by analysing work processes, but its real consequence at Pacific Bell was the large-scale centralization of operations and automation of key technical job tasks. The reengineering efforts relied heavily on job rotation and multi-skilling. (Biewener, 2008, p. 136)



Accordingly, the consequence of continuous technological and organisational change is a workplace experience where employees are not employed in terms of a stable shape of daily tasks, but rather in an environment of changing jobs and serial projects (Biewener, 2008). Thus, a workplace experience where one project follows another one, and multi-skilling is required in order to cover a broader scope of jobs which are available for employees, demonstrates that change is the norm, and not the exception from an employee's perspective.

A direct effect of continuous technological change is that employees are forced to develop new skills as well in order to adapt in terms of up to date know how within the ICT sector. In this regard, a survey of 162 telecommunications companies in Europe, North America, Latin America and Asia compared factors shaping the internal versus external sourcing of new capabilities. In doing so, the study concludes that "Firms face strong inertial pressures that limit their abilities to change. At the same time, though, firms face strong competitive pressures to undertake ongoing changes or risk failing" (Capron and Mitchell, 2004, p. 170). Accordingly, new technologies require new know how, and it remains for example unclear how many employees can adapt the knowledge to maintain a digital data centre in a suitable time by means of occupational retraining in a sector, where technical know-how regarding the previous network technology is obsolete. In this connection, retraining forms an important facet of reorganisations and the continuous evolvement of new technologies requires employees to continuously enhance their technological skills, which forms another particular change pressure directly affecting the workplace experience of employees.

On the whole, this assessment of the ICT sector has demonstrated that strong change pressures exist in this sector indeed, and it is argued that two drivers of change are outstanding: the liberalisation of markets, which leads to increased competition and declining revenues, and technological change, which leads to an increased competition and declining revenues as well. In this regard, the strongest change pressure nevertheless evolves from technological change, and the increasing transmission of data – including telephone calls – over IP and hence a digital broadband network is described as "a disruptive technology that will fundamentally change the traditional public-switched telephone network market" (Rieck and Doan, 2009, p. 365) whereas

disruptive technology is defined as referring “to a technology or innovation, which radically transforms markets, creates entire new markets, or destroys existing markets for other (often older) technologies” (Rieck and Doan, 2009, p. 365).

Hence, the pace and scope of reorganisations in the contemporary ICT sector creates a workplace experience which is considerably different from the past, when organisations were comparatively stable. The ICT sector continues to go through fundamental change and understanding this change is essential in order to understand the importance of considering employees’ fairness perceptions in a contemporary workplace experience where nothing endures but change. Consequently, change as such also bears the risk to be perceived as being unfair on the part of employees and in this regard, it is employees’ subjective perceptions of change which determine whether it is regarded as fair or unfair. Beyond a company’s management of change which can be objectively in accordance with applicable laws and procedures, organisational change can nevertheless bring perceived undesirable consequences for employees, such as a loss of job security, the loss of career prospects, the loss of task autonomy or the need to continuously adapt to new job profiles and related tasks, to name a few. Hence, employees judge whether these undesirable consequences reflect a fair or unfair treatment on the part of their employer.

It is these tensions of perceived unfair treatment which constitute the basis for the research hypothesis of this study, which argues that change in the workplace experience of employees can lead to an increase in tolerant attitudes towards staff dishonesty, when the change itself is perceived as being unfair. Accordingly, perceived unfair change in the workplace experience forms the predictor in the research hypothesis of the present study, whereas an increase in tolerant attitudes towards staff dishonesty forms the outcome, and hence a further main concept which deserves attention.

In this connection, dishonesty is not exclusively related to employees, but to humans as such. Citizens and customers were found to display dishonest behaviours, which are referred to as “crimes of everyday life” (Karstedt and Farral, 2006, p. 1011). Furthermore, a tendency to display small levels of dishonesty was found to be a

widespread human characteristic (Ariely, 2013), which shows that dishonest behaviour forms a widespread phenomenon among humans in general.

As the scope of the present study is nevertheless narrowed down to reorganisations and staff dishonesty, the subsequent section will now focus on existing explanations for staff dishonesty, and in particular those which can be related to a perceived unfair workplace experience on the part of employees.

### 1.1.2 Staff Dishonesty – Context and Explanations

The wider context of the research hypothesis is about staff dishonesty and the workplace experience of employees. In this regard, staff dishonesty forms a widespread and expensive phenomenon, and employee theft is regarded as the most frequent form of staff dishonesty (Greenberg, 1998). Due to estimates, 75% of all employees steal at least once at work (Lipman and McGraw, 1988), and several studies in particular in the retail sector show that staff dishonesty forms a challenge on a national and global level (NRSS, 2015; British Retail Consortium, 2015; Global Theft Barometer, 2015). Further research on staff dishonesty covers several sectors, like the wholesale, retail and construction sector, where data on theft by employees and thefts by unknown persons are available (Home Office, 2016).

Thus, staff dishonesty forms a severe and widespread challenge for employers, but the challenge to explore the concept of staff dishonesty itself nevertheless starts with the existence of several synonyms of staff dishonesty in the literature, like organisational misbehaviour (Vardi and Weitz, 2004) or counterproductive work behaviour (Conlon, Meyer and Nowakowski, 2005). In addition to the variety of denominations for staff dishonesty, a plenty of further delineations exist which either refer to the perpetrator, like blue collar theft (Horning, 1970), which encompasses theft by workers, and white collar crime (Sutherland, 1949), which is related to theft by managers.

This study's research definition of staff dishonesty will refer to property deviance and production deviance (Hollinger and Clark, 1982b), as these concepts focus on two major forms of staff dishonesty which are applicable to companies in the ICT

sector as well. In doing so property deviance encompasses the unauthorised appropriation of company property, while production deviance covers acts like sick day abuse or excessive internet surfing for private purposes during working hours. Furthermore, an unwillingness to protect company property from being abused by others will be included in the research definition of staff dishonesty as well.

Having this focus in mind, a subsequent examination of explanations for staff dishonesty provides four main approaches:

- Born criminals - offender motivation as a personality trait
- Neutralising crime – ways to offend with a non-criminal self concept
- Exploiting opportunities - staff dishonesty as a function of opportunity
- Disgruntled employees - the workplace experience as a determinant of staff dishonesty

Firstly, offender motivation can be considered as a personality trait. Accordingly, followers of this approach assume that some humans are criminal by nature, while others are not, which ultimately leads to a perception of criminality as an intrinsic personality trait being detached from situational stimuli, like the assumption of a born criminal. In this regard, research on levels of criminality exists as well, and separates offenders on a scale from low to high crime readiness (Tilley, 1997).

A second approach to explain criminality deals with neutralisation techniques which finally enable offenders to neutralise their moral beliefs in order to commit dishonest acts. Thus, neutralisation enables employees to engage in staff dishonesty with a self-perception of not being a criminal, and hence provides a second intrinsic explanation for staff dishonesty. In this case, criminality is not referred to as a personality trait which enables an offender to commit dishonest acts, but as an offender's inclination to neutralise the deviant nature of an offence by means of five techniques. The first technique of neutralisation is a denial of responsibility, a scenario in which an offender refers to external pressures which leave no other chance than to commit dishonest acts. The second technique refers to a denial of injury, where an offender claims not to cause any damage, like in the case of an employer who is perceived to be insured against losses or too big to feel the losses anyway. In the same

manner, further techniques of neutralisation refer to the denial of an existing victim, a denial of an employer's authority to label certain forms of behaviour as wrong, or an appeal to higher loyalties which finally excuse the breaking of rules. Hence, the core explanation of this approach circles around the neutralisation of commonly held moral beliefs. Accordingly, neutralisation refers to an offender's intrinsic decision making as well.

Vice versa, a third approach explains staff dishonesty as a function of external, situational opportunities, thus considering dishonest employees as opportunists which exploit perceived good opportunities. In doing so, opportunity related theories assume that offenders weigh up the risk, effort and reward (Clarke and Cornish, 2001) of dishonest acts rationally in order to decide whether an opportunity for staff dishonesty is worth being exploited or not. Hence, opportunity related theories do not seek to explain an intrinsic motivation to offend beyond external, situational opportunities, and assume that motivated offenders are available instead - which finally implies an appreciation of criminality as a personality trait as well, as intrinsic offender motivation is not taken into consideration as a situational variable.

Finally, a fourth and extensive approach to explain staff dishonesty refers to the workplace organisation and the workplace experience of employees. Mars (1982) related particular forms of staff dishonesty to particular workplace organisations, which exercise higher versus lower group pressures on employees, and offer more or less opportunities to commit crimes. Beyond organisational issues, the mere workplace experience from an employee's perspective was found to be important as well, and several factors were examined as triggers of staff dishonesty, like low job satisfaction (Hollinger and Clark, 1982b), pay cuts (Greenberg, 1990) or conflicting goals of employees and employers (Cools, 1991).

Despite these studies on the impact of a negative workplace experience on staff dishonesty, however, the existing literature nevertheless fails to provide an encompassing conceptualisation of how and when the workplace experience of employees becomes criminogenic. In order to develop such a conceptualisation of a criminogenic workplace experience, this study focuses on perceived unfair change in terms of reorganisations which are perceived as an injustice on the part of employees.

Hence, the present study seeks to explain staff dishonesty as a reaction to forms of an employee's perceived unfair treatment at work.

Based on these examinations of existing explanations for staff dishonesty on the one hand, and the extent of change in the contemporary ICT sector on the other hand, the subsequent section will frankly summarise the shortcomings in the existing literature which concern a potential effect of organisational change on staff dishonesty.

## **1.2 Shortcomings in the Existing Research**

As the previous sections show, the lack of an encompassing concept which is able to measure a negative workplace experience of employees originates from a combination of several shortcomings in the existing literature. Firstly, this study argues that the predominant perception of criminality as a relatively stable personality trait forms an obstacle for situational examinations of intrinsic offender motivation. In this regard, it is surprising that contemporary conceptualisations of staff dishonesty, like Routine Activity Theory, neglect the assumption that a motivated offender can be related to situational triggers beyond opportunity. Accordingly, a first shortcoming in the existing research is that the intrinsic motivation to engage in staff dishonesty has not been considered as a situational variable.

Correspondingly, change in the workplace experience was never conceptualised as an encompassing concept, which forms the second shortcoming in the existing literature. In this connection, an examination of change in the ICT sector has demonstrated that attention towards the continuity of change is indispensable when a contemporary workplace experience is assessed.

Finally, a third limitation in the literature on staff dishonesty is that morality is frequently referred to, but not conceptualised when potential triggers of staff dishonesty are examined. Thus, the assumption that employees can construct staff dishonesty as a morally justified approach to even the score with an employer who is acting unfairly has not been examined as well. Such a motivation to engage in staff dishonesty is referred to as corrective justice in this thesis and forms the essence of the present study's research hypothesis that staff perceptions of unfair change in the workplace lead to rises

in tolerant attitudes towards staff dishonesty among employees.

### 1.2.1 Research Aims

Accordingly, the first research aim of the present study is to test this research hypothesis and to provide evidence that a situational motivation to engage in staff dishonesty exists beyond perceived good opportunities. In order to test the hypothesis, staff perceptions of unfair change will be measured in the first half of a self-completion online questionnaire while the second half of the questionnaire measures tolerance levels towards staff dishonesty. Hence, statistical analysis of the research results provides a means to examine whether perceptions of unfair change are associated with an increase in tolerant attitudes towards staff dishonesty or not.

Focussing on a precondition in this regard, a second research aim of the present study is to explore a suitable means to conceptualise and measure perceived unfair change in the workplace experience of employees. For this purpose, four dimensions of injustice are conceptualised.

Thus, with reference to the shortcomings in the existing literature, the research hypothesis of this thesis aims at delivering an original contribution to knowledge, and the conceptualisation of the key concepts of the research hypothesis, a perceived unfair workplace experience as well as staff dishonesty, will be referred to in more detail in the subsequent section.

## **1.3 Injustice Dimensions as a Trigger to Even the Score by Means of Staff Dishonesty**

The research approach of this study conceptualises employees' perceptions of receiving unfair treatment from the employer by means of four dimensions of reorganisational injustice. In each case, this study focuses on staff perceptions of the treatment received by an employer in the course of reorganisations, and not on actual injustice. Actual injustice is not relevant for the testing of the research hypothesis, which exclusively relates to the subjective decision making behind staff dishonesty.

Hence, the focus lies of staff perceptions of the fairness and unfairness of both reorganisations and staff dishonesty.

With regard to perceived unfair reorganisations, four injustice dimensions will be considered:

- Distributive injustice – an employee's ratio of investments and outcomes deteriorates
- Procedural injustice – an employee has no voice and choice in the change process
- Interactional injustice – inadequate information and insensitive treatment
- Moral injustice – an employer ignores better alternatives in the change process

#### 1.3.1 Distributive Injustice

Firstly, distributive injustice encompasses staff perceptions of reorganisations which lead to a more negative ratio of an employee's investments and outcomes, like an increased effort for learning new tasks, increased workload, or a loss of career prospects. Accordingly, distributive injustice in this study is about a ratio of perceived outcome fairness relative to contributions as compared to the status quo before the reorganisations took place. A typical example for such a scenario is about cuts in salary, which was already found to stimulate increased levels of theft (Greenberg, 1990).

#### 1.3.2 Procedural Injustice

Procedural injustice forms the second dimension of reorganisational injustice and covers an employer's methods, procedures and mechanisms which are used to determine organisational changes. Hence, procedural injustice in this study is conceptualised as employees' perceptions of not having voice; i.e. not having the chance to speak freely about the reorganisations taking place, and not having a choice but to adapt to the changes decided by an employer.



### 1.3.3 Interactional Injustice

Thirdly, the perception of interactional injustice is composed of two elements; a perceived lack of adequate explanations for the necessity of ongoing reorganisations, and a perceived insensitive treatment from an employer. In this regard, a lack of an adequate explanation for reorganisations taking place forms the informational part of interactional injustice, as employees who are subject to reorganisations feel entitled to receive an explanation for the necessity of change (Folger and Cropanzano, 1998), while the perceived honesty of an employer forms a crucial attribute of adequate information as well. In addition to a lack of information, a lack of sensitive treatment reflects a violation of employees' expectations related to respectful treatment from the employer. This encompasses for example a superior's friendly and attentive contact with employees.

### 1.3.4 Moral Injustice

As a fourth and last dimension, moral injustice measures violated expectations towards perceived better alternatives for previous reorganisations in the research setting. Accordingly, the present study measures employees' perceptions of what an employer could have done with reference to available options in times of reorganisations, and what an employer should have selected among feasible alternatives; the least harmful option for employees. Thus, investing less in management bonuses or takeovers can be perceived as more appropriate than pay cuts for employees.

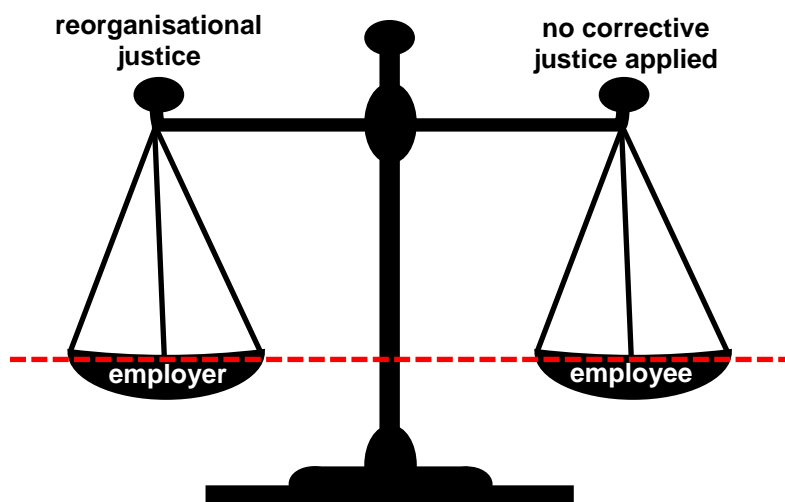
As a whole, the four dimensions of reorganisational injustice refer to an employee's potentially violated fairness expectations in the workplace experience. Accordingly, the conceptualisation of reorganisational injustice does not only serve theory testing as a predictor of rises in tolerant attitudes towards staff dishonesty, but constitutes theory building as well: a broad array of potential injustice perceptions is used to measure the particular injustice profile of the research setting. This – consistently perceived – foul play of an employer is tested as a trigger of corrective justice, as will be shown in the description of this study's research approach in the next

section.

### 1.3.5 Fair Play, Foul Play, and Striking Back

Given that employees who perceive their employer of treating staff unfairly hold more tolerant attitudes towards staff dishonesty, at least two conditions in organisations exist: Firstly, a condition where employees feel they are being treated fairly by their employer and do not hold attitudes which display an increased tolerance towards staff dishonesty, and this condition is displayed in Figure 1.

**Figure 1: Fair Play - Justice in Balance**

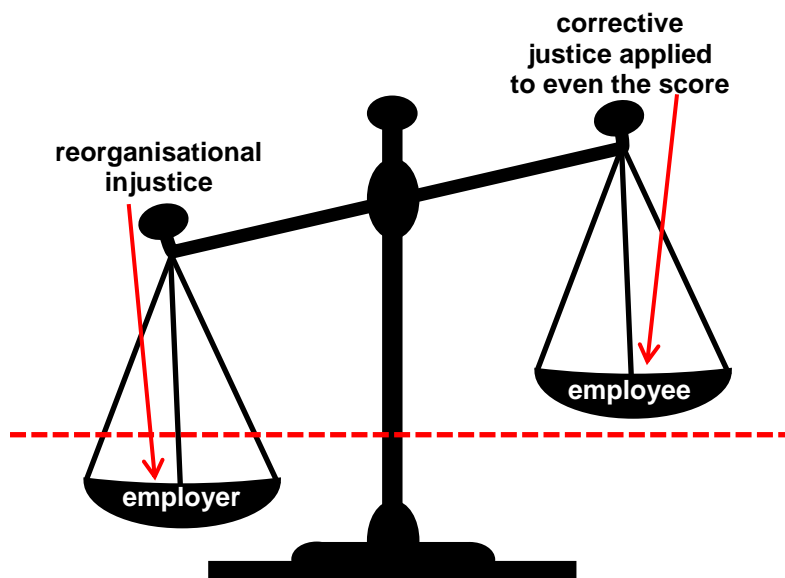


In general, the left scales pan reflects employee perceptions of an employer's behaviour and the right scales pan reflects perceptions of the behaviour of employees. As Figure 1 illustrates, the left scales pan displays a perceived state of justice which is experienced by employees in the course of reorganisations. A state of reorganisational justice can be described as a condition where employees feel being treated fairly in each of the four injustice dimensions; i.e. firstly prevailing feelings of distributive justice where workload and career prospects are handled fairly, secondly prevailing feelings of procedural justice where employees had the chance to raise their concerns about ongoing reorganisations and had a choice between different reorganisational options

affecting their workplace, thirdly prevailing perceptions of interactional justice in terms of adequate information and sensitive treatment received by an employee in the course of reorganisations and finally, moral justice; employees' beliefs that the employer has chosen the least harmful among feasible alternatives.

As a consequence of this balance, which is visualised as a red horizontal line, employees regards their overall investments and outcomes in the workplace experience as fair. Accordingly they do not construct a motivation to even the score by means of staff dishonesty, as opposed to a condition where justice is not in balance, which is referred to in Figure 2.

**Figure 2: Foul Play - Injustice Triggers a Motivation to Even the Score**



The second condition of justice is about a perceived imbalance of the scales, reflecting a condition in which employees feel that they do not get what they deserve and blame the employer of behaving unfairly in this regard; in other words: injustice. This condition will be conceptualised in depth as reorganisational injustice in this thesis, and constitutes a reversal of the aforementioned state of justice in the course of reorganisations, thus encompassing a loss of career prospects, not having voice and choice, inadequate information and insensitive treatment, and the belief that the management reorganised whilst not taking the needs of employees into account, to

name a few. As a whole, these particular characteristics of reorganisational injustice serve to measure a negative workplace experience in the research design of this study.

In the scenario of such a perceived state of reorganisational injustice, the research hypothesis of this thesis assumes that a rise in tolerant attitudes towards staff dishonesty forms a consequence. Hence, it is hypothesised that staff dishonesty can become an employee's perceived justified means to restore justice in this context; a motivation to even the score. This particular motivation to engage in staff dishonesty in order to even the score with an employer who is perceived of acting unfairly is referred to as corrective justice, and Figure 2 illustrates that an employee's behaviour, displayed in the right scales pan, can shift towards a motivation of corrective justice when justice in the workplace experience is out of balance. Thus, corrective justice finally constitutes a motivation where two wrongs make a right when the score, respectively the scale, is evened by the employee.

As the results and discussion chapter of this thesis will demonstrate, the research hypothesis could be verified and effects of up to 11.8 % of rises in tolerant attitudes towards staff dishonesty were measured when employees felt being treated unfairly in the course of reorganisations. Consequently, the verification of this study's theoretical approach and research hypothesis has theoretical and practical implications, which will be briefly sketched out in the subsequent section.

#### 1.3.6 Theoretical and Practical Implications

With reference to existing shortcomings in the literature on explanations for staff dishonesty, the research findings do have implications on a theoretical level as well. Opportunity focussed theories, like Rational Choice Theory (Cornish and Clarke, 1986) and Routine Activity Theory (Cohen and Felson, 1979) do not consider offender motivation itself as a situational variable, but as a function of perceived opportunities to commit crime. Nevertheless, this study's findings prove that a motivated offender is at least partly subject to situational stimuli like reorganisational injustice as well, which shows that corrective justice offers an approach to refer the concept of a motivated offender to situational triggers. Hence, the concept of corrective justice is

complementing - not contradicting - Routine Activity Theory, as it offers a conceptual approach to include an element into a situational context which was treated as a generic precondition for crime so far: the motivated offender.

Thus, overcoming a historical lack of attention towards the situational facets of offender motivation beyond opportunity challenges the traditional construction of criminality. In the past, criminality was continuously regarded as “relatively stable differences among individuals in their propensity to engage in criminal or equivalent acts” (Hirschi, 1986, p. 114). Vice versa, this study’s findings show that shifts in reorganisational injustice do prompt situational shifts in criminality, which finally contradicts a conceptualisation of criminality as a relatively stable personality trait. In this regard, 11.8 % of rises in tolerant attitudes towards staff dishonesty are related to the perceived severity of reorganisational injustice in the research setting, and more severe perceptions of reorganisational injustice in other settings may well trigger larger effect sizes in terms of corrective justice, which finally forms a concept depending on the situational context.

Moreover, the situational motivation of corrective justice implies that a prevailing morality which declares staff dishonesty as being wrong does not exist, but indicates the existence of conflicting moralities instead: what is wrong from an employer’s view can be perceived as right by employees. Accordingly, the concept of corrective justice is in conflict with Neutralisation Theory (Sykes and Matza, 1957), which assumes that offenders share a common set of moral beliefs which can be neutralised in order to commit dishonest acts. As opposed to neutralising the moral wrongfulness of one’s behaviour, corrective justice forms a scenario where offenders are aware that their behaviour is deviant from an employer’s perspective, but perceive it as a morally right answer to even the score with an employer acting unfairly. Hence, staff dishonesty becomes an act of justice in itself, corrective justice, which forms a motivation that is clearly separate from mere neutralisation.

Beyond these theoretical implications, the research findings have practical implications as well. Firstly, it was shown that an employee’s workplace experience in times of change can be conceptualised as reorganisational injustice, and that perceptions of distributive injustice, procedural injustice, interactional injustice and moral injustice

can be measured separately. Hence, these dimensions can be used to measure and tackle employees' fairness perceptions in the course of reorganisations. It will for example be shown that in particular the possibility to raise one's concerns and to be treated respectfully in the course of reorganisations are important for staff. Furthermore, it will be demonstrated that these staff expectations of fair treatment can be easily violated, even if a company follows applicable laws or procedures for formally fair reorganisations. On the other hand, these violations can be reduced or avoided, and it will be shown how employers can design perceived fair reorganisations in the best way possible.

In order to provide a broad overview on how the argument of this thesis is developed and leads, among other findings, to these conclusions, the next section will provide a frank description of the thesis's flow with reference to the chronology, purpose and main findings of the subsequent four chapters.

#### **1.4 Structure of the Present Study**

Following this chapter, Chapter Two provides an overview of the existing literature concerning the main foci of this study; staff dishonesty and reorganisational injustice. In this regard, both the context of staff dishonesty and existing explanations for staff dishonesty will be examined, and it will be concluded that the workplace experience was already identified as an important indicator of staff dishonesty, while a lack of attention towards continuous change and unfairness in the workplace experience exists nevertheless. Following the same logic, the second part of Chapter Two examines the context of – and explanations for – reorganisational injustice, and it will be concluded that the dimensions of distributive, procedural, interactional and moral injustice form an encompassing approach to measure a perceived unfair workplace experience in times of reorganisations, which is referred to as reorganisational injustice in this thesis.

Based on these insights, Chapter Three considers the most appropriate research design and compares existing possibilities to test the research hypothesis. In doing so, Chapter Three concludes that an online self-completion questionnaire forms the best

among available options to measure staff attitudes towards the perceived unfairness of reorganisations as a predictor variable, and attitudes towards staff dishonesty as an outcome variable. It will be shown that a self-completion questionnaire is a suitable tool to test the directional research hypothesis that reorganisational injustice leads to rises in tolerant attitudes towards staff dishonesty. Moreover, it will be demonstrated that the questionnaire feedback in terms of gender and age is in line with the demographical structure of the research setting, which demonstrates the generalisability and representativeness of the study's results. In this regard, each of the measured results reflects subjective perceptions of employees, as opposed to actual injustice in the course of reorganisations.

Having the subjective nature of justice versus injustice perceptions in mind, Chapter Four presents the research results. It will be shown that reorganisational injustice perceptions of employees provide reliable and consistent data, and that the same applies to the outcome variables measuring tolerance levels towards production deviance, incapable guardianship and perceptions of staff dishonesty as paying back. With reference to the research hypothesis, it will be demonstrated that each of the injustice dimensions predicts rises in tolerant attitudes towards staff dishonesty, and that a combination of the nine strongest predictor items is able to predict 11.8 % of rises in tolerant attitudes towards perceptions of staff dishonesty as paying back and incapable guardianship, which clearly verifies the research hypothesis.

Finally, Chapter Five discusses the research findings and argues that the four dimensions of reorganisational injustice provide an encompassing approach to measure employees' perceptions of an unfair workplace experience in times of reorganisations. Furthermore, Chapter Five concludes that reorganisational injustice predicts rises in tolerant attitudes towards staff dishonesty and hence delivers a situational explanation for intrinsic offender motivations beyond, but complementary to, situational opportunities for staff dishonesty. In this connection, it will be argued that such an employee's motivation to even the score forms an expression of corrective justice, and hence a set of moral convictions which is in conflict with the moral expectations of an employer. In this regard Chapter Five will also highlight the preventive potential of the concepts of reorganisational injustice and corrective justice, as the concepts offer an

approach to measure and shape injustice perceptions of employees and hence inform employers in the course of delivering fair reorganisations.

The journey to this point, however, requires an extensive assessment of the existing research on staff dishonesty and unfairness at the workplace, which will be covered in the subsequent Chapter Two.



## **Chapter Two: Literature Review**

With regard to the present study's hypothesis that staff perceptions of unfair change at the workplace lead to rises in tolerant attitudes towards staff dishonesty among employees, this chapter will set the scene for the key components implied: unfair change at the workplace as a predictor, and staff dishonesty as an outcome.

Focussing on these two components, the literature review starts with an analysis of the context and the concept of staff dishonesty. It will be argued that staff dishonesty has a considerable impact on business, and the first half of this chapter will pay particular attention to explanations for staff dishonesty. The research definition of staff dishonesty will encompass forms of property deviance which are less straightforward than theft, like the private use of company property, as well as forms of production deviance, like sick day abuse. Moreover, a lack of willingness to defend company property from being abused by others will be regarded as a form of staff dishonesty as well.

In connection with this understanding of staff dishonesty, four major approaches to explain staff dishonesty will be presented, encompassing firstly those considering staff dishonesty as a personality trait, secondly those considering it as a consequence of neutralisation techniques, thirdly those regarding staff dishonesty as a function of opportunities and finally approaches which interpret it as a consequence of an employee's negative workplace experience. Based on the assessment of these four approaches, the literature review will demonstrate several shortcomings in the existing literature on staff dishonesty, which are related to a lack of attention towards intrinsic offender motivation in general and changes in intrinsic offender motivation in particular. Moreover, it will be argued that a continuous focus on isolated, single change factors – like .e.g. pay cuts - forms another shortcoming. In this connection, a comprehensive framework to assess a condition of unfair change in the workplace experience was not conceptualised so far in order to measure its impact on staff dishonesty, and the significance of the extent and pace of change in a contemporary workplace experience was not considered adequately. Finally, it will also be illustrated that morality is frequently referred to when explanations for staff dishonesty are constructed, but not conceptualised as a decisive factor when the motivation to engage

in staff dishonesty is assessed, which forms another shortcoming in the existing literature.

Having these shortcomings in mind, the second half of this chapter will examine how employees construct fairness versus unfairness perceptions in the course of reorganisations; i.e. perceptions of whether reorganisations are fair or unfair, just or unjust, and whether they are necessary at all. In a first step, the Theory of Organisational Justice and its three dimensions of perceived fairness will be evaluated as a means to explain how employees make fairness judgements at work. In this regard, it will be shown that the construction of organisational fairness perceptions is suitable to explain the construction of organisational unfairness perceptions as well, as a lack of perceived fairness, or any deviation from an employee's expectations automatically lead to perceptions of unfairness. Thus treating justice and injustice as the ends of the same scale, the dimensions of Organisational Justice Theory will be examined as related to their potential to explain injustice perceptions at the workplace.

Forming the first dimension of injustice, distributive injustice addresses disturbances in the exchange ratio between an employee and an employer, like giving more and receiving less in the course of reorganisations. Constituting the second dimension, procedural injustice will be introduced as an employee's perceived lack of voice and choice in the course of reorganisations, and as a third dimension, interactional injustice covers a state where employees feel being uninformed and disrespected in the course of organisational change. Beyond these three dimensions of reorganisational injustice, this thesis will argue that perceptions of immoral reorganisations form a further dimension of reorganisational injustice, where employees feel that the employer could and should have chosen an alternative way to reorganise which is less harmful for employees.

The section concludes that the four dimensions of injustice offer a comprehensive approach to examine perceived unfair change in an employee's workplace experience, which is referred to as reorganisational injustice in this thesis. In doing so, the present study conceptualises the four dimensions of reorganisational injustice as a situational predictor of staff dishonesty. Hence, reorganisational injustice provides a first comprehensive conceptual framework to measure perceived unfair

change in the workplace experience on the part of employees, and the concept of reorganisational injustice is furthermore used to test such a condition of perceived unfairness as a situational trigger of rises in tolerant attitudes towards staff dishonesty. Accordingly, a situational intrinsic offender motivation which is based on perceptions of immoral change addresses each of the aforementioned shortcomings in the existing literature on staff dishonesty.

Finally, particular attention will be devoted to explanations of staff dishonesty as a consequence of reorganisational injustice. It will be argued that reorganisational injustice may result in perceptions of staff dishonesty as corrective justice, which forms a situational motivation to engage in staff dishonesty in order to even the score against an employer which is found guilty of reorganisational injustice on the part of employees.

As a first step, the context of staff dishonesty and the approach chosen to provide a conceptual clarification of staff dishonesty will be described in the next section.

## **2.1 The Context of Staff Dishonesty**

Dishonesty forms a widespread phenomenon and beyond dishonest staff, citizens and consumers in the United Kingdom and Germany were found to regularly engage in “crimes of everyday life” (Karstedt and Farrell, 2006, p.1011). The study revealed that 64% of the research participants “had engaged in illegal or “shady” practices” (Karstedt and Farrell, 2006, p.1022) like avoiding VAT payments or engaging in insurance fraud. Accordingly, staff forms only a sub-group displaying dishonest behaviour, and citizens and consumers can be perceived as a scope which covers entire societies.

In line with these findings on dishonesty in the general population, another series of studies proved a general tendency “to benefit from cheating” (Ariely, 2013, p. 237) among research participants which tended to make a personal profit by smaller exaggerations, while a few participants exploited given opportunities as much as possible. Hence, these findings demonstrate that “many people cheat just a little when

given the opportunity (Ariely, 2013, p.27). Furthermore, the study provides evidence that cheating is not bound to particular cultures or nationalities, but relates to a “basic human capacity to be morally flexible and reframe situations” (Ariely, 2013, p. 242) in order to maintain a positive self-image in the course of offending - which finally reflects a human inclination to use neutralisation techniques.

In this regard, the reference to a global human inclination towards dishonesty is also linked to the effects of globalisation “as the manifold process of increasing transnational interconnectedness of societies” (Franko Aas, 2013, p.24). One of the effects of this interconnectedness is about the “globalization of media and consumer culture” (Franko Aas, 2013, p.24), which increases societal tensions between privileged and deprived citizens, leading to “increasing feelings of relative deprivation, social exclusion, disintegration of communal life and value systems” (Franko Aas, 2013, p.25) among the latter. Thus, knowledge about being deprived whilst not being able to afford a visible better lifestyle forms a criminogenic facet of globalisation. This deprivation affects the populations of Western industries as well, which either experience “Social polarizations...between highly paid knowledge workers and low-paid industrial and service professions” (Franko Aas, 2013, p.15) or situations where “blue-collar workers in the industrialized North...find themselves out-competed by far cheaper labour forces in the developing world” (Franko Aas, 2013, p.14). Altogether, this shows that dishonesty occurs at a societal level, and not only with reference to staff dishonesty. Nevertheless, societal changes related to globalisation do have an impact on staff and employment conditions as well, which makes it even more significant to consider the extent and nature of staff dishonesty in times of change.

In order to introduce staff dishonesty as the key concept of the thesis, this section will first describe the prevalence and thereby the size of the problem of staff dishonesty in the private sector. Second, the variety of existing perceptions and definitions of staff dishonesty will be taken into consideration and used to derive the research definition of staff dishonesty. The subsequent focus of the section explores the limitations and contributions of the main approaches explaining why staff dishonesty occurs; encompassing approaches dealing with motivation, neutralisation,

opportunity, workplace organisation, workplace norms and attitudes, and finally unfairness in the workplace experience itself.

### 2.1.1 Prevalence of Staff Dishonesty

Staff dishonesty has a long history, with workers in a papyrus factory in Egypt, in 1160 B.C. being reported to have betrayed their employer by selling papyrus to Nile shippers in order to make a personal profit (Peet, 1924). More than 3,000 years later, Greenberg (1998) notes that employee theft is the most frequent and damaging form of staff dishonesty, and Beck and Peacock (2009) describe internal theft as a major form of shrinkage in particular in the retail sector. Lipman and McGraw (1988) estimate that 75% of all employees steal at least once at work. In four surveys between 1991 and 1994, Beck and Willis (1995) found that 45% of retail staff indicated that some fellow employees steal money, and 57% reported that some fellow employees steal goods. Greenberg and Barling (1996) note that annual losses due to employee theft in the USA are higher than US \$ 40 billion, hence being ten times higher than the costs of street crime. With reference to staff dishonesty in the form of employee theft, the most well researched setting is the retail sector where a multitude of annual studies exists in Western industries, both with a national and an international scope.

A large survey of 29 retailers with 11,000 stores and nearly two million employees was conducted in the United States and discovered that more than 780,000 employees (39%) were detected as having engaged in employee theft, and about 40% of staff admitted the temptation to steal, while another 20% admitted the theft of cash (Halverson, 1998). Accordingly, the importance of the phenomenon of staff dishonesty is confirmed by this study, and further studies underline these findings as well. Drawing data from 100 retailers, the 2015 National Retail Security Survey in the United States revealed that employee theft was thought to account for 34.5%, while shoplifting caused 38% of the overall shrinkage (NRSS, 2015). The Shrinkage rate was 1.38% and summed up to US\$ 44.02 billion in annual loss, and an average damage of US\$ 1,547 was attributed to a dishonest employee case.

A comparatively lower ratio of employee theft was found in a study in the UK. The British Retail Consortium's annual Retail Crime Survey in 2015 revealed that employee theft accounted for 6% of retail crime by direct cost, compared with customer theft scoring 56.3%, while further damage was caused by robbery, burglary, fraud and criminal damage (British Retail Consortium, 2015). The average cost per employee theft incident constitutes £1,114 in 2014-2015, with a rate of 8.6 employee thefts per 1,000 employees, and in comparison, employee theft was three times as high as the average costs per customer theft incident (British Retail Consortium, 2015). These figures show that employee theft in the retail sector is a widespread phenomenon which causes high losses. This is not to say that other sectors are free from employee theft, and a survey of the British Chamber of Commerce notes that "Theft by an employee affects proportionally more...the hotel and restaurant sector" (British Chamber of Commerce, 2008, p. 9). Furthermore, the Crime Victimization Survey offers insights into employee theft across the wholesale, retail and construction sector; once more with the highest prevalence of staff dishonesty in the wholesale and retail sector, where 39,000 thefts by employees were reported within 12 months, accompanied by a high grey zone of 456,000 "thefts by unknown persons" (Home Office, 2016, p.3).

High theft rates in the retail sector suggest that the availability of small-scale, high value goods which are useful in everyday life make the retail sector crime prone in particular. Nevertheless, the threat of employee theft can be transferred to other settings beyond the retail sector, where other kinds of targets and opportunities exist. Hollinger and Clark (1982b) studied employee theft in retail, hospital and manufacturing settings by the use of anonymous questionnaires. The proportion of respondents admitting to be involved in theft was high; about 35% in the retail setting, about 33% in the hospital setting and about 28% in the manufacturing setting (Hollinger and Clark, 1982b). Further studies on staff dishonesty were undertaken in settings as different as hotel bars (Gill, 1994), hospitals (Hollinger and Clark, 1982b), bakeries (Ditton, 1977), dock workers (Mars, 1982) and factories (Horning, 1970; Greenberg, 1990), to name a few.

This broad scope shows that staff dishonesty occurs in various occupational settings, and Vardi and Weitz "assume that most, if not all, members of work organizations, throughout their employment, engage in some form of misbehavior

related to their jobs, albeit in varying degrees of frequency and intensity and for different reasons” (2004, pp. xvi-xvii). Accordingly, the research setting of this thesis, a company in the Information and Communications Technology (ICT) sector, constitutes an additional sector to test the nature and extent of staff dishonesty.

While employee theft in the retail sector forms an example of a delinquent act that is widely accepted as staff dishonesty, other forms of misbehaviour exist without a widely shared agreement of being within the boundaries of staff dishonesty. In this respect, it has to be clarified what staff dishonesty in itself is about.

### 2.1.2 Understanding Staff Dishonesty

This section will address the challenge of defining staff dishonesty and present key developments and definitions in the area of staff dishonesty. In doing so, the characteristics of these definitions will be examined in order to extract boundaries for the definition of staff dishonesty to be used in this research.

With differences in foci and definitions, the existing literature in the field of staff dishonesty uses several synonyms, like antisocial behaviour (Giacalone and Greenberg, 1997), blue-collar theft and pilferage (Horning, 1970), fiddling (Gill, 1994), counterproductive work behaviour (Conlon, Meyer and Nowakowski, 2005) or organisational misbehaviour (Vardi and Weitz, 2004). This shows that the challenge of defining staff dishonesty starts with the existence of various terms covering what is referred to as staff dishonesty in this thesis.

An early concept in the history of the study of staff dishonesty is white collar crime. Sutherland defined white collar crime as “crime committed by a person of respectability and high social status in the course of his occupation” (1949, p. 9). White collar crime was later complemented by the concept of blue-collar theft, “the illegal or unauthorized utilization of facilities or removal and conversion to one’s own use of company property or personal property located on the plant premises by nonsalaried personnel employed in the plant” (Horning, 1970, p. 48). These early clusters of definitions of staff dishonesty refer to a separation of offender types, and the social or hierarchical class of the offender was the main criterion of differentiation.

The clustering of staff dishonesty in occupational crime and corporate crime refers to a differentiation of the beneficiary. Occupational crime is described as a criminal act of an employee or a group of employees for personal gain (Clinard and Quinney, 1967; Colman, 1985). Complementary, corporate crime is described as a criminal act in favour of the company (Horning, 1970). With a look at the victim, a subdivision of occupational crime was created by Turner and Stevenson (1993), who differentiated between occupational crime against co-workers and occupational crime against the employer. Felson and Boba (2010) clustered staff dishonesty as related to five different victims: employees; the public; the host organisation; other organisations; and finally customers, clients or patients. Having these clusters of victims in mind, the research definition of staff dishonesty can be reduced to the scenario of occupational crime damaging exclusively the employer, as the research hypothesis focuses on self-benefitting behaviour of employees in order to even the score with an employer which is perceived to act unfairly.

Related to the variety of possibly dishonest acts, a further development in the definition of staff dishonesty was the broad clustering of occupational crime into the categories of property deviance and production deviance (Hollinger and Clark, 1982b), and these two concepts will now be explained in greater detail. Starting with the latter, production deviance encompasses a violation of “the formally proscribed norms delineating the minimal quality and quantity of work to be accomplished” (Hollinger and Clark, 1982a, pp. 333-334). A violation of norms implies intent, and sick day abuse forms an example of intentional and deceptive production deviance, or production misbehaviour (Vardi and Weitz, 2004). This separation of property and production deviance informs the understanding of staff dishonesty within this thesis, as both forms of deviance are applicable to a private sector company as a research setting.

Vardi and Weitz note that “the most prevalent production-related misbehavior is the physical as well as the psychological absence or withdrawal from work” (2004, p. 78). A study by the London House & Food Marketing Institute found that 29% of the respondents admitted the abuse of sick days (1995). Vardi and Weitz state that while “withdrawal behavior has been extensively documented and researched; on the other hand, relatively little is known about the intentions underlying the choice to be absent”



(2004, p. 79). Accordingly, production deviance forms a confirmed and widespread form of staff dishonesty.

Moreover, Murphy argues that there is an important link between production deviance and dishonesty, and he separates occasional withdrawals, based on personal problems or stress, from “habitual patterns of carelessness” (1993, p. 16). Noting that only the latter form of production deviance is perceived as deviant in his research, he points out that employees may have a perception of production deviance as wrong, but not as dishonest. This variety in the staff’s perception suggests that different levels of tolerance exist, which depend both on the frequency of violations and the reasons triggering the violations.

The second dimension, property deviance, encompasses the misappropriation or damage of physical company assets and is defined as “those instances where employees acquire or damage the tangible property or assets of the work organization without authorization” (Hollinger and Clark, 1982a, p. 333). In this regard, the most researched form of property deviance covers the acquisition of company property, employee theft. Employee theft is defined “as a nonviolent form of property deviance toward a company committed by an employee of that company for personal gain” (Greenberg and Scott, 1996, p. 111). This definition highlights nonviolent behaviour, directed against the employer for personal gain, but lacks to detail what the act in itself is about. A more detailed definition describes employee theft as “any unauthorised appropriation of company property by employees either for one’s own use or for sale to another. It includes, but is not limited to, the removal of products, supplies, materials, funds, data, information, or intellectual property” (Greenberg, 1995, p. 154). A key part of this definition is the unauthorised appropriation or use of company property, which suggests that an appropriation can also take place temporarily, like for example using a company projector during leisure time at the weekend and bringing the device back on the Monday. Accordingly, temporarily using company assets for private purposes is regarded as a form of property deviance as well.

A broader understanding focussing on the offender’s benefit is mirrored in the definition of employee theft as a “rational crime of opportunity, done as an intentional act that involves a breach of trust, resulting in a direct economic benefit to the actor,

against the employing organization, within varying degrees of localized tolerance” (National Council on Crime and Delinquency, 1975, quoted in Vardi and Weitz, 2004, p. 102). This definition reflects the assumption that employee theft is triggered by opportunity, and indicates that varying degrees of tolerance exist like in the case of production deviance. Moreover, the definition allows the conclusion that tolerance is not only related to different acts, but also to different locations; an act which is not tolerated in one setting can be acceptable in another setting. Furthermore, the definition highlights the importance of an intentional act, an intentional breach of trust on the part of an employee.

The concept of intent is also examined in the field of organisational psychology, where organisational misbehaviour “is defined as acts in the workplace that are done intentionally and constitute a violation of rules pertaining to such behaviors” (Vardi and Weitz, 2004, p. 3). Besides a violation of defined rules, intent is a focal node of the definition of organisational misbehaviour, as opposed to accidental damage which is a result of “errors, mistakes, or even unconscious and unintended negligence” (Vardi and Weitz, 2004, p. 30). Leatherwood and Spector define employee misconduct as “employee decisions to pursue self-interest” (1991, p. 553), hence linking intent with the goal to make a personal profit. This suggests that intent is a valuable characteristic to narrow down what falls into the research definition of staff dishonesty.

Finally, a key concept related to staff dishonesty is dishonesty itself, and lies or deception can be seen as being the opposite of honesty. Murphy points out that intent and deception are key characteristics of lies, and that lies can either manifest themselves through the stating of wrong information or through the holding back of relevant information (1993). This suggests that both intent and deception are helpful characteristics to border staff dishonesty from unintentional acts like mistakes, negligence or openly shown misbehaviour as a form of protest. Accordingly, intentional and deceptive behaviour with the aim to gain a personal profit will be used as a key characteristic of staff dishonesty within this thesis. In this context, intentional and deceptive acts can either relate to a breach of law, like theft, or to a breach of company rules, like the private use of company property. The reference to company rules, in turn, poses a particular challenge for a common agreement on the boundaries of staff

dishonesty, as will be shown in the following section.

### 2.1.3 Blurred Boundaries of Staff Dishonesty

The difficulty of a common understanding of the boundaries of staff dishonesty can be attributed partly to the variety of criteria and dimensions available to establish a border between staff dishonesty and other forms of perceived misbehaviour, which are then declared as antisocial, unproductive, unethical or self-destructive (Giacalone and Greenberg, 1997; Vardi and Weitz, 2004). Consequentially, a problem of a common understanding of staff dishonesty refers to the large scope of potentially dishonest acts, which is inherent in different definitions.

Vardi and Weitzs' (2004) reference towards a violation of company rules can be seen as a particular feature of a grey area. Company rules differ from company to company, and formally dishonest acts in one company can be formally allowed in another company. Company rules can even differ among hierarchical levels in one company, such as allowing managers to use company property for private purposes, but forbidding other more junior employees to do so. Equally, regional differences in company rules regulating the use of company property and labour time, and the variety of differences in their application to different hierarchical levels suggest that a common agreement on the boundaries of staff dishonesty is much more complex than in the case of national laws, which apply to all kinds of companies and all kinds of hierarchic levels.

Beyond the scope of the law, company rules regulate behaviour at the workplace which is not necessarily in the sphere of crime, like deliberately working slowly. Therefore, staff dishonesty in terms of organisational misbehaviour through rule breaking can be “considered as a facet of job performance” (Vardi and Weitz, 2004, p. 77). If staff dishonesty is defined as a violation of company rules, misbehaviour can even take the form of a productive workaholic, who frequently works longer than the allowed daily working time.

Furthermore, it has to be taken into consideration that national laws have an impact on the drawing up of the boundaries of staff dishonesty, in particular those forms

of dishonesty which are also subject to legal definitions, like theft, burglary and fraud, which are described in penal or criminal codes (Bundesministerium für Justiz und Verbraucherschutz, 2015). In general, this implies that forms of property deviance, like employee theft, are more likely to be accepted as inappropriate behaviour among staff than forms of production deviance. Property deviance in terms of theft, for example, is subject to legal definitions and hence identical with or close to illegal behaviour.

Production deviance, in turn, is subject to formally prescribed company rules which may even be in conflict with the informal rules among employees (Cools, 1991; Ditton, 1977). Moreover, this thesis argues that the efficiency and concentration of employees at work is related to several characteristics beyond intentional behaviour, like e.g. health, the absence of problems in private life or an individual's capability of working slower or faster. Hence, it is more difficult to judge whether the productivity of an employee is purposively or deceptively lower than it should be, whereas it is easier to judge that the theft of company property occurred intentionally. Nevertheless, the existence of intentional and deceptive forms of production deviance allows the conclusion that a common understanding of the dishonest nature of some acts, like sick day abuse, exists (Vardi and Weitz, 2004).

#### 2.1.4 Defining Staff Dishonesty

Taking the variety of possible demarcations of staff dishonesty into account, the research definition of staff dishonesty is reduced to intentional, deceptive and non-violent acts at the expense of the employer. The particular acts included within the areas of property and production deviance are:

- theft;
- unauthorised use of company property for private purposes;
- sick day abuse;
- unauthorised use of office communication means for private purposes, and
- an unwillingness to exercise social control in terms of telling or acting on dishonest staff.

As related to the private use of office communication means, it is acknowledged that an overlap between property deviance and production deviance exists. Beyond property and production deviance, a further particular breach of company rules is related to violations of the obligation to protect the company from being abused by others, including fellow employees. In this regard, the research definition of staff dishonesty also includes an omission, where employees act as incapable guardians.

Vice versa, potential violent forms of property deviance, like sabotage or vandalism are not in the scope of the research definition, because there is no history of internal sabotage and vandalism in the research setting.

So far, the literature review has dealt with the widespread prevalence of staff dishonesty in different sectors and a variety of approaches to set boundaries to the concept of staff dishonesty. Having defined what constitutes staff dishonesty in the context of this thesis, the next section will address approaches to explain why staff dishonesty takes place.

## **2.2 Explanations for Staff Dishonesty**

Research has evaluated different variables in order to explain why employees engage in dishonest acts against their employers, and the existing approaches can broadly be clustered into four areas:

- those primarily considering offender motivation as a personality trait;
- approaches dealing with neutralisation;
- approaches focussing on opportunity and workplace norms as a determinant of offender motivation; and finally
- approaches which interpret staff dishonesty as a consequence of an employee's negative workplace experience.

Accordingly, the subsequent sections will address these approaches, and the first section focuses on offender motivation in terms of a propensity to offend.

### 2.2.1 The Propensity to Offend

Having reorganisational injustice as a potential predictor of staff dishonesty in mind, an emphasis on a situational explanation of offender motivation becomes evident. Hence, the present study is in conflict with approaches which treat criminality as a personality trait, as such approaches refer to a motivation which is finally inherent in terms of an offender's intrinsic decision making, and do not consider a reference to situational stimuli.

A succinct approach to explain why crime occurs is the hypothesis that some humans are criminal by nature, whereas others are not, and the underlying assumption that criminality is something which is inherent and within an offender has a powerful influence even in the contemporary literature. Hirschi defines criminality as “relatively stable differences among individuals in their propensity to engage in criminal or equivalent acts” (1986, p. 114). The reference to stable differences among humans forms the core content of this definition and suggests that criminality is finally composed of human's inborn differences in the propensity to offend. Likewise, Clarke and Cornish define criminality as “criminal motivations – deep rooted inclinations or dispositions to commit crime” (2001, p. 33), hence offering another definition where an individual's nature is addressed in terms of a deep rooted inclination or disposition which finally separates offenders from non-offenders. When the reference towards crime and criminal acts is excluded, these definitions of criminality allow the conclusion that they refer to an individual's personality as a determinant.

The Oxford English Dictionary defines personality as “the qualities that form a person's character” (2012, p. 535). Research in the field of organisational psychology refers to such qualities using the concept of personality traits, defined as “inner structures directing an individual's behavior in a relatively stable and typical manner” (Vardi and Weitz, 2004, p. 118), hence emphasising the relatively stable character of an individual's personality. With reference to the inner structures which finally constitute an individual's personality, research in the domain of organisational psychology has reached an agreement on five basic dimensions of human personality: extroversion, agreeableness, neuroticism, conscientiousness and openness (Vardi and Weitz, 2004). A disposition to commit crime, however, is not in the focus of contemporary research in

the field of organisational psychology. Nevertheless, studies have addressed links between dimensions of personality and staff dishonesty, and low self-esteem was found to be positively related to counterproductive behaviour (Raelin, 1994). Moreover, integrity tests addressing personality traits are used for the purpose of pre-employment screenings. These tests either take the form of an overt testing of honesty related attitudes, like the Reid Report (Ash, 1971), or a direct focus on personality traits like low impulse control and low self-consciousness (Cunningham, Wong and Barbee, 1994), which are assumed to be linked to staff dishonesty. Besides these personality related approaches, research on levels of criminality exists as well.

Tilley assumes that “varying levels of crime readiness” (1997, p. 105) exist, and argues that individuals differ in their preparedness to break rules. Accordingly, crime readiness is clustered on a five point scale from very low to very high individual crime readiness, labelled prig, temptable, opportunity taker, opportunity seeker and compulsive offender (Tilley, 1997). This crime readiness continuum informs the evaluation of offender motivation because it offers a scale with five segments instead of the perception that an offender is either motivated or not. Tilley furthermore suggests that guardianship too can be understood as a continuum of “guardians with greater or lesser capability” (1997, p. 101), hence supporting an additional focus on the strength of social control and capable guardianship in the research definition of staff dishonesty. Moreover, Tilley argues that “crime intentions or readiness for crime commission choices will have been generated by the more distal circumstances of those involved” (1997, p. 106), and refers to variations in the situational, social, individual and structural context of an offenders decision making in a crime event.

Thus, a situational and social context is considered as well, as opposed to a reduced focus on personality traits. Furthermore, this reference highlights the importance of change, or variations, in the external context of an offender’s decision making. Beyond this, external factors like the social context are linked to crime readiness, hence being a determinant which shapes the decision to offend. This allows the conclusion that even if criminality is related to a relatively stable internal predisposition, not only the final decision to offend is shaped by a variety of external factors, but the motivation to offend as well (Tilley, 1997), thus suggesting that the

motivation to offend can at least shift to a slightly higher or lower inclination to offend. The assumption that criminal motivations are not stable is also supported by Greenberg, who differentiates between determined offenders and “those whose latitude of acceptable behavior has grown to unacceptable proportions” (1997, p. 101) in order to argue that the latter can be deterred by clear pronouncements that theft is not tolerated.

In hindsight, approaches to explain offender motivation as a personality trait lack to provide evidence, and rather form a hypothesis which can hardly be verified or falsified - the literature on criminality does not provide empirical evidence for a causal relationship with personality or personality traits. Nevertheless, contemporary definitions of criminality indicate that an individual’s propensity, inclination or disposition to commit crime is stable or relatively stable, as explicitly indicated in the previous definitions of criminality (Hirschi, 1986; Clarke and Cornish, 2001), which implies an explanation for existing shortcomings concerning situational effects on intrinsic offender motivation. At least, the personality related approaches to explain criminality can be seen as a barrier to acknowledge intrinsic situational stimuli at all, although shifts in criminality are kept in mind (Greenberg, 1997; Tilley, 1997).

Accordingly, there is no evidence which contradicts the present study’s consideration of intrinsic situational criminality, and the subsequent sections will focus on existing approaches which examine situational motivations to engage in staff dishonesty. In this context, one approach to explain the occurrence of staff dishonesty focuses on factors which are partly inherent in an offender’s mind as well and deals with neutralisation techniques and rationalisation.

### 2.2.2 When Two Wrongs Make a Right

Sykes and Matza (1957) argue that an offender is able to commit a criminal act despite having a moral commitment to conventional behaviour. The researchers explain this antagonism by the use of several techniques of neutralisation, which enable an offender to engage in deviant acts and still hold a non-deviant self-concept. Maruna and Copes emphasise that neutralisations “are learned patterns of thought that are prevalent in society and do not appear spontaneously to individuals” (2005, p. 297). This suggests



that neutralisation can manifest itself in the form of patterns of thought among employees as well.

The first of five techniques of neutralisation identified by Sykes and Matza is the denial of responsibility. In this scenario, offenders recognise their deviance from laws or company rules, but claim not to be responsible for it. Related to staff dishonesty, employees could use the excuse that peer pressure urges them to take part in dishonest acts. Not telling on internal offenders can be an informal rule among employees as well, based on work group norms which override company rules and allow employees to normalise their behaviour, thereby externalising the responsibility for their individual deviance. Moreover, studies revealed that superiors occasionally or systematically allow employees abusive behaviour as a kind of extra reward (Dalton, 1959; Ditton, 1977), which suggests that superiors are perceived as taking the responsibility for the deviant act as well in these cases.

The second technique is a denial of injury. In this scenario, offenders recognise the deviant nature of their behaviour, but claim not to cause any damage. In a workplace environment, this excuse can take many forms. An employee might use the neutraliser that the company is insured or that the deviant act is so small that the company will never realise it. An approach complementing the denial of injury is the concept of uncertain ownership (Horning, 1970). Horning found that workers in a factory differentiated between items clearly owned by the employer or fellow employees, and items of perceived unknown ownership, usually based on perceived little value, like screws, nails or scrap parts. These findings underline the importance of work group norms as an indicator and trigger of neutralisation techniques. Moreover, the mere size of a company has been examined as a facilitator of neutralisation as well. Smigel (1970) found that large companies are crime prone in general, because they are perceived as being able to afford some losses, hence referring to an attitude which can be explained by the denial of injury.

Another finding is that employees perceive large companies as impersonal and that employees in large companies tend to have feelings of weakness or being cheated (Smigel, 1970), which supports the denial of the existence of a victim, the third technique of neutralisation. In this scenario, an offender perceives the victim either to

suffer no harm or to deserve the offensive behaviour. The perception that a victim suffers no harm can also occur “if the victim is absent, unknown or abstract” (Maruna and Copes, 2005, p. 233), and the latter applies to a large company which is perceived as impersonal. Moreover, an employee could offend as a kind of retaliation against perceived harmful behaviour on the part of the employer, hence changing roles and perceiving the employer to be the offender while the employee is the victim.

The fourth technique of neutralisation is the condemnation of the condemner. In this case, the offender denies the ruling authority the right to label certain forms of behaviour as wrong. It is not the potential victim which is denied, but the criminality of the offensive behaviour. At work, this neutraliser could be applied towards the breaking of burdensome company rules in general, and to adverse changes in company rules in particular. Moreover, variations in the implementation of company rules can attract neutralisation as well, and the private use of company property, which is not allowed for more junior employees, but for managers, forms an example in this context.

Finally, the fifth neutraliser touches upon excuses by appeal to higher loyalties. In this case, the offender believes in values which are superior to existing laws or company rules. Concerning staff dishonesty, higher loyalties could be linked to the goal to alleviate financial problems in the family of an employee. This is not to say that higher loyalties are necessarily bound to the support of others, and gambling, debts, drug addiction or expensive hobbies (Duffin, Gill and Taylor, 2006) can lead to financial needs beyond the salary as well, hence motivating an employee to engage in dishonest acts to obtain additional financial means (Greenberg and Barling, 1996).

This approach is in line with Merton’s Strain Theory, which suggests that people with a material need have a higher inclination to engage in dishonest acts (1938). Although material needs are a potentially critical factor, it has been found that staff dishonesty is committed by employees with high incomes as well, and the concept of white collar crime with its focus on offenders at a management level forms a cluster of its own (Sutherland, 1949). Altogether, it appears worthwhile to treat material needs as one critical factor among others, but not as the all-encompassing explanation it constituted in the first half of the last century, where staff dishonesty was perceived as a phenomenon related to the poor factory worker (Sutherland, 1949). Thus, material

needs provide a possible neutralisation scenario where higher values are superior to laws or company rules.

In this connection, a further source of conflicting values which bear the potential to override company rules was already examined; workforce attitudes (Mars, 1982), and this thesis argues that workforce attitudes can shape the willingness to engage in capable guardianship as well. In the context of guardianship as social control, employees can also appeal to higher loyalties in terms of values which are superior to an employer's expectation that employees should be capable guardians of company property. In the scenario of a fellow employee who is observed in theft of company property, the witnessing employee could perceive telling on colleagues as even more wrong than theft. Sykes and Matza themselves invite future research to examine "the internal structure of techniques of neutralization, as a system of beliefs and attitudes, and its relationship to various types of delinquent behavior" (1957, p. 670), and several studies address and underline the effect of neutralisation techniques on staff dishonesty. Sharma notes that a

major characteristic of occupational crime is the way in which the offender conceives of himself. Since the offences take place in connection with a legitimate occupation and the offender generally regards himself as a respectable citizen, he does not regard himself as a criminal. At most he regards himself as a "lawbreaker" (1998, p. 25)

Accordingly, Neutralisation Theory provides an explanation for staff dishonesty by means of several techniques to neutralise the deviant nature of an offence. In particular the denial of the victim, which includes perceptions that the employer deserves to be punished, supports the research hypothesis of this thesis, which assumes that staff dishonesty can be paying back for perceived unfair treatment. Furthermore, Neutralisation Theory provides a link between an offenders intrinsic decision making; i.e. considerations of morality, and situational triggers which may support such decision making. Neutralisation Theory informs the present study's approach not only with a strong reference towards morality, respectively neutralised moral commitment to conventional behaviour, but also with a combined link towards situational external

stimuli; it is the employer which is perceived to deserve punishment and does not constitute a victim of staff dishonesty.

In this regard, a link between neutralisation and the importance of supervision by fellow employees suggests that neutralisation does not only have a high impact on offender motivation, but also on the decreased risk of detection and punishment when fellow employees act as incapable guardians. Hence, increased incapable guardianship affects the quality of an opportunity as well, and the importance of opportunities as an explanation of staff dishonesty will be discussed in the next section.

### 2.2.3 Opportunity Makes the Thief

A further approach to explain why staff dishonesty occurs perceives offender motivation as a direct function of opportunity, thus focussing on situational stimuli without a reference to morality or an offender's intrinsic decision making. Accordingly, opportunity related approaches argue that some employees steal because their employment offers opportunities to engage in property or production deviance.

Rational Choice Theory is closely related to opportunity and focuses on the situational decision making process; a potential offender's making of "quick choices" (Felson, 2002, p. 37) which lead to the perpetration of a dishonest act, committed by offenders making decisions related to the issues of risk, effort and reward (Clarke and Cornish, 2001) in a particular situation. Hence, Rational Choice Theory assumes a given predisposition to offend on the part of some employees, which cannot resist from exploiting the perceived opportunities available at work. In line with the assumption of a born offender, Rational Choice Theory assumes that the motivation to offend is inherent in some employees and focuses on the analysis of factors related to opportunity.

The theory argues that the major determinants in the offender's decision making process are that "offenders seek to benefit themselves by their criminal behavior" (Cornish and Clarke, 1986, p. 1) by means of "crimes that offer immediate gratification, that require little effort to complete, and that expose them to scant risk of detection and arrest" (Lilly, Cullen and Ball, 2011, p. 329). A study by Bamfield indicates that the

perceived ease of an offence, the perceived risk of detection and the perceived risk of punishment are important variables shaping attitudes towards employee theft (1998). It appears to be worthwhile to consider Rational Choice Theory's perception of opportunity as an important perspective, or set of critical factors when it comes to a causal evaluation of staff dishonesty. Nevertheless, the theory cannot be all-encompassing as it does not explain what deters non-offenders from exploiting good opportunities. Offender motivation and criminality are not challenged, and rather treated as an obscure part of an individual's personality which is either there or not. Beyond the existence and the underlying reasons for changes in the criminality of employees, Rational Choice Theory particularly lacks the ability to take situational factors like morality and workplace ethics into consideration.

In this regard, Routine Activity Theory offers a more detailed perception of opportunities and hypothesises that a criminal act minimally requires three factors which have to converge in time and space in order to occur; a motivated offender, the presence of a suitable target and the absence of a capable guardian (Cohen and Felson, 1979). Felson later added the concept of an intimate handler, a guardian related to the offender, like a friend or parent who is able to demotivate the offender, and argues that the demotivation is applied to a particular situation where an offender is about to offend (1986). In this context, the reference to a particular situation appears to be artificially limited in its scope. The concept of an intimate handler implies that for example parents are not only shaping the motivation of an offender in a situational sense, but act, above all, as a moral authority which continuously sets norms addressing what can be done and what should not be done.

Applied to a workplace setting, fellow employees can serve as an intimate handler because of their participation in a social group which determines acceptable and unacceptable behaviour at work by means of informal workplace norms (Mullins, 2005). This in turn suggests that the concept of an intimate handler can be used to integrate morality, which is defined as "principles concerning the difference between right and wrong" (Oxford English Dictionary, 2012, p. 468), and suggests that a prevailing morality in the workplace is a force shaping or even determining an offender's predisposition or preparedness to offend beyond the situational stimulus of a

perceived good opportunity. Applied to a workplace setting, the concept of an intimate handler implies that workplace norms as well as staffs' shared attitudes and beliefs constitute an expression of morality, which can either facilitate or weaken an employee's motivation to offend.

Besides the concepts of a motivated offender and an intimate handler, Routine Activity Theory divides the quality of an opportunity to offend into two further elements; suitable targets and the absence of capable guardians. Both time and physical items can form a suitable target in this concern, and capable guardians might be humans, such as security managers, or technical like CCTV and swipe-card access log files. In a company environment in particular, fellow employees can serve as capable guardians, and capable guardianship can accordingly take place in the form of social control among staff. This thesis argues that incapable guardianship, in turn, is likely to be shaped by moral considerations in two ways. First, workplace norms can define what constitutes unacceptable behaviour of individual employees, and second, they can define what forms the appropriate response when fellow employees take note of an offence (Mars, 1982). This suggests that responses in terms of social control can for example take place in the form of whistle-blowing, reports to the management, informing other employees, or turning a blind eye. Thus, Routine Activity Theory takes morality and workplace ethics into account.

The notion that the four factors of Routine Activity Theory have to converge in time and space stresses the importance of the routine activities of ordinary people in every-day life. As most people spend a large part of their lifetime at work, Routine Activity Theory is suitable to explain dishonest acts of staff which are directed against their employer, whenever a capable guardian is perceived to be absent and a suitable target is available – while a motivation to offend exists. Employees are usually familiar with their working environment, hence knowing about suitable targets and good opportunities which are available (Mars, 1982; Ditton, 1977; Horning, 1970). With regard to daily routines and the amount of time spent in a particular environment, the place of work can be seen as a particularly criminogenic routine environment of ordinary people, as it is the place of work where the opportunity to misappropriate valuable property of the employer, including labour time, exists. An employee might

even be in the role of a guardian himself, a scenario resulting in an immediate opportunity which can be exploited when the motivation to offend exists.

Hence, Routine Activity Theory provides a framework to link aspects of morality to the concepts of an intimate handler and capable guardianship through fellow employees. Moreover, both the intimate handler and the capable guardian underline the importance of the social context for offender motivation and perceived opportunities. Nevertheless, the traditional focus on opportunities, and the drawing on an offender's free will and his disposition to make rational choices is based on the assumption that offenders are free from moral considerations. This shows that morality is not particularly examined when the situational impact of intimate handlers and incapable guardianship is assessed, although Routine Activity Theory provides the ability to consider moral considerations of offenders to a much more detailed extent, both within offenders and within the workforce.

This section has shown that situational triggers like opportunities and employees' perceptions of moral or immoral behaviour form important factors among approaches to explain staff dishonesty. The subsequent section will refer to opportunities and employees' perceptions of morality in the form of workplace norms once more - with a particular focus on the workplace organisation as a determinant of staff dishonesty.

#### 2.2.4 The Workplace Organisation as a Determinant of Crime

A comprehensive approach to explain why staff dishonesty occurs is offered by the social anthropologist Mars, who argues that employees' behaviours and justifications follow from "the way a job is organised, the values and attitudes that match such organisation" (1982, p. vi). The aim of Mars' study was "to link type of fiddle to type of job" (1982, p. 23). To achieve this aim, Mars classified occupations due to "comparable aspects of structure" (1982, p. 24) in order to derive "characteristic features of particular occupations that encourage or inhibit fiddling, determine its method and form, and affect the attitudes both of employers and of employees" (Mars, 1982, p. 24). The classification of occupations is based on the work of anthropological

research on non-industrial societies, which differentiates between a grid and a group dimension in order to compare cultures (Douglas, 1970).

Grid is “the extent to which a culture imposes its social categories on its people and therefore fixes their appropriate behaviour” (Mars, 1982, p. 24), resulting in a lower or higher level of constraints attached to job profiles. With reference to staff dishonesty, the grid dimension is described as the level of freedom or control imposed by a job profile, hence determining the availability of opportunities for motivated offenders. The group dimension describes the extent to which “the interests of the individual are essentially subordinate to those of the group” (Mars, 1982: 24), hence enabling groups to “exert an overriding control” (Mars, 1982, p. 25) over individual group members. With regard to staff dishonesty, the strength of workplace norms, capable guardianship and social control are reflected in the group dimension. Although morality is not explicitly in the focus, the group dimension acknowledges the importance of the workplace as a social construct.

These characteristics of the grid and group dimension allow the conclusion that Mars basically refers to opportunity and morality in terms of workplace norms as determinants of staff dishonesty. In doing so, Mars assumes that the grid and group dimensions harmonise with each other in the workplace as they do in the organisation of non-industrial societies. Nevertheless, a workplace scenario implies that for example formal rules as a manifestation of the grid dimension can easily be in conflict with informal rules among the workforce as a manifestation of the group dimension. An employee might for example be absent without leave, and the workgroup and its “Covert institutions” (Mars, 1982, p. 202) could cover this violation of workplace rules. Moreover, Mars’ approach is limited by a lack of attention towards change in the workplace organisation, although the researcher himself notes that “no occupation is static” (1982, p. 36).

Taken as a whole, Mars’ combined focus on both situational and social determinants of staff dishonesty provides a complex examination of “fiddle proneness...any work context where a propensity exists for a job to offer regular material rewards that are excluded from formal accounts or which are included under ambiguous or deceptive headings” (Mars, 1982, p. 137). Moreover, Mars’ group



dimension raises the question of how far informal workplace norms among co-workers can serve as a determinant of staff dishonesty. In this context, workplace attitudes were found to be an important indicator of staff dishonesty.

In 1970, Horning conducted a series of semi-structured interviews with employees in a plant in order to evaluate theft by factory workers. The study revealed that employees perceived property in the plant to fall into three categories; company property, personal property or property of unknown ownership. Taking the resulting workplace norms into consideration, the appropriation of items of unknown ownership was not regarded as theft. In this scenario, shared employees' attitudes about ownership created norms on items which can be appropriated, and Horning points out that "the workers' attitudes are, at least in part, a function of the perceived attitudinal milieu in the plant" (1970, p. 58). Vardi and Wiener support this approach assuming that two independent but possibly correlated forces shape the behaviour of individuals: the beliefs about one's own personal interests, and internalised organisational expectations (1996). Taking morality into account, the attitudinal milieu in Horning's study is based on moral considerations, which finally perceive the appropriation of items of unknown ownership as being acceptable.

The importance of workforce attitudes has been highlighted in several other studies as well. Boye and Jones state "that the influence of work group attitudes on employee involvement in counterproductive behavior is equal to or greater than the influence of management sanctions" (1997, p. 179). With reference to the importance of workplace attitudes, Jones and Terris (1983) researched the link between tolerant attitudes and misbehaviour. Using a questionnaire to examine criminogenic perceptions and attitudes, they found that tolerant attitudes towards theft and related excuses were highest in the settings with the highest theft rates. These findings suggest that tolerant attitudes towards staff dishonesty, as well as the neutralisation of dishonesty, are valuable indicators of staff dishonesty itself. Furthermore, the study underlines that the behaviour of employees is shaped by predominant attitudes in a workplace setting and highlights the importance of shared attitudes, and thereby moral considerations of right and wrong behaviour amongst staff.

Accordingly, this raises the question of which external factors and conditions can lead to criminogenic workforce attitudes? In this regard, several studies have focussed on conditions which finally cause tensions and dissatisfaction in the workplace experience of employees.

#### 2.2.5 Conflict and Dissatisfaction in the Workplace

The explanation that the workplace experience itself is able to motivate employees to engage in staff dishonesty suggests that an employer can be both a possible trigger and a victim of staff dishonesty. Criminogenic workforce attitudes are hence triggered in a situational sense, which allows the conclusion that a greater knowledge about those workplace related factors which strengthen the predisposition to offend is able to support the design of preventive action as well.

One factor in the focus of studies researching causes of staff dishonesty is job satisfaction (Farrell, 1983), which implies that low job satisfaction is equal to dissatisfaction. A study by Hollinger and Clark (1982b) found that job satisfaction was negatively related to involvement in property and production deviance, and concludes that dissatisfied employees are more likely to engage in property and production deviance. The likelihood to leave the job, on the other hand, was positively related to property and production deviance (Hollinger and Clark, 1982b). Furthermore, it was found that job satisfaction and property deviance were well correlated in the hospital and retail sector, and less correlated in the manufacturing sector. Hollinger and Clark assumed that this difference was related to less attractive goods to steal in the manufacturing sector, as compared to the availability of “items of high desirability and practical usefulness” (1982b, p. 108) in the retail and hospital sector. In connection with this finding, the researchers suppose that a comparatively higher negative correlation between job satisfaction and production deviance in the manufacturing sector forms the expression of a balance, a manifestation of the same dissatisfaction in a setting, where the opportunities for property deviance are low or not attractive.

This suggests that attempts to balance perceived dissatisfaction can express themselves by means of production deviance in a workplace setting where attractive

targets for property deviance are not available. Accordingly, the study shows that low job satisfaction is an important variable which can explain the motivation to engage in staff dishonesty and confirms the hypothesis that “subjective perceptions of the work experience may affect the prevalence of employee deviance” (Hollinger and Clark, 1982b, p. 98). Nevertheless, the study concludes that “Job dissatisfaction is apparently only one variable set related to the occurrence of deviance within the work setting” (Hollinger and Clark, 1982b, p. 111), which indicates that other factors are likely to exist as well.

The workplace as a source of dissatisfaction and conflict is also addressed by Cools (1991), who argues that the goals of those interacting in a company, the employer and the employees, are different and sometimes in conflict with each other. Cools states that “The conflict between these opposite goals generates a tension area that is controlled within a framework of values and norms...It is this tension area...that provides the key to the explanation of employee crime” (Cools, 1991, p. 7). The reference towards conflicting goals is supported by studies which found that the perception of being mistreated by the employer may increase self-benefiting misbehaviour (Hollinger, 1986; Greenberg, 1990) or feelings of frustration and revenge, which lead to aggression and sabotage (Spector, 1997; Newman and Baron, 1997). As related to an individual’s workplace experience, frustration (Fox and Spector, 1999), unfairness (De Boer et al., 2002), job dissatisfaction (Hollinger and Clark, 1983), disgruntlement about the employer (Hollinger and Davis, 2006) and stress (Spector, 1978) were also found to have an influence on misbehaviour. Concerning salary, Ditton found perceived low wages to be a trigger for employee theft (1977); a finding which is supported by Greenberg (1990) in particular under certain circumstances, as will be shown in the following section.

Moreover, the reference to a framework of values and norms (Cools, 1991) refers to the concept of morality once more and suggests that the shape of the prevailing morality is a factor which either strengthens or weakens the predisposition to offend on the part of employees. The definition of morality as “principles concerning the difference between right and wrong” (Oxford English Dictionary, 2012, p. 468) furthermore suggests that not only goals can be in a state of conflict, but the perception

of right and wrong behaviour in itself; employees can for example assess an act as right behaviour, like the theft of little pieces in Horning's study (1970), which in turn is judged as wrong behaviour on the part of the employer. Thus, conflicting perceptions of right and wrong can lead to scenarios where a particular behaviour is labelled as staff dishonesty on the part of the employer, but as right behaviour on the part of employees.

The nature of morality is also examined in Hirschi's Social Bond Theory (1969), which assumes that humans have a set of internal controls and that it is the loss or weakening of these controls which enables people to calculate the costs of crime freely. Moreover, Hirschi argues that "for some men, considerations of morality are important; for others, they are not" (1969, p. 11). In order to explain what differentiates offenders from non-offenders, Hirschi (1969) asks the theoretical question what restrains people to commit an offense? One among four control variables labelled social bonds is about beliefs as a force inherent in people, which is able to regulate the desire to commit a crime. Beliefs in turn are described as being based on "impressions and opinions that are highly dependent on constant social reinforcement...precarious moral positions much in need of social support" (Lilly, Cullen and Ball, 2011, p. 118), thus demonstrating strong links to morality. This suggests that individuals do not only differ in the strength of their internal moral controls, but that the strength of internal controls is related to a situational social context as well. Accordingly, moral values might refrain employees from exploiting opportunities in one scenario, and less in other scenarios where social support for adhering to company rules is weak. Applied to a company setting, the nature of an organisation's morality could therefore either support or weaken the social reinforcement of internal controls which refrain employees from engaging in staff dishonesty.

In this connection, a limitation of Social Bond Theory is that Hirschi (1969) does not seek to explain changes over time, although in particular beliefs, which are dependent on "a person's beliefs in the moral validity of norms" (Hirschi, 1969, p. 26) and "constant social reinforcement" (Lilly, Cullen and Ball, 2011, p. 118) can be weakened in the course of time. Hence, weakened beliefs indicate that the morality dimension of Social Bond Theory is influenced by changes which may occur at any phase of a person's life, including work-life. This, in turn, allows the conclusion that

beliefs among a workforce are likely to respond to changes like pay cuts or dismissals, and that staff beliefs are predominantly opinions and expectations related to a fair exchange of goods between employer and employee (Adams, 1965).

Correspondingly, expectations related to a fair exchange of goods are also reflected within the concept of a psychological contract (Rousseau, 1995), and “The psychological contract held by an employee consists of beliefs about the reciprocal obligations that exist between that employee and his or her organizations” (Morrison and Robinson, 1997, p. 226). A concept closely related to the psychological contract is the normative rate, and Folger and Cropanzano (1998) state that an employee or a group of employees share a perception of a normatively appropriate rate of return for their inputs. When fairness is about and employer’s continuous giving of “equal value for the value received” (Adams, 1965, p. 278), this implies that a considerable potential for dissatisfaction and perceived mistreatment exists.

As the concept of reciprocal obligations refers to a continuous exchange process between employers and employees, this furthermore allows the conclusion that every disruption or modification of reciprocal obligations or the normative rate bears the potential of shaping morality among staff in a way which increases the motivation to offend among individual employees. The final section covering approaches to explain staff dishonesty will therefore evaluate the contribution of a study, which has examined the impact of a particular change scenario on staff dishonesty, hence having a focus similar to the one of this thesis.

#### 2.2.6 Unfair Change in the Workplace

Greenberg (1990) conducted a study in order to experimentally examine the impact of pay cuts on employee theft in combination with an either adequate explanation, where the employer carefully explains the necessity of the pay cut in detail, or an inadequate explanation, where no such information is offered to the employees. The independent variables in his study are pay cuts with and without an adequate explanation and sensitive treatment, and the dependent variable is employee theft. Greenberg hypothesised that staff perceptions of unfair treatment in forms of “payment

inequity, and attempts to reduce that inequity...would be reduced when adequate explanations were given to account for the pay reduction” (1990, p. 562), hence leading to lower rates of employee theft. Features of an adequate explanation included sensitivity towards the viewpoints of workers and the assurance that decisions were made without bias, applied consistently, carefully justified and communicated in a courteous and honest way.

The experimental study was conducted in three comparable plants in three different cities with a similar unemployment rate. In two plants, payment was reduced by 15% for 10 weeks, and in doing so adequate information and a sensitive treatment of employees was given in one plant, but not in the other plant. The third plant served as a control group. Using the plants’ standard procedures for actuarial data by means of weekly inventory taking, employee theft was measured in a timeframe of 30 weeks; 10 weeks before the pay cut, during the pay cut and 10 weeks after the end of the pay cut. The experiment revealed that the plant where a very short, inadequate explanation was offered to the employees experienced a rise in shrinkage from 3% to 8%, while shrinkage in the plant where the pay cut was carefully explained rose from 3% to approximately 5%. Shrinkage rates in both plants dropped to their pre pay cut level when the initial payment level was reinstalled. The shrinkage rate in the control group, the third plant, remained stable.

Greenberg concluded that underpayment motivates employees to engage in employee theft, noting that “while workers experienced a 15% pay reduction, they reported feeling underpaid and stole over twice as much as they did when they felt equitably paid” (1990, p. 565). This finding confirms the key assumption of Adams’ Equity Theory (1965), an employee’s attempt to balance perceived inequity. Based on the finding that the theft rates in the second plant, where an adequate explanation was given, were much smaller than in the plant where an inadequate explanation was given, Greenberg argues that the use of an adequate explanation is a “critical moderator of the tendency to pilfer to restore equity with one’s employer” (1990, p. 566). Beyond this interpretation of the findings, the impact of adequate explanations allows the interpretation that an inadequate explanation for change can form a critical trigger in itself; for some employees, treatment can be as important as salary.

With regard to the motivation of employees engaging in theft, Greenberg assumes that either “feelings of frustration and resentment... motivated the aggressive acts of theft” (1990, p. 565) or rather rational attempts of “adjusting the balance” (Greenberg, 1990, p. 566) took place. In a later publication, employee theft is also interpreted as a response evolving from dissatisfaction, either as a “restitution response” or as a “retaliation response” (Greenberg and Scott, 1996, p. 135). While restitution is described as a rational approach to restore a balance in the case of perceived underpayment, retaliation is conceptualised as a more expressive, emotional answer towards perceived maltreatment and perceived harm. This approach is in line with Darley and Pittman’s concepts of retributive and compensatory justice, where retributive justice is seen as punitive and directed against a wrongdoer, while compensatory justice is seen as satisfactory by restoring equity (2003). These concepts suggest that an expressive or punitive motivation to offend is triggered by factors beyond payment, like treatment, while restitution and compensation are rather rational approaches to balance economic harm in itself.

Moreover, Greenberg’s findings on payment, adequate explanations and perceived unfair treatment provide evidence that organisational change, in the form of payment reductions, can trigger property deviance in terms of theft. In addition, the study provides evidence that employee reactions towards organisational change do not only relate to the changes themselves but to the perceived quality of the treatment while the changes occur, like receiving adequate or inadequate explanations for measures of organisational change. Nevertheless, the experimental design of Greenberg’s study fails to address an employee’s motivation to offend in itself, allowing the researcher only an inspiring guess on theft as an either emotional or rational response to pay cuts.

One interpretation of rising theft rates after a pay cut is that the pay cut increases material needs on the part of some employees. This explanation fits in well with Greenberg’s assumption of a rational approach, but the finding that an adequate explanation proved to reduce theft rates in Greenberg’s study shows that material need cannot be the only causal explanation for theft, as explanations cannot satisfy material needs. Hence, the findings indicate that explanations serve to moderate another trigger of staff dishonesty, a non-material stimulus for the motivation to steal. One

interpretation of such a stimulus is about an employer violating what is perceived to form his moral obligations from a staff perspective; and Greenberg's broad interpretation of employee theft as a rather emotional and expressive reaction to pay cuts fits in well with a violation of moral obligations as a trigger. Thus, this allows the conclusion that perceived immoral treatment can also account for employee theft in itself. Employees could perceive themselves to be paid fairly, but not to be treated fairly.

All told, the literature on the workplace experience as a determinant of staff dishonesty forms a broad and rather unstructured array of single factors which were tested as related to their respective effects on staff dishonesty and in this regard, both morality and situational stimuli were considered. Beyond this reference to the workplace experience, the subsequent section will sum up the shortcomings in the existing research on explanations for staff dishonesty.

#### 2.2.7 Concluding Thoughts on the Limitations of Existing Approaches

The existing literature in the field offers a variety of approaches to explain why employees engage in dishonest acts. When it comes to an evaluation of offender motivation, the underlying assumptions of opportunity focused theories are closer to nature than to nurture, meaning that an inclination to offend is assumed to form a constituent part of at least some employees' personalities. On the other hand, several studies evaluate an employee's workplace experience as a potential explanation for staff dishonesty, hence striving to evaluate the nurture dimension of a perceived unfair workplace experience. With reference to perceived unfair reorganisations, attention is paid to critical factors in practice, and scenarios like pay cuts, dismissals or several forms of perceived mistreatment are considered as triggers of staff dishonesty. Despite this variety in studies and approaches to explain staff dishonesty, however, the literature review on staff dishonesty has revealed three shortcomings in the existing literature.

First, criminality is at risk of either being treated as a stable personality trait, or - vice versa - of not being considered as a potentially intrinsic situational variable. An examination of existing explanations for staff dishonesty has shown that an offender's



criminality is either not in the focus of the literature on staff dishonesty, or taken as given by nature in terms of a personality trait of at least some employees. With a basically motivated offender in mind, Routine Activity Theory reduces the situational stimuli of an opportunity to suitable targets and the absence of a capable guardian, hence weighing up the risks and rewards of an opportunity. An employee's criminality in terms of the propensity to offend is taken as given and therefore not referred to in detail. This poses a considerable limitation in the existing literature, as Routine Activity Theory cannot explain what refrains some employees from exploiting opportunities, while others use opportunities to engage in dishonest acts. Nevertheless, differences in the criminality of employees are obvious, as some employees engage in dishonest acts, while others do not. Thus, a differing predisposition to offend is accepted, but not examined with reference to situational triggers.

Although opportunity related theories examine situational stimuli, a potential situational impact on an offender's criminality itself is not looked at. Opportunity related explanations for staff dishonesty are either based on the assumption that an individual's predisposition to offend is stable, or do not take the possibility of employees' shifts in criminality into account. On the contrary, a further approach to explain staff dishonesty focuses on the organisation and the workplace experience as a situational trigger, hence taking triggers beyond opportunity into consideration. This link to the workplace experience, however, poses the question whether criminality can or should still be seen as a relatively stable personality trait – or whether an employee's criminality can and has to be interpreted as a situational function of the workplace experience as well. Existing studies with a focus on the workplace experience show that conflict and dissatisfaction at the place of work form another situational stimulus of staff dishonesty, hence striving to evaluate the nurture dimension of the workplace.

In this regard, attention is paid to critical factors in practice, and scenarios like pay cuts, dismissals or several forms of perceived mistreatment were already considered as a trigger of staff dishonesty. Nevertheless, a second shortcoming in the existing literature on the workplace experience as a trigger of staff dishonesty is that the significance of continuous change, for example in terms of any kind of reorganisations, is not recognised, although the scope and pace of change in for example the ICT-sector

implies that changes in the employer-employee relationship are the norm and not the exception. Thus, organisational change, including dissatisfaction evolving from perceived adverse change and perceived unfair treatment, may form a continuous and omnipresent nurture for shifts in offender motivation and criminality. This, in turn, suggests that all sorts of change and change effects, including dissatisfaction evolving from perceived adverse change and perceived unfair treatment, form a continuous and omnipresent trigger for shifts in offender motivation and criminality.

Accordingly, analysing the impact of the workplace experience on the motivation to offend complements Routine Activity Theory's situational focus on opportunities and offers a promising additional approach to explain why staff dishonesty occurs. In this connection, other potentially critical factors beyond pay cuts, such as re-education in terms of learning almost entirely new job skills, loss of task autonomy and loss of career prospects, have not been covered so far. Hence, research on the impact of these situational triggers and facets of organisational change on offender motivation and the capability of guardianship among staff delivers an original contribution to knowledge as well.

Finally, a third limitation in the existing literature on staff dishonesty is that morality, ethics and fairness are frequently referred to - but not conceptualised, when the quality of the workplace experience is examined as a trigger of staff dishonesty. Thus, the importance of feeling treated right or wrong, or fair versus unfair, will be introduced as a key approach to measure the quality of the workplace experience from an employee's perspective in the following section. In doing so, a particular attention will be dedicated to perceived unfair reorganisations, which are referred to as reorganisational injustice throughout this thesis.

### **2.3 The Context of Reorganisational Injustice**

In order to deepen the understanding of a link between a perceived unfair workplace experience and offender motivation, the second half of this chapter will start with a detailed evaluation of perceived reorganisational injustice and examine how employees make injustice judgements in the course of reorganisations. As the

introduction of this thesis has already demonstrated (Section 1.1.2), organisational change has become the norm rather than the exception in the contemporary ICT sector, which forms the research setting of this study. Hence, a broad scope of triggers for injustice perceptions might exist, and this study's understanding of reorganisational injustice will therefore encompass any employers' changes in the status quo of employees, which can be perceived as unfair on the part of staff.

Thus, the purpose of the subsequent sections is to construct a detailed theoretical approach as an analytical framework to answer the questions how employees make injustice judgements about their workplace experience and how employees may react to perceived injustice at work. It will be argued that offender motivation is not only a function of opportunity, but also a function of an offender's predisposition to offend in order to correct perceived injustice, a predisposition which is shaped by situational stimuli and the social context of an employee – the workplace experience. The motivation to offend as a means to correct perceived injustice will be referred to as Corrective Justice hereafter, hence forming a concept which encompasses the research hypothesis of this thesis, which states that perceived unfair reorganisations lead to an increase in tolerant attitudes towards staff dishonesty.

The following sections will commence by providing clarifications for the main concepts used; namely morality, ethics, justice and fairness. In a second step, perceptions of injustice will be related to the workplace experience. In doing so, particular attention will be paid to studies which relate the workplace experience to staff dishonesty as well as the circumstances which lead to a negative workplace perception. In this context, it will be concluded that change in organisations forms a particularly critical driver of negative workplace perceptions and perceived injustice in organisations.

Focussing on the conceptualisation of a detailed analytical framework, the literature review will continue to explore theoretical approaches which seek to explain how employees make injustice judgements and how employees react to perceived injustice in their workplace experience. Thus, the three dimensions of Organisational Justice Theory will be introduced in order to examine their flip sides of injustice respectively; distributive injustice, which refers to a distorted balance of an employee's

inputs and outcomes at work, procedural injustice, which refers to a lack of an employee's voice and choice in the course of reorganisations, and finally interactional injustice, which refers to inadequate information about reorganisations as well as disrespectful treatment in the course of reorganisations. The purpose of this undertaking is to derive conceptual tools which support the measurement of reorganisational injustice judgements of employees.

In a subsequent step, morality will be assessed as a means whereby employees make judgements about justice and fair treatment in their workplace experience as well. It will be argued that employees' morality perceptions towards reorganisations relate to what an employer could and should have done, or, in other words, to an employer's choice of the least harmful alternatives for employees in the course of reorganisations. In doing so, this thesis argues that perceived immoral reorganisations constitute a further dimension of injustice - moral injustice - which complements the dimensions of distributive injustice, procedural injustice and interactional injustice.

Accordingly, moral injustice will be used as a fourth and new factor to complement a theoretical framework which assesses reorganisational injustice as a situational trigger of rises in tolerant attitudes towards staff dishonesty.

### 2.3.1 Conceptual Clarifications

In order to proceed with a theoretical framework to examine reorganisational injustice in the workplace experience, a conceptual clarification of morality, ethics, justice and fairness is required. Morality is defined as "principles concerning the difference between right and wrong" and "the extent to which an action is right or wrong" (Oxford English Dictionary, 2012, p. 468), while ethics is defined as "the moral principles that govern a person's behaviour or how an activity is conducted" (2012, p. 243). Besides morality and ethics, the concepts of fairness and justice are frequently used when an employee's perception of the workplace experience is evaluated. Justice is defined as "behaviour or treatment that is right and fair" or "the quality of being right and fair" (Oxford English Dictionary, 2012, p. 394). In the context of justice in organisations, fairness and justice are treated as interchangeable labels for the same

concept (Folger, Cropanzano and Goldman, 2005; Fortin, 2008), and this thesis will treat fairness and justice – or unfairness and injustice - in this interchangeable manner as well. Applied to the workplace experience, the behaviour of an employer is accordingly a matter of justice perceptions, and moral principles support an assessment of whether the behaviour of an employer is just or unjust.

In this regard, the previous definitions reflect positive states of morality, justice and fairness. Nevertheless, the present study treats morality, justice and fairness as one end of a scale which displays immorality, injustice and unfairness on its opposite side. Accordingly, there is no morality or immorality as such, but employees' perceptions ranging on a scale from moral to immoral. Hence, the subsequent notions of morality and justice are inevitably linked to perceptions of immorality and injustice as well; employees' low fairness perceptions for example reflect a condition of perceived unfairness.

Thus, from an employee's perspective, justice in organisations is about right and fair treatment in the course of the workplace experience, and organisational justice is also described as being "concerned with people's fairness perceptions in their employment relationship" (Fortin, 2008, p. 93). Vice versa, organisational injustice is about employees' perceptions of wrong and unfair treatment in the course of their employment relationship, and this section will now introduce several studies which provide explanations how a negative workplace experience can be conceptualised.

With reference to staff dishonesty, studies revealed that in particular low job satisfaction acts as a trigger, and low job satisfaction can be seen as a synonym for a negative workplace experience (Farrell, 1983; Hollinger and Clark, 1982b). The conceptualisation of job satisfaction reflects a variety of further sub-factors, including an employer's fairness and ethical standards, the friendly behaviour of colleagues and supervisors, good payment, manageable workload and sufficient information to execute one's job (Hollinger and Clark, 1982b). Accordingly, the concept of job satisfaction mirrors the importance of an employee's mere assumptions and expectations on how to be treated, and indicates that a variety of factors on right and wrong treatment at work have to be taken into consideration when perceived injustice in the workplace is examined.

Regarding the concepts of injustice and immorality, injustice perceptions and moral principles overlap when it comes “to a sense of injustice derived from the violation of ethical precepts” (Folger, Cropanzano and Goldman, 2005, p. 228). In this case, injustice perceptions related to the employer are linked to violations of moral principles as well, a perceived wrongful behaviour on the part of the employer. Taking the question of how employees make injustice judgements into consideration, this means that any time an employer violates a moral principle held by its employees, this can be seen as an injustice by the latter.

In this context, an employer’s unfairness is interpreted as “morally prohibited social conduct in dominance-submission terms” (Folger, Cropanzano and Goldman, 2005, p. 219), and the question of what is morally prohibited or not is a matter of subjective perceptions of employees. The importance of mere perceptions is also highlighted by the phenomenological approach of social and organisational science, which states that “If most people perceive the act as an injustice, then it is an injustice” (Folger and Cropanzano, 1998, p. xv). This approach is shared in the course of this thesis, which treats injustice as a subjective perception of employees. The same stance applies to immorality and unfairness, and this thesis will treat perceptions of right and wrong, or fair versus unfair behaviour as subjective assumptions of employees as well. Vice versa, subjective injustice perceptions on the part of employees will be used later on in order to evaluate to what extent the moral principle of corrective justice can influence offender motivation.

In doing so, this thesis defines organisational injustice as “a condition perceived by employees, where the employee’s expectations and assumptions of how to be treated at work are violated by an employer which is perceived by employees as not taking the interests, the rights and the well being of its employees into account”. With reference to this definition, it has to be kept in mind that this thesis focuses on injustice, immorality and unfairness related to reorganisations in order to test the research hypothesis. Vice versa, the existing literature which informs further approaches in this context consistently uses positive labels of justice, morality and fairness. Despite this difference in labelling, the present study continuously uses the concept of e.g. morality in terms of perceptions of good and bad, or right and wrong, hence forming a scale where moral

conduct is at the one end, and immoral conduct at the other end. In this way, any subsequent examination which is related to the fairness or justice is also related to the degree of unfairness and injustice, and changes in the status quo of employees are particularly prone to be perceived as unfair.

With reference to changes, further studies on staff dishonesty display several triggering factors, like perceptions of being mistreated by the employer (Hollinger, 1986), low wages (Ditton, 1977) or pay cuts in combination with and without adequate explanations (Greenberg, 1990). The study on pay cuts is of particular interest, as it shows that a worsening of material issues like salary is not the only factor which shapes employee theft – the adequacy of an explanation for pay cuts was found to be an important factor as well. Hence, the study shows that the quality of an explanation for pay cuts can shape the level of employee theft, and that an employer's way to explain change measures which are disadvantageous for staff can serve as a moderator for disadvantageous change. While the disadvantageous change measure stays the same, an employee's perception of being treated either fairly or unfairly, or right and wrong, varies and can have an impact on levels of theft. Thus, perceived organisational injustice may have the potential to shape levels of staff dishonesty. Perceptions of right and wrong, however, can be attributed to material and non-material circumstances which shape the relationship between an employer and its employees; for example the information received from an employer, payment, the workload and treatment can be perceived as fair or unfair on the part of employees.

Hence, this thesis argues that any management decisions and management behaviour which lead to a change in the exchange relationship between an employer and its employees may lead to perceptions of injustice on the part of employees, in particular when the change is perceived as disadvantageous. The definition of such a perceived reorganisational injustice looked at throughout this thesis will therefore encompass "modifications of an employee's ratio of inputs and outcomes in the exchange relationship with an employer which have the potential to be perceived as unfair on the part of the employee, like less salary, more workload, perceived mistreatment and inadequate explanations for adverse change measures", and these

changes leading to organisational injustice will be referred to as reorganisational injustice hereafter.

Accordingly, it is this broad understanding of perceived reorganisational injustice which has to be kept in mind when potential triggers of injustice perceptions are examined in the subsequent sections.

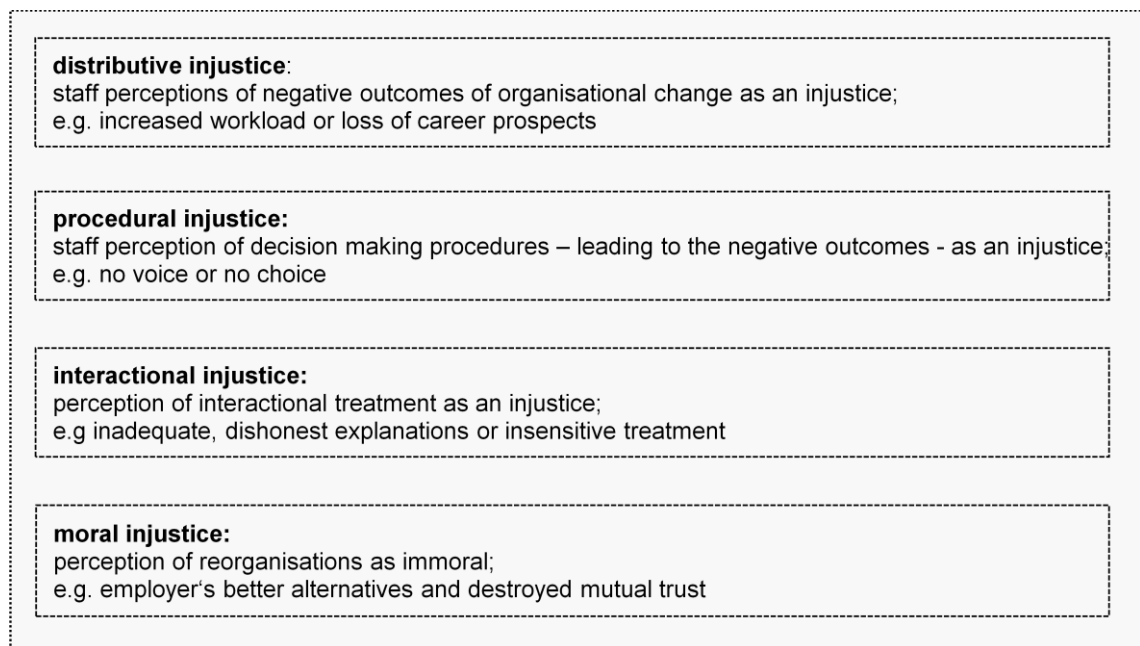
## **2.4 Explanations for Reorganisational Injustice**

An examination of the ways in which employees make judgements about reorganisational injustice is informed by theories dealing with justice in organisations. These theories provide several factors which explain how justice judgements are made, which circumstances lead to perceptions of injustice, and some agreement on an integrated approach aligning the main factors has been reached (Colquitt and Shaw, 2005). A meta-analytic review of 183 empirical studies on justice in the workplace revealed “high correlations among the justice conceptualizations, but not so high that they seem to be multiple indicators of one underlying construct” (Colquitt et al., 2001, p. 432). Concerning the development over time, research on justice in organisations can be clustered chronologically into four waves (Colquitt, Greenberg and Zapata-Phelan, 2005): a focussing on distributive justice in a time span reaching from the 1950s to the 1970s, a second wave focussing on procedural justice from the 1970s to the 1990s, and a third, ongoing wave which started in 1986, focussing on interactional justice. Finally, a fourth and ongoing wave of research aims to integrate the above mentioned foci on distribution, procedures and interaction as dimensions of a combined Theory of Organisational Justice.

In connection with the integrative wave, the Theory of Organisational Justice encompasses several theoretical approaches dealing with research in the field of organisational justice in the past decades (Cropanzano and Ambrose, 2015). This thesis shares the integrative approach and treats the dimensions of Organisational Justice Theory as complementary factors which shape justice perceptions. In this regard, the derived injustice dimensions are displayed in Figure 3.



**Figure 3: Overview of Injustice Dimensions**



Thus, distributive injustice, procedural injustice, interactional injustice and the injustice dimension which was conceptualised in this thesis, moral injustice, will be evaluated as the main dimensions which explain how employees make injustice judgements related to reorganisations. The four factors will be used in order to conceptualise and detail an analytical framework which answers the questions how employees make injustice judgements about their workplace experience, which circumstances lead to perceptions of injustice in the course of organisational change, and which circumstances are perceived as unjust in the context of reorganisations in particular.

In doing so, the next section will introduce distributive injustice as a first dimension of reorganisational injustice; an employee's perceived unfair ratio of inputs and outcomes in an exchange relationship with an employer.

#### 2.4.1 Give More, Receive Less

A fair return for an employee's input lies in the focus of Equity Theory, which describes the degree of perceived distributive justice as a result of an exchange process. Hence, Equity Theory argues "that it is the relation between ratios of profits

to investments that results in felt justice or injustice” (Adams, 1965, p. 273). Accordingly, a balanced proportion of investments and profits, or inputs and outcomes, forms the key characteristic of a condition where distributive justice is given. Thus, this thesis defines distributive injustice as staff perceptions of an unfair return for the invested effort, which results in a perceived disadvantageous inequity in the course of reorganisations where employees feel under-rewarded.

A large study on perceptions of unfairness in the workplace experience (Hollinger and Clark, 1982b) shows that employees who feel exploited are more likely to engage in forms of property and production deviance. In the context of distributive injustice, perceptions of being exploited form a general example of a perceived inequity in the input-outcomes ratio of an employee. In line with the definition’s reference to felt injustice, and in line with the phenomenological nature of morality, employees’ assumptions of distributive injustice will be treated as entirely subjective throughout this thesis as well.

With reference to the subjective assessment of distributive injustice, the exchange of goods between an employer and its employees bears the risk of being perceived as unjust, and a wide scope of potential inputs and outcomes has to be taken into consideration. An input of an employee can for example take place in the form of the professional education an employee has, the experience in the job, seniority or the effort which is dedicated to daily tasks (Folger and Cropanzano, 1998; Adams, 1965). Hence, employees and employers may well experience a dissonance related to the existence and importance of an input, in particular when only the employee considers an input to be existing and relevant; for example technical skills which are not required any more, like expertise in outdated software or hardware. Another example is about seniority and length of service, and an employer may or may not accept seniority as an input which justifies a higher salary (Folger and Cropanzano, 1998). Thus, an employee’s input can be anything the employee perceives to be as valuable and offered to the employer.

The counterpart of the ratio is about an employee’s outcomes, which can be positive, like a perceived adequate salary, or negative, like bad working conditions or cuts in salary (Colquitt, Greenberg and Zapata-Phelan, 2005). In this context, it is

important to consider that an employee's outcomes are not reduced to material rewards. Due to the subjective nature of an employee's perceived inputs and outcomes, issues like status symbols and formal job status, or appreciations of seniority, or job titles, can form an outcome as well. Altogether, perceptions of a fair ratio of the effort invested versus the sum of the benefits received offer a broad portfolio of sub-factors which either create perceptions of being treated fairly or not.

Furthermore, the logic of the ratio urges an employee to reassess distributive injustice as soon as either an employee's inputs or an employee's outcomes are modified; like in the case of a cut in salary (Greenberg, 1990). Beyond salary, any change in an organisation which is perceived to be relevant from an employee's point of view can lead to perceptions of injustice, as an employee might also "compare his present and past outcomes and inputs" (Adams, 1965, p. 280) in order to assess distributive injustice.

Applied to changes in organisations, this shows that employees can compare the ratio of inputs and outcomes before and after a change measure. In doing so, disadvantageous change measures which either increase an employee's inputs or reduce an employee's outcomes inevitably lead to a state of inequity which can subsequently lead to perceptions of injustice. With reference to organisational change, the focus of this thesis is directed towards disadvantageous inequity where employees feel under-rewarded, as opposed to inequity where employees might feel overpaid or over-rewarded.

Despite its capability to take changes in the input-outcomes ratio into account, Equity Theory as the main theoretical foundation of distributive justice is criticised for ignoring the decision making activities which shape the ratio between an employee's inputs and outcomes (Folger and Cropanzano, 1998); and these decision making activities will be referred to in the subsequent section.

#### 2.4.2 No Voice, No Choice

A general theory of fairness was developed by means of collecting insights from different theories and literature related to justice, including Equity Theory and Referent

Cognitions Theory (Folger, 1986; Skarlicki and Folger, 1997). Referent Cognitions Theory argues that unfavourable outcomes leading to perceived low distributive justice form only one dimension of injustice and the perceived inappropriateness of conduct by an exchange partner is described as another dimension which leads to injustice perceptions. Moreover, it was found that “In the presence of fair procedures, individuals are more likely to accept the responsibility for their problems than if the procedures are unfair” (Skarlicki and Folger, 1997, p. 435). In further detail, the decision making procedures which shape the inputs and outcomes of employees are labelled procedural justice.

Procedural justice is defined as referring “to fairness issues concerning the methods, mechanisms, and processes used to determine outcomes” (Folger and Cropanzano, 1998, p. 26). This definition shows that procedural justice manifests itself in the time span before an input-outcomes ratio within a company is modified, for example the time span when decisions about organisational changes are made. In a business context, procedural justice can be seen as the fairness of a company’s formal decision making procedures, and several procedural elements attribute to the risk of perceived unfair decision making procedures.

So how are judgements about fair decision making procedures in companies made on the part of employees? One approach to answer this question argues that voice, which can be seen as a sufficient chance to express one’s own point of view, has the effect to let people perceive procedures as more fair when voice exists, as compared to procedures where voice is denied (Folger, 1977). Consequently, the perception of not having voice forms an antecedent of procedural injustice. Vice versa, the chance to present one’s arguments is a deescalating feature of fairness, a perceived chance to be able to participate in the decision making process on the part of employees. In this connection, employees can appreciate voice as a chance to shape management decisions, or value the mere chance to express their arguments (Lind and Tyler, 1988).

Thus, voice can be significant “as the means to an end, or...have value as an end in itself” (Folger and Cropanzano, 1998, p. 35). Accordingly, in the scenario of an employer deciding about change measures which affect the employees in the company as well, employees can use voice as a factor to derive fairness judgements. In this

regard, it is argued that it makes a difference whether employees perceive to have the chance of presenting their point of view or not, whether the employer listens to their point of view or not, or whether an employee's articulated point of view is finally able to shape management decisions about one's further career – or not. Beyond this reference to fairness, voice is also interesting when it comes to whistle-blowing, which was found to be an efficient means to control staff dishonesty (Scicchitano et al., 2004). Thus, not having voice can also be seen as a condition where the likelihood of telling on offenders is low.

Another, more direct element which is related to decisions concerning organisational change is about choice, which can be seen as the presence of an employee's option not to accept a disadvantageous change measure, or to make a choice among feasible alternatives. The absence of choice was found to be a predictor of angry responses to adverse inequity (Folger, Rosenfield and Hays, 1978; Cropanzano and Folger, 1989), whereas less angry responses occur when “the procedures allowed the participants some form of choice” (Folger and Cropanzano, 1998, p. 22). In this case, having the right to make choices offers an employee a direct participation in decision-making, and the perceived participation in decision making in itself is what this thesis uses as a further factor to explain how employees make justice judgements.

Accordingly, this thesis refers to procedural injustice as a condition perceived by employees, where voice and choice is lacking in the course of reorganisations; i.e. not having the chance to express one's point of view, and not having an option to avoid disadvantageous change measures. In this regard, procedural injustice has been introduced as a dimension where events are looked at which take place before a change decision is made. Vice versa, the third factor, interactional justice, focuses on events which take place during and after a change decision is made.

#### 2.4.3 Uninformed and Disrespected

A strong link between theft levels on the one hand, and adequate explanations as well as caring, sensitive behaviour on the part of an employer on the other hand has

already been examined (Greenberg, 1990), and these two factors are labelled as informational and interpersonal justice, or, combined, as interactional justice.

Concerning interactional justice, an ongoing debate on its main elements of adequate information and sensitive treatment exists. Some researchers argue that adequate explanations and sensitive treatment, or informational and interpersonal justice, are rather separate dimensions (Colquitt, 2001), while others combine adequate information and sensitive treatment as two indicators of a factor labelled interactional justice (Fortin, 2008; Cropanzano, Stein and Nadisic, 2011). As there is no disagreement on the importance of the elements themselves, the structure of this thesis will follow the three dimension approach mirrored in the contemporary literature and discuss construct discrimination within interactional justice in the course of analysing the research results of this thesis.

Interactional justice is traditionally described as referring “to the quality of the interpersonal treatment received by an individual” (Folger and Cropanzano, 1998, p. xxiii). As opposed to the perceived participation in decision-making, interactional justice refers to the behaviour of a point of reference, for example an employer. Furthermore, it was found that injustice perceptions also relate to the manner people feel treated interpersonally (Mikula, Petrik and Tanzer, 1990; Greenberg, 1990). With reference to the workplace experience of reorganisations, the dimension of interactional justice can be subdivided into adequate explanations for disadvantageous changes and interpersonal sensitivity in the course of implementing disadvantageous changes, including respect and politeness.

Concerning the first factor, adequate explanations, it is argued that “often...people affected by a decision feel entitled to hear why it was made” (Folger and Cropanzano, 1998, p. 46). An adequate explanation for the reasons behind disadvantageous outcomes of organisational change can take place in the form of excuses and justifications with reference to the harm or the constraints for decision making. An employer can for example claim that external pressures make it inevitable to adapt, whereas the initiated change measures create inevitable disadvantageous outcomes for employees, or it could be claimed that the burden of disadvantageous outcomes has to be carried by everyone in the company, including the management

(Greenberg, 1990). In the scenario of organisational change, typical explanations refer to external pressures like increased competition, technological change, shrinking profits or customers demanding new products (Mullins, 2005).

In this manner, no explanation for disadvantageous change is likely to be perceived as an injustice on the part of employees (Greenberg, 1990). Nevertheless, the mere existence of justifications does not mean that these explanations are believed on the part of employees. With reference to the credibility of explanations, Baron (1988) points out that appeals to mitigating circumstances are useful only when they are believed, and employees could also have the firm conviction that mismanagement forms the trigger of reorganisations, or that only employees have to face disadvantageous outcomes, while the management still receives high bonuses. Hence, several features shape the adequacy of an employer's communication related to disadvantageous change measures; the existence, the comprehensibility, the adequacy and the credibility of an employer's explanations for reorganisations taking place.

Furthermore, explanations can be divided into two sub-dimensions; one which contains arguments and factual information on the necessity of change, and one with a focus on emotional aspects, like a perceived employer's sensitivity and respect for its employees. With reference to the emotional aspects, the "stylistic or qualitative aspects of an explanation seem to be at least potentially as important as some features pertaining to the content of an explanation" (Folger and Cropanzano, 1998, p. 46). Thus, the perceived adequacy of information can have several features, which are either factual or emotional, including a denial of responsibility, an appeal to higher values, downward comparisons or excuses (Sitkin and Bies, 1993). This shows that employees consider the perceived adequacy of information and hence the communication between an employer and its employees in the course of implementing organisational change measures in order to make justice judgements on the fairness of an employer's behaviour and decisions.

The second dimension of interactional justice covers interpersonal sensitivity and respect, and hence emotional aspects as well. Several studies on interpersonal sensitivity examined criteria such as "honesty, courtesy, timely feedback and respect for rights" (Bies, 1986, quoted in Folger and Cropanzano, 1998, p. 48), respect and dignity

(Bies, 2001) sensitivity to others' feelings, empathy and expressions of remorse (Greenberg, 1993), or "respectful and socially sensitive treatment" (Bies, 2015, p. 92). Thus, an employee can perceive the treatment received in the course of reorganisations as being fair or unfair, respectful or arrogant, and such perceptions are usually related to the behaviour of direct superiors. Nevertheless, new media such as video messages, social network blogs, intranet articles, mails and further communication on the part of the top management allow the interpretation that an employee's perception of interpersonal top-management sensitivity exists as well. Accordingly, this thesis will take justice judgements with a broader reference to the perceived sensitivity and respect related to top-management communication, or the company itself, into consideration.

Finally, trust forms another concept which can be used to measure interpersonal justice. Trust in authorities like a company's management is described as being based on "inferences about the authority's motivations, especially the authority's willingness to consider one's needs and to try to make fair decisions...which we term trust in benevolence" (Lind, Tyler and Huo, 1997, p. 768). Hence, trust has a moral component, the expectation that an employer's conduct in the course of organisational change is or should be benevolent. This expectation includes for example that an employer's management decisions consider employees' well being, as opposed to a reduced focus on profit. Even if trust is interpreted as a result of justice judgements rather than a means as to how employees make justice judgements, the extent to which an employer appears trustworthy can be used as an indicator of the quality of the workplace experience.

Accordingly, interactional injustice is defined as a condition perceived by employees where they receive insensitive treatment on the part of their employer in the course of reorganisations and where the employer offers inadequate explanations for the reorganisations going on, resulting in damaged mutual trust between an employer and its employees.

In sum, the dimensions of distributive injustice, procedural injustice and interactional injustice provide useful conceptual tools for an analytical framework to answer the questions how justice judgements are made on the part of employees. Beyond this, this thesis argues that perceptions of right and wrong, or fair and unfair, do



not only exist in the distributive, procedural and interactional dimensions, but also independent of the previously examined injustice dimensions. Accordingly, this thesis argues that a violation of moral expectations on the part of employees forms a dimension of injustice in its own. In this regard, the next section will demonstrate how perceptions of moral injustice are constructed.

#### 2.4.4 Could Have, Should Have

Applied to a workplace setting, management decisions related to changes in the organisation bear the risk of being perceived as a violation of an employer's moral obligations on the part of employees, or as a transgression of the perceived legitimate rights of employees. In one study, participants perceived a situation as unfair although they suffered no economic harm, and the researchers concluded that the participants had reacted on the basis of moral principles (Folger and Cropanzano, 1998). Without a direct reference to morality, it is also noted that "what is just is based upon relatively strong expectations" (Adams, 1965, p. 271). Nevertheless, morality provides an explanation in this context, because it finally shapes an employee's expectations towards appropriate behaviour on the part of the employer. Hence, measuring violations of morally appropriate behaviour informs the examination of injustice at the workplace.

Having an employee's subjective expectations and perceptions of fair treatment and organisational justice in mind, this section will seek to examine how employees make moral injustice judgements about reorganisations. With reference to employees it has been found "that the sense of fairness is grounded in basic ethical assumptions of normative treatment. The sense of injustice, therefore, often involves holding someone accountable for a deliberate transgression of acceptable conduct" (Folger, Cropanzano and Goldman, 2005, p. 216). This definition includes two informing aspects: Firstly, an employee's expectations or assumptions towards appropriate behaviour on the part of the employer are subjective, which matches well with the research definition of reorganisational injustice. Secondly, an employee's injustice judgement may also involve holding the employer accountable for a violation of moral expectations.

An actor who is held accountable for immoral behaviour is labelled “transgressor...a person perceived as exerting willpower in pursuit of self-interest with indifference or even callous disregard both for others’ concerns and for dictates known by that person as commonly held moral standards of conduct” (Folger, Cropanzano and Goldman, 2005, p. 217). In this regard, the research definition of reorganisational injustice already considers that management decisions bear the risk of being perceived as a violation of an employer’s moral obligations, or as a perceived transgression of the legitimate rights of employees.

One approach to measure an employer’s moral transgressions is about perceived choice and the availability of less disadvantageous alternatives, as employees apply “moral principles that hold people accountable for the implications of their discretionary behavior” (Folger and Cropanzano, 1998, p. 175). The reference towards discretionary behaviour shows that employees consider whether an employer has made the right choices among feasible alternatives, and this section will now describe how morality shapes a two-step-assessment which finally enables an employee’s injustice judgement in the course of reorganisations.

In a first step, an employee’s assessment of an adherence to moral principles covers what the employer did and what he could have done, focusing on managerial discretion: “other feasible options – alternatives over which personal control could be exercised” (Folger and Cropanzano, 1998, p. 186). In the scenario of a cut in salary, for example, it makes a difference whether employees believe that the employer had no other choice, and that the pay cut was important for the survival of the company, or whether employees believe that there would have been less harmful alternatives, which would have affected the employees less. The perceived availability of alternatives, however, allows a subsequent assessment.

Bearing an employee’s perceived expectations and perceived moral imperatives in mind, moral principles can be used to consider what an employer should have done in the sense of the alternative an employer should have chosen among feasible alternatives. Staying with the scenario of pay cuts, a reduction of management bonuses or cuts related to any other costs than salary could for example be perceived as an alternative the employer should have considered instead of cutting wages. Thus, this thesis argues that

an employee's judgements on reorganisational injustice, and in particular disadvantageous change, can be measured with reference to the perceived alternatives of an employer by the use of a two-step assessment covering what an employer could have done – and what an employer should have done instead; namely the perceived morally right selection of a less harmful alternative. Accordingly, an employee's perception of immoral or unfair reorganisations is related to an employer's morally wrong selection of an unnecessarily harmful alternative for the staff of a company.

Hence, it is hypothesised that this two-step-assessment determines whether staff dishonesty as a means to correct wrongful behaviour on the part of the employer can be morally justified by employees or not. If employees believe that an employer had no other choice than to cut salary, for example because of increased competition or an inevitable investment in new technologies, the moral blaming of an employer cannot work. If employees believe that the employer is guilty of not having chosen a feasible alternative which would have been less harmful for employees, action against this employer can become morally justified, as will be argued in the subsequent section.

Folger and Cropanzano argue that employees who perceive the management of “wrongdoing – also have a desire to reproach the wrongdoers” (1998, p. 79), while reproach is defined as “the urge not only to reprimand but also to punish” (Folger and Cropanzano, 1998, p. 80). Moreover, the researchers argue that in particular anger is a suitable concept to consider when analysing consequences of inequity, because “it constitutes a focused reaction rather than merely a diffuse emotional state of distress. Feeling unfairly treated by...some institution gives anger a direction, a target” (Folger and Cropanzano, 1998, p. 19). This finding is supported by studies on staff dishonesty as a consequence of anger and frustration (Spector, 1997) or anger and feelings of revenge (Bies, Tripp and Kramer, 1997). Accordingly, anger forms a promising factor to assess potential consequences of perceived injustice.

The allocation of blame for wrongdoing, however, is not necessarily as easy as in the scenario of pay cuts, where the employer can easily be accused as the actor, and the assessment of feasible and more appropriate alternatives does not necessarily have to be limited to the employer. Employees might also ask themselves what constitutes their own moral obligation in the employer-employee relationship. When it comes to

learning new job skills, for example, the learning effort could be perceived as a burden, a chance or as an employee's obligation. Hence, an employee's subjective expectations directed towards the employer, and finally assumptions about own duties, may result in widely differing perceptions of the morality or injustice of change measures.

This section has shown that moral injustice forms an independent approach to examine how employees make injustice judgements related to reorganisations. Accordingly, employees' perceptions of an employer acting immorally constitute a further dimension of injustice, which complements firstly perceptions of an unfair input-outcomes ratio in the exchange relationship with an employer, secondly perceptions of not having voice and choice in the course of reorganisations, and thirdly perceptions of being uninformed and disrespected in the course of reorganisations. In this regard, each dimension of injustice forms an independent potential trigger of staff dishonesty, meaning that each dimension of injustice can act as a stimulant of staff dishonesty even when perceptions of fairness prevail in the remaining three dimensions.

On the whole, these four dimensions provide a comprehensive approach to measure perceptions of reorganisational injustice as a potential predictor of rises in tolerant attitudes towards staff dishonesty.

As this thesis assumes that perceptions of reorganisational injustice lead to an increase in tolerant attitudes towards staff dishonesty, the next section will theorise morality as a means to explain employees' reactions on perceived injustice.

## **2.5 Corrective Justice**

With a look at the workplace experience as a trigger of staff dishonesty, it has already been argued that staff dishonesty can form a behavioural response to an employer which is perceived to act wrongfully from an employee's point of view (Greenberg, 1990; Hollinger, 1986; Ditton, 1977). In this connection, perceptions of right and wrong are also reflected in the denominations of staff dishonesty as a restitution or retaliation response (Greenberg and Scott, 1996), compensatory justice or retributive justice (Darley and Pittman, 2003) or adjusting the balance (Greenberg,

1990), as each of the denominations implies the reactive nature of staff dishonesty. Thinking of offender motivation, employees can accordingly perceive staff dishonesty as a form of corrective justice; a means to correct injustice and reinstall justice. Thus, this potential motivation to offend in order to correct a perceived injustice or perceived unethical behaviour on the part of the employer is referred to as corrective justice throughout this thesis.

The definition of ethics as “the moral principles that govern a person’s behaviour or how an activity is conducted” (Oxford English Dictionary, 2012, p. 243) helps to examine the motivation of dishonest staff in this context. In terms of this definition, the moral principle behind corrective justice is that dishonest acts are acceptable as long as they serve to correct wrongful behaviour on the part of the employer, hence forming a morally justified option to react. In this scenario, an employee feels morally entitled to engage in dishonest behaviour as a response to mistreatment on the part of the employer, meaning that staff dishonesty becomes the right reaction to an employer who is perceived to behave wrongfully, like in the case of reorganisational injustice. Accordingly, the correcting of injustice describes a potential motivation of those employees who engage in dishonest acts in order to even the score. Hence, reorganisational injustice and its four dimensions form a promising predictor to assess offender motivation.

Furthermore, the degree of a rational versus expressive motivation is considered with reference to the responsive nature of staff dishonesty. Research in the field argues that staff dishonesty can either form a rather rational response in order to restore equity, or a rather emotional, expressive one to punish the employer (Hogan and Emler, 1981; Darley and Pittman, 2003; Greenberg, 1990). Darley and Pittman differentiate between retributive justice and compensatory justice (2003). Compensatory justice is seen as satisfactory by restoring equity when harm is “accidental or without ill intent” (Cropanzano, Stein and Nadisic, 2011, p. 90). Retributive justice in turn is seen as punitive and directed against an accountable wrongdoer acting intentionally. Accordingly, the assessment of whether a decision took place accidentally or with ill intent is based on moral assumptions as well and supports the moral principle behind corrective justice.

The limitation of a conceptual separation between compensatory versus retributive justice is that the consequence of staff dishonesty generally stays the same. Nevertheless, the separation between staff dishonesty as a rather rational or a rather emotional response to perceived injustice makes a difference in terms of offender motivation and the particular forms of staff dishonesty examined in the course of this thesis. The research definition of staff dishonesty encompasses self benefitting behaviour like property deviance and production deviance. In this context, staff dishonesty matches well with a rather rational attempt to correct a perceived material injustice in the exchange relationship with the employer.

Vice versa, a rather emotional response and motivation to punish can be linked to sabotage (Giacalone, Riordan and Rosenfeld, 1997), which does not provide a material gain to the perpetrator. Nevertheless, a rather emotional motivation to engage in staff dishonesty, like being angry at the employer, may also manifest itself in the form of purposively incapable guardianship, which is part of the research definition of staff dishonesty. In this scenario, employees turn a blind eye to third parties damaging the employer. Furthermore, an emotional response without the motivation to obtain a material gain is also possible in a scenario where employees suffer no economic harm; employees could for example consider an employer to act immorally although a reorganisation does not affect themselves, but only fellow employees.

So far, this section has argued that employees can perceive staff dishonesty as a morally right response to correct injustice, and such a reactive nature is also applied to neutralisation, where an employer can for example be perceived as an offender, and not as a victim (Sykes and Matza, 1957). Having the examination of neutralisation in the staff dishonesty section in mind, which has shown that neutralisation forms an important antecedent or facilitator of staff dishonesty, this nevertheless allows two diverging interpretations of an employee's motivation in detail. The first interpretation is that corrective justice works as a mere neutraliser, hence enabling an employee to neutralise that staff dishonesty actually forms an immoral response. In this case, an employee is aware that acts such as theft are wrong, but manages to neutralise the immorality of theft when it takes place as a response to perceived injustice.

The second interpretation is that corrective justice is perceived as right behaviour in itself, and that an employee has a conflicting view of morality, where a dishonest act is committed in the firm belief that it constitutes a morally correct response to perceived reorganisational injustice. In this scenario, neutralisation does not necessarily take place, and moral considerations are conflicting rather than commonly shared but finally neutralised on the part of employees. Thus, employees could regard an employer as an immoral agent who deserves staff dishonesty as a reaction, hence resulting in a more extensive motivation than mere neutralisation.

In this connection, an underlying limitation in the existing literature concerns the assumption of an uncontradicted morality. Neutralisation Theory (Maruna and Copes, 2005) assumes that widely accepted moral principles among offenders can be neutralised in order to offend. Thus, differing perceptions of right or wrong behaviour itself are not taken into consideration. Nevertheless, morality is about beliefs concerning good and bad, right and wrong – and this thesis argues that perceptions may well differ between individuals, an employer and the workforce, and change over time. If staff perceives an employer to violate moral principles and this perception in turn forms a main factor triggering employee theft – should this be considered as a neutralisation of moral principles, or rather as a conflicting perception of morality; a conflicting premise which forms an antecedent of staff dishonesty in itself? In the scenario of pay cuts which are declared as theft on the part of Trade Unions, employees may well feel morally entitled to even the score – and the perceived violation of moral principles becomes a cause of staff dishonesty in itself, where wrongdoing is corrected. Accordingly, these two configurations of offender motivation reflect two different approaches in which morality shapes reactions to perceived injustice.

As the purpose of this section is to examine the way morality shapes employees' reactions to perceived injustice, it will now finally consider to what extent morality may work as a moderator which deters disgruntled employees from engaging in dishonest acts. In general, research has already discussed how the concept of morality and moral values can also work as a moderator of dishonest behaviour (Hirschi, 1969; Lilly, Cullen and Ball, 2011). Applied to disadvantageous organisational change, moral principles can accordingly keep employees honest although perceptions of unfair

treatment exist. In this case, a moral principle which shapes the motivation to offend is for example that theft is wrong in each case, and consequently the extent to which an employer is perceived to violate moral principles cannot trigger corrective justice any more. In this scenario, an employee who feels unfairly treated by an employer nevertheless refrains from theft because such kind of behaviour is perceived, in terms of a moral principle, as a morally wrong and hence an inadequate response. Accordingly, it is argued that morality has the potential to shape the consequences of perceived reorganisational injustice in two completely different ways: either as a moderator to refrain from staff dishonesty, or as a moral principle or neutraliser triggering corrective justice, as will be discussed in the next section.

### 2.5.1 Staff Dishonesty as Corrective Justice

The section on distributive injustice has shown that the concept offers an explanation of how injustice judgements at work are made, arguing that distributive justice forms a perceived balance between the inputs and the outcomes of an employee, a fair return for the work which is done. Without examining the motivation to engage in staff dishonesty in further detail, it was also shown that employees who feel exploited are more likely to engage in property and production deviance. Beyond this, the concept of distributive justice also offers a suitable approach to answer the question how employees react to perceived injustice at work.

It will be argued that maximising outcomes and minimising inputs are main consequences of a workplace experience, where a fair return for the work done is perceived not to exist, and that Equity Theory thereby offers an approach to explain corrective justice as well. In doing so, this section will argue that maximising outcomes matches well with property deviance, while reducing inputs matches well with production deviance - and incapable guardianship, as a reduced propensity to defend company property against misuse forms a means to reduce input as well.

Equity Theory seeks to explain, “when and why...exchanges might seem fair or unfair to employees...and...what employees who felt unfairly treated might do” (Folger and Cropanzano, 1998, p. 3). Therefore, a great value of Equity Theory lies in



its attempt to evaluate not only the antecedents of perceived unfair treatment, but also the consequences. The concept of distributive justice implies that humans “do not simply become dissatisfied with conditions they perceive to be unjust. They usually do something about them” (Adams, 1965, p. 276). Thus, two possible options to restore a balance between own inputs and own outcomes on the part of an employee are seeking more personal gain or providing less input at the workplace.

The importance of an employee’s perceived balance in the input-outcomes ratio implies that an individual who experiences disadvantageous inequity “will reduce inequity, insofar as possible, in a manner that will yield...the largest outcomes” (Adams, 1965, p. 284). Without any reference towards staff dishonesty, the theory notes that an individual may increase his or her outcomes in order to reduce inequity. Nevertheless, this thesis argues that increasing one’s outcomes can take place in the form of property deviance. Hollinger and Clark define property deviance as “those instances where employees acquire or damage the tangible property or assets of the work organization without authorization” (Hollinger and Clark, 1982a, p. 333). The research definition of staff dishonesty focuses on property deviance as well, and refers to theft and the unauthorised use of company property for private purposes in particular. Accordingly, theft and the private use of company property may take place as a means to increase outcomes in order to restore equity.

Thus, distributive injustice provides a possible explanation for the motivation to engage in property deviance – including an explanation where this motivation stems from. Besides this motivation to seek more personal gain, providing less input is another option to restore equity, and employees can for example reduce the effort dedicated to a job. Once more without any reference to staff dishonesty, Equity Theory labelled this scenario “production restriction” (Adams, 1965, p. 283). As a part of the research definition of staff dishonesty, production deviance is defined as a violation of “the formally proscribed norms delineating the minimal quality and quantity of work to be accomplished” (Hollinger and Clark, 1982a, p. 333). Accordingly, sick day abuse, the excessive abuse of office communication means and an unwillingness to exercise social control fall into the category of production deviance and match well with the consequence of decreasing input.

This shows that Equity Theory offers a theoretical framework for production deviance as well, providing another answer to the question how employees may react to perceived injustice at work; the decreasing of input in order to restore equity can form a motivation to engage in production deviance. Accordingly, distributive injustice offers a possible explanation for sick day abuse and explains where this motivation can stem from. In doing so, Equity Theory supports the concept of corrective justice with a theoretical explanation beyond a mere hypothesis.

So far, this section has argued that corrective justice can form a direct response in order to restore equity. Another possibility in this concern is that an increase in property or production deviance is related to neutralisation. In this scenario, perceived inequity enables employees to neutralise the wrongfulness of theft and sick day abuse. Although the deviant act finally stays the same, the motivation to engage in staff dishonesty is composed in a slightly different, rather indirect way when neutralisation takes place. Furthermore, neutralisation can be used to explain scenarios where employees decrease their engagement in capable guardianship, although a reduced willingness to protect company assets from being abused by others can be interpreted as a reduction of inputs as well. Accordingly, several situational triggers of staff dishonesty exist.

## **2.6 Chapter Conclusion**

As the literature review has shown, several explanations for staff dishonesty exist, which can broadly be clustered into those explaining staff dishonesty as a function of personality traits, opportunity, neutralisation or the workplace experience. With reference to the latter, it was demonstrated that the workplace experience forms a source of tension and dissatisfaction indeed, and that in particular change in the workplace experience has the potential to act as a trigger of staff dishonesty, like in the form of pay cuts (Greenberg, 1990). Nevertheless, it became evident that an encompassing conceptualisation of a negative workplace experience does not exist, and that existing studies and literature in the field focus on single situational triggers of staff dishonesty instead.

Furthermore, it was shown that the workplace experience contains a moral dimension where the shared values and beliefs of the workforce shape the thinking of employees. Existing literature in the field emphasises the importance of concepts like workplace attitudes, employees' values or beliefs, and informal workplace norms which touch perceptions of right and wrong behaviour both on the part of the employer and on the part of employees. Although this implies that perceived unfairness in the workplace experience can be used as a conceptual framework to explain motivations to engage in staff dishonesty, factors like perceived immorality, injustice and unfairness were not comprehensively used as an explanation for staff dishonesty so far. This is surprising because a workplace setting suggests that organisational change triggers justice versus injustice assessments of the workplace experience, as morality and justice encompass perceptions on whether reorganisations are good or bad, fair or unfair, meet expectations or not, and how changes in the workplace could and should be managed.

Thus, the literature review has revealed several limitations among existing approaches to explain staff dishonesty; in particular that offender motivation is treated as a rather stable personality trait and accordingly not as a situational variable, that the significance of continuous organisational change is not considered when the workplace experience as a trigger of staff dishonesty is assessed, and that morality and fairness are frequently referred to, but – apart from Neutralisation Theory - not conceptualised when explanations of staff dishonesty are constructed. In this connection, it was illustrated that Neutralisation Theory already combines perceptions of morality with situational triggers, and hence both situational, external factors and an offender's intrinsic decision making, but lacks to consider staff dishonesty as a perceived moral act as such. The same applies to opportunity related approaches, which focus on situational triggers of staff dishonesty, but take offender motivation as a prerequisite of an offence without discussing a potentially situational effect on intrinsic offender motivation. In this regard, the present study assumes that this a lack of attention towards intrinsic offender motivation is rooted in an understanding of criminality which considers the propensity to offend as a rather stable personality trait – without providing evidence that such a criminogenic personality trait exist.

In order to address each of these limitations, four dimensions of reorganisational injustice were examined as key concepts to explain situational motivations to engage in staff dishonesty. These examinations focussed on the question how injustice judgements in the course of reorganisations at the workplace are made by employees. In a first step, three dimensions of reorganisational injustice were derived from Organisational Justice Theory; firstly distributive injustice in terms of increased inputs and decreased outcomes in the exchange relationship with an employer, secondly procedural injustice in terms of employees not having voice and choice when the employer modifies this exchange relationship, and thirdly interactional injustice which encompasses a lack of adequate information on the necessity of reorganisations and insensitive treatment in the course of reorganisations. These three dimensions will be used as a theoretical framework to measure injustice perceptions in times of reorganisations, and in a second step, moral injustice was added as a new concept which expresses a further independent dimension of reorganisational injustice.

In this context, the present study has argued that perceptions of injustice are not necessarily limited to technical features of reorganisations, but that reorganisations as such bear the potential to be perceived as an injustice, when employees believe that an employer did not choose the least harmful alternative for employees in the course of reorganisations. On the whole, the present study constructs the use of four dimensions of reorganisational injustice as a comprehensive approach to test and explain a situational motivation to even the score against an employer who is perceived of acting unfairly on the part of employees, hence offering a set of possible motivations for corrective justice; a concept which reflects the hypothesis of this thesis in itself.

In order to further detail a theoretical framework for corrective justice, it was argued that in particular Equity Theory's focus on the antecedents and consequences of perceived unfair treatment offers a suitable approach to explain the motivation of corrective justice. Equity Theory focuses on an employee's balanced score of inputs and outcomes, and evening this score by reducing inputs or increasing outcomes was found to match well with the theoretical framework of Equity Theory. In this regard, it was demonstrated that increasing outcomes matches well with property deviance, while reducing inputs matches well with production deviance or incapable guardianship, thus

offering a theoretical framework for the research hypothesis of corrective justice. In this connection, the present study conceptualised staff dishonesty as firstly forms of property deviance, such as the private use of office communication means, secondly production deviance, such as sick day abuse, and thirdly incapable guardianship in terms of an unwillingness to protect company property from being abused by fellow employees.

Based on this understanding of corrective justice, it was argued that employees can perceive staff dishonesty as a means to compensate perceived unfair treatment on the part of the employer. With reference to motivation, staff dishonesty accordingly serves as a reaction which is triggered by an employer acting unfairly. Thus, staff dishonesty forms a perceived just means to correct perceived injustice, and thereby becomes a form of corrective justice itself. Accordingly, this study hypothesises that corrective justice is based on a two-step assessment on the part of employees. In a first step, employees assess whether they feel being treated unfairly by their employer or not, and perceptions of such unfair treatment were conceptualised as reorganisational injustice. In a second step, an employee assesses which form of staff dishonesty is appropriate, and property deviance, production deviance and incapable guardianship were conceptualised as measurable forms of corrective justice.

Having assessed and conceptualised the four dimensions of reorganisational injustice, the three forms of staff dishonesty and finally the concept of corrective justice which in sum constitute the theoretical framework to test the research hypothesis, the subsequent chapter will now focus on a research design which can be applied to transform this theoretical framework into an approach collecting insights from employees.

## **Chapter Three: Research Design**

### **3.1 Introduction to Chapter**

This chapter is concerned with the methodological approach chosen to test the present study's hypothesis that staff perceptions of unfair change at the workplace lead to an increase in tolerant attitudes towards staff dishonesty. Such a causal motivation related to staff dishonesty is also referred to as "corrective justice" throughout this thesis; a perception of staff dishonesty as a means to compensate perceived unfairness. Accordingly, this chapter will construct and justify a research design which serves best to gather the information which is needed to examine whether employees' perceptions of the need for corrective justice may influence the motivation to engage in staff dishonesty – or not.

In this connection, the concept of corrective justice forms a directional hypothesis, as staff perceptions of unfair treatment trigger tolerant attitudes towards staff dishonesty. Thus, it is argued that it is unlikely that tolerant attitudes towards dishonest behaviour, like pilfering and sick day abuse, or a lack of willingness to engage in capable guardianship, cause employees to feel being treated unfairly, to have no voice in the change process, or to receive inadequate information on the reasons why reorganisations take place.

Vice versa, it was shown that the quality of the workplace experience forms an important factor which shapes the motivation to engage in staff dishonesty (Sections 2.2.5; 2.2.6). Two key landmark studies on staff dishonesty found that theft rates increased when either salary was reduced (Greenberg, 1990) or job satisfaction was low (Hollinger and Clark, 1982b). With reference to offender motivation, the motivation to engage in staff dishonesty was either interpreted as an expression of dissatisfaction (Hollinger and Clark, 1982b; Greenberg, 1990) or as an attempt to reduce inequity (Greenberg, 1990; Hollinger and Clark, 1983). In another study, theft was also regarded "as a morally justified addition to wages; indeed, as an entitlement due from exploiting employers" (Mars, 1974, p. 224). Hence, Chapter Two offers several hints that the motivation to engage in staff dishonesty is frequently referred to as an attempt to even

the score, or, in other words, an act of corrective justice. Accordingly, these findings underline the directional nature of the research hypothesis.

In order to describe the approach used to test the research hypothesis, Chapter Three presents the chosen approach from broad to specific considerations; i.e. from an underlying philosophical worldview to available options for a research design and finally to the chosen research tool of a self-completion online questionnaire. Following the introduction, the second section of Chapter Three will focus on the philosophical perspective which informs the overall approach. Epistemological and ontological worldviews will be introduced, and it will be argued that corrective justice forms a concept which is constituted by subjective meaning and accordingly reflects the philosophical assumptions of phenomenology and constructionism.

Based on these insights, the third section will compare and contrast possible options for the research design of this thesis and argue that online self-completion questionnaires form the best among available options to measure socially constructed attitudes towards both the perceived unfairness of the workplace experience and staff dishonesty, hence providing a means to test the research hypothesis.

In the fourth section, the design of the questionnaire will be introduced in greater detail, and the predictor and outcome variables used to operationalise the research hypothesis will be presented. Unfairness perceptions form the independent variable, and the justice dimensions will be translated into items which contextualise both the unfairness of treatment and the context of organisational change. Attitudes towards staff dishonesty form the dependent variable and will be translated into items which contextualise the neutralisation of harm and wrongfulness in the area of production and property deviance. Moreover, the preparedness to engage in whistle-blowing will be measured as an indicator of capable guardianship, hence serving as a further dependent variable in the immediate context of staff dishonesty.

Following this justification of the design of the questionnaire, the section will turn to examine the research setting and argue that it is particularly suitable because of the frequent reorganisations which serve as a point of reference in order to measure unfairness perceptions. Subsequently, both the design of the pilot study and the attitude

survey will be presented, and the measures implemented to overcome the weaknesses of self-completion online questionnaires will be described. The fourth section will then focus on how the attitude survey was conducted and introduce the sampling procedure and design that was chosen. With reference to representativeness, existing limitations will be taken into account. The demographic data of the attitude survey population and the research population will be compared, and it will be argued that the chosen procedure produced a representative sample of the research population. Furthermore, the final chapter section will provide a conclusion of the chapter.

## **3.2 Philosophical Perspective**

### **3.2.1 The View of Constructionism**

The concept of corrective justice implies that the subjective character of fairness forms the focus of this thesis; both in terms of the perception of the workplace experience as fair or unfair, and in terms of the potential perception of staff dishonesty as a fair response to an employer who is perceived to act unfairly. In the latter case, the motivation to engage in staff dishonesty – and hence the subjective meaning of staff dishonesty - is about restoring fairness: an employee strikes back in order to even the score. Thus, the research aim of this thesis requires the gathering of insights into patterns of subjective attitudes towards fairness in the workplace experience and staff dishonesty. With this reference to subjective meanings, the overall approach reflects a certain philosophical perspective, an ontological set of assumptions.

Ontology is defined as the “philosophy concerned with the nature of being” (Oxford English Dictionary, 2012, p. 501), and focuses on the question whether social phenomena exist independently as facts which are external to humans, or whether they exist only as social constructions of humans, hence being dependent on human consciousness (Crotty, 1998). Accordingly, ontology is concerned with differences between appearance and reality (Williams and Arrigo, 2006), and with reference to the research hypothesis, fair treatment could for example either exist as an objective fact within a company setting, or as a social construction of employees within a company. The purpose of this thesis, however, is to test whether corrective justice forms a



particular motivation to engage in staff dishonesty. Hence, it is the perception of fairness itself which is needed to test the research hypothesis.

Thus, a suitable research tool has to gather knowledge on whether corrective justice is true for the employees who answer the questionnaire, and not whether corrective justice exists as a true factor apart from employees' consciousness. Accordingly, this tool reflects a philosophical perspective which recognises social phenomena like corrective justice as being constructed by humans, and not as concepts which exist independent of human consciousness. Vice versa, a reality which exists external to employees is not in the focus of this thesis, as the research hypothesis – and testing the research hypothesis – focuses exclusively on the way in which employees subjectively construct fairness perceptions throughout their workplace experience.

In doing so, the chosen approach reflects a constructionist philosophy, and constructionism is defined as

the view that all knowledge, and therefore all meaningful reality as such, is contingent upon human practices, being constructed in and out of interaction between human beings and their world, and developed and transmitted within an essentially social context. (Crotty, 1998, p. 42)

This philosophical view is also inherent in the concept of corrective justice, which contains the research hypothesis that the workplace experience as a typical interaction between human beings can trigger tolerant attitudes towards staff dishonesty. Thus, tolerant attitudes towards staff dishonesty are constructed as a means to even the score.

An important facet of constructionism is that meaning is not created, but constructed through the subjective experience of an objective external world, and human experiences, like the workplace experiences of employees, “do not constitute a sphere of subjective reality separate from, and in contrast to, the objective realm of the external world” (Crotty, 1998, p. 45). In compliance with this constructionist approach, this thesis acknowledges organisational change in the workplace experience as a trigger of subjective unfairness perceptions on the part of employees. In doing so, the reference to organisational change in the workplace forms an objective contribution to the

constructionist approach. This thesis examines corrective justice as an immediate object of the workplace experience, and it is this reduced focus on a particular phenomenon to be tested which allows reducing the interaction with employees in the research setting to questions which exclusively relate to corrective justice.

Beyond the worldviews related to an either objective or constructionist philosophical perspective, epistemological considerations focus on the nature of knowledge which can be obtained, and “Different ways of viewing the world shape different ways of researching the world” (Crotty, 1998, p. 66), as will be demonstrated later in this section. Epistemology, the Greek word for “theory of knowledge” (Williams and Arrigo, 2006, p. 23) is defined as “the study of the nature of knowledge and justification: in particular, the study of (a) the defining components, (b) the substantive conditions or sources, and (c) the limits of knowledge and justification” (Moser, 2002, p. 3). Epistemological considerations address in particular the question how the social world can be studied, and whether quantitative research tools which are used in the natural sciences are suitable to research the social world (Bryman, 2012; Crotty, 1998).

In this respect, a main criticism towards quantitative research is that it fails to acknowledge the difference between humans and nature, and hence “the differences between the social and the natural world” (Bryman, 2012, p. 178). This difference relates to subjective meanings and emotions of humans which exist in a social world, but not in an objective, natural world, where natural sciences traditionally use quantitative measures. The two opposed “sociological theories” (Cooper, 2001, p. 3) - or philosophical perspectives – whereof one states that social reality has to be seen as being constructed by humans, while a second perspective argues that a social reality external to humans exists, were already introduced. Based on these differing perspectives, a subsequent criticism of quantitative research in social science is that only qualitative in-depth research is able to understand the meaning of social experiences for humans (Hagan, 2010; de Vaus, 2001). This exclusive link between methods, ontology and finally epistemology, however, “is far from justified” (Crotty, 1998, p. 15), as research methods are not exclusively related to either objectivism or constructivism. With reference to the chosen methodology, “There is nothing about the

logic of cross-sectional designs that requires the use of quantitative or qualitative data. The key thing is that data are systematic” (de Vaus, 2001, p. 191).

Whilst transferring the nature of knowledge to the nature of research tools, a strict separation of quantitative and qualitative research potential mirrors an objectivist philosophical perspective, as it attributes an objectivist reality - i.e. independent of human consciousness - to research methods, and neglects the potential of social researchers to apply quantitative tools in order to communicate with humans - like in the case of self-completion questionnaires. Accordingly, and despite using online self-completion questionnaires, and hence a quantitative research tool, this thesis has a phenomenological epistemological orientation and refers to a constructionist ontology. In doing so, this thesis defines phenomenology as a critical reinterpretation of subjectively experienced phenomena (Crotty, 1998) in employees’ everyday lives, which matches well with a reinterpretation of staff dishonesty as an act of corrective justice. In this connection, fairness and corrective justice are concepts which can be attributed to the social world only, and not to nature, hence supporting the underlying distinction between a social and a natural world. Nevertheless, quantitative research is suitable to test the causality implied in the research hypothesis of this study, whereas qualitative research designs are less suitable to prove causal relationships (de Vaus, 2001; Crotty, 1998).

As discussed earlier, both quantitative and qualitative methods can serve to examine an employee’s subjective perceptions towards corrective justice. “What was your motivation to engage in staff dishonesty” would be an open question which could be used, for example, as a means to explore such a motivation in qualitative in-depth interviews. The purpose of this thesis, however, is neither to *explore* unknown phenomena nor to understand the meaning of staff dishonesty as a whole. The purpose of this thesis is to *test* one assumed social phenomenon, corrective justice, and this purpose allows reducing the communication to test this factor to a quantitative research method using closed questions in a self-completion online questionnaire.

In order to do so, a company setting was chosen to test these subjective factors in an environment which objectively exists; the company which forms the research setting of this thesis. Within this kind of research setting, an employer-employee

relationship forms a typical social interaction and it was shown that the workplace experience forms an everyday life experience which was found to be a continuous source of conflict when it comes to fairness perceptions on the part of employees (Sections 2.2.5; 2.2.6). Hence, fairness and corrective justice are key concepts of this thesis which constitute important constructs for employees in order to make sense of the “world which they experience as the reality of their daily lives. It is these thought objects of theirs which determine their behaviour by motivating it” (Schutz, 1962, quoted in Bryman, 2012, p. 30). Thus, this thesis tests the importance of selected thought objects and gathers knowledge on whether a causal link between two thought objects exists – or not.

Knowledge is defined as “justified, true belief” (Shope, 2002, p. 29), and “perception, memory, consciousness...and reason” (Audi, 2002, p. 72) are regarded as the classical sources of knowledge. Accordingly, this thesis seeks to use fairness perceptions in terms of the “consciousness of the inner world” (Audi, 2002, p. 76) as a source to investigate a causal relationship between subjective phenomena.

### 3.2.2 Researching Probabilistic Causality

In this regard, the knowledge aimed at deviates from the causal relationships which are examined in natural sciences. Beyond drawing on an objective reality which exists apart from human consciousness, positivism also emphasises the certainty and accuracy of knowledge (Williams and Arrigo, 2006). With reference to the examination of causal relationships, objectivism applies objective truth to causal relationships, meaning that the same quantifiable results are expected as certain when causation is repeatedly tested, and such a perception of causation is also described as *deterministic* (de Vaus, 2001). Social science, in turn, predominantly draws on *probabilistic* causality, meaning “that a given factor increases (or decreases) the probability of a particular outcome” (de Vaus, 2001, p. 5). The hypothesis related to corrective justice reflects probabilistic causation as well; it is assumed that unfairness increases the probability of tolerant attitudes towards staff dishonesty. Apart from the direct reference to motivation, corrective justice finally relates to staff dishonesty in the same way as other situational factors like suitable targets and capable guardians do; constituting one

among several factors which can increase staff dishonesty, but cannot offer certainty about staff dishonesty.

### 3.2.3 Remaining Impact of Objectivism

Despite these differences between social sciences and constructionism on the one hand, and natural sciences and objectivism on the other hand, the philosophy of objectivism has an impact on staff dishonesty as well. The philosophical stance opposed to constructionism is “Objectivism - the notion that truth and meaning reside in their objects independently of any consciousness” (Crotty, 1998, p. 42). It was already argued that corrective justice cannot exist independently of an employee’s consciousness, but nevertheless, the influence of objectivism on staff dishonesty – and research on staff dishonesty - has to be considered. Looking at the history of the concept of crime, in ancient philosophy “crime was regarded as a form of vice or immoral behavior” (Williams and Arrigo, 2006, p. 6), whereas the theological perspective of the middle ages treated crime as a sin (Williams and Arrigo, 2006). These historical classifications of crime reflect an objectivist stance, and the phenomenon of crime gained the meaning of wrong behaviour independent of human consciousness.

In the same manner, Chapter Two has shown that the preparedness to engage in staff dishonesty is frequently seen as a stable personality trait (Hirschi, 1986; Clarke and Cornish, 2001). Furthermore, Neutralisation Theory assumes that offenders still share the values of society, but manage to neutralise them and maintain a non-criminal self-concept. In both cases, the philosophical perspective behind these approaches is objectivism, assuming that dishonesty is, objectively, and apart from human consciousness, always wrong. Hence, the reinterpretation of staff dishonesty as a right answer to wrong treatment is contradicting an objectivist definition of staff dishonesty.

Thus, the present study argues that this lack of neutrality in the perception of staff dishonesty is also mirrored in the conceptual label “dishonesty”, which implicitly values dishonesty as wrong and thereby shapes the perception of staff dishonesty as wrong behaviour. Correspondingly, the same applies to the labels of deviance, misconduct, and antisocial or counterproductive behaviour, which represent an

objectivist and realist view of morality, “objective, universal standards of right and wrong, good and evil” (Williams and Arrigo, 2006, p. 23). Accordingly, the moral imperatives of the philosophical worldview which underlie these labels for staff dishonesty may have seduced researchers to underestimate the motivation to engage in staff dishonesty as right behaviour; hence forming a perceived morally appropriate answer. The moral imperative behind the labelling of staff dishonesty is not neutral, and research “should never lose sight of the fact that the particular set of meaning it (culture) imposes has come into being to serve particular interests and will harbour its own forms of oppression, manipulation and other forms of injustice” (Crotty, 1998, p. 81). Staff dishonesty can only be dishonest as related to formal laws and company rules imposed on employees and accordingly, both laws and company rules bear the risk of being perceived as unfair in themselves. Thus, these risks are real only from a constructionist perspective, where humans give a subjective meaning to the social world around them.

Following the philosophical perspective of constructionism, this thesis regards reality as “what is real for the people living it; and knowledge of that reality is what is true for them. Rather than searching for universal, objective truths, constructivism allows for multiple truth reflective of multiple realities” (Williams and Arrigo, 2006, p. 27).

With reference to crime, the diversity of ethical perspectives is also mirrored in a stance which argues as follows: “that people have a moral obligation to disobey unjust laws implies that criminal behavior can be, under specified conditions, more ethical than conformist behavior”(Martin Luther King, quoted in Williams and Arrigo, 2006, p. 31). Accordingly, “in the context of criminal activity, ethics challenges us to consider what people are doing when engaged in this behavior” (Williams and Arrigo, 2006, p. 31). This position is a logical enhancement of the research hypothesis which is tested; dishonesty is not only a morally correct answer to experienced unfairness, but it is even unethical to refrain from striking back. Although the research hypothesis does not go that far, the idea of a moral obligation to disobey shows to what extent crime can be conceptualised as right behaviour.

Altogether, an examination of the philosophical worldview behind the present study's hypothesis has shown that concepts of fairness and corrective justice are highly subjective. Moreover, it was shown that the required research design does not strive to examine the motivation to engage in staff dishonesty as a whole, but provides a reduced focus on the concept of corrective justice instead. With these requirements in mind, the next section will compare and contrast different research designs which are able to gather the data needed to test a corrective justice effect.

### **3.3 Justification of the Chosen Approach**

The function of a research design has been described as “to ensure that the evidence obtained enables us to answer the initial question as unambiguously as possible” (De Vaus, 2001, p. 9). So what kind of evidence does the directional hypothesis of corrective justice require in order to be tested? The purpose of this section is about answering this question and choosing the best among available options which are able to collect the required evidence, and it will finally be demonstrated that self-completion online questionnaires form the best option.

Due to the concept of corrective justice, fairness perceptions are determined as predictor variables and staff dishonesty, or attitudes towards staff dishonesty, as an outcome variable. Accordingly, one approach to obtain the evidence needed to test the research hypothesis is about comparing two groups, whereof one group consists out of employees which feel being treated fairly, and a second group consists of employees which feel they are being treated unfairly. Following this approach, the attitudes towards staff dishonesty can be compared on whether they support the hypothesis of a corrective justice effect – or not. As long as attitudes towards staff dishonesty – and the willingness to engage in capable guardianship - are referred to, employees in a workplace setting can serve as a research population.

Another logical approach is about accessing staff with a known record of disciplinary action. Following this approach, the motivation of such staff can be focused upon and it can be examined whether corrective justice motivations formed a trigger to engage in staff dishonesty or not. Whether accessing staff or offenders, however, the

information which is needed in order to test the research hypothesis is reduced to the variables which are tested; fairness dimensions, property and production deviance as well as incapable guardianship. In this connection, the research aim of this thesis is based on a set of variables which were derived from the contemporary literature, and this thesis does not seek to explore which further variables shape perceptions of fairness or dishonesty. Hence, the nature of the data which had to be gathered in order to test the research hypothesis suggests the use of closed questions. Open ended questions serve to generate theories – and closed questions serve to test theories on subjective meaning, knowing that only a limited range of possible views can be reflected in this approach (Creswell, 2014). Furthermore, closed questions exploit a major strength of quantitative research, as they are able to test causality by the use of statistical response evaluation e.g. with reference to fairness perceptions and corrective justice which can finally be addressed to a larger research population by the use of closed questions in questionnaires.

Vice versa, open questions are not required in order to test the present study's research hypothesis. In contrast to the type of evidence which is looked for, open questions even bear the potential and "risk" of revealing a multitude of factors which contribute to fairness perceptions, and a further multitude of potential motivations to engage in staff dishonesty. Such a multitude of concepts, however, is not required to test the narrow focus of the research hypothesis on corrective justice, as this hypothesis can be tested with a reduced set of concepts which has already been derived from the literature review, as will be shown in the subsequent section 3.4.1. Accordingly, this thesis does not strive to deliver a full explanation of motivations for staff dishonesty, but tests whether a limited set of factors is able to contribute to a motivation for staff dishonesty or not. In this regard, the theoretical conceptualisation of what constitutes meaningful fairness perceptions and meaningful reactions in the area of staff dishonesty was extracted from the literature, and not from open questions towards staff or convicted offenders; the latter could have preceded the attitude survey in a mixed methods design. Drawing a theoretical framework from the literature constitutes a priori reasoning, which is defined as "proposing, on the basis of theoretical considerations and previous research, that X will cause Y and will therefore be correlated" (de Vaus, 2001, pp. 179-180).



Available tools for closed questions are structured interviews and questionnaires, and self-completion questionnaires were found to be less prone to social desirability effects than interviews (Sudman and Bradburn, 1982; Tourangeau and Smith, 1996). A social desirability bias is defined as “A distortion of data that is caused by respondents’ attempts to construct an account that conforms to a socially acceptable model of belief or behaviour” (Bryman, 2012, p. 716). In this connection, fairness perceptions and attitudes towards staff dishonesty form sensitive attitudes and hence a potential trigger of social desirability.

Employees in the research setting might well be inclined to answer dishonesty related questions in a way which conforms with an employer’s official code of conduct regulating for example the use of company property. Hence, confessions like “the company deserves to be cheated” are at risk to be withheld in an interview with a researcher being an employee of the same company. In this regard, an interviewer effect had to be considered as well, and both the researcher’s status as a fellow employee or the researcher’s professional background as a member of the research setting’s security department might have provoked answers which comply with forms of behaviour that are desirable from an employer’s point of view. Accordingly, a distance between the researcher and the research participants by means of self-completion questionnaires formed the most reliable method in terms of reducing social desirability bias. Beyond that, social desirability was also acknowledged as being related to anonymity and confidentiality of the data subject.

Providing anonymity and confidentiality during the attitude survey was regarded as a crucial predisposition not only to gain the trust of several hundred employees to participate in the study, but also to reduce social desirability bias in the course of answering critical questions. It is argued that any lack of trust in the anonymity of the survey could have triggered either a lack of willingness to participate or social desirability bias in the course of answering the questions. In this regard, self-completion questionnaires constitute a completely anonymous and confidential research approach without interviewer bias (Fielding and Thomas, 2001) and the anonymity of the research design was a basic requirement to obtain the necessary approvals in order to be

allowed to address employees in the company setting; the importance of anonymity and confidentiality will be referred to in more detail in the subsequent section 3.4.7.

Furthermore, company staff proved to be both easier to approach and more numerous than a sample of staff with a known record of disciplinary action. In connection with larger research populations, online self-completion questionnaires have the advantage to leave the respondents the choice to participate whenever it fits, which supports the economic creation of a larger sample size (Balch, 2010). This feasibility to address a larger group of respondents in a short time span of several weeks also supports the extraction of a representative sample within the research population. Hence, for these reasons of availability, feasibility, confidentiality and precision, the researcher decided to employ self-completion online questionnaires in order to test corrective justice perceptions with staff in the research setting.

Concerning the research setting, it is argued that a larger company provides both a comparable situational context for the research population and an increased homogeneity among the research population, which shares organisational employment, organisational culture and the experience of organisational change. In this context, the homogeneity of a research population increases the confidence level and hence the generalisability of the research findings as well (Creswell, 2014). Accordingly, a larger company which experienced ongoing reorganisations was chosen, and it was already shown that organisational change in the workplace experience forms a potential trigger of perceived unfairness and staff dishonesty (Section 2.2.6).

With reference to the research tool of online self-completion questionnaires and the research setting, it is argued that this overall approach which was chosen formed a combination of the best available options; a bigger sample of offenders was not available in the research setting where the researcher had access to company resources. In doing so, the design which was chosen for this thesis is also in line with the three key characteristics of an approach referred to as a cross sectional design; “no time dimension; reliance on existing differences rather than change following intervention; and groups based on existing differences rather than random allocation” (de Vaus, 2001, p. 170). The lack of a time dimension complies with the one-off nature of the self-completion questionnaire, the study relies on existing differences in fairness

perceptions, the statistical analysis of the results will be based on groups with different attitude sets, and “there is nothing inherent in cross-sectional designs that precludes trying to access the meaningful dimensions of human behaviour and building these into explanations” (de Vaus, 2001, p. 184), hence contributing to the research aim of this thesis.

A quantitative approach in the form of self-completion online questionnaires served to measure employees’ attitudes towards the concept of corrective justice and hence to examine a potential causal relationship between perceived unfair treatment at work and tolerant attitudes towards staff dishonesty. Quantitative research allows, unlike qualitative research, an evaluation of causes and effects by the use of predictor and outcome variables (Field, 2009), and in particular questionnaires have proved to be able to ask research participants for meanings (Marsh, 1982). Furthermore, Chapter Two has already shown that research on staff attitudes towards staff dishonesty has frequently addressed meanings by the use of questionnaires or interviews (Horning, 1970; Hollinger and Clark, 1982b; Speed, 2003; Bamfield, 2003). The strength of questionnaires is that they form an economic means to better understand attitudes, and the self-completion online questionnaires which were used in this thesis served to structure and test a cause and effect relationship between perceived unfair treatment and rises in tolerant attitudes towards staff dishonesty.

Nevertheless, the use of questionnaires and quantitative research is also subject to criticism. A generic criticism refers to a static nature of quantitative research, which “creates a sense of a static social world that is separate from the individuals who make it up” (Bryman, 2012, p. 179). As this thesis focuses on organisational change and its impact on fairness perceptions, changes in the employees’ lives and subjective meanings are in the centre of the quantitative approach, thus not constituting a static view on the social world. With a focus at fairness within the workplace experience, the emphasis lies at subjective perceptions and meaning from the employees’ point of view, hence focussing on the view of individuals which make up their social world. The concept of corrective justice, in turn, is completely constructed by employees, and a questionnaire focussing on the workplace experience with respondents located at the place of work provided an approach to gain insights into employees’ subjective interpretations of the social procedures and effects asked for. In this connection, it has

to be considered that not the complexity of the workplace experience as a whole was looked at, but a reduced number of factors which are related to the workplace experience; a reduced number of factors which is either significantly related to each other or not.

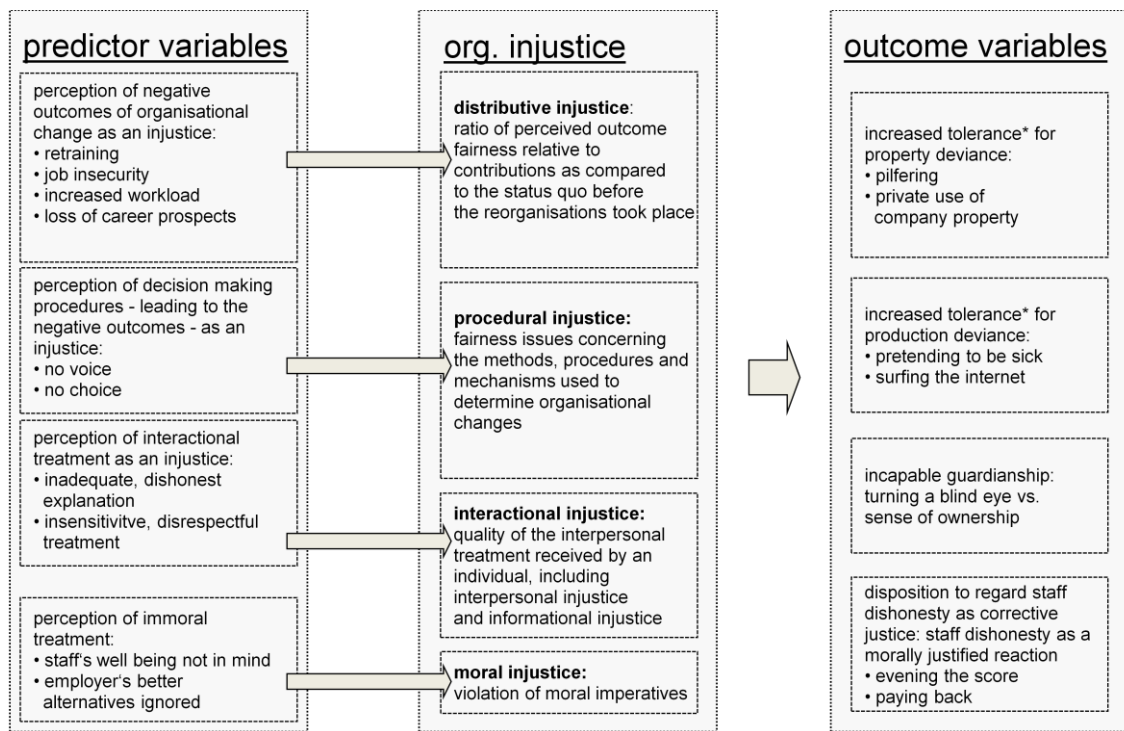
Having examined why self-completion questionnaires form the best among available options, the next section will demonstrate how the questionnaire was operationalised; i.e. designed, tested and finally distributed to the research population.

### **3.4 Using Self-Completion Online Questionnaires**

#### **3.4.1 Operationalisation of the Research Hypothesis**

This section will describe how the concepts within the questionnaire were used to operationalise the research hypothesis. With the aim to produce a consistent measure of perceived organisational unfairness in the course of organisational change, four concepts which reflect the contemporary literature on organisational injustice dimensions were used as predictor variables in the first half of the questionnaire. In the second half of the questionnaire, four concepts which either conceptualise important dimensions of staff dishonesty or situational triggers of staff dishonesty were used to measure staff dishonesty as an outcome variable. An overview of the variables and the situational context which was used to transform the concepts into items in the course of the operationalisation is provided below.

**Figure 4: Overview of Predictor and Outcome Variables**



\* tolerance in terms of neutralisation of harm and denial of wrongfulness

In order to assure a continuous relevance of items for the testing of the hypothesis, the list of items was cross-referenced with the theoretical framework which supports the research hypothesis. In doing so, a use of four variables each was implemented in order to operationalise the relevant theoretical concepts into predictors and outcomes. As can be seen in Figure 4, four injustice dimensions conceptualise the predictor of a perceived unfair workplace experience, and these dimensions of injustice were already discussed in greater detail (Sections 2.4.1 to 2.4.4). Vice versa, four criminogenic motivators were used to measure tolerance levels towards staff dishonesty, which reflect the research definition of staff dishonesty which was already presented (Section 2.1.4). Based on the findings in the literature review, the three dimensions of distributive, procedural and interactional injustice were derived from Fairness Theory (Folger and Cropanzano, 1998), while the dimension of moral injustice was developed and added for the purpose of the present study. In the same manner, criminogenic attitudes were related to main findings in the literature on staff dishonesty, such as the concepts of production and property deviance (Hollinger and Clark, 1982b) and routine activity's factor of a lack of capable guardianship (Cohen and Felson, 1979). Likewise,

a fourth outcome variable was developed and added in the course of the present study and encompasses the concept of corrective justice itself.

Exemplary items will now be introduced, and the single items referred to in this section can be found in the questionnaire, which is attached to this thesis together with the survey invitation letter (Appendix A, Appendix B). With the aim to test the research hypothesis by means of an online self-completion questionnaire, references towards the unfairness of organisational change were combined with the dimensions of organisational justice for the purpose of developing concepts which can serve as predictor variables. Distributive injustice was related to change measures affecting the input-outcomes ratio of employees. Increased input was formulated in items addressing retraining (item 10) and increased workload (item 9), while decreased outcomes were formulated in items addressing job insecurity (item 5) and a loss of career prospects (item 8).

Procedural injustice items were related to the availability of voice and choice in the change period, like being able to speak freely about reorganisations (item 12) or being able to shape organisational change or not (items 13 and 14). Interactional injustice was related to the sensitivity of treatment and the availability of adequate information in the change period, like being treated respectfully in the course of reorganisations (item 21) or receiving clearly explained reasons for the necessity of the reorganisations (item 18). Furthermore, moral injustice was related to feasible and better alternatives an employer could have chosen instead of implementing the organisational changes which took place (item 16 and 17) versus having had no other choice than to reorganise (item 15). This approach refers to the conceptualisation of morality in terms of *could* and *should* (Folger and Cropanzano, 1998), and hence addresses the value dimension of employees in terms of their beliefs in what the employer *could* have done, hence referring to available options, and the selection an employer *should* have made among the available options.

Concerning the outcome variables, production deviance and property deviance were used as two concepts directly measuring tolerant attitudes towards staff dishonesty, while the concept of incapable guardianship was used to measure an important situational factor which affects staff dishonesty. Neutralisation, a factor

shaping the motivation to engage in staff dishonesty, was used to support the measurement of the outcome variables rather than being measured as a separate concept itself. In doing so, the concepts of property and production deviance were related to neutralisation and morality of either increasing outcomes or decreasing input, like taking home company property for private use (item 26) or pretending to be sick (item 31).

At the same time, both the perceived harmfulness and wrongfulness of staff dishonesty were addressed in order to develop measurable outcome variables, like “...some pretended sick days do not harm the company” (item 31) or “...it is ok for some employees to spend hours a workday surfing the internet for private purposes” (item 29). For the purpose of this thesis, the harmfulness and wrongfulness of staff dishonesty are referred to as tolerant attitudes towards staff dishonesty hereafter. The concept of incapable guardianship was then related to the wrongfulness of whistle-blowing, like “...telling on colleagues is wrong” (item 34) and the likelihood of harm for the whistle-blower, like “...reporting concerns about internal deviance can damage one’s career” (item 36) in order to build the third outcome variable.

Finally, single references towards wrongfulness were applied to outcome variables in a way that reflects corrective justice, like “...some employees think that the company deserves to be cheated” (item 33) or “pilfering can be just paying back for being treated unfairly” (item 27). In combination with an item measuring whether honesty at the workplace pays off or not (item 37), this allowed the measurement of corrective justice as a separate concept and fourth outcome variable. Furthermore, a single control question (item 25) addressed the clarity of what is allowed and what is not allowed at work, because a condition of unclear company rules could have compromised the testing of corrective justice in terms of a conscious violation of company rules.

Beyond testing the research hypothesis, correlation analysis and Cronbach’s alpha were used to explore how far the subsets of reorganisational injustice form separate variables, or build a cluster of large correlation coefficients. Vice versa, the same approach was used to explore the internal consistency of the outcome variables capable guardianship, property deviance, production deviance and corrective justice,

and further statistical tests and their results in the field of regression analysis will be presented in the Chapter Four. In this regard, Cronbach's alpha was continuously measured as it provides a mathematical procedure to split the items forming a factor "in every way possible and computing the correlation coefficient for each split...which is the most common measure of scale reliability" (Field, 2013, p.708). Hence, Cronbach's alpha delivered an insight into the variance of each item and its covariance with other items constituting a factor, and these insights were important in order to explore the particular composition of injustice dimensions in the research setting.

Apart from statistical tests, it is noted that this study's questionnaire served to measure both the extent to which evening the score in order to correct experienced unfairness can create a motivation to engage in staff dishonesty – and the ideal conceptual structure to measure such a condition in the research setting. In this respect, the multitude of concepts served to evaluate construct validity as well, and correlation coefficients among the items of the predictor variables and the outcome variables respectively were used to determine whether the concepts formed variables on their own, or had to be considered as dimensions of a larger concept.

By this approach, the questionnaire examined the impact of organisational change on staff dishonesty in the research setting, and tested the research hypothesis that perceived unfair change in the workplace can increase tolerant attitudes towards staff dishonesty. With regard to the latent nature of justice variables, attitudes towards justice were treated as phenomenological, and this thesis did not seek to examine normative aspects of justice at work. The same applies to attitudes towards corrective justice which shape the level of tolerance towards staff dishonesty.

Following this description how the questionnaire was designed, the next section will describe the research setting which was chosen to distribute the questionnaire.

### 3.4.2 Research Setting

Due to the sensitivity of the research topic, the management of the company which served as the research setting of this thesis supported the research project provided that the research results were published without mentioning the company



explicitly. For this reason, the following description of the research setting will stay generic while presenting a short overview of the particular characteristics which made the company suitable as a setting to test the research hypothesis.

The research setting was the German branch of a larger multinational company in the Information and Communications Technology (ICT) sector. Due to the nature of this sector, competitive pressures and technological innovations have triggered a constant need to adapt. With regard to technical positions in the research setting, it is above all the ongoing technological shift towards All IP (Internet Protocol) communication which causes employees to either acquire related administrator skills, or lose their position as experts in the previous communications technology standard, Integrated Services Digital Network (ISDN). Furthermore, All IP technology is based on a more centralised network structure and therefore requires less regional centres, which forces employees to move to the remaining technical locations in Germany whilst applying for a reduced number of remaining positions. With regard to non-technical positions, competitive pressure in the research setting manifests itself in the form of “Nearshoring”, which describes the transfer of labour to Eastern European countries with a lower salary level. Thus, employees who work for example in departments dealing with finance, customer administration, call centre tasks or personnel administration face the reduction of regional centres as well; a scenario which forces employees to move to the remaining administrative locations in Germany and to apply for a reduced number of remaining positions.

In sum, these changes in technical and non-technical job profiles in the research setting are disruptive as related to the type of labour, the place of work, and the amount of remaining positions. Hence, these pressures have led to increased levels of reorganisations, retraining and staff reductions within the research setting over the past years. Accordingly, the chosen research setting was appropriate to measure subjective unfairness perceptions of employees pertaining to organisational change. Hence, reorganisations which objectively took place were considered as an ideal antecedent in order to test subjective unfairness perceptions of employees. In this connection, the study did not only strive to know how employees subjectively experience injustice, but

also which objective factors lead to this perception, and how perceived unfair treatment and tolerant attitudes towards staff dishonesty relate to each other.

Beyond the chosen setting, a particular characteristic of Germany, German law in general, and larger companies in Germany in particular, is the high level of unionisation and the power of Works Councils (Bundesministerium der Justiz, 2013). A high influence of the Labour Union existed in the research setting as well, and the Works Council had a say when it came to the approval of the use of self-completion questionnaires in the research setting, as will be described later. Apart from these approvals, the Works Council was likely to shape the perception of procedural justice itself; in particular the procedural justice concept of voice (Folger and Cropanzano, 1998). Voice as a relevant fairness characteristic has been introduced in section 2.4.2 as either being able to express one's opinion openly or as being able to shape planned change measures (Folger, 1977) and accordingly, the Works Council as an employee representative function has the potential to serve as the voice of union members and employees within the research setting.

This implies that the sample of respondents of the attitude survey potentially perceived voice as a concept which did not necessarily mean their personal voice, but rather the power of an elected Works Council in influencing organisational change measures. Although the certainty of such an influence cannot be quantified, it is argued that both the formal role of the Works Council in negotiating organisational change measures and the requirement of a Works Council's approval for change measures (Bundesministerium der Justiz, 2013) supports its role as a voice and representative function of employees.

Such an influence shapes choice as well, the potential to choose between feasible alternatives (Folger and Cropanzano, 1998), and an employee may well perceive the Works Council as a representative which finally negotiates and selects the best options for members of staff. Hence, the high degree of unionisation in the research setting formed an important framework condition which does not necessarily exist in other settings, where the legislation gives Works Councils less rights or Works Councils do not even exist.

Another relevant national and cultural characteristic of the research setting is related to uncertainty avoidance; “The extent to which the members of a culture feel threatened by uncertain or unknown situations” (Hofstede, 2001, p. 161). Attitudes which are frequently related to uncertainty avoidance are a pessimistic view of an employer’s motives and change resistance, and Germany scores 65 on the uncertainty avoidance scale (Hofstede, 2001); a value which coincides with a mean score of 65 among 53 participating countries or regions. This in turn implies that the chosen research setting is at least likely to produce different results than a setting in cultures with a lower or higher uncertainty avoidance, when fairness perceptions with reference to organisational change are measured.

In sum, the chosen company setting is suitable because it allows to test attitudes towards identical points of reference in two respects; the employer as a source of injustice, and the employer as the target of corrective justice.

Following the presentation of the questionnaire design and the research setting, the next sections will focus on the procedures which were used to test and distribute the questionnaire.

### 3.4.3 Pilot Study

A pilot study was designed for the purpose of testing the questionnaire in terms of potential weaknesses and limitations which can be related to comprehensibility, respondent fatigue, vertical responding, obtrusiveness and logical order of the items. Hence, the pilot constituted a procedure where “The pretest subjects are asked to critique the instrument, pointing out confusions or misunderstandings and perhaps suggesting more proper wording or issues to be explored” (Hagan, 2010, p. 129). A methodological weakness of self-completion questionnaires is that respondents can reflect on their own definitions, which are not necessarily in line with the concepts which are to be measured. In this regard, testing the wording of the items during the pilot also served to minimise misunderstandings (Simmons, 2001).

The pilot study took place in June 2013 and was designed and executed by the use of SurveyMonkey (2013), an online market-research tool. An email with a link to

the survey was distributed to 33 employees within the research setting of this research, and participants were selected either because they had their offices close to the office of the researcher or because they were personally known to the researcher. While selecting the participants, it was ensured that the pilot sample consisted of colleagues with an academic and a non-academic background. An invitation email contained a brief introduction to the research topic and announced that the researcher would contact the participants of the pilot study in the days after the distribution. Within three weeks, 30 employees took part in the pilot study and the researcher was able to interview the participants either by phone or by visiting them in their offices.

Each participant was asked five questions; whether the items were understandable, whether the sequence of the items appeared to be in the right order, whether some items were found to be offensive or unpleasing, whether the items and the survey as a whole appeared to be boring, and finally whether there was something else they found unusual or worth being revised. In doing so, the researcher received valuable feedback. This section will now continue by summarising the answers to the questions as related to the amount of the feedback received.

*Were the questions offensive or unpleasing?* Only one out of 30 respondents declared that she found some questions “a little bit frightening”, and all other participants did not feel offended by the questions.

*Did the sequence of the questions appear to be in the right order?* Each respondent declared that the sequence of the questions appeared logical. Nevertheless, five respondents declared that they were confused when the transition to the second half of the questionnaire took place, because they thought that the items which displayed exemplary ways employees treat the employer were supposed to be related to reorganisations as well. Due to this input, the researcher decided to explicitly describe what the first and the second half of the questionnaire was about both in the invitation letter and at the starting page of the online survey. Moreover, the title of the questionnaire, “Consequences of reorganisations” was changed into “Fairness in the employer-employee-relationship”.

*Were questions or the survey as a whole boring?* Most respondents declared that quite the contrary, the survey was “interesting”, “something new” and that they were able to tick the answers fluently. None of the respondents declared that the survey was perceived to be boring, but some respondents declared that they missed a progress-bar telling them how close they were to the end of the survey, which was clustered into 7 screens with groups of items. Such feedback can be seen as an indicator of respondent fatigue, and it was kept in mind that some respondents might have cancelled taking part in the survey in a real-run. As a progress-bar is also a standard feature in the company-internal surveys in the research setting, the researcher decided to make use of such a feature in the attitude survey as well. Furthermore, two other respondents complained that they always had to think whether to agree or to disagree, because the design of the items made it impossible to respond vertically. A continuous change between positive and negative items, however, was designed intentionally to minimise the probability of vertical responding.

*Was there something else found to be unusual?* This question revealed a few patterns in the answers given. Seven respondents claimed that they found some questions redundant. The examples given, however, were either positive-negative combinations of different items measuring the same variable, or similarly formulated items measuring different variables. As a consequence, the similar formulation of items measuring different variables was rejected in order to reduce the impression of redundancies.

Three respondents struggled with the indirect way the items addressed them, and two of them claimed that they could not know what others think. Another respondent proposed to cluster items by those asking for facts and those asking for attitudes. This feedback mirrors the phenomenological versus normative debates in social science; the discussion whether normative and factual concepts exist apart from attitudes, or whether a sum of individual attitudes creates a phenomenological reality (Bryman, 2012). In order to reduce this source of confusion, the invitation letter and the starting page of the online survey was rewritten to underline that the survey was about the respondent’s perception of the general attitude in a business unit.

Finally, three other respondents complained that the starting item that followed the demographic cluster, “At my business unit, most employees are afraid of reorganisations” formed a harsh start. Although most employees did not mention the start at all, this issue was found to be easy to solve and the respective item was shifted to a later position in order to enable an easy entry with more general, positive items.

*Were the items understandable?* In sum, most feedback was received to the question whether the items were understandable. The majority of this feedback was about opinions how to formulate one or a few items in a better way, but nevertheless there were a few patterns in the criticism received. Six respondents found that the items were written in a kind of broken German, and criticism concerned the word order and the expressions used. As German is the first language of the researcher, this impression was due to the fact that the questionnaire used for the pilot was literally translated from the first English draft. In doing so, priority had initially been given to the requirements of a verbatim re-translation, and not to a fluent formulation in German everyday language. In consideration of the advantages and disadvantages of the differing approaches, priority was shifted to the comprehensibility of the questionnaire and the items were reformulated in colloquial language with a word order reflecting spoken German. This approach, in turn, helped to consider several criticisms related to single items as well.

Another five respondents complained that the staff-dishonesty related items which contained “there is no excuse for..” were hard to answer, as it would not be clear whether expressing agreement with the issue addressed in these items required to tick the agree or disagree-box. As a consequence, these items were reformulated without negations in order to avoid the need to think in double negatives for respondents.

In a final step, the improved questionnaire was distributed to a reduced number of 10 colleagues once more, which consistently declared that the items were now easier to understand. All in all, the pilot made several concerns visible which had reduced the comprehensibility of the questionnaire, and which presumably would have reduced the response rate of the survey as well.

#### 3.4.4 Attitude Survey

The attitude survey was designed to test how far corrective justice forms a motivation to engage in staff dishonesty. The questionnaire contained 37 items which can be clustered into three groups. The first group of four items covers issues which require individual responses; three demographic variables and one item which addresses the perceived intensity of organisational change within the respondent's business unit.

Concerning the demographic variables, the respondents were asked to give feedback to their gender, age, and length of service within the company. In doing so, age was asked for by the use of younger than 30, the decades from 30 to 39 and 40 to 49, and older than 50. While these broad clusters were designed to support the anonymity of the respondents, the option "not specified" was added for those who might feel comfortable with even increased anonymity. The decision to cluster the age item in four broad clusters takes into consideration that the average age in the research setting was 44 when the study was conducted. The possible responses to item 3, the length of service in the company, were less than five years, five to 10 years, 11 to 20 years, 21 to 30 years and more than 30 years. The decision to cluster the length of service in this way considers both anonymity and an average length of service of approximately 20 years in the company which served as a research setting. The final item with an individual response scale asked, to what extent the respondent's business unit experienced reorganisations within the last two years, and available answers reached from "very large extent", "large extent" and "rather large extent" to "rather low extent", "low extent", "very low extent" and "not at all".

The remaining 33 items started with "At my business unit" and shared a common six-point Likert scale (Procter, 2001) measuring the level of agreement by the use of "strongly agree", "agree", "tend to agree", "tend to disagree", "disagree" and "strongly disagree". In doing so, both a "not specified" and a neutral "undecided" option which could have been the neutral choice within a five-point Likert scale were not offered, as each of these options produces statistically insignificant results. Moreover, these options bear the risk of triggering laziness among those respondents which avoid thinking about the questions and research found that the "inclusion of no-opinion options in attitude measures may not enhance data quality and instead may

preclude measurement of some meaningful opinions” (Krosnick et al., 2002, p. 371). Nevertheless, the online questionnaire allowed the respondents to skip single answers, and it is argued that this option provides the possibility not to answer without explicitly triggering it in each question. This feature was implemented to make sure that no respondent was urged to answer a question. Beyond that, the voluntary and anonymous nature of the study served to exercise no pressure on potential participants as well.

Within the remaining 33 items, the second group of 19 items was designed to measure fairness perceptions as related to the employer, and the third group of 14 items measured the degree of tolerant attitudes towards staff dishonesty. All of the remaining 33 items were designed in a way that the items varied between positive, desirable conditions, and negative, undesirable conditions from an employer’s point of view. These changes serve to avoid vertical responding and supported the measurement of single variables from a different perspective (Bryman, 2012).

Aiming at an easy entry for respondents, the second group of items started with items focussing on a general perception of the past reorganisations, while the most critical items were listed at the end of the questionnaire. Among the 19 variables in the second group, which measured the perceived impact of reorganisations as well as employee perceptions concerning the fairness of treatment received by the employer, 10 items were formulated as a positive, desirable condition and nine items as a negative, undesirable condition. An example of a desirable condition from an employer’s point of view is item number 11; “At my business unit, employees are rewarded fairly”. An example for an undesired condition from an employer’s point of view is item number 17; “At my business unit, the reorganisations are a consequence of earlier mismanagement”. Furthermore, the second group of items contained several items which were inspired by a previous study which looked at staff dishonesty as “A response to the perceived quality of the work experience” (Hollinger and Clark, 1982b, p. 97) and employed items like “My employer is honest” or “The pay is good” (Hollinger and Clark, 1982b, p. 102-103).

In the third group which contained 14 items measuring attitudes towards exemplary ways employees treat company property and the employer, only 4 items



were positive, and 10 items were negative. An initially even distribution between positive and negative items was altered by the results of the pilot survey which found that several desirable items quoting that there were *no excuses* for several forms of staff dishonesty confused the respondents with a double negative in the condition of a disagreeing answer created. As the formulation of staff dishonesty related items without negations was found to be difficult in general, some items on forms of staff dishonesty were reformulated as undesirable statements in order to avoid offering double negative responses. An example for an undesired condition from an employer's point of view is item number 27; "At my business unit, pilfering can be just paying back for being treated unfairly". An example of a desirable condition from an employer's point of view is item number 37; "At my business unit, honesty pays off". This final item was also formulated in a positive way in order to serve as a comparatively abstract and smooth closure of the questionnaire, and hence as an easy exit, as the following action required from respondents was pushing the send-button.

In this context, it is also argued that the sending of a completed questionnaire provides the research participants with transparency and control when it comes to their participation in the study. A crucial ethical requirement is to gain informed consent, meaning "that those who are researched should have the right to know that they are being researched, and that in some sense they should have actively given their consent" (Bulmer, 2001, p. 49). Accordingly, an anonymous self-completion online questionnaire, together with detailed information on the purpose of the study (see Appendix 1 and Appendix 2), provided the respondents with reasonable information to decide on whether to participate in the study or not. Furthermore, the possibility to quit participation during the process of filling out the online questionnaire existed up to the time at which the participants were kindly asked to push a send-button, hence providing an ex post information basis to offer respondents a choice on whether they would finally like to participate in the survey or not. This shows that informed consent on the part of the respondents was adequately assured as a part of the research design up to the final item of the questionnaire.

Throughout the aforementioned items, the respondent was not addressed personally, like "At my business unit, I am rewarded fairly". Instead, both the positive

and the negative items addressed employees in general, like “At my business unit, employees are rewarded fairly”. This approach was chosen for two reasons. First, an indirect approach was found to be more efficient to measure attitudes towards staff dishonesty (Speed, 2003). While social desirability remains an issue which limits the validity of a questionnaire on critical issues, addressing the general attitude in a business unit was expected to be less prone to social desirability than addressing the respondents’ attitudes directly.

The second reason is that the sample population in the research setting consisted of the workforce as a whole, and not of staff with a known disciplinary record. Hence, a questionnaire design asking employees which did not engage in forms of staff dishonesty how they considered engaging in staff dishonesty themselves would have been presumptive and hence badly received. Nevertheless, employees are able to tell on the general attitude towards staff dishonesty in a company, and several studies found that work group attitudes were an important predictor of the level of staff dishonesty (Horning, 1970; Skarlicki and Folger, 1997; Boye and Jones, 1999). Therefore, the items throughout the questionnaire were related to tolerant attitudes towards staff dishonesty, and not towards committing acts of staff dishonesty itself.

In order to run the attitude survey within the research setting, several formal constraints had to be considered. First, only one software solution was released for internal use within the research setting. This tool was Rogator survey software (Rogator, 2013), a market research software for employee surveys which produces SPSS feeds. The tool which was used for the purpose of the pilot survey, SurveyMonkey, had no approval for a larger internal use. Being allowed to use the Rogator tool, however, was subject to two further approvals. The first obligatory approval was the one of the company’s data protection department, and the study had to be anonymous, confidential and voluntary.

The second approval was the one of the Works Council. Although the Works Council - at least formally - had to be informed about the survey taking place only, an informal agreement of the invitation letter and the questionnaire took place in order to promote the success of the survey. While only one word within the questionnaire had to be reformulated, additional information had to be added to the invitation letter; that the

survey was not an employer's survey but a student's survey, and that the results were used for the purposes of the study only. These requirements reflect the political nature of the survey, and the Works Council representative was keen to avoid a scenario where the raw data became available for further examination by the employer.

Having agreed on these conditions, however, the online self-completion questionnaire could finally be distributed to the employees in the research setting and produced a satisfactory sample size, as will be shown in the next section.

### 3.4.5 Distribution and Recoding of Items

Due to the central limit theorem, in larger samples "the sampling distribution has a normal distribution with a mean equal to the population mean" (Field, 2009, p. 42), and a large sample is defined as larger than 30 participants. This is considerably lower than the sample size of this thesis, which finally counts for 463 participants. Thus, a normal distribution of the data is assured by the sample size.

With reference to the coding of items, 19 out of 33 items were recoded as these were items addressing an undesirable state from an employer's point of view, which will be referred to as a negative item hereafter. Using a six-point Likert scale, "strongly agree" was per default coded with "1", "agree" with "2", "tend to agree" with "3", "tend to disagree" with "4", "disagree" with "5" and "strongly disagree" with "6". Nevertheless, an agreement towards a negative item like "most employees are afraid of reorganisations", for example, has a completely different meaning than an agreement towards a positive item like "most employees can handle reorganisations". Accordingly, the recoding of negative items served to assure that the rejection of negative items was coded as a desirable condition. In doing so, it was assured that the coding of "1" reflects the most desirable condition from an employer's view both for the negative and the positive items, while the coding of "6" represents the most undesirable condition respectively.

Concerning missing data, two out of 465 participants were deleted as they did not answer the majority of the items in the questionnaire. A further analysis of missing values revealed that one participant did not answer seven, eight or nine items

respectively, while several participants did not answer six or less items. As the design of the questionnaire did not offer a “don’t know” option in order to motivate respondents to either agree or disagree, but offered the possibility not to answer questions instead, no further participants were deleted. Furthermore, the statistical methods chosen excluded items with missing data automatically and displayed the number of participants which did not respond to single items, so that the sample size was continuously transparent.

Altogether, the normal distribution, the coding of items and the deletion of respondents provide a data set which delivers a suitable source to test the research hypothesis. In this regard, the chosen approach generated a representative sample for the company forming the research setting, as will be shown in the subsequent section.

#### 3.4.6 Sampling Procedure

This section will provide a justification for the chosen sampling approach and describe the framework conditions which influenced the sampling procedure.

The sample population was composed of employees using an account with the Facebook-like company-internal social network (CSN) which was available within the research setting when the study took place. This social network was offered to the employees by the employer as a closed user group in order to test it as a means of internal communication. In 2013, both the company’s intranet and the classical email-communication were starting to be shifted towards an internal CSN, which was available for employees only. The total number of employees having an account within the CSN represented 53% of the company’s employees. Setting up an account with the CSN was open to all employees, and no employee within the research setting was excluded from the option to use the CSN.

Vice versa, the use of the social network was not obligatory, and the decision whether to use such a new media was left to each employee. Beyond the gap in between the total number of employees in the research setting and the number of employees having a CSN account, the company’s market research department noted that the amount of passive users, which had created an account once and rarely entered the

CSN, was high. This demonstrates that differences between those employees which use the CSN frequently, rarely, or not at all is determined by personal preferences, and not by organisational restrictions beyond their area of influence. In order to gain transparency on the representativeness of the sample, the demographic variables of the sample population and the research population were gathered, and the age group data compare as follows:

**Table 1: General Matching of Company and Questionnaire Data in Terms of Age Groups**

Age group	Company: %	Study: total/%
<30	10.7%	62 / 13.3%
30-39	14.0%	74 / 15.9%
40-49	39.0%	183 / 39.4%
50 +	36.3%	142 / 30.5%

This comparison shows slightly higher values for respondents with an age under 40, and slightly lower values for respondents with an age of 50 or older. The biggest deviation forms a lack of 5.8% participants in the age group of 50 or older, and it is assumed that this deviation reflects a comparatively lower disposition to use social media as a new and voluntary form of communication in this age group.

Concerning the demographic variable of gender the company data on gender distribution note 68% male employees in Germany as well as 32% female. The study results show only 57,6% male and 42,4% female respondents.

**Table 2: General Matching of Company and Questionnaire Data in Terms of Gender**

Age Group	Company male: %	Company female: %	Study male: total/%	Study female: total/%
<30	6.4%	4.2%	29 / 6.3%	33 / 7.2%
30-39	9.0%	5.1%	34 / 7.4%	40 / 8.7%
40-49	26.0%	13.3%	105 / 22.8%	78 / 16.9%
50+	27.4%	8.9%	98 / 21.3%	44 / 9.5%

A comparison between age-gender cross tabulations for the population of the company and the sample population illustrates that the deviation in gender is distributed throughout the age groups, with male respondents participating slightly less frequently, and female respondents participating slightly more frequently. There is no evidence why these deviations in gender occurred; probable explanations are that either the voluntary use of social media within the company, the fairness-related topic or the personalised invitation may have caused a slight deviation in gender. In sum, it is argued that the demographic benchmark between the sample population and the research population supports the representativeness of the sample as a whole.

Contacting the sample population took place by means of posting an invitation to take part in the survey once a day at the starting page of the largest groups within the CSN, which automatically triggered a posting in the news-section at the starting page of the CSN. Due to the experience of low response rates among CSN users in previous surveys of the marketing department, this procedure was scheduled for a time frame of one month in order to reach a satisfactory response rate. In this connection, one month formed a comparatively long period, as surveys within the research setting were regulated both with regard to limited resources of programming the Rogator-server of the marketing department and the use of a survey calendar which served to evenly distribute upcoming surveys over the year.

A sample size of more than 400 participants was aimed at in order to obtain a margin error of  $\pm 5\%$ , meaning that a random sample within the research population would produce results which lie in a “band of reasonable certainty” (de Vaus, 2001, p. 190) that deviates no more than  $\pm 5\%$  from the research results at a confidence level of 95% (Creswell, 2014; de Vaus, 2001). Accordingly, a range of 400 to 500 responses was agreed with the Works Council, which felt uncomfortable with the sensitive focus of the study in combination with an unlimited sample size. Hence, a reduction of the maximum sample size was one out of several measures which helped to finally obtain the Works Council’s approval. After one month, a feedback rate of 465 questionnaires was obtained, and this sample size supports research on small effects as well (de Vaus, 2001).

Within the company which served as the research setting, the highest amount of obligatory regulations and approval procedures was related to traditional email based attitude surveys. Hence, posting an online self-completion questionnaire in an internal social network provided an opportunity to introduce the questionnaire to a larger population without having to deal with the HR department as an additional gatekeeper. The researcher decided to exploit this opportunity for the purpose of avoiding an approval procedure of estimated eight weeks in addition; this approval would have been necessary to access the SAP-HR database of employees in order to randomly select survey participants.

The comparatively smaller amount of requirements and company-internal departments which had to be contacted when using the social network for surveys was due to its newness; the company-internal social network was in use for only two years when the study started, while the company's internal email system was in use for approximately twenty years at this time. It took the researcher nevertheless three months to collect the approvals required, and the chosen approach generated another advantage which will be referred to in the next section: increased anonymity for research participants.

#### 3.4.7 Supporting Anonymity, Confidentiality and Generalisability

Beyond overcoming these constraints and saving time, the sampling which was created by the posting of the questionnaire in the social network provided an important advantage which was acknowledged by the group Works Council and the data protection department in particular. Due to the sensitivity of the research topic – fairness and staff dishonesty – the anonymity of the survey participants was given highest priority by the gatekeepers and by the researcher. Posting the survey invitation online provided a means to distribute the sensitive questionnaire not only without a direct contact between the researcher and the research participants, but also without any evidence that an employee had participated in – or taken notice of - the survey, unlike in the case of an email-invitation which is sent to a selected addressee and stays in the email-account. In this context, it has to be considered that an employee's email-account

is neither private nor confidential, because deputies and sometimes even superiors are able to access the email-accounts of their colleagues as well.

Thus, the chosen procedure of posting the questionnaire also helped to convince the group Works Council that the likelihood of employees being endangered by their participation in the study was reduced through maximising anonymity. Due to the web based design of the survey, the filling out of the questionnaire could take place via a link which led the participant to a survey server, hence providing a means to give an anonymous feedback without a trace of personalised communication; the server did not log the participants. Accordingly, this procedure provided an approach where the researcher and the survey respondents were not in contact at all, and where the participants were able to fill in the questionnaire not only in the workplace, but everywhere where they were able to log into the company network.

Another important implication of anonymity is that the likelihood of social desirability is lower in an anonymous, self-administered procedure, as there is “evidence that computer-assisted self-administration increases respondents’ willingness to make potentially embarrassing admissions in surveys” (Tourangeau and Smith, 1996, p. 299). With reference to social desirability bias, it was also supposed that the spirit of openness of the company’s internal social network, which contained critical blogs and discussions on various topics as well, supported the displaying of employees’ attitudes on critical issues like fairness perceptions and staff dishonesty.

Furthermore, anonymity is important in order to prevent survey participants from harm. The researcher too had no personal contact with survey participants; neither when posting the survey invitation, nor when the survey participants took part and added their contribution to the survey server electronically. In order to further prevent any participants from harm, demographical questions were reduced to a minimum of three items, so that no tracing back of any particular contribution was possible.

Beyond this, the selected research design solved another ethical challenge; a potential conflict of interest which could have existed in the scenario of personal contact between the researcher and employees, where the position of the researcher or acquaintance with prospective research participants could have affected the voluntary



nature of informed consent. In this connection, the strict reduction of interviewer effects by means of having no personal contact between the researcher and the research participants forms an expression of considered reflexivity as well. Reflexivity is concerned with assessing the implications of a researcher's bias, values or methodological decisions in gathering and examining research findings for the knowledge which is finally generated (Bryman, 2012; Gilbert, 2001). Hence, the chosen research design did not only reduce observation bias and interviewer effects, but also provided quantitative statistical results as a basis for further interpretation, thus forming an approach which further reduced potential researcher bias in data gathering. Nevertheless, it has to be considered that a researcher with another social, cultural or professional background might have constructed the research design in a slightly different way, thus leading to potentially differing research results. Apart from this personal note of the researcher, however, the particular hypothesis of this thesis could be tested and verified by means of the chosen research design, while a personal and methodological interference with the data gathering was reduced to a minimum.

Despite of this designed distance between the researcher and the research respondents, it was highlighted that the results of the study were available for the researcher only, and not for the employer. This guaranteed the confidentiality of the research findings, and hence the attitudes which were displayed by the research participants. Altogether, the chosen research design managed to deal with possible ethical problems in a way which respected the free will of research participants, the confidentiality of obtained research results, and prevented those who participated from harm.

Finally, a further advantage of the social network approach is related to the generalisability of the sample, which was already referred to in the previous section. Concerning the networking-effect which takes place in social networks, the likelihood of patterns in the selection process was limited by the random effect of posting and the multitude of social network users which subsequently commented, liked or shared the survey invitation. Unlike in the case of a snowball sample, where the initial contact is made with a smaller group of participants, the initial contact within this survey was made with the social network community as a whole. Hence, it is argued that the logic

of a simple random selection was replaced by an organic distribution within the social network, thus retaining a random character which reflects the nature of social life.

A potential limitation to the random likelihood of participating in the survey may nevertheless have existed due to the personalised posting of the invitation, which included the name and a picture of the researcher. Social network users which never had personal contact with the researcher could have been less (or more) likely to participate in the survey than social network users which knew the researcher personally. The personalised posting of the survey invitation was nevertheless regarded as important in order to underline the non-official nature of the survey; to underline that the survey was done by a colleague and student, and not by the employer.

This clarification was also a requirement on the part of the Works Council, which explicitly asked the researcher to state at the very beginning of the survey invitation that the study was driven by a student, and not by the employer, and that the results were to be used for the students research purposes only. Such an announcement was also deemed to be important in order to increase the employees' trust in the confidentiality of the findings; the trust in being able to tell about their feelings and beliefs without having to expect a potentially dissatisfied employer. All in all, the opportunities to generate a representative sample were used as far as possible, and the survey invitation did for example not ask respondents to forward the invitation to colleagues in order to avoid a snowball effect in the social network. Furthermore, the comparison of the demographical data of the sample population and the company staff matched, which indicates that an even and representative distribution of the survey invitation took place within the company.

Taking the overall sampling design and procedure into consideration, it is argued that the chosen approach produced a representative sample of the research population. Nevertheless, "any findings can be generalized only to the population from which that sample was taken" (Bryman, 2012, p. 205), so the research population will now be examined in greater detail. In the case of the attitude survey, the overall population consisted of German speaking employees of a large company in the ICT sector, which used the company-internal social network when the study was posted. Having the low activity rate within the social network in mind, and having the limited time span of one

month in mind when the study was online, it is not possible to define how many employees finally took notice of the survey invitation. Although the size of the workforce as a wider research population is known, and although the number of employees which have an account for the CSN and hence form the theoretical maximum of participants is known, the mode of posting the survey to an unknown amount of active CSN users does not allow the assessment of a reliable feedback rate. Vice versa, it is argued that this forms a direct effect of the privacy, anonymity and indirect communication which was an indispensable characteristic of the research design.

On the other hand, the workforce of the company was homogeneous at least in terms of being employed within the same company, hence sharing experience in frequent reorganisations, cost cutting and staff reductions over the past years. Moreover, the core concepts measured were focussing on subjective fairness perceptions, and it is argued that subjective fairness perceptions with reference to organisational change formed a concept which was applicable and relevant to the employees in the company as a whole, and not only to a particular sub-group of employees. All employees share their organisational employment, have subjective perceptions of the fairness of organisational change scenarios within the company, and have an attitude towards staff dishonesty related items. Accordingly, it is argued that the employees of the company which served as a research setting constitute a research population with an increased homogeneity, and homogeneity within a research population forms a factor which further increases the representativeness of the research findings (Creswell, 2014).

Concerning the methodological limitations and the way in which they were overcome, several aspects were presented already, in particular with reference to sociological theories, operational constraints and the generalisability of attitude surveys. With a focus on several generic weaknesses and criticisms which are applied to attitude surveys, the following section will add to the discussion of methodological limitations which need to be considered.

#### 3.4.8 Limitations

General operational weaknesses of self-completion questionnaires are the uncertainty about who actually responds and the risk of respondents who read the whole questionnaire before answering the questions (Bryman, 2012). The risk of a lower response rate was accepted because the sample population encompassed at least several thousand employees, hence being large enough to create a satisfactory sample size of participants in the survey. The uncertainty about respondents was reduced to a minimum by posting the survey invitation in areas and groups of a social network which was accessible exclusively to employees of the company which formed the research setting. This approach assured that the survey invitation was posted only to those who had a company account within the social network. Finally, the risk that a questionnaire is read as a whole before being answered - and hence not in the intended sequence - was reduced by the web-based presentation of the survey. The questionnaire was structured into subsequent groups of five or six items, and the respondents were guided from one screen with a group of items to the next one; hence increasing the effort to read only. This design was similar to the design of other attitude surveys which took place in the company, and accordingly the research participants were familiar with it.

Another generic criticism which is applied to self-completion questionnaires is that respondents of questionnaires are not likely to “interpret the key terms in the question similarly” (Bryman, 2012, p. 179), because the meaning of these terms can be interpreted subjectively and differently (Cooper, 2001), and that fixed choice answers offer “a solution to the problem of meaning by simply ignoring it” (Cicourel, 1964, quoted in Bryman, 2012, p. 179). In order to reduce the problem of shared meanings, the items within the questionnaire were formulated in everyday language and mirrored almost spoken, colloquial German in short sentences. Moreover, the problem of shared meanings was reduced through a consistent focus on change scenarios which formed daily experiences of employees in the research setting. In doing so, this focus on shared experiences assured that the point of reference was clear to the research participants. Subsequently, the pilot study served to clarify whether the items were understandable, and each pilot study respondent was asked whether some items appeared unclear in order to simplify the wording.

Due to the cautious handling of these limitations, the research design proved to be suitable to test the research hypothesis, as will be outlined in the subsequent and final section of this chapter.

### **3.5 Chapter Conclusion**

Having the importance of underlying worldviews in mind, and in order to set the scene for the research design, the first section of this chapter reflected on the philosophical perspective which informs the overall research design. Corrective justice was introduced as a constructionist concept, as only employees can know about corrective justice perceptions. From an epistemological perspective, the focus of gaining knowledge lies on the phenomenon of corrective justice and the probabilistic causation contained therein. Hence, this study focuses on both reorganisations which objectively took place and the subjective fairness perceptions of employees in the course of reorganisations. This combination of subjectivity and objectivity, which is the essence of constructionism, was used to study the concept of corrective justice as a response to experienced unfairness. In this regard, the study does not only strive to know how employees subjectively experience injustice, but also which objective factors lead to this perception, and to what extent perceived unfair treatment at work predicts rises in tolerant attitudes towards staff dishonesty.

In order to further examine this relationship and the present study's research hypothesis, Chapter Three has presented a cross-sectional design as a chosen methodology. The questionnaire was distributed to employees in a larger company which experienced frequent reorganisations. It was argued that this situational context was suitable to trigger unfairness perceptions, and a variance in fairness perceptions was needed in order to test the research hypothesis. Furthermore, the directional hypothesis and the literature review allowed to focus on a few variables to be tested, hence enabling the researcher to use questionnaires with closed questions. For economic reasons and in order to create a larger sample, not structured interviews, but self-completion questionnaires were used.

Correspondingly, online self-completion questionnaires were justified as the best approach to test the research hypothesis. By means of a posted invitation which directed the prospective participants to a self-completion online questionnaire, the questionnaire was published to a larger research population and provided a chance to reach a sample size of more than 400 participants. Such a sample size was needed to engage in a statistical analysis in causes and effects with an error margin lower than 5% in the course of testing the hypothesis. At the same time, the online self-completion questionnaire provided savings in cost and time and enabled the researcher to generate the intended sample size in an operational time span of one month.

Beyond that, anonymity and confidentiality could be assured in order to protect the participants from harm and to reduce social desirability bias. A web-based posting of an invitation to fill out a questionnaire which then gets stored in a database provided an opportunity to examine attitudes towards fairness and staff dishonesty without a direct contact between the researcher and the research participants, and hence without interviewer effects. In this regard, anonymity and confidentiality formed indispensable facets of the overall research design, which complies with the research ethics requirements of the University of Leicester. Thus, the research design passed the University's ethics approval procedure as well.

Finally, and beyond the purpose to ethically gather suitable information to test the research hypothesis, it is hoped that the analysis of causes and effects between unfairness and corrective justice can serve as a springboard for similar studies in different organisational environments. Organisational change and fairness perceptions of employees form an everyday situation for most, if not all employees. Accordingly, research in a social process like corrective justice is applicable to employees in other companies as well, and the replicability of the research design of this thesis delivers a blueprint to test corrective justice effects in other organisational settings.

Following this justification of the research tool, the methodology and the philosophical perspective which underlies the overall research design, the next chapter will present the results of the 463 online self-completion questionnaires obtained.

## **Chapter Four: Research Results**

### **4.1 Introduction to Chapter**

Based on the research design which was used to gather the research data, this chapter will now present the results of the self-completion questionnaire survey. In doing so, this chapter will demonstrate that the research results verify the research hypothesis that staff perceptions of unfair reorganisations lead to rises in tolerant attitudes towards staff dishonesty among employees - and provide statistical evidence that up to 11.8% of rises in tolerant attitudes towards staff dishonesty can be predicted by perceived unfair reorganisations.

Following the introduction, the second section will examine employees' perceptions of the extent of change and the unfairness of reorganisations and focus on the internal consistency and suitability of these predictor variables. As explained in Chapter Two, unfairness in terms of reorganisational injustice encompasses modifications of an employee's ratio of inputs and outcomes in the exchange relationship with an employer which have the potential to be perceived as unfair on the part of the employee, like less salary, more workload, perceived mistreatment and inadequate explanations for adverse change measures (Section 2.3.1). Accordingly, this thesis focuses on the subjective perceptions of employees, and four predictors related to the perceived unfairness of reorganisations were conceptualised and implemented in the questionnaire as independent variables; distributive injustice, procedural injustice, interactional injustice and moral injustice. Furthermore, perceptions of change itself were conceptualised as an additional control variable and predictor, and the second section will present both the frequencies and Pearson correlations within the five predictor variables.

In the same manner, the third section will present the internal consistency, distribution and Pearson correlations within the four outcome variables measuring critical attitudes towards staff dishonesty; property deviance, production deviance, incapable guardianship and morality perceptions related to staff dishonesty itself, which is referred to as "staff dishonesty as paying back" hereafter.

Based on this examination of the factors used, the subsequent five sections will then relate each predictor; i.e. change perceptions and the four independent variables displaying perceptions of unfair treatment in the course of reorganisations, towards a set of variables measuring critical attitudes towards staff dishonesty. As correlation coefficients are an appropriate means to indicate the “overall fit of the regression model” (Field, 2009, p. 202), Pearson correlations between change and unfairness factors versus critical attitudes towards staff dishonesty will be presented as well, and linear regression will be applied to the strongest relationships.

Section nine will then combine the strongest items constituting the five predictor variables and relate them to critical attitudes towards staff dishonesty once more, and the final section will summarise the findings of this chapter and discuss them with regards to the research hypothesis.

## **4.2 Reliability and Consistency of Perceptions of Change and Unfairness**

This section will first present descriptive statistics concerning four items measuring perceptions of change. Subsequently, 16 items which serve to measure unfairness perceptions will be presented, and the items are clustered into the four dimensions of distributive injustice, procedural injustice, interactional injustice and moral injustice; the latter injustice dimension will be further examined in section 4.2.5. Following the descriptive part, the internal correlation and the internal consistency within each of the five predictors will be presented respectively.

In doing so, it will be demonstrated that the four injustice predictors and most items contained therein provide a valuable basis to test the research hypothesis; in particular interactional injustice, which proves to be the strongest predictor.

### **4.2.1 Internal Consistency of Change Extent Items**

Descriptive statistics relating to four introductory items which measured the perception of the change extent in the research setting will be examined in this section.



Insights on the change extent are not only a means to test a direct effect on tolerant attitudes towards staff dishonesty, but also a precondition to test the research hypothesis of this thesis: the subsequent use of unfairness perceptions which are themselves related to organisational change requires that perceived organisational change takes place in the first place - a precondition which is confirmed in this section. Vice versa, a design which directs questions concerning unfair reorganisations to a population which did not experience change would be invalid, and hence the following four items fulfil the purpose of control variables in this respect. Furthermore, change perceptions will be examined as a predictor variable as well, as it supports the testing of the research hypothesis when both the effect of change and the effect of perceived unfair change on critical attitudes towards staff dishonesty can be assessed.

Item four asked the research population “To what extent has your business unit experienced reorganisations in the last two years”, and almost half of the respondents (47.1%) selected answers reaching from “rather low” to “not at all”, while the other half (52.9%) reported a change extent scoring from “rather high” to “very high” in their business unit. Accordingly, a good distribution of change perceptions exists in order to test the impact of the perceived change extent.

Three further items addressed the presence of change by the use of a six-point Likert scale. Item five asked the research population “At my business unit, jobs have become increasingly insecure over the past years”, and a majority of the respondents (71.6%) agreed, while 28.4% disagreed. Thus, a negative perception of job insecurity prevails amongst most of the respondents.

An even distribution was displayed vis a vis item six, “At my business unit, most employees can handle reorganisations”, where 50.3% agreed while another 49.7% disagreed. Like in the case of the extent of reorganisations, the attitudes towards being able to handle reorganisations create two almost equally sized subs-groups.

The strongest imbalance was expressed as related to item seven, “At my business unit, most employees are afraid of reorganisations”. A large majority of 82.8% agreed, while only 17.2% disagreed, and this uneven distribution complements to the negative perception of increasingly insecure jobs. As a whole, the four change-related

items display a large variance in attitudes with a dominant negative perception of insecure jobs and fear of reorganisations, and Table 3 below describes the strength of Pearson correlation coefficients among these items.

**Table 3: Correlation Among Items Measuring Change Perceptions**

Variables	Statistical Type	Variables		
		Insecure Jobs	Can Handle Reorganisations	Fear of Reorganisations
Extent of Change	Correlation	.327**	.161**	.056
	Significance	.000	.001	.235
	Effect Size	10.7	2.6	-
Insecure Jobs	Correlation		.360**	.404**
	Significance		.000	.000
	Effect Size		13	16.3
Can Handle Reorganisations	Correlation			.392**
	Significance			.000
	Effect Size			15.4

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (two-tailed).

The squared correlation coefficients show that the perceived extent of change shares a variance of 10.7% with the perception of insecure jobs, and a variance of only 2.6% with perceptions of being able to handle reorganisations, while a significant correlation with being afraid of reorganisations does not exist. This reveals that the perceived extent of change has no large correlations towards the remaining three items measuring change perceptions.

A perception of insecure jobs relates to perceptions of being able to handle reorganisations with a covariance of 13%, and to fear towards reorganisations with a covariance of 16.3%. Finally, perceptions of being able to handle reorganisations share a variance of 15.4% with being afraid of reorganisations. A comparison of these results shows that the mere change extent provides the weakest correlations to the three other items, which focus on the meaning of change for the respondents; i.e. whether jobs are insecure, reorganisations can be handled or whether employees are afraid of reorganisations. This finding is also supported when the internal consistency of the four items is measured, as Cronbach's alpha rises from a weak .57 to a questionable .65,

when the change extent item is excluded. Accordingly, it is not the extent of change, but the meaning related to it, which is consistent among the change items.

In sum, the internal consistency and variance in attitudes towards change confirms the conditions needed in order to test the research hypothesis. Based on these insights, the next section will focus on the first dimension measuring perceived unfairness in the course of reorganisations: distributive injustice.

#### 4.2.2 Measuring the Internal Consistency of Distributive Injustice

As this thesis hypothesises that employees who feel being treated unfairly by their employer in the course of reorganisations tend to hold more tolerant attitudes towards staff dishonesty, variance in unfairness perceptions is required in order to test the hypothesis. This section will present descriptive statistics on four items which served to measure perceptions of distributive injustice. Following the descriptive part, the internal correlation and the internal consistency among the four items will be presented, and it will be argued that perceptions of distributive injustice provide a suitable variance, but a reduced internal consistency.

Distributive injustice is described as an imbalance, perceived by employees, between the inputs and outcomes of an employee; an unfair return for the work which is done from an employee's perspective, and less tangible assets like career prospects can form an outcome in this respect as well (Section 2.4.1). Being the first out of four items measuring distributive injustice in the questionnaire, item eight asked the respondents: "At my business unit, most employees lost their career prospects in the course of reorganisations", and 69.6% of the respondents agreed, while 30.4% disagreed, hence displaying a large standard deviation of 1.28 and a mean of 2.82. This shows that more than two thirds of the respondents display an attitude of reduced outcomes in the course of reorganisations.

Vice versa, the concept of workload can be seen as the most straightforward means to measure an employee's input. "At my business unit, reorganisations have increased the workload for most employees" was directed to the participants as the subsequent item, and a large majority of the respondents agreed (87.4%), while only

22.6% disagreed. Related to the resulting mean of 2.2, a large standard deviation of 1.14 exists. Accordingly, a large majority of the respondents reports increased inputs on the part of employees in the course of reorganisations.

Changes in tasks, and hence the requirement to adapt to a new situation and develop new skills is an ambiguous concept, as some employees might welcome diversification or a chance to develop further, while others might perceive the mere need to learn as a burden. Item 10 asked the respondents: “At my business unit, most employees view new tasks as an opportunity”. Only a minority of 37.3% agreed with this statement, while a majority of 62.7% disagreed. With reference to the mean of 3.7, a large standard distribution of 1.06 exists as well. This indicates that a clear majority of the respondents perceives new tasks as something negative, and thus not as something positive that they receive as an additional outcome.

Finally, distributive injustice in terms of an unfair return for the work done was addressed directly, and item 11 stated: “At my business unit, employees are rewarded fairly”. A large majority of 77.3% agreed with this statement, while only 22.7% disagreed, and a mean of 2.79 was related to a standard deviation of 1.27. Hence, the respondents display a positive attitude towards material rewards in this concern.

As a whole, these frequency and standard distributions in the dimension of distributive injustice show that the measured injustice perceptions provide a considerable variance in attitudes. Accordingly, differing attitudes related to distributive injustice provide a suitable means to test the research hypothesis. Concerning unfairness perceptions, a negative consequence of increased workload was the most frequently mentioned condition, followed by lost career prospects (69.6%) and the rejection of new tasks as an opportunity, and only fair payment was denied by a minority (22.7%). Hence, three out of four items measure a prevailing perception of unfairness, while only one item measures a prevailing perception of fairness.

Beyond these descriptive statistics, Table 4 describes the strength of the correlation coefficients between the four variables which constitute the factor of distributive injustice.

**Table 4: Correlation Among Items Measuring Distributive Injustice in the Course of Reorganisations**

Variables	Statistical Type	Variables		
		Increased Workload	Change is No Opportunity	Unfair Rewards
Loss of Career Prospects	Correlation	.437**	.305**	.231**
	Significance	.000	.000	.000
	Effect Size	19.1	9.3	4.4
Increased Workload	Correlation		.167**	.175**
	Significance		.000	.000
	Effect Size		2.9	3.2
Change is No Opportunity	Correlation			.143**
	Significance			.002
	Effect Size			2

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (two-tailed).

A perception of lost career prospects is significantly correlated to the attitude that workload had increased and the items share a variance of 19.1%, hence constituting a medium to large effect. Furthermore, lost career prospects are significantly related to the perception that new tasks are seen as an opportunity, but the covariance is moderate at 9.3%. A small to medium but nevertheless significant covariance of 4.4% exists between lost career prospects and the perception of being rewarded unfairly. The remaining correlations are significant respectively, but the effect size is small in each case. A perception of an increased workload covaries with both the perception of new tasks as an opportunity (2.9%) and the perception of being paid fairly (3.2%). Finally, a perception of new tasks as an opportunity displays a small covariance of 2% with fair payment.

Thus, an assessment of the correlation coefficients among the items which constitute the predictor distributive injustice reveals that the observed covariance has a small to medium effect. Only one effect size is larger than 10%, which is the covariance between lost career prospects and increased workload (19.1%). Furthermore, the overall Cronbach's alpha for the four items displays a questionable internal consistency of .57, and two items had a corrected item-total correlation of less than .3, which "indicates fairly bad internal consistency" (Field, 2009, p. 680).

#### 4.2.3 Measuring the Consistency of Procedural Injustice

The next predictor, procedural injustice, was introduced as referring to unfairness “concerning the methods, mechanisms, and processes used to determine outcomes” (Folger and Cropanzano, 1998, p. 26), and the concept of voice in terms of being able to express one’s feelings and thoughts or not was found to be a major component of procedural injustice (Section 2.4.2). As the first out of three items composing procedural injustice in the research questionnaire, item 12 asked the respondents: “At my business unit, employees are able to speak freely about reorganisations taking place”, and 64.8% agreed with this statement while 35.2% disagreed. The resulting mean is 3.14, and the standard deviation is 1.36. Accordingly, the respondents display a dominant perception of fairness, but a level of 35.2% of the respondents claiming that employees cannot speak freely about reorganisations reveals a critical level of perceived unfairness as well.

Being able to speak freely can be seen as an expressive feature of the concept of voice, which has an instrumental feature as well; the ability to shape an employer’s decisions. Accordingly, the subsequent item 13 stated: “At my business unit, employees can shape the decisions made about their daily tasks”. Among the respondents, only 14% agreed, while a broad majority of 86% disagreed. Hence, the mean was 4.57, but the standard deviation was nevertheless large at 1.11. This shows that a shift from an expressive to an instrumental feature of voice results in a complete shift in attitudes; speaking freely about reorganisations is possible, but this doesn’t influence changes in the daily tasks of employees.

An ability to shape an employer’s decisions is also related to the concept of choice; the presence of an employee’s option not to accept a disadvantageous change measure, or to make a choice among feasible alternatives. Item 14 asked the respondents, whether “employees have no choice but to take the burden of reorganisations”. In this case, a large majority of 88% agreed, while only 12% disagreed. The strong agreement results in a mean of 2.79, but the standard deviation is still large at 1.20, which indicates that the respondents display a variance in attitudes which supports the testing of the research hypothesis. Beyond that, the findings show

that a large majority of the respondents confirms the perception of not being able to shape the impact of reorganisations.

Altogether, the frequency distributions among the items constituting the factor of procedural injustice reflect a large variance in attitudes, both in terms of agreement or disagreement, and in terms of standard deviation. The most frequently reported condition regarding unfairness perceptions is item 14, where 88% of the respondents agree they have no choice, followed by item 13, where 84% of the respondents deny the possibility to shape decisions made about their daily tasks. As opposed to these two prevailing unfairness perceptions, a minority of 35.2% of the respondents rejecting the ability to speak freely is the only item which reflects a prevailing perception of fairness. Hence, the measured diversity of attitudes confirms that procedural injustice forms a suitable factor to test the research hypothesis, and the correlation coefficients among the procedural injustice items are presented in Table 5.

**Table 5: Correlation Among Items Measuring Procedural Injustice**

Variables	Statistical Type	Variables	
		Shape Decisions	Take Burden
Speak Freely	Correlation	.456**	.216**
	Significance	.000	.000
	Effect Size	20.8	4.7
Shape Decisions	Correlation		.417**
	Significance		.000
	Effect Size		17.4

\*\* . Pearson Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (two-tailed).

Like in the case of the distributive injustice items, the significance of the correlation coefficients among the three items constituting procedural injustice is consistently high as well. A perception of being able to offer one's opinion freely shares a covariance of 20.8% with attitudes that employees cannot shape the decisions made about changes in their daily tasks, hence constituting a medium to large effect. Furthermore, the ability to speak freely correlates with the perception to have no choice other than to take the burden of reorganisations to a much smaller extent (4.7%). Finally, the latter perception of having no choice has a medium to large covariance of

17.4% with the perception of being able to shape decisions made about an employee's daily tasks.

These correlation coefficients show that procedural injustice items are more strongly correlated than distributive injustice items, hence forming a theoretical and empirical factor which serves even better to test the research hypothesis of this thesis. Cronbach's alpha for the three procedural injustice factors was .62, and all of the items have corrected item-total correlations above .3. Although Cronbach's alpha is interpreted as demonstrating reliability from .7 upwards, it is also noted that the alpha values tend to be lower when only a few items contribute to a factor, and that the alpha value goes up with the number of items contributing to a scale (Field, 2009). Hence, a .62 for a factor with only three items is interpreted as being internally consistent.

#### 4.2.4 Measuring the Internal Consistency of Interactional Injustice

The third injustice factor, interactional injustice, has been described as referring "to the quality of the interpersonal treatment received by an individual" (Folger and Cropanzano, 1998, p. xxiii), which was further divided into the inadequacy of explanations and the insensitivity of treatment (Section 2.4.3). The first out of five items measuring interactional injustice is item 18, which asked the respondents: "At my business unit, the reasons underlying the reorganisations were clearly explained". A minority of 41.8% agreed, while a slight majority of 58.2% disagreed. A mean of 3.37 mirrors the disagreement, together with a large standard deviation of 1.23. Thus, a broad variance in attitudes also reveals a majority of respondents denying adequate explanations for past reorganisations.

As described earlier in Chapter Two, the perception that an employer communicates honestly was found to be an important feature of adequate information. Hence, the second item measuring interactional injustice stated: "At my business unit, the employer has communicated honestly about the reorganisations", and only 35.3% agreed with the statement, while 64.7% disagreed, thus creating a mean of 3.94 with a standard deviation of 1.3. Accordingly, at least a part of those 41.8% of the respondents indicating clearly explained reorganisations with the previous item do not consider the



employer to communicate honestly. Furthermore, a proportion of almost two thirds of the respondents which do not perceive their employer to communicate honestly displays a clearly negative condition.

Having the impact of an employer's inadequate information for reorganisations in mind, the following item stated: "At my business unit, most employees understand that the reorganisations are necessary for the company's survival". The item was agreed with by only 36.1% of the respondents, and a majority of 63.9% disagreed. Among the responses, a mean of 3.88 and a standard deviation of 1.13 were found. Again, almost two thirds of the respondents display perceptions of unfairness, which forms a suitable variance to test the research hypothesis.

Following these items' findings reflecting an inadequate, dishonest and unclear explanation for reorganisations, item 21 addressed insensitive treatment directly and asked: "At my business unit, employees were treated respectfully in the course of reorganisations". Among the respondents, only 39% agreed with this statement. Another 61% of the employees disagreed, leading to a mean of 3.96 and a large standard deviation of 1.31, which is in line with the former distribution of two thirds of the respondents holding prevailing attitudes of interactional injustice in the research setting.

Finally, the last interactional justice item addressed mutual trust as a concept which reflects a desirable state of interaction between employees and an employer; and trust was described as an employee's belief in an employer's benevolence. Item 22 stated: "At my business unit, reorganisations have badly damaged the mutual trust between employees and employer", and out of the employees who answered this item, a large majority of 68.3% agreed, while a minority of 31.7% disagreed. The agreement was reflected in a mean of 2.89, and the standard deviation was large once more at 1.23. Altogether, this shows that all five items share a predominantly critical stance of interactional injustice whilst displaying a variance with an average of only one third of the respondents feeling they are being treated fairly.

Thus, differing attitudes in interactional injustice perceptions provide a further fairness factor which is suitable to test the research hypothesis. The most frequently

reported conditions in terms of unfairness are damaged mutual trust (68.3%), a negation of an honest employer (64.7%), a denial of the necessity of reorganisations (63.9%), a negation of respectful treatment (61%) and finally a denial of having received adequate explanations (58.2%). On the whole, all of the interactional injustice items measure a dominant perception of unfairness, while a suitable variance to test the research hypothesis exists as well. Furthermore, correlation coefficients between the 5 items showed they were consistently related to each other at  $p$  (two-tailed)  $< .01$ , as can be seen in Table 6.

**Table 6: Correlation Among Items Measuring Interactional Injustice**

Variables	Statistical Type	Variables			
		Dishonest Employer	Reorganisations Unnecessary	Insensitive Treatment	Mutual Trust Damaged
Inadequate Explanation	Correlation	.682**	.503**	.599**	.449**
	Significance	.000	.000	.000	.000
	Effect Size	46.5	25.3	35.9	20.2
Dishonest Employer	Correlation		.558**	.709**	.615**
	Significance		.000	.000	.000
	Effect Size		31.1	50.3	37.8
Reorganisations Unnecessary	Correlation			.475**	.413**
	Significance			.000	.000
	Effect Size			22.6	17.1
Insensitive Treatment	Correlation				.645**
	Significance				.000
	Effect Size				41.6

\*\* . Pearson Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (two-tailed).

The correlation coefficients displayed in Table 6 indicate that perceptions of a dishonest employer share a covariance of 46.5% with perceptions of having received an inadequate explanation for reorganisations, thus forming a large effect. Furthermore, the perception of an inadequate explanation covaries to an extent of 25.3% with the attitude that reorganisations were unnecessary, and to an extent of 35.9% with the perception of receiving insensitive treatment by one's employer, thus forming two further correlations with a large effect size. Vice versa, the belief that mutual trust is damaged shares a covariance of 20.2% with perceptions of inadequate explanations, a comparatively weaker correlation coefficient displaying a moderate to large effect.

Attitudes towards a dishonestly communicating employer covary to an amount of 31.1% with a perception of reorganisations being unnecessary for the company's survival. The strongest correlation coefficient within the interactional injustice factor was measured between dishonest communication on the part of the employer and insensitive treatment, resulting in an effect size of 50.3%, and another strong covariance of 37.8% existed between dishonest communication and damaged mutual trust. Insensitive treatment itself was strongly related to mutual trust as well (41.6%), while the remaining effect sizes between perceived unnecessary reorganisations and insensitive treatment (22.6%) and mutual trust (17.1%) displayed a comparatively weaker covariance.

This assessment shows that interactional injustice items provide the highest correlation coefficients and thus the largest effect sizes among the dimensions of injustice measured so far. Complementing this, Cronbach's alpha is very high at .87. The corrected item total correlations were .58 and higher, and no item increased Cronbach's alpha if deleted, which underlines the fit of the items measuring interactional injustice. As a whole, these findings underline that interactional injustice forms a significant, internally consistent and reliable factor which is considerably more consistent than change perceptions, distributive injustice and procedural injustice.

Nevertheless, as discussed in Chapter Two, the suitability of inadequate explanations and insensitive treatment as a combined concept of interactional injustice is worth being examined as well. In order to further test internal consistency in this matter, interactional injustice was sub-divided into three items on informational injustice, which measure inadequate explanations, and two items on interpersonal injustice, which measure insensitive treatment. In this case, Cronbach's alpha for informational injustice was comparatively lower at .81, which shows that a joint scale of inadequate explanations and insensitive treatment provides a higher reliability. Accordingly, a conceptual split between inadequate explanations and insensitive treatment will be refrained from and this thesis will continue to use interactional injustice as a combined concept.

#### 4.2.5 The Internal Consistency of Perceived Moral Injustice

Finally, perceptions of immoral reorganisations - which are referred to as moral injustice in the present study - constitute the fifth predictor used in order to test the research hypothesis. In doing so, moral injustice conceptualises morally wrong management decisions among feasible alternatives from an employees' point of view. Morality is defined as "principles concerning the difference between right and wrong" and "the extent to which an action is right or wrong" (Oxford English Dictionary, 2012, p. 468). In the context of reorganisations, this thesis considers morality in terms of an employee's assessment concerning what an employer did, what an employer could have done alternatively, and what an employer finally should have done. Hence, immorality in the course of reorganisations is about the perceived failure of an employer to select the least harmful available alternative for employees.

With a look at the range of feasible alternatives, the first out of four items used to measure immoral reorganisations stated: "At my business unit, external factors (e.g. competitive pressure) leave the employer with no other choice than to reorganise". Among the responding employees 39.6% agreed, while a majority of 60.4% disagreed. In doing so, a mean of 3.82 was related to a large standard deviation of 1.29. Accordingly, a majority of the respondents declared that a precondition for better alternatives, an employer's ability to choose whether reorganisations have to take place or not, exists. As opposed to this perception of an employer's room for manoeuvre, a majority of 88% of the employees declared that employees themselves have no other choice than to take the burden of reorganisations, which provides a clear picture of the acting party and the victim.

While the previous item had an employer's perceived room for manoeuvre in mind, item 16 went a step further and asked the respondents: "At my business unit, better alternatives to the reorganisations were frequently ignored". A clear majority of 73.5% agreed with this statement, while 26.5% disagreed, and a mean of 2.83 was accompanied by a large standard deviation of 1.24. Furthermore, 26 missing responses for this item are outstanding in a sequence with an average of less than 10 missing responses for the remaining fairness items. Altogether, this item shows that almost three quarters of the respondents find the employer guilty of ignoring better alternatives.

Hence, the employer could have acted differently, and the employer should have considered better alternatives.

Moral blame towards the employer is also measured in item 17, asking the respondents: “At my business unit, the reorganisations are a consequence of earlier mismanagement”, and a majority of 65.8% agreed, while 34.2% disagreed. The agreement is reflected in a mean of 2.99, which is accompanied by a large standard deviation of 1.29. As in the case of the first morality item, 16 missing responses is above-average. Complementing the previous findings, this majority perception of mismanagement provides a clear indication of moral blame, whilst offering a variance in attitudes which is suitable to test the research hypothesis. This overall perception is also reflected in the fourth and last item measuring immoral reorganisations.

Anger as a result of moral blame is adhered to in item 23, which asked the respondents: “At my business unit, many employees are angry about the way they are treated by the employer”, and a large majority of 76.6% agreed, as opposed to 23.4% of the responding employees who disagreed. Related to the resulting mean of 2.72, a large standard deviation of 1.19 exists. As with the previous fairness factors, the variance in attitudes related to moral injustice provides a suitable means to test the research hypothesis. In the context of immorality, the most frequently reported conditions are anger about the treatment received (76.6%), ignored better alternatives (73.5%), mismanagement (65.8%) as well as the rejection of an employer without choice (60.4%). Accordingly, all items measured prevailing perceptions of immoral reorganisations, and beyond this, continuously significant relationship between all of the items is displayed in Table 7.

**Table 7: Correlation Among Items Measuring Moral Injustice**

Variables	Statistical Type	Variables		
		Ignored Alternatives	Mismanagement	Employees Angry
Employer has No Choice	Correlation	.327**	.137**	.250**
	Significance	<b>.000</b>	<b>.004</b>	<b>.000</b>
	Effect Size	10.7	1.9	6.3
Ignored Alternatives	Correlation		.416**	.500**
	Significance		<b>.000</b>	<b>.000</b>
	Effect Size		17.3	25
Mismanagement	Correlation			.437**
	Significance			<b>.000</b>
	Effect Size			19.1

\*\* . Pearson Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (two-tailed).

Opinions towards a lack of available choices on the part of the employer covary with ignored better alternatives to the amount of 10.7%, thus forming a moderate effect. Furthermore, a lack of choices shares a covariance of only 1.9% with perceptions of mismanagement as a reason for reorganisations, which constitutes a small effect. Finally, a perceived lack of choices has a shared variance of 6.3% with being angry with the employer. This shows that staff perceptions of feasible alternatives on the part of an employer share only small to moderate effect sizes with the remaining items, which go a step further and measure anger and what an employer should have done.

Ignored better alternatives are related to mismanagement with an effect size of 17.3%, and share a covariance of 25% with employees being angry, which constitutes a moderate and large effect respectively. Finally, the items addressing mismanagement and angry employees covary significantly as well, amounting to 19.1%. Accordingly, the remaining items share a comparatively higher covariance. This increased internal consistency is also reflected in a Cronbach's alpha of .68, which rises to .71 when the item measuring an employer's availability of choices is deleted. Hence, the items measuring perceptions of immoral reorganisations provide good internal reliability as well.

It was already noted that the amount of items used influences Cronbach's alpha. In order to assess the internal consistency of 19 items which were used for change and

fairness perceptions, a Cronbach's alpha of .91 was measured, which indicates an extremely high reliability of the overall fairness scale which was used for the provision of independent variables. Table 8 also shows that all corrected item-total correlations are above .3, which indicates a good fit into the overall predictor set while the items are presented in a way which reflects the attitudes of the majority of the respondents.

**Table 8: Internal Consistency of All Items Constituting the Five Predictor Variables**

Variables	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
1. jobs have become insecure	.470	.906
2. employees can't handle reorganisations	.522	.904
3. employees are afraid of reorganisations	.484	.905
4. employees lost career prospects	.595	.902
5. the workload increased	.506	.904
6. change is not seen as an opportunity	.447	.906
7. rewards are fair	.335	.909
8. employees can speak freely	.500	.905
9. employees can't shape decisions	.589	.902
10. reorganisations are a burden	.483	.905
11. employer had other options	.363	.909
12. better alternatives were ignored	.613	.902
13. mismanagement triggered reorganisations	.478	.905
14. inadequate explanation for change	.641	.901
15. employer does not communicate honestly	.740	.898
16. reorganisations were unnecessary	.580	.903
17. employees were treated insensitively	.751	.898
18. the mutual trust is damaged	.777	.897
19. employees are angry about treatment received	.741	.898

On the whole, and apart from the items measuring perceptions of change, the frequency distribution of the remaining 16 items measuring unfairness perceptions shows that 14 items measured dominant perceptions of unfairness reaching from 58.2% to 88%, while only two items measured dominant perceptions of fairness: employees can speak freely and they are rewarded fairly. Furthermore, standard deviations, and hence the variance, was continuously high. Accordingly, perceptions of unfairness and a

variance in attitudes provide an ideal basis to test the research hypothesis. The structure provided by the theoretical framework could be confirmed by continuously significant correlation coefficients within the derived predictors which nevertheless varied in their size from small effects to large effects up to  $r = .71$ .

In the next section, the results which were drawn from an assessment of tolerance levels towards staff dishonesty will be presented in the same manner as the results of fairness perception items were presented in this section.

### **4.3 Variance in Tolerant Attitudes Towards Staff Dishonesty**

This section will introduce the results of the items measuring tolerant attitudes towards staff dishonesty. In this connection, four factors were conceptualised as dependent variables; property deviance, production deviance, incapable guardianship and corrective justice perceptions themselves. The frequency distributions and correlation coefficients within these four factors will now be presented along with the results related to two control items.

Constituting the first control item, item 25 asked the respondents “At my business unit, employees know what is allowed and what is not allowed at work”, and a large majority of 94.4% agreed, while only 5.6% disagreed. The large majority is reflected in a mean of 2.1, which is accompanied by a standard deviation of 0.88. As this thesis measures attitudes towards staff dishonesty, a large agreement of 94.4% of the responding employees with clear rules supports the assumption that the subsequently measured items are considered as staff dishonesty among the respondents as well, and that the likelihood of a conflicting ambiguousness on what constitutes staff dishonesty is low.

#### **4.3.1 Tolerance Levels Towards Property Deviance**

Property deviance, which forms the first outcome measured, is defined as “those instances where employees acquire or damage the tangible property or assets of the work organization without authorization” (Hollinger and Clark, 1982a, p. 333). As the



first out of four items measuring this factor, item 24 referred to refraining from property deviance, stating: “At my business unit, employees treat company property with care”. Out of the responding employees, 93.7% agreed with the statement, while 6.3% disagreed. In doing so, 20.3% of the respondents only tended to agree, resulting in a mean of 2.08, and a standard deviation of 0.95. Accordingly, the acceptance of careless treatment of company property, and hence the variance, is very low.

Having the appropriation of company property in mind, the second item asked the respondents: “At my business unit, now and then it is ok for some employees to take home company property for private use”. A clear minority of 7.5% agreed, while a large majority of 92.5% disagreed. Related to the resulting mean of 5.19, a standard deviation of 1.06 exists. This low accordance with property deviance is in line with the first item and confirms the reduced variance in attitudes when this dimension of staff dishonesty is referred to.

Subsequently, item 27 referred to property deviance as a means to even the score, stating “At my business unit, pilfering can be just paying back for being treated unfairly”. Once more only a small minority of 6.3% agreed with this negative item, while a clear majority of 94.7% disagreed. Accordingly, the agreement with property deviance does not rise when a motivation to even the score is added.

Finally, the fourth item referred to a neutralisation of property deviance and asked the respondents: “At my business unit, some pilferage does not harm the company”. A minority of only 4.1% agreed, while once more a clear majority of 95.9% disagreed. Reflecting the disagreement, a mean of 5.58 exists, and the standard deviation is 0.8. Thus, the final item displays the low tolerance level for property deviance once more.

A look at the frequency distributions of the four property deviance items shows that the variance in attitudes was continuously low when the level of tolerance towards property deviance was addressed. Thus, the most frequently reported item in terms of tolerance was the private use of company property (7.5%), followed by pilfering as paying back (6.3%) and a negation of careful treatment of property (6.3%), and finally a perception of pilferage not causing harm (4.1%). Hence, tolerance levels towards

property deviance were low without exception, which results in a lack of variance which is needed to test a potential effect of perceived unfair versus fair reorganisations.

Beyond these insights related to frequencies, Pearson's correlation coefficients among the property deviance items were continuously significant at  $p$  (two-tailed)  $< .01$ , as can be seen in Table 9.

**Table 9: Correlation Among Items Measuring Tolerance Levels Towards Property Deviance**

Variables	Statistical Type	Variables		
		Private Use of Property	Corrective Pilfering	Pilferage No Harm
Treat Property With Care	Correlation	.143**	.235**	.217**
	Significance	.002	.000	.000
	Effect Size	2	5.5	4.7
Private Use of Property	Correlation		.252**	.278**
	Significance		.000	.000
	Effect Size		6.4	7.7
Corrective Pilfering	Correlation			.582**
	Significance			.000
	Effect Size			33.9

\*\* . Pearson Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (two-tailed).

A perception of employees treating company property carefully correlates to the attitude that employees sometimes use company property for private purposes with an effect size of 2%, thus representing a small effect. Furthermore, careful treatment of company property shows a covariance of 5.5% with pilfering as paying back for unfair treatment, and a covariance of 4.7% with the attitude that some pilferage does not harm the company. Tolerance towards the private use of company property relates to pilfering as paying back with an effect size of 6.4%, and towards the attitude that some pilferage does not harm with a shared covariance of 7.7%, hence displaying small to moderate effect once more. Finally, pilfering as paying back for experienced injustice relates to a perception that pilferage does not harm the company with a high effect size of 33.9%. With the exception of the last correlation, this shows that a lack of variance in attitudes is accompanied by a lack of covariance as well. Although 4.1% to 7.5% of the

respondents do hold tolerant attitudes towards the items measuring property deviance respectively, the lack of covariance shows that a “hard core” of respondents holding critical attitudes does not exist, but that different subgroups of respondents displayed critical attitudes towards single items respectively.

Accordingly, and despite the significantly related correlation coefficients, a lack of variance in attitudes provides a limited usefulness of property deviance as the first factor constituting a dependent variable. Furthermore, these limitations are also visible in a Cronbach’s alpha of .60 and two out of 4 factors having a corrected item-total correlation of less than .3. Following this assessment of tolerant attitudes towards property deviance, the following section will assess attitudes towards the second cluster of staff dishonesty; production deviance.

#### 4.3.2 Tolerance Levels Towards Production Deviance

Production deviance is defined as a violation “of the formally proscribed norms delineating the minimal quality and quantity of work to be accomplished” (Hollinger and Clark, 1982a, 333), and tolerance levels towards production deviance were measured by the use of three questionnaire items. Offering a clear transgression of the minimal quantity of work, item 29 asked the respondents “At my business unit, it is ok for some employees to spend hours a workday surfing the internet for private purposes”. A minority of 14.5% agreed, while a majority of 85.5% disagreed. A high mean of 5.01 and a standard deviation of 1.23 were linked to this distribution. This shows that agreement to a straightforward item measuring production deviance is considerably higher than the agreement towards property deviance items, where critical attitudes scored in a range of 4.1% to 7.5%.

Both a violation of norms prescribing the quantity of work and the motivation to do so are the focus of the subsequent item, which asked the respondents for their attitude towards the statement “At my business unit, pretending to be sick can be just paying back for experienced injustice”. A minority of 11.9% agreed with this item, while 88.1% disagreed. Again, a high mean of 5.2 reflects a strong disagreement, and the standard deviation was 1.23. At the same time, critical attitudes are once more

higher than with the property deviance items, but evening the score as a key theme of this thesis does not trigger higher agreement levels than making private use of the internet in the previous item.

With a reference to neutralisation techniques, item 31 asked respondents “At my business unit, some pretended sick days do not harm the company”. Only 5.8% of the respondents agreed, and 94.2% disagreed, hence resulting in a high mean of 5.33. As in the case of property deviance items, the frequency distribution reflects a small variance in tolerance levels. Accordingly, the most frequently reported condition in terms of tolerant attitudes towards production deviance is surfing the internet for private purposes for hours a workday (14.5%), followed by pretending to be sick (11.8%) and a perception of sick day abuse causing no harm (5.8%). As in the case of property deviance, tolerance levels are low but nevertheless critical agreement is up to twice as large. Furthermore, high standard deviations also reflect a rejection of negative items by the use of “tend to disagree” by more than 10% of the respondents in two cases, and in general, the correlation between items measuring tolerance levels towards production deviance is high, as demonstrated in Table 10.

**Table 10: Correlation Among Items Measuring Tolerance Levels Towards Production Deviance**

Variables	Statistical Type	Variables	
		Corrective Sick	Sick No Harm
Private Internet Use	Correlation	.620**	.436**
	Significance	.000	.000
	Effect Size	38.4	18
Corrective Sick	Correlation		.582**
	Significance		.000
	Effect Size		33.9

\*\* . Pearson Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (two-tailed).

An examination of the correlation coefficients shows that the three items measuring tolerant attitudes towards production deviance share a large covariance. Privately surfing the internet covaries strongly with both pretending to be sick in order to pay back (38.4%) and the attitude that pretended sick days cause no harm (19%). Furthermore, perceptions of pretended sickness as paying back share a covariance of

33.9% with perceptions that pretended sick days cause no harm. Beyond this, the second control item, item 32, addressed showing up at work whilst being ill because of a fear to lose one's job, and this item was negatively correlated to the three production deviance items which addressed a reduced investment in productivity. Hence, the control item indicates the reliability of the production deviance items as well.

Altogether, production deviance demonstrates both a higher variance in attitudes and a higher covariance among the three items measured. The significantly related correlation coefficients show that production deviance represents a reliable factor and accordingly constitutes a valuable dependent variable to test the research hypothesis. The high reliability and internal consistency is also confirmed by a Cronbach's alpha of .78 and corrected item-total correlations scoring .57 and higher.

Having assessed property deviance and production deviance as two established fields of staff dishonesty, the subsequent section will now focus on tolerant attitudes towards a critical pre-condition of staff dishonesty: incapable guardianship.

#### 4.3.3 Tolerance Levels Towards Incapable Guardianship

Tolerance levels related to incapable guardianship are addressed in the third dependent variable, which, like the previous factor, consists of three items. As the discussion of Routine Activity Theory has shown (Section 2.2.3), incapable guardianship is described as a lack of preparedness to protect company assets from being abused or damaged by third parties, like for example turning a blind eye to witnessed offences. In this context, item 34 addressed the morality of guardianship itself and asked the respondents: "At my business unit, telling on colleagues is wrong". A minority of 19.7% agreed, while 80.3% disagreed. Out of those who disagreed, 22% only tended to disagree, and the overall mean was 4.55, with a standard deviation of 1.27. Accordingly, a critical attitude is held by a considerable proportion of the respondents, which forms the largest agreement with a critical attitude measured so far.

Beyond morality, general reasons for turning a blind eye on property deviance were addressed in item 35, which stated: "At my business unit, there are good reasons for turning a blind eye on pilferage", and out of the respondents, only 5.5% agreed,

while 94.5% disagreed. A high mean of 5.32 resulted together with a standard deviation of 0.92. Thus, a direct link to property deviance results in a much lower score when incapable guardianship is measured.

Finally, item 36 used a reference to concrete harm as related to engaging in guardianship and asked the respondents: “At my business unit, reporting concerns about internal deviance can damage one’s career”. In this case, 27.5% agreed, while 72.5% disagreed, resulting in a mean of 4.34 and a standard deviation of 1.42. It is also noticeable that 20.7% out of those who disagreed only tended to disagree. Hence, more than a quarter of the respondents hold an attitude that supports a climate of incapable guardianship. With regard to the previous item, the damage to an employee’s career could be interpreted as being a good reason to turn a blind eye on pilfering. Nevertheless, the reference to the career provides a five times higher agreement than the reference towards pilfering.

The frequency distribution among the items constituting the incapable guardianship factor shows that the variance in attitudes is larger than with the property or production deviance items. Furthermore, accumulated answers in the “tend to agree” or “tend to disagree” options provided variance in this factor as well. The most frequently reported condition which indicates incapable guardianship and hence a tolerance towards observed offences is item 36, where 27.5% of the respondents raise concerns about whistle-blowing damaging one’s career, followed by 19.7% of the respondents agreeing with telling on colleagues is wrong, and 5.5% agreeing with perceptions that there are good reasons for turning a blind eye to offences. Thus, attitudes towards undesirable behaviour are once more held by a minority of the respondents, but agreement is up to 27.5%. Beyond this, the correlation coefficients among the three items are moderate to large as well, as displayed in Table 11.

**Table 11: Correlation Among Items Measuring Tolerance Levels Towards Incapable Guardianship**

Variables	Statistical Type	Variables	
		Turn Blind Eye	Damage Career
Telling Wrong	Correlation	.541**	.399**
	Significance	.000	.000
	Effect Size	26.4	15.9
Turn Blind Eye	Correlation		.418**
	Significance		.000
	Effect Size		17.5

\*\* . Pearson Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (two-tailed).

With reference to correlation coefficients, a continuously high significance at  $p$  (two-tailed)  $< .01$  was measured once more. A perception that telling on colleagues is wrong correlates with both the existence of good reasons for turning a blind eye on pilfering (26.4%) and the opinion that telling on colleagues can damage one's career (15.9%). In addition, the perception that there are good reasons for turning a blind eye on pilferage shares a covariance of 17.5% with the attitude that reporting concerns about internal deviance can damage an employee's career. Correspondingly, a variance in attitudes is accompanied by a covariance between the items measuring incapable guardianship. In this context, Cronbach's alpha for the incapable guardianship scale is an acceptable .69, hence constituting a reliable value for a small scale consisting of three items, and the corrected item-total correlations were .46 and higher for each item.

On the whole, this shows that incapable guardianship items provide a variance in attitudes, share a moderate to large statistical effect, and build an internally consistent factor, thus delivering a further predictor which is suitable to test whether perceived unfair change in the workplace leads to rises in tolerant attitudes towards staff dishonesty. Having assessed forms of staff dishonesty and incapable guardianship, the next section will introduce the results related to the final outcome measured, the morality of staff dishonesty.

#### 4.3.4 Perceptions of Staff Dishonesty as Paying Back

The final factor measured is about morality perceptions related to staff dishonesty itself. As argued in Chapter Two, staff dishonesty can form a behavioural response to an employer who is considered to act wrongfully (Section 2.2.6), which is referred to as corrective justice throughout this thesis – and forms a key characteristic of the research hypothesis. With a focus on “paying back” the items 27 and 30 also measure corrective justice and hence morality perceptions, but as these items are related to property and production deviance as well, they were already described in terms of descriptive statistics. Referring to corrective justice in a similar manner, item 33 asked the respondents: “At my business unit, some employees think that the company deserves to be cheated”, and 17% of the responding employees agreed, while 83% disagreed, resulting in a mean of 4.76 and a standard deviation of 1.27. Given the straightforward formulation of the item, an agreement of 17% indicates the potential of the concept of corrective justice.

Once more with the idea of paying back in mind, item 37 referred to morality in terms of honest behaviour at the workplace as such, stating: “At my business unit, honesty pays off”. A majority of 72.3% of the respondents agreed, while a minority of 27.7% disagreed. In this case, the mean is 2.8 and the standard deviation is large at 1.47. Furthermore, a large part out of those who agreed only tended to agree (25.7%). As a result, the final questionnaire item provides the highest agreement with a critical condition with more than a quarter of the respondents indicating that honesty does not pay off at their place of work.

Nevertheless, a predominant rejection of tolerant attitudes towards staff dishonesty is visible in the items addressing morality perceptions towards staff dishonesty once more, but the variance in attitudes is much larger than in the case of property or production deviance. Thus, negative conditions like honesty not paying off (27.7%) and a company that deserves to be cheated (17%) deliver two further attitude sets which are predominantly positive, but nevertheless among the highest sets of critical attitudes in the field of the dependent items.



With reference to correlation, the items measuring attitudes that property or production deviance can be paying back for being treated unfairly are included in the subsequent Table 12, as these items refer to the morality of staff dishonesty as well.

**Table 12: Correlation Among Items Measuring Staff Dishonesty as Paying Back**

Variables	Statistical Type	Variables		
		Corrective Sick	Cheating Deserved	Honesty Pays Off
Corrective Pilfering	Correlation	.527**	.324**	.067
	Significance	.000	.000	.156
	Effect Size	27.8	10.5	
Corrective Sick	Correlation		.476**	.182**
	Significance		.000	.000
	Effect Size		22.7	3.3
Cheating Deserved	Correlation			.141**
	Significance			.003
	Effect Size			2

\*\* . Pearson Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (two-tailed).

Apart from small correlations with the perception that honesty pays off, the remaining three items measuring perceptions of staff dishonesty as paying back are strongly related to each other. The perception that pilfering can be paying back for experienced injustice correlates both with the perception that sick day abuse can be paying back for experienced injustice (27.8%) and with the general perception that the company deserves to be cheated (10.5%). In the same manner, the perception that sick day abuse can be paying back shares a covariance of 22.7% with the perception that the company deserves to be cheated. As indicated, a perception that honesty pays off shares a covariance of only 2% with the attitude that the company deserves to be cheated, and another covariance of 3.3% with sick day abuse as paying back, which constitutes only a small effect in both cases.

Accordingly, the suitability of perceptions of staff dishonesty as paying back is also displayed by a Cronbach's alpha of .59, which rises to .70 when one out of four items, namely the item stating that honesty pays off, is deleted. Furthermore, the remaining three items demonstrate a corrected item-total correlation of .41 and higher,

which suggests internal consistency is good. This demonstrates that items referring to a reactive moral reference like paying back or an employer who deserves to be cheated form an internally consistent factor on its own.

Finally, when Cronbach's alpha is measured for 12 dependent items as a whole, a highly reliable value of .82 is measured, and only the item measuring the private use of property demonstrates a corrected item-total correlation  $< .3$ . This shows that the items used in order to measure tolerant attitudes towards staff dishonesty build a scale with a high internal consistency.

**Table 13: Internal Consistency of Items Measuring Tolerant Attitudes Towards Staff Dishonesty**

Variables	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
1. employees treat property with care	.378	.810
2. private use of company property	.205	.823
3. pilfering can be paying back	.543	.800
4. pilferage is no harm	.532	.802
5. private use of internet during work	.554	.796
6. sick day abuse can be paying back	.622	.790
7. sick day abuse does not cause harm	.522	.800
8. employer deserves to be cheated	.532	.798
9. telling on colleagues is wrong	.461	.805
10. good reasons to turn a blind eye	.541	.800
11. telling on colleagues can damage one's career	.477	.804
12. honesty pays off	.301	.822

This section has examined change and fairness perceptions as predictor variables, and tolerant attitudes towards staff dishonesty as outcome variables. The overall assessment of frequencies, variance, scale reliability and internal consistency shows that tolerance levels towards staff dishonesty and relevant undesirable conditions attached to staff dishonesty are low and held by a minority of the respondents only, varying in a range of 4.1% to 27.7%. Together with a moderate standard deviation, this variance in attitudes towards both unfair reorganisations and tolerant attitudes towards

staff dishonesty provides a suitable basis to test the research hypothesis; in particular when the “tend to disagree” answers to strictly negative items or “tend to agree” answers to strictly positive items are considered.

Accordingly, the subsequent sections will further develop the examination of the research data and relate each of the five predictor variables to the outcome variables respectively. In this regard, property deviance as an outcome variable proved to attract consistently insignificant results, and will therefore not be referred to in the course of the further analysis.

#### **4.4 Perceptions of Change vs. Tolerant Attitudes Towards Staff Dishonesty**

In order to evaluate the directional character of the research hypothesis, this section will examine predictor-outcome correlations in terms of effect sizes. In order to examine the predictors one by one, the section will start with change perceptions as a predictor of tolerant attitudes towards staff dishonesty, and an assessment of change perceptions demonstrates that up to 4.1% of rises in tolerant attitudes towards staff dishonesty can be predicted by negative change perceptions.

As Table 14 demonstrates, the change extent as such is not considered as it does not provide results which are suitable to test the research hypothesis. Accordingly, the extent of change was excluded from the further analysis within this section.

**Table 14: Change Perceptions (IV) vs. Tolerant Attitudes Towards Staff Dishonesty (DV)**

Independent Variables (IV)	Statistical Type	Dependent Variables (DV)			
		DV1: Production Deviance	DV2: Incapable Guardianship	DV3: Paying Back	DV2 + DV3
IV1: Insecure Jobs	Correlation	.058	.173	.149 <sup>**</sup>	.180 <sup>**</sup>
	Significance	.107	<b>.000</b>	<b>.001</b>	<b>.000</b>
	Effect Size		2.9	2.2	3.2
IV2: Inability to Handle Reorganisations	Correlation	.133 <sup>**</sup>	.139 <sup>**</sup>	.175 <sup>**</sup>	.174 <sup>**</sup>
	Significance	<b>.002</b>	<b>.002</b>	<b>.000</b>	<b>.000</b>
	Effect Size	1.8	1.9	3.1	3
IV3: Fear of Reorganisations	Correlation	.040	.037	.136 <sup>**</sup>	.106 <sup>*</sup>
	Significance	.196	.222	<b>.002</b>	<b>.014</b>
	Effect Size			1.8	1.1
IV4: Change Perception (IV1+IV2+IV3)	Correlation	.100 <sup>*</sup>	.156 <sup>**</sup>	.198 <sup>**</sup>	.201 <sup>**</sup>
	Significance	<b>.017</b>	<b>.001</b>	<b>.000</b>	<b>.000</b>
	Effect Size	1	2.4	3.9	4.1

<sup>\*\*</sup>. Pearson Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (one-tailed).

<sup>\*</sup>. Pearson Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (one-tailed).

A perception that jobs have become increasingly insecure over the past years forms the first predictor item measuring change perceptions, and this item shares 2.9% of its variance with incapable guardianship, and another 2.2% with perceptions of staff dishonesty as paying back. Thus, the effects are significant, but small in their size. The attitude that employees cannot handle reorganisations correlates significantly with the remaining three outcomes, the shared covariance with production deviance is 1.8%, the covariance with incapable guardianship is 1.9%, and the effect size with perceptions of staff dishonesty as paying back is 3.1%.

This comparison shows that change perceptions are more strongly related to perceptions of paying back than towards production deviance and incapable guardianship. Finally, being afraid of reorganisations relates to perceptions of staff dishonesty as paying back, revealing a small effect size of 1.8%. When the three above described predictors are summed up as a factor measuring the perceived change, summed change perceptions provide slightly higher effect sizes; the covariance with incapable guardianship is 2.4%, the covariance with staff dishonesty as paying back is 3.9%, and the covariance with a sum of incapable guardianship and paying back is

4.1%. Thus, staff dishonesty as paying back attracts the strongest among several small correlations related to change perceptions as predictors.

In order to further examine the small effects that change perceptions do have on tolerant attitudes towards staff dishonesty, the four strongest effects are examined by means of linear regression.

#### 4.4.1 Insecure Jobs vs. Incapable Guardianship

The first item measuring change perceptions asked the respondents whether jobs have become increasingly insecure over the past years, and regression analysis confirms that increased perceptions of insecure jobs can predict small rises (2.9%) in critical attitudes towards incapable guardianship, as can be seen in Table 15.

**Table 15: Insecure Jobs (IV) vs. Incapable Guardianship (DV)**

Statistical Type			
$r = .17$ ( $p < .01$ ) $r^2 = .029$	$F = 13.41$ $p < .01$	$B = .36$ $SE = .10$	$t = 3.66$ $p < .01$

The improved prediction of the model is confirmed by a significant F-ratio, a B-value with a small standard error demonstrates the rise in critical attitudes towards incapable guardianship, and a significant t-value rejects the null hypothesis that the effect size of 2.9% is zero. Thus, a small but significant effect between perceived job insecurity and a factor measuring critical attitudes towards incapable guardianship, like an increase in attitudes that “telling on colleagues is wrong”, is proven.

#### 4.4.2 Inability to Handle Reorganisations vs. Staff Dishonesty as Paying Back

As displayed in Table 16, perceptions of not being able to handle reorganisations predict small rises (3.1%) in perceptions of staff dishonesty as paying back, and the F-ratio demonstrates a significant improvement of the prediction, while a positive B-value with a small standard error reveals the positive gradient of the regression line; a rise in attitudes like “the company deserves to be cheated” which can be predicted by rises in

perceptions of not being able to handle reorganisations.

**Table 16: Inability to Handle Reorganisations (IV) vs. Staff Dishonesty as Paying Back (DV)**

Statistical Type			
$r = .18$ ( $p < .01$ ) $r^2 = .031$	$F = 13.96$ $p < .01$	$B = .49$ $SE = .13$	$t = 3.74$ $p < .01$

While perceived job insecurity displays the strongest effect on a lack of willingness to protect company assets, a perceived inability to handle reorganisations has its strongest effect on tolerant attitudes towards behaviours which damage the employer.

#### 4.4.3 Combined Change Perceptions vs. Staff Dishonesty as Paying Back

When the score for the three items measuring that jobs have become increasingly insecure over the past years, that employees are unable to handle reorganisations and that most employees are afraid of organisations are summed up as a combined factor, this factor predicts 3.9% of the rises in perceptions of staff dishonesty as paying back, as displayed in Table 17.

**Table 17: Three Combined Change Perceptions (IV) vs. Staff Dishonesty as Paying Back (DV)**

Statistical Type			
$r = .20$ ( $p < .01$ ) $r^2 = .039$	$F = 17.70$ $p < .01$	$B = .23$ $SE = .06$	$t = 4.21$ $p < .01$

As all of the aforementioned items are significantly related to perceptions of staff dishonesty as paying back, the prediction could be improved, and Table 17 illustrates that the null hypothesis could be rejected as well. Accordingly, the predictive potential of change perceptions rises when items are combined. Vice versa, an increased effect size was measured with combined outcomes as well, as described in the subsequent section.

#### 4.4.4 Combined Change Perceptions vs. Combined Outcomes

As can be seen in Table 18, combined change perceptions reveal the largest effect size on a sum of the two outcome factors incapable guardianship and staff dishonesty as paying back (4.1%).

**Table 18: Combined Change Perceptions (IV) vs. Staff Dishonesty as Paying Back and Incapable Guardianship Combined (DV)**

Statistical Type			
$r = .20$ ( $p < .01$ ) $r^2 = .041$	$F = 17.81$ $p < .01$	$B = .39$ $SE = .09$	$t = 4.22$ $p < .01$

Once more, statistical evidence confirms the improved prediction, the mutual rise, and the rejected null hypothesis.

As a whole, the examination of change perceptions has shown that single items can predict rises in critical attitudes towards staff dishonesty up to 3.1 %, that perceptions of staff dishonesty as paying back form the most strongly related outcome variable, and that a combination of the change related predictor items further improves the prediction of perceptions of staff dishonesty as paying back to 3.9%. This demonstrates that a negative perception of change itself has the potential to predict small rises in tolerant attitudes towards staff dishonesty.

Following the logic and procedure of this section, the subsequent sections will now measure the impact of the four injustice dimensions on tolerant attitudes towards staff dishonesty respectively, and the first predictor variable tested is distributive injustice.

#### 4.5 Distributive Injustice vs. Tolerant Attitudes Towards Staff Dishonesty

In order to split up reorganisational injustice into the four injustice dimensions developed in Chapter Two, this section will start with the first dimension and examine whether employees holding perceptions of distributive injustice in the course of reorganisations tend to hold higher tolerance levels towards staff dishonesty.

Distributive injustice has been defined as a perceived imbalance between the inputs and outcomes of an employee, an unfair return for the work which is done from an employee's perspective (Section 2.4.1). Thus, the four questionnaire items developed to measure distributive injustice focus on a potentially perceived imbalance of the inputs and outcomes; i.e. the loss of career prospects as a reduced outcome, increased workload as an increased input, the fairness of rewards as a measure of the ratio itself, and finally whether new tasks are perceived as something positive, and hence an outcome, or rather as a burden. In this connection, the strongest effect as such is measured between a variable which combines the three strongest distributive injustice items as a predictor, and perceptions of staff dishonesty as paying back as an outcome. The three strongest distributive injustice items measure the employees' perceptions that

- employees lost their career prospects in the course of reorganisations,
- employees do not view new tasks as an opportunity, and
- employees are not rewarded fairly.

Vice versa, staff dishonesty as paying back reflects items expressing that

- pilfering is paying back for being treated unfairly,
- pretending to be sick can be just paying back for perceived injustice,
- the company deserves to be cheated, and
- honesty does not pay off at the workplace.

By the use of this combination of items reflecting distributive injustice, 8.3% of increases in perceptions of staff dishonesty as paying back can be explained.

Accordingly, perceived distributive injustice does increase tolerant attitudes towards staff dishonesty and hence proves that an imbalance between the effort which is invested into daily work on the one hand and an employer's perceived unfair returns on the other hand can increase a motivation to even the score.

Within the network of distributive injustice items and factors measuring tolerant attitudes towards staff dishonesty, the strongest single item correlation is measured between unfair rewards and staff dishonesty as paying back - and regression analysis confirms that 4.6% of the variance in perceptions of staff dishonesty as paying back can be predicted by the perceived unfairness of rewards. This shows that unfair rewards



have a stronger impact than all other distributive injustice items; the denial of new tasks as an opportunity predicts 3.9% of rising perceptions of staff dishonesty as paying back, while lost career prospects predict 3.4%. Finally, increased workload forms the weakest predictor, which is not statistically significant ( $p > .05$ ) when it comes to an effect on staff dishonesty as paying back.

Providing an overview, Table 19 shows how each of the four items measuring distributive injustice in the course of reorganisations are correlated with factors measuring tolerance levels towards staff dishonesty. Missing values were excluded pair wise, meaning that only participants who answered both the measured predictor and outcome items were considered, and excluded if one or both items were not answered.

**Table 19: Distributive Injustice (IV) vs. Tolerant Attitudes Towards Staff Dishonesty (DV)**

Independent Variables (IV)	Statistical Type	Dependent Variables (DV)			
		DV1: Production Deviance	DV2: Incapable Guardianship	DV3: Paying Back	DV2 + DV3
IV1: Lost Career Prospects	Correlation	.076	.085 <sup>*</sup>	.185 <sup>**</sup>	.155 <sup>**</sup>
	Significance	.053	<b>.038</b>	<b>.000</b>	<b>.001</b>
	Effect Size		0.7	3.4	2.4
IV2: Increased Workload	Correlation	.001	.095 <sup>*</sup>	.078	.097 <sup>*</sup>
	Significance	.492	<b>.023</b>	.052	<b>.022</b>
	Effect Size		0.9		0.9
IV3: New Tasks No Opportunity	Correlation	.103 <sup>*</sup>	.048	.197 <sup>**</sup>	.139 <sup>**</sup>
	Significance	<b>.014</b>	.158	<b>.000</b>	<b>.002</b>
	Effect Size	1		3.9	1.9
IV4: Rewarded Unfairly	Correlation	.136 <sup>**</sup>	.160 <sup>**</sup>	.215 <sup>**</sup>	.226 <sup>**</sup>
	Significance	<b>.002</b>	<b>.000</b>	<b>.000</b>	<b>.000</b>
	Effect Size	1.9	2.6	4.6	5.1
IV5: Distributive Injustice (IV1+IV3+IV4)	Correlation	.158 <sup>**</sup>	.144 <sup>**</sup>	.287 <sup>**</sup>	.249 <sup>**</sup>
	Significance	<b>.000</b>	<b>.001</b>	<b>.000</b>	<b>.000</b>
	Effect Size	2.5	2.1	8.2	6.2

<sup>\*\*</sup>. Pearson Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (one-tailed).

<sup>\*</sup>. Pearson Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (one-tailed).

In order to verify the statistical evidence of the findings above, the subsequent sections apply regression analysis to the strongest effect sizes displayed in the

dimension of distributive injustice.

#### 4.5.1 Lost Career Prospects vs. Staff Dishonesty as Paying Back

When linear regression is applied to lost career prospects as a predictor and paying back as an outcome, 3.4% in the variation of perceptions of staff dishonesty as paying back can be explained by a perception of lost career prospects, as demonstrated in Table 20.

**Table 20: Lost Career Prospects (IV) vs. Staff Dishonesty as Paying Back (DV)**

Statistical Types			
$r = .19$ ( $p < .01$ ) $r^2 = .034$	$F = 16.60$ $p < .01$	$B = .49$ $SE = .12$	$t = 3.95$ $p < .01$

Thus, the motivation to even the score can be triggered by a perception of injustice which refers to the loss of career prospects in the course of reorganisations. In this context, a significant F-ratio shows that the predictor-outcome model “improved the prediction of the outcome compared to the level of inaccuracy of the model” (Field, 2013, p. 302). Moreover, the B value describes a positive gradient of the regression line and hence “represents the change in the outcome resulting from a unit change in the predictor (Field, 2013, p. 303). A significant gradient with a small standard error confirms that lost career prospects have an effect on perceptions of staff dishonesty as paying back. Finally, a significant t-value rejects the null hypothesis that the effect of lost career prospects on perceptions of staff dishonesty as paying back is not true. In sum, the effect examined is small to medium, but remarkable for a single item variable.

Apart from this strongest effect, a perception of lost career prospects is significantly related to incapable guardianship,  $r = .09$ ,  $p < .05$ , and to a sum of incapable guardianship and staff dishonesty as paying back  $r = .16$ ,  $p < .16$ . This shows that lost career prospects have the strongest correlation towards a perception of staff dishonesty as paying back.

#### 4.5.2 Increased Workload vs. Tolerant Attitudes Towards Staff Dishonesty

The second item in the field of distributive injustice asked employees whether the workload was increased by reorganisations. Taking the balance of an employee's inputs and outcomes into consideration, increased workload offers a suitable condition to trigger motivations to even the score. Nevertheless, increased workload forms the weakest out of the four distributive injustice items, both in terms of the number of significant results and in terms of the size of the correlation coefficient. Increased workload is positively related to incapable guardianship and a sum of incapable guardianship and perceptions of staff dishonesty as paying back, hence displaying a consistent effect on critical factors related to staff dishonesty. Furthermore, the positive correlation coefficients explain less than 1% of the variance in tolerance attitudes, thus displaying a less than small effect. Due to these limitations, increased workload does not support a testing of the research hypothesis. In this connection, the same applies to the item measuring the mere change extent, which formed another neutral approach to address the size of changes, and not the meaning of change.

#### 4.5.3 New Tasks vs. Staff Dishonesty as Paying Back

The third distributive injustice item asks whether new tasks, which are a typical side effect of reorganisations, are regarded as positive or negative. Like in the case of lost career prospects, a negative perception of not viewing new tasks as an opportunity is most strongly related to staff dishonesty as paying back. In this case, regression analysis can predict a small to medium effect size of 3.9% of the rises in perceptions of staff dishonesty as paying back, and the F-ratio confirms that the prediction of perceptions of staff dishonesty as paying back is improved, as displayed in Table 21.

**Table 21: New Tasks Are No Opportunity (IV) vs. Staff Dishonesty as Paying Back (DV)**

Statistical Type			
$r = .20$ ( $p < .01$ ) $r^2 = .039$	$F = 17.86$ $p < .01$	$B = .62$ $SE = .15$	$t = 4.23$ $p < .01$

Furthermore, a positive B-value illustrates that the perception of staff dishonesty

as paying back grows, the more an employee denies new tasks as an opportunity. Accordingly, undesired new tasks form a significant condition of unfairness which is able to predict critical attitudes towards staff dishonesty, and a significant t-value rejects the null hypothesis that the measured effect could be zero.

A second significant correlation of not viewing new tasks as an opportunity relates to production deviance, but the effect size is small at 1% explained variance. In this manner, the correlations to different combinations of summed critical attitudes towards staff dishonesty are significant but smaller than the correlation towards paying back. Having excluded property deviance from the outcome factors already, this shows that the remaining factors of production deviance and incapable guardianship are once more less affected by perceptions of unfairness than moral justifications for staff dishonesty, which forms the essence of the items constituting perceptions of staff dishonesty as paying back. Subsequently, the final item in the dimension of distributive injustice confirms this finding as well.

#### 4.5.4 Unfair Rewards vs. Production Deviance

As the only item within the dimension of distributive injustice, perceptions of not being rewarded fairly have a small effect on tolerant attitudes towards production deviance. A variance of 1.9% in tolerant attitudes towards production deviance can be explained by perceived unfair rewards, and the improved prediction of the model is confirmed by a significant F-ratio, as can be seen in Table 22.

**Table 22: Unfair Rewards (IV) vs. Production Deviance (DV)**

Statistical Type			
$r = .14$ ( $p < .01$ ) $r^2 = .019$	$F = 8.58$ $p < .01$	$B = .31$ $SE = .11$	$t = 2.92$ $p < .01$

Related to this small effect, a B value with a low standard error confirms that tolerant attitudes towards production deviance rise when employees do not feel being rewarded fairly; a finding which is confirmed by a t-value which rejects the null hypothesis that the measured effect is zero. Although the effect on the morality of staff

dishonesty is the largest one once more, as will be presented later, this finding nevertheless proves that distributive injustice in the form of unfair rewards does have an effect on production deviance, and hence a key dimension of staff dishonesty. Related to the design of the production deviance items, this means that tolerant attitudes towards sick day abuse and surfing the internet at work for private purposes rise, when employees feel being rewarded unfairly.

#### 4.5.5 Unfair Rewards vs. Incapable Guardianship

Furthermore, linear regression shows that incapable guardianship rises when rewards are not perceived as being fair, and 2.6% of the variation in incapable guardianship can be explained by perceptions of unfair rewards, as illustrated in Table 23, while a significant F-ratio confirms the improved prediction of variances in incapable guardianship.

**Table 23: Unfair Rewards (IV) vs. Incapable Guardianship (DV)**

Statistical Type			
$r = .16$ ( $p < .01$ ) $r^2 = .026$	$F = 11.41$ $p < .01$	$B = .37$ $SE = .11$	$t = 3.38$ $p < .01$

A positive and significant B-value demonstrates that tolerant attitudes towards incapable guardianship do rise when perceptions of unfair rewards rise. This shows that perceptions of distributive injustice have a small effect on rises in tolerant attitudes towards incapable guardianship, meaning that employees tend to agree more with items like “telling on colleagues is wrong” or “there are good reasons for turning a blind eye on pilferage”, when they perceive themselves as being rewarded unfairly, and a significant t-value rejects the hypothesis that this small effect of a 2.6% rise in tolerant attitudes towards incapable guardianship does not exist.

In addition, perceived unfair rewards have an effect on perceptions of staff dishonesty as paying back as well, as will be shown in the next section.

#### 4.5.6 Unfair Rewards vs. Staff Dishonesty as Paying Back

As can be seen in Table 24, regression analysis confirms that perceptions of being rewarded unfairly can predict 4.6% of the increases in perceptions of staff dishonesty as paying back.

**Table 24: Unfair Rewards (IV) vs. Staff Dishonesty as Paying Back (DV)**

Statistical Type			
$r = .22$ ( $p < .01$ ) $r^2 = .046$	$F = 21.37$ $p < .01$	$B = .57$ $SE = .12$	$t = 4.62$ $p < .01$

Thus, the strongest effect of unfair rewards relates once more to the outcome of staff dishonesty as paying back. With regard to the weakest item reflecting distributive injustice, increased workload, this shows that a perceived balance in the input-outcomes ratio is not disturbed by giving more, but rather by not receiving back what is expected to be a fair return. A significant F-ratio demonstrates that unfair rewards improve the prediction of staff dishonesty as “just paying back for experienced injustice”, and a positive B-value with a small standard error proves that the belief that the company deserves to be cheated rises together with perceptions of unfair rewards. Finally, a significant t-value rejects the possibility that such an effect of unfair rewards occurs by chance.

A comparison of the distributive injustice items reveals that three out of four items had a small, but significant impact on rises in tolerant attitudes towards staff dishonesty. The strongest predictor-outcome relationship between single items relates to unfair rewards, which explain 4.6% of the variance in perceptions of staff dishonesty as paying back. Accordingly, the measured values support the hypothesis that tolerant attitudes towards staff dishonesty grow when perceptions of distributive unfairness at the workplace rise. In this context, unfair rewards form the most powerful predictor in the dimension of distributive injustice, while tolerant attitudes towards staff dishonesty as paying back form both the largest and most frequent outcome when it comes to the effects of the other distributive injustice items. Hence, unfair rewards are the most critical issue when the effect of reorganisations on staff dishonesty is considered, while

increased workload forms the weakest predictor. These findings indicate that tolerant attitudes towards staff dishonesty are not triggered by a disturbance of an employee's perceived balance between inputs and outcomes as such; it is the perceived unfair outcome which has a much larger effect.

Apart from the single factors measuring tolerant attitudes towards staff dishonesty, unfair rewards also provide significant effects when the outcome factors are summed up. Nevertheless, the measured effect is slightly lower than the effect of unfair rewards on paying back alone when the three dependent factors of production deviance, incapable guardianship and perceptions of staff dishonesty as paying back are summed up as a combined staff dishonesty tolerance factor. When only incapable guardianship and paying back are summed up, unfair rewards explain 5.1% of the variance, and the B value confirms that unfair rewards trigger a rise in the combined incapable guardianship and paying back factor.

Nevertheless, a combination of the three strongest distributive injustice items provides the strongest effect on production deviance measured in this thesis, as will be shown in the next section.

#### 4.5.7 Distributive Injustice vs. Production Deviance

A combination of the three strongest distributive injustice items can predict 2.5% of the rises in production deviance, thus forming a small effect. Furthermore, Table 25 displays a highly significant F-ratio which demonstrates the improved prediction of production deviance, while a positive B-value demonstrates that tolerant attitudes towards production deviance rise as a result of rises in perceptions of distributive injustice.

**Table 25: Three Strongest Distributive Injustice Items (IV) vs. Production Deviance (DV)**

Statistical Type			
$r = .16$ ( $p < .01$ ) $r^2 = .025$	$F = 11.39$ $p < .01$	$B = .18$ $SE = .05$	$t = 3.38$ $p < .01$

This shows that less input on the part of an employee partly results from a perceived unfair ratio of inputs and outcomes; perceptions of unfair rewards, lost career prospects, as well as a negative perception of new tasks. Accordingly, the dimension of distributive injustice provides an explanation for small, but significant rises in production deviance, and a significant t-value rejects the null hypothesis that this effect could be zero.

Finally, the subsequent section will show the largest effect size in the dimension of distributive injustice, which can be measured when the strongest distributive injustice items are related to perceptions of staff dishonesty as paying back.

#### 4.5.8 Distributive Injustice vs. Staff Dishonesty as Paying Back

The effect that summed items improve the strength of a predictor is revealed once more when the four strongest distributive injustice items are combined and related to perceptions of staff dishonesty as paying back. In this case, 6.9% of the variation in perceptions of staff dishonesty as paying back can be explained by summed distributive injustice items. Accordingly, a rise of 6.9% can be explained by summed distributive injustice factors and thereby constitutes a medium effect. As a comparison of the correlation coefficients shows, the item of increased workload forms the weakest factor constituting distributive injustice. In order to further examine the potential of distributive injustice, the item of increased workload was excluded and only the remaining three items were combined as a factor.

By only considering the three strongest items, 8.2% of the variance in perceptions of staff dishonesty as paying back can be explained, as can be seen in Table 26.

**Table 26: Three Strongest Distributive Injustice Items (IV) vs. Perceptions of Staff Dishonesty as Paying Back (DV)**

Statistical Type			
r = .29 (p<.01) r <sup>2</sup> = .082	F = 38.77 p < .01	B = .38 SE = .06	t = 6.23 p < .01



Providing a medium effect once more, this value constitutes the strongest effect which can be predicted by distributive injustice in this thesis, and the improved predictive potential is also confirmed by a significant F-ratio, and the related B-value and t-ratio.

When the three strongest distributive injustice items are related to combined tolerant attitudes towards staff dishonesty, a predictive potential of only 6.2% is confirmed by regression analysis. Accordingly, these findings underline the comparative strength of staff dishonesty as paying back, when effects of distributive justice are measured.

This section shows that the effects of distributive injustice on property deviance produce predominantly insignificant results. Furthermore, the effects on production deviance and incapable guardianship are continuously small, but significant, while the effect on perceptions of staff dishonesty as paying back has a medium size explaining up to 8.2% of rises which are triggered by distributive injustice. Accordingly, the theoretical factors informing the design of distributive injustice and tolerant attitudes towards staff dishonesty delivered heterogeneous scores in terms of effect size and significance, but the hypothesis that perceived injustice in the course of reorganisations increases tolerant attitudes towards staff dishonesty could be verified.

Following the examination of distributive injustice, the next section will analyse how far the second dimension of injustice, procedural injustice, helps to explain a rise in tolerant attitudes towards staff dishonesty.

#### **4.6 Procedural Injustice vs. Tolerant Attitudes Towards Staff Dishonesty**

Procedural injustice in the course of reorganisations has been defined as the absence of voice and choice (Section 2.3.2), whereas voice stands for a sufficient chance of an employee to express his or her own point of view, and choice stands for an employee's option not to accept a disadvantageous change measure, or to make a choice among feasible alternatives. This perception of procedural injustice is also mirrored in the design of the three items measuring the absence of voice and choice. Voice is referred to in the first item, which asked the respondents whether "employees can speak

freely about the reorganisations taking place”. The two remaining items addressed choice, asking the respondents whether “employees can shape the decisions made about their daily tasks” or whether “employees have no choice but to take the burden of reorganisations”.

When the procedural injustice items are correlated with tolerant attitudes towards staff dishonesty, the strongest effect size of 8.7% is measured between employees’ perceptions of not being able to speak freely about the reorganisations taking place as a predictor – versus a combination of incapable guardianship and perceptions of staff dishonesty as paying back as an outcome, hence forming a moderate effect.

As can be seen in Table 27, the absence of choice is not considered as a predictor, as the item measuring perceptions of having no choice but to take the burden of reorganisations provides only one significant correlation, which is nevertheless smaller than 1% and therefore insignificant as a result.

**Table 27: Procedural Injustice (IV) vs. Tolerant Attitudes Towards Staff Dishonesty (DV)**

Independent Variables (IV)	Statistical Type	Dependent Variables (DV)			
		DV1: Production Deviance	DV2: Incapable Guardianship	DV3: Paying Back	DV2 + DV3
IV1: Speak Freely	Correlation	.126**	.257**	.253**	.295**
	Significance	<b>.004</b>	<b>.000</b>	<b>.000</b>	<b>.000</b>
	Effect Size	1.6	6.6	6.4	8.7
IV2: Shape Decisions	Correlation	.047	.167**	.195**	.207**
	Significance	.161	<b>.000</b>	<b>.000</b>	<b>.000</b>
	Effect Size		2.8	3.8	4.3
IV3: Take Burden	Correlation	.023	.060	.076	.080*
	Significance	.315	.107	.056	<b>.050</b>
	Effect Size				0.6
IV4: IV1 + IV2	Correlation	.100*	.249**	.263**	.294**
	Significance	<b>.017</b>	<b>.000</b>	<b>.000</b>	<b>.000</b>
	Effect Size	1	6.2	6.9	8.7

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (one-tailed).

\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (one-tailed).

On the contrary, the absence of voice, or the lack of the ability to speak freely, demonstrates the strongest and continuously significant effects on all of the dependent variables respectively. Not being able to speak freely about reorganisations shares a small variance of 1.6% with production deviance, while the correlation with incapable guardianship is moderate at 6.6%, and the correlation with perceptions of staff dishonesty as paying back is equally strong at 6.4%, thus forming a second moderate effect. When incapable guardianship and perceptions of staff dishonesty as paying back are summed up as a combined outcome, this factor shares a variance of 8.7% with perceptions of not having the ability to speak freely. Hence, the absence of voice has a larger effect on tolerant attitudes towards staff dishonesty than single or combined perceptions of distributive injustice.

Covering the lack of an ability to shape decisions made about an employee's daily tasks, the second item provides significant results and demonstrates slightly smaller effect sizes. The shared variance with incapable guardianship amounts to 2.8%, and the covariance with perceptions of staff dishonesty as paying back to 3.8%, which leads to an effect size of 4.3% when the two outcomes are combined as a single factor. This is a small to moderate effect on tolerant attitudes towards staff dishonesty, and displays that a perceived lack of an ability to shape one's daily tasks provides an effect on tolerant attitudes towards staff dishonesty which is half as big as a perceived absence of voice.

Finally, the items measuring both an absence of voice and the lack of an ability to shape decisions made about one's daily tasks are combined as a factor of procedural injustice. The item measuring alternatives to taking the burden of reorganisations is excluded, because it provides only insignificant correlations towards the single dependent variables. By combining the absence of voice and choice, the shared variance with perceptions of staff dishonesty as paying back increases to 6.9%, as compared to 6.4% when only the absence of voice is considered. Besides this particular effect on perceptions of staff dishonesty as paying back, all other effect sizes remain smaller than the effect of denied voice alone, which shows the strength of denied voice as a concept.

A comparison with the effect of distributive injustice, and in particular a comparison with the effect of change itself, demonstrates that procedural injustice

provides the highest effect sizes observed so far. The strongest effect measured with regard to perceptions of the mere change extent is 4.1%, and the effect of combined perceptions of distributive injustice increased tolerant attitudes towards staff dishonesty by up to 8.2%. Hence, an effect size of 8.7% which is related to the absence of voice illustrates that the perceived injustice of reorganisations, either distributive or procedural, scores more than twice as high as the mere extent of reorganisations, and higher than the combined perceptions of distributive injustice.

In order to further examine the impact of procedural injustice on tolerant attitudes towards staff dishonesty, the subsequent sections will evaluate the strongest effects by the use of regression analysis.

#### 4.6.1 Denied Voice vs. Incapable Guardianship

The highest impact of a single predictor item on a single outcome variable is related to perceptions of not being able to speak freely, which predicts 6.6% of the rises in tolerant attitudes towards incapable guardianship, as Table 28 shows.

**Table 28: Not Being Able to Speak Freely (IV) vs. Incapable Guardianship (DV)**

Statistical Types			
$r = .26$ ( $p < .01$ ) $r^2 = .066$	$F = 30.51$ $p < .01$	$B = .54$ $SE = .10$	$t = 5.52$ $p < .01$

The improved prediction of incapable guardianship is demonstrated by a significant F-ratio, and the B-value displays the positive gradient of the regression line, which shows that tolerance levels towards incapable guardianship rise when perceptions of not being able to speak freely rise. Finally, the significant t-value rejects the hypothesis that the measured effect may occur by chance, and thereby confirms a moderate effect for a single predictor item.

Considering that the item asked the respondents whether “employees can speak freely about the reorganisations taking place”, this shows that a perceived denial of the ability to express feelings and thoughts about reorganisations taking place has a much stronger effect than perceptions of being able to shape an employer’s decisions

concerning the reorganisations themselves, or to have a choice among feasible alternatives. Thus, the expressive feature of voice demonstrates a stronger effect than the instrumental feature of voice or choice, which focuses on an employee's ability to shape the course of reorganisations. Nevertheless, a combination of the two items measuring the perceived absence of voice and choice leads to the highest effect on tolerant attitudes towards staff dishonesty as paying back, as will be described in the next section.

#### 4.6.2 Denied Voice and Choice vs. Staff Dishonesty as Paying Back

Up to 6.9% of rises in perceptions of staff dishonesty as paying back can be explained by the combination of the perceived absence of both voice and choice as a single predictor, as can be seen in Table 29.

**Table 29: Combined Absence of Voice and Choice (IV) vs. Staff Dishonesty as Paying Back (DV)**

Statistical Types			
$r = .26$ ( $p < .01$ ) $r^2 = .069$	$F = 32.34$ $p < .01$	$B = .41$ $SE = .07$	$t = 5.69$ $p < .01$

Once more, the improved prediction of perceptions of staff dishonesty as paying back, as well as the rises in perceptions of staff dishonesty as paying back as a result of perceived denied voice and choice are confirmed by the F-ratio and B-value respectively. Complementing the effect of denied voice on rises in tolerant attitudes towards incapable guardianship, this shows that the agreement with items like “some employees think that the company deserves to be cheated” rises to the amount of 6.9% when voice and choice are perceived to be denied.

Accordingly, procedural injustice has a significant and moderate effect on perceptions of staff dishonesty as paying back as well. This is demonstrated by two out of the three items used to measure procedural injustice, which provide relevant results to confirm the research hypothesis of this thesis. Like in the previous assessments of change and distributive injustice, the strongest effects relate to the outcomes of incapable guardianship and perceptions of staff dishonesty as paying back. Furthermore,

the strongest effects of single items are clearly stronger than the strongest effects of distributive injustice or mere change items, and even stronger than the effect of combined distributive injustice items, as will be shown in the next section.

#### 4.6.3 Denied Voice vs. Tolerant Attitudes Towards Staff Dishonesty

As a single predictor item, the denial of voice delivers the highest impact measured in the dimension of procedural injustice, and Table 30 shows that 8.7% of the rises in a combined factor of incapable guardianship and perceptions of staff dishonesty as paying back can be predicted by perceptions of denied voice.

**Table 30: Absence of Voice (IV) vs. Combined Incapable Guardianship and Staff Dishonesty as Paying Back (DV)**

Statistical Types			
$r = .30$ ( $p < .01$ ) $r^2 = .087$	$F = 40.24$ $p < .01$	$B = 1.18$ $SE = .19$	$t = 6.34$ $p < .01$

This effect is confirmed by a significant F-value, and a clearly positive gradient of the regression line, which demonstrates that rising tolerance levels towards staff dishonesty are indeed a result of rising perceptions of absent voice. Finally, this effect size reveals that an employee's perceived inability to speak freely about reorganisations taking place predicts larger rises in tolerant attitudes towards staff dishonesty than combined procedural injustice items or combined distributive injustice items, which demonstrates the importance of voice to be considered in the course of reorganisations.

Complementing the dimensions of injustice examined so far, the next section will address the dimension of interactional injustice in the course of reorganisations.

#### 4.7 Interactional Injustice vs. Tolerant Attitudes Towards Staff Dishonesty

Interactional injustice in the course of reorganisations has been described (Section 2.3.3) as a condition with two sub-dimensions; the lack of an adequate explanation for the necessity of the reorganisations taking place as well as lack of

respectful treatment received by the employer. Three out of the five items measuring interactional injustice tested the level of perceived inadequacy of the information received in the course of reorganisations, asking whether “the reasons underlying the reorganisations were clearly explained”, whether “the employer has communicated honestly about the reorganisations”, and whether “most employees understand that the reorganisations are necessary for the company survival”. As the evaluation of frequency distributions has shown, these positive statements were rejected by a majority of the respondents in each case, hence displaying an overall perception of an inadequate explanation for reorganisations.

Two remaining items addressed respectful treatment and the trustworthiness of the employer, asking the respondents whether “employees were treated respectfully in the course of reorganisations”, and whether “reorganisations have badly damaged the mutual trust between employees and employer”. The strongest single item effect in the dimension of interactional injustice is related to a perceived lack of respectful treatment, which shares a covariance of 6.7% with a combined outcome of incapable guardianship and perceptions of staff dishonesty as paying back, thus displaying a moderate effect. The strongest effect as such is measured when the items measuring interactional injustice are combined. A combination of the five items shares a variance of 7.5% with perceptions of staff dishonesty as paying back, rising to an effect size of 8.9% when only the three strongest items are considered. This shows that combined perceptions of unnecessary reorganisations, disrespectful treatment in the course of reorganisations and finally broken trust can explain up to 8.9% of the variance in perceptions of staff dishonesty as paying back, which forms another moderate effect size.

Beyond these strongest effects, interactional injustice provides several significant effect sizes related to tolerant attitudes towards staff dishonesty, as can be seen in Table 31.

**Table 31: Interactional Injustice (IV) vs. Tolerant Attitudes Towards Staff Dishonesty (DV)**

Independent Variables(IV)	Statistical Type	Dependent Variables (DV)			
		DV1: Production Deviance	DV2: Incapable Guardianship	DV3: Paying Back	DV2 + DV3
IV1: Reasons Explained	Correlation	.116**	.102	.202**	.168**
	Significance	<b>.006</b>	<b>.016</b>	<b>.000</b>	<b>.000</b>
	Effect Size	1.3	1	4	2.8
IV2: Honest Employer	Correlation	.037	.134**	.172**	.172**
	Significance	.212	<b>.003</b>	<b>.000</b>	<b>.000</b>
	Effect Size		1.8	2.9	2.9
IV3: Reorganisation Necessary	Correlation	.060	.075	.217**	.167**
	Significance	.099	.057	<b>.000</b>	<b>.000</b>
	Effect Size			4.7	2.8
IV4: Respectful Treatment	Correlation	.075	.213**	.250**	.258**
	Significance	.055	<b>.000</b>	<b>.000</b>	<b>.000</b>
	Effect Size		4.5	6.3	6.7
IV5: Destroyed Mutual Trust	Correlation	.070	.170**	.247**	.239**
	Significance	.067	<b>.000</b>	<b>.000</b>	<b>.000</b>
	Effect Size		2.9	6.1	5.7
IV6: IV1 + IV2 + IV3 + IV4 + IV5	Correlation	.090*	.177**	.273**	.255**
	Significance	<b>.028</b>	<b>.000</b>	<b>.000</b>	<b>.000</b>
	Effect Size	0.8	3.1	7.5	6.5

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (one-tailed).

\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (one-tailed).

As Table 31 shows, production deviance provides only one significant outcome with an effect size higher than 1%; a small effect of an unclear explanation of reorganisations, which shares a variance of 1.3% with production deviance. Thus, production deviance was excluded from the further examination. Furthermore, the table shows that all interactional injustice items provide significant results when being related to incapable guardianship and perceptions of staff dishonesty as paying back. In doing so, perceptions of a lack of respectful treatment form the strongest predictor, including a shared variance of 4.5% with incapable guardianship. This illustrates the comparatively high impact of a perceived lack of respectful treatment.

Vice versa, perceptions of staff dishonesty as paying back form the strongest outcome for all of the five predictor variables respectively. This is in line with the



previous predictor examinations, which demonstrated the strongest covariance with perceptions of staff dishonesty as paying back as well.

In order to deepen the understanding of the effect of perceived interactional injustice on incapable guardianship and perceptions of staff dishonesty as paying back, the subsequent sections will examine the strongest effect sizes by the use of linear regression.

#### 4.7.1 The Effect of Perceived Disrespectful Treatment on Incapable Guardianship

An employer which acts disrespectfully in the course of reorganisations is a key feature of interactional injustice. Rises in perceived disrespectful treatment can predict 4.5% of the rises in incapable guardianship, hence providing the strongest effect on incapable guardianship in the dimension of interactional injustice.

**Table 32: Disrespectful Treatment (IV) vs. Incapable Guardianship (DV)**

Statistical Types			
$r = .21$ ( $p < .01$ ) $r^2 = .045$	$F = 20.71$ $p < .01$	$B = .46$ $SE = .10$	$t = 4.55$ $p < .01$

As Table 32 shows, a significant F-ratio confirms the improved prediction of incapable guardianship when disrespectful treatment is considered, and a positive B-value with a low standard error demonstrates that critical attitudes towards incapable guardianship rise together with perceptions of disrespectful treatment in the course of reorganisations.

This finding proves that perceived disrespectful treatment in the course of reorganisations increases tolerant attitudes towards staff dishonesty, and hence validates the research hypothesis of this thesis. Nevertheless, perceptions of staff dishonesty as paying back attract the strongest effect sizes once more, as the subsequent sections reveal.

#### 4.7.2 Interactional Injustice Items vs. Staff Dishonesty as Paying Back

As a contrast to the previous injustice dimensions, all of the interactional injustice items provide significant results. When the five items measuring interactional injustice are combined to a single interactional injustice factor, 7.5% of the rises in perceptions off staff dishonesty as paying back can be explained, thus providing a moderate effect which is also displayed in Table 33.

**Table 33: Combined Interactional Injustice Items (IV) vs. Staff Dishonesty as Paying Back (DV)**

Statistical Types			
$r = .27$ ( $p < .01$ ) $r^2 = .075$	$F = 35.34$ $p < .01$	$B = .18$ $SE = .03$	$t = 5.95$ $p < .01$

Once more, the statistical tests conducted in the course of the regression analysis underline the reliability and significance of the effect, and a positive B-value confirms that perceptions of staff dishonesty as paying back rise as a result of rises in perceptions of interactional injustice. Furthermore, a significant t-value rejects the possibility that the effect measured occurs by chance, while a significant F-ratio confirms the improved prediction of the model.

The effect size further increases, when only the three strongest interactional injustice items are combined as an interactional injustice factor. In this case, 8.9% of the rises in perceptions off staff dishonesty as paying back can be predicted, which constitutes the strongest effect size measured in the course of this thesis so far, as Table 34 shows.

**Table 34: Three Strongest Interactional Injustice Items (IV) vs. Staff Dishonesty as Paying Back (DV)**

Statistical Types			
$r = .30$ ( $p < .01$ ) $r^2 = .089$	$F = 42.92$ $p < .01$	$B = .33$ $SE = .05$	$t = 6.55$ $p < .01$

Furthermore, the improved prediction of staff dishonesty as paying back is confirmed by a significant F-ratio, while the null hypothesis is rejected by a significant

t-value. The strongest effect in the dimension of interactional injustice is also confirmed by a positive B-value with a low standard error, which demonstrates that 8.9% of the rises in perceptions of staff dishonesty as paying back can be explained by rises in perceived interactional injustice. Thus, a focus on the three strongest items in the dimension of interactional injustice provides a moderate effect on perceptions of staff dishonesty as paying back, and delivers a further validation of the research hypothesis. Beyond this, the effects of combined interactional injustice items confirm that the ability to predict rises in tolerant attitudes towards staff dishonesty is continuously higher when the perceived unfairness of reorganisations is in focus, and considerably smaller when only the extent of change is considered.

In addition, the focus on the three strongest items provides further insights into the two foci of interactional injustice; a lack of adequate information and a lack of respectful treatment. Although all of the interactional injustice items deliver consistently significant results, the weakest items in the interactional injustice dimension refer to a lack of adequate information, addressing the inadequacy of the information concerning reorganisations and an employer which did not communicate honestly in the course of reorganisations. On the contrary, the strongest item in the interactional injustice dimension refers to a lack of respectful treatment. Hence, the findings illustrate that the interpersonal feature of interactional injustice has a larger effect than the informational feature; the effect of interpersonal injustice exceeds the effect of informational injustice.

This dominance is also visible in the subsequent section, where the largest effect of a single interactional injustice item is looked at.

#### 4.7.3 Disrespectful Treatment vs. Tolerant Attitudes Towards Staff Dishonesty

Forming the strongest single item effect in the dimension of interactional injustice, 6.7% of rises in a combined outcome of incapable guardianship and perceptions of staff dishonesty as paying back can be predicted by a perceived lack of respectful treatment in the course of reorganisations, as illustrated in Table 35.

**Table 35: Disrespectful Treatment (IV) vs. Combined Outcome of Incapable Guardianship and Staff Dishonesty as Paying Back (DV)**

Statistical Type			
$r = .26$ ( $p < .01$ ) $r^2 = .067$	$F = 30.51$ $p < .01$	$B = 1.07$ $SE = .19$	$t = 5.52$ $p < .01$

Thus, an employer's interpersonal insensitivity and lack of politeness in the course of reorganisations has the largest effect in the dimension of interactional injustice, and one of the largest single item effects measured in this thesis. Furthermore, a positive B value with a low standard error confirms that incapable guardianship and perceptions of staff dishonesty as paying back rise when an employer is increasingly perceived not to treat employees respectfully in the course of reorganisations. Accordingly, this finding confirms the research hypothesis of this thesis, and demonstrates that perceived unfair treatment in the course of reorganisations leads to an increase in tolerant attitudes towards staff dishonesty.

Beyond that, a combination of the two outcomes of incapable guardianship and perceptions towards staff dishonesty as paying back results in a further increase of the effect size, as can be seen in the next section.

#### 4.7.4 Strongest Interactional Injustice Items vs. Tolerant Attitudes Towards Staff Dishonesty

When the three strongest predictor items are related to the combined outcomes of incapable guardianship and staff dishonesty as paying back, this results in a shared variance of 7.8%. Although the effect is statistically significant, as displayed in Table 36, the effect size is smaller than the prediction of perceptions towards staff dishonesty as paying back, which scores 8.9%.

**Table 36: The Three Strongest Interactional Injustice Items (IV) vs. Combined Outcome of Incapable Guardianship and Staff Dishonesty as Paying Back (DV)**

Statistical Type			
$r = .28$ ( $p < .01$ ) $r^2 = .078$	$F = 36.12$ $p < .01$	$B = .51$ $SE = .08$	$t = 6.01$ $p < .01$

Hence, this shows the proportional strength of staff dishonesty as paying back which attracts the strongest effect resulting from interactional injustice. In this regard, the straightforward composition of “staff dishonesty as paying back” underlines the significance of this effect: One item addresses that property or production deviance can be paying back for experienced injustice respectively, while another one states that the company deserves to be cheated. This nature of the items underlines that perceptions of interactional injustice in the course of reorganisations increase tolerant attitudes towards staff dishonesty in a considerable way.

In this regard, interactional injustice forms the third dimension of perceived injustice in the course of reorganisations which produces effect sizes larger than 8% whilst displaying a heterogeneous set of variables in terms of the resulting effect sizes. Moreover, the predominantly insignificant or small effects on the outcomes of property and production deviance are in line with the previous injustice dimensions assessed, where perceptions of staff dishonesty as paying back continuously attracted the largest and incapable guardianship the second largest effect sizes.

Following this assessment of interactional injustice, the subsequent section will examine the fourth and final injustice dimension derived from the theoretical framework of this thesis, the immorality of reorganisations.

#### **4.8 Moral Injustice vs. Tolerant Attitudes Towards Staff Dishonesty**

Moral injustice has been defined as a result of an employee’s two-step assessment of what an employer could have done as an alternative to the reorganisations which took place – and an additional assessment of what an employer should have done; i.e. the selection of the least harmful option for employees. Accordingly, perceived immoral reorganisations were conceptualised as an employer’s selection of an unnecessarily harmful alternative in the course of reorganisations, thus not taking the well-being of employees in mind (Section 2.4.4.).

In order to measure the perceived availability of alternatives for an employer, the first immorality item stated “external pressures leave the employer with no other choice than to reorganise”. The subsequent items measured an employer's selection of

unnecessarily harmful alternatives, asking the respondents whether “better alternatives to the reorganisations were frequently ignored” or whether “the reorganisations are a consequence of earlier mismanagement”. In the overall context of the reorganisations experienced in the past, the fourth item finally addressed anger to measure whether the employer is blamed for immoral reorganisations, asking whether “many employees are angry about the way they are treated by their employer”.

In this regard, the independent variable measuring the perceived availability of an employer's alternatives provided continuously insignificant effect sizes and is therefore excluded from the further examination. As can be seen in Table 37, the effect sizes of the remaining items measuring the perceived immorality of reorganisations vary in their size. Looking at the strongest single item effect measured in the dimension of immoral reorganisations, anger about the treatment received by an employer covaries to an amount of 7.2% with perceptions of staff dishonesty as paying back, which constitutes the highest effect of a single item on a single outcome variable in this thesis; only a perceived inability to speak freely scored higher when incapable guardianship and perceptions of staff dishonesty as paying back were combined.

**Table 37: Immorality of Reorganisations (IV) vs. Tolerant Attitudes Towards Staff Dishonesty (DV)**

Independent Variables (IV)	Statistical Type	Dependent Variables (DV)			
		DV1: Production Deviance	DV2: Incapable Guardianship	DV3: Paying Back	DV2 + DV3
IV1: Better Alternatives	Correlation	.060	.154*	.195**	.199**
	Significance	.105	<b>.001</b>	<b>.000</b>	<b>.000</b>
	Effect Size		2.4	3.8	4
IV2: Mismanagement	Correlation	.079*	.187**	.164**	.204**
	Significance	<b>.048</b>	<b>.000</b>	<b>.000</b>	<b>.000</b>
	Effect Size	0.6	3.5	2.7	4.2
IV3: Employees Angry	Correlation	.098*	.174**	.269**	.252**
	Significance	<b>.018</b>	<b>.000</b>	<b>.000</b>	<b>.000</b>
	Effect Size	1	3	7.2	6.4
IV4: IV1 + IV2 + IV3	Correlation	.101*	.214**	.260**	.273**
	Significance	<b>.018</b>	<b>.000</b>	<b>.000</b>	<b>.000</b>
	Effect Size	1	4.6	6.7	7.4

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (one-tailed).

\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (one-tailed).

Perceptions of staff dishonesty as paying back provide the highest covariance with ignored better alternatives, amounting to an effect size of 3.8%, and hence a small effect, which rises to 4% when both incapable guardianship and perceptions of staff dishonesty as paying back are considered. An employer's perceived mismanagement as a trigger of reorganisations shares a covariance of 3.5% with incapable guardianship, which constitutes the highest single item effect on incapable guardianship. When incapable guardianship and perceptions of staff dishonesty as paying back are combined as an outcome factor, this factor covaries with perceptions of reorganisations as a consequence of earlier mismanagement to an amount of 4.2%, thus presenting another small effect. This demonstrates that being angry about the treatment received from an employer has a considerably stronger effect than all other items measuring the immorality of reorganisations.

When the three remaining items measuring the immorality of reorganisations are combined as a predictor, this results in an increased covariance with incapable guardianship (4.6%) as well as an increased covariance with a combined outcome of incapable guardianship and perceptions of staff dishonesty as paying back (7.4%), thus forming the largest effect size measured in the field of perceived immoral reorganisations.

In order to further assess the predictor potential of perceived immoral reorganisations on rises in tolerant attitudes towards staff dishonesty, the subsequent sections will apply regression analysis to the strongest moral injustice effects on incapable guardianship, perceptions of staff dishonesty as paying back, and a combination of the two.

#### 4.8.1 The Effect of Combined Moral Injustice Perceptions on Incapable Guardianship

As Table 38 shows, 4.6% of the variance in incapable guardianship can be explained by the three strongest immorality items.

**Table 38: Three Strongest Immorality Items (IV) vs. Incapable Guardianship (DV)**

Statistical Type			
$r = .21$ ( $p < .01$ ) $r^2 = .046$	$F = 19.91$ $p < .01$	$B = .21$ $SE = .05$	$t = 4.46$ $p < .01$

A significant F-ratio confirms the improved prediction of variances in incapable guardianship by means of the strongest immorality items, and a positive gradient of the regression line demonstrates that a rise in incapable guardianship results in increased perceptions of immoral reorganisations. Thus, perceptions of immoral reorganisations prove to increase tolerant attitudes towards incapable guardianship, and the effect size is small to moderate.

This shows that the final injustice dimension tested within this thesis - moral injustice - provides a predictor of incapable guardianship which is weaker than the effect of procedural injustice (6.2%), but stronger than the effects of distributive injustice or perceptions of change. Furthermore, the effect sizes on perceptions of staff dishonesty as paying back are the largest ones once more, as can be seen in the subsequent sections.

#### 4.8.2 Anger about the Treatment Received vs. Staff Dishonesty as Paying Back

Once more, the largest effect on perceptions of staff dishonesty as paying back exceeds the largest effect on incapable guardianship. Anger about the way employees feel being treated by their employer predicts 7.2% of the rises in perceptions of staff dishonesty as paying back, which demonstrates a moderate effect. The improved prediction of staff dishonesty as paying back is confirmed by a significant F-ratio, and a positive gradient of the regression line, which demonstrates that perceptions of staff dishonesty as paying back result from increased attitudes towards being angry about the way an employer treats its employees.



**Table 39: Anger about the Treatment Received (IV) vs. Staff Dishonesty as Paying Back (DV)**

Statistical Type			
r = .27 (p<.01) r <sup>2</sup> = .072	F = 34.45 p < .01	B = .75 SE = .13	t = 5.87 p < .01

As Table 39 shows, a significant t-value rejects the hypothesis that the measured effect could be zero as well. Accordingly, being angry about the treatment received in the course of reorganisations constitutes a further predictor of rises in tolerant attitudes towards staff dishonesty, and this potential is also visible when the three strongest immorality items are combined as a single factor.

#### 4.8.3 Moral Injustice vs. Tolerant Attitudes Towards Staff Dishonesty

When the three strongest items measuring moral injustice are combined, this predictor shares a variance of 7.4% with a combined outcome factor of incapable guardianship and perceptions of staff dishonesty as paying back, and thus constitutes a moderate effect size and the strongest impact in the fourth injustice dimension.

**Table 40: Three Strongest Immorality Items (IV) vs. Combined Outcomes of Incapable Guardianship and Staff Dishonesty as Paying Back (DV)**

Statistical Type			
r = .27 (p<.01) r <sup>2</sup> = .074	F = 32.53 p < .01	B = .51 SE = .09	t = 5.70 p < .01

As can be seen in Table 40, an increase in tolerant attitudes towards staff dishonesty results from rising perceptions of moral injustice, and both the predictor potential of the strongest moral injustice items as well as the rejection of the null hypothesis are highly significant.

This shows that the fourth and last injustice dimension provides significant results to test and confirm the research hypothesis of this thesis. Moreover, the combined effect of the strongest moral injustice items on combined strongest outcome variables demonstrates that a focus on the strongest predictor and outcome items has the

potential to deliver increased effect sizes, and this potential of a focus on the strongest items will also be explored in the subsequent section.

#### **4.9 Unfairness Perceptions vs. Tolerant Attitudes Towards Staff Dishonesty**

Having assessed the impact of change and the four injustice dimensions on tolerant attitudes towards staff dishonesty respectively, this final section describes the impact which is caused by a combination of the strongest predictor items. An examination of items with the highest scores reveals that nine items build a factor of combined injustice perceptions which explains up to 11.8% of the rises in tolerant attitudes towards staff dishonesty, and thereby constitutes the highest effect size which can be reached by a combination of predictor items.

In this regard, the nine items forming this strongest predictor contain all of the five predictor items measuring interactional injustice. This proves that inadequate explanations and insensitive treatment, which constitute the dimension of interactional injustice, provide the strongest effects on tolerant attitudes towards staff dishonesty. Two further items, the inability to speak freely and the inability to shape decisions concerning an employee's daily tasks, relate to the dimension of procedural injustice. One of the remaining two items, ignored better alternatives to reorganisations, refers to immoral reorganisations, while unfair rewards refer to distributive injustice. Accordingly, perceived unfairness in the research setting is about not feeling being informed well and being treated without respect in the course of reorganisations, and this predominant perception of interactional injustice is combined with employees' perceptions of neither having voice nor choice in the course of reorganisations. Hence, seven out of nine items constituting the profile of perceived unfairness in the research setting are related to treatment, and not to material hardships in the course of reorganisations, which underlines the importance of social exchange in the employer-employee relationship. Beyond treatment, the remaining two items express firstly blame towards an employer who missed to select better alternatives and secondly perceived unfair rewards. Thus, only the latter item refers to a material, distributive injustice.

In sum, perceived reorganisational injustice in the research setting reflects a range which includes each of the four injustice dimensions with a clear dominance of interactional injustice items. Furthermore, two out of three items measuring procedural injustice are reflected in the strongest injustice factors as well, which shows that the underlying concepts of voice and choice are highly relevant for employees in the research setting. Finally, the composition of the strongest predictor items reveals that none of the items measuring the effect of change itself is contained, which demonstrates that it is the perceived unfairness of reorganisations, and not the extent of reorganisations, which leads to higher tolerance levels towards staff dishonesty.

Despite of the range of injustice dimensions which are reflected in this combined injustice factor, the nine predictor items contained therein display a high internal consistency, as demonstrated in the following section.

#### 4.9.1 Internal Consistency of the Nine Strongest Predictor Items

An examination of the internal consistency of the nine strongest predictor items demonstrates a high Cronbach's alpha of .87. As can be seen in Table 41, only the item measuring perceptions of unfair rewards leads to a slight, negligible increase to .88 if the item is deleted.

**Table 41: The Nine Strongest Predictor Items**

Independent Variables	Corrected Item- Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
1. speak freely	.534	.861
2. shape decisions	.589	.855
3. better alternatives	.523	.861
4. reasons explained	.677	.846
5. dishonest employer	.776	.836
6. reorganisation necessary	.564	.857
7. disrespectful treatment	.767	.837
8. destroyed mutual trust	.680	.846
9. rewarded unfairly	.327	.879

Providing corrected item-total correlations of .3 and higher, this proves a high internal consistency and reliability of this final factor, and the improved predictive potential of combined unfairness perceptions is further described in the subsequent section.

#### 4.9.2 Unfairness Perceptions vs. Tolerant Attitudes Towards Staff Dishonesty

As Table 42 displays, production deviance attracts a smaller effect size than the consistently strongest variables incapable guardianship and perceptions of staff dishonesty as paying back. Accordingly, a combination of the two strongest variables produces a stronger effect size than a combination of the three dependent variables as well.

**Table 42: Nine Strongest Predictor Items vs. Tolerant Attitudes Towards Staff Dishonesty**

Independent Variable (IV)	Statistical Type	Dependent Variable (DV)			
		DV1: Production Deviance	DV2: Incapable Guardianship	DV3: Paying Back	DV2 + DV3
Nine Strongest Predictor Items	Correlation	.137**	.268**	.333**	.343**
	Significance	.002	.000	.000	.000
	Effect Size	1.9	7.2	11.1	11.8

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (one-tailed).

Beyond this, the nine strongest fairness items share 1.9% of the variance with tolerant attitudes towards production deviance, which forms a small, but significant effect. A covariance of 7.2% with incapable guardianship indicates a moderate effect, and the nine strongest predictor items share an even larger variance of 11.1% with perceptions of staff dishonesty as paying back. Hence, a combination of the strongest predictor items confirms the proportional strength of effect sizes measured throughout this thesis; predominantly insignificant effects on property deviance, small effects on production deviance, moderate effects on incapable guardianship and the largest effects on perceptions of staff dishonesty as paying back.

When production deviance as the weakest outcome variable is left out and only incapable guardianship and perceptions towards staff dishonesty as paying back are considered as a combined outcome variable, a covariance of 11.8% is shared with the nine strongest predictor items, hence forming the largest effect size measured throughout this thesis.

In sum, a focus on the strongest predictor items results in a considerable increase of the correlation coefficients, and the measured effects are not small, but moderate, scoring up to 11.8%. In order to confirm the effect of perceived unfair change in the workplace on rises in tolerant attitudes towards staff dishonesty, the second part of this section will now examine the effect of the nine strongest predictor items by the use of regression analysis.

#### 4.9.3 Unfairness Perceptions vs. Production Deviance

By the use of linear regression, the nine strongest predictor items explain 1.9 % of the variance in tolerant attitudes towards production deviance, as presented in Table 43.

**Table 43: Nine Strongest Predictor Items vs. Production Deviance as an Outcome**

Statistical Type			
$r = .137$ ( $p < .01$ ) $r^2 = .019$	$F = 8,052$ $p < .01$	$B = .064$ $SE = .023$	$t = 2,838$ $p < .01$

A significant F-ratio confirms the improved prediction of production deviance as an outcome, and a positive B-value demonstrates that a small increase in tolerant attitudes towards production deviance results from perceived injustice as a predictor. Finally, a significant t-value rejects the null hypothesis that the predictor-outcome relationship is zero. This shows that perceptions of unfair treatment in the course of change result in small, but significant rises in productions deviance with an effect size of 1.9%. Although this effect is small, it nevertheless demonstrates that production deviance as an outcome continuously provides more significant results than property deviance. Furthermore, this finding demonstrates that the effect is smaller than the

effect of the three strongest distributive injustice items combined, which explain 2.5% of the rises in production deviance.

Nevertheless, the nine strongest items have a higher effect on the remaining variables, as can be seen in the subsequent sections.

#### 4.9.4 Unfairness Perceptions vs. Incapable Guardianship

Incapable guardianship is predicted by the nine strongest predictor items to an extent of 7.2% of its variance. Table 44 demonstrates that this increased impact is also visible in a B-value of .12, which reflects the gradient of the regression line and hence the rise in incapable guardianship which results from a rise in perceived unfair treatment in the course of reorganisations.

**Table 44: Nine Strongest Predictor Items vs. Incapable Guardianship as an Outcome**

Statistical Type			
$r = .268$ ( $p < .01$ ) $r^2 = .072$	$F = 31,79$ $p < .01$	$B = .124$ $SE = .022$	$t = 5,638$ $p < .01$

Thus, unfairness perceptions have a moderate, but significant impact and can explain 7.2% of the increase in tolerant attitudes towards incapable guardianship, which is considerably higher than the effect on production deviance. As incapable guardianship forms a situational precondition of both property deviance and production deviance, this indicates that tolerant attitudes towards incapable guardianship imply tolerant attitudes towards staff dishonesty itself.

This general attitude set is also reflected in the next outcome variable which is tested by the use of regression analysis; perceptions of staff dishonesty as paying back.

#### 4.9.5 Unfairness Perceptions vs. Staff Dishonesty as Paying Back

Constituting the third outcome which shares a significant regression coefficient with combined perceptions of unfair reorganisations, perceptions of staff dishonesty as

paying back can be predicted by the nine strongest fairness items to an extent of 11.1 % of its variance.

**Table 45: Nine Strongest Predictor Items vs. Staff Dishonesty as Paying Back as an Outcome**

Statistical Type			
$r = .333$ ( $p < .01$ ) $r^2 = .111$	$F = 51,556$ $p < .01$	$B = .178$ $SE = .025$	$t = 7.18$ $p < .01$

As illustrated in Table 45, a significant F-ratio and t-value confirm that 11.1% of the rises in perceptions of staff dishonesty as paying back result from rising perceptions of unfair reorganisations. Having the items constituting the predictor variables and the outcome variables in mind, this means that, for example, a lack of adequate explanations for reorganisations, perceived insensitive treatment in the course of reorganisations, and a feeling of having no voice and no choice in the course of reorganisations lead to an attitude that the employer deserves to be cheated. Beyond this general reference towards paying back, the effect size of 11.1% is also critical because two further items measuring perceptions of staff dishonesty as paying back include straightforward references towards property deviance (...pilfering can be just paying back for being treated unfairly) and production deviance (...pretending to be sick can be just paying back for experienced injustice). Accordingly, paying back as a motivation to engage in property deviance and production deviance constitutes a much larger outcome than the notion of property deviance and production deviance alone.

Finally, effect sizes increase once more when perceptions of staff dishonesty as paying back are combined with incapable guardianship, as can be seen in the next section.

#### 4.9.6 Unfairness Perceptions vs. Tolerant Attitudes Towards Staff Dishonesty

A reduced focus on attitudes towards incapable guardianship and perceptions of staff dishonesty as paying back provides the basis for the highest effect size measured in this thesis. Accordingly, production deviance was not considered further and only the two strongest outcomes were combined. A variance of 11.8% in combined attitudes

towards incapable guardianship and staff dishonesty as paying back can be explained by perceptions of unfair reorganisations, and a B-value of .3 indicates as clear rise in tolerant attitudes when perceptions of unfair reorganisations rise. This effect is also confirmed by a significant F-ratio and t-value, as can be seen in Table 46.

**Table 46: Nine Strongest Predictor Items vs. the Combined Outcomes of Incapable Guardianship and Staff Dishonesty as Paying Back**

Statistical Type			
r = .343 (p<.01) r <sup>2</sup> = .118	F = 53,846 p < .01	B = .301 SE = .041	t = 7.338 p < .01

Accordingly, up to 11.8% of rises in tolerant attitudes towards staff dishonesty result from perceived unfair treatment in the course of reorganisations, which constitutes an effect size that clearly verifies the research hypothesis of the present study, as will be concluded in further detail in the final section.

#### 4.10. Chapter Conclusion

In sum, a multitude of results of this chapter confirm the research hypothesis of this thesis, as the findings of the online self-completion questionnaires prove that tolerant attitudes towards staff dishonesty rise as a result of rising perceptions of unfair treatment at the workplace in four injustice dimensions.

When the strongest effect sizes of the four injustice dimensions are compared to each other, combined interactional injustice provides the largest effect; 8.9% of rises in perceptions of staff dishonesty as paying back can be explained by a combination of the three strongest interactional injustice items. In the dimension of procedural injustice, it is the absence of voice, a perception not to be able to speak freely about the reorganisations going on, which provides the highest effect size. Thus, a single item measuring the absence of voice can predict increases of 8.7% in a combined outcome of incapable guardianship and perceptions of staff dishonesty as paying back. The third strongest effect is delivered by the three strongest distributive injustice items, which predict 8.2% of rises in perceptions of staff dishonesty as paying back, while perceived



moral injustice in terms of the three strongest items constituting this factor can predict 7.4% of rises in a combined outcome of incapable guardianship and perceptions of staff dishonesty as paying back.

Hence, the four dimensions of injustice predict moderate rises in perceptions of staff dishonesty as paying back as well as rises in a combined outcome of incapable guardianship and perceptions of staff dishonesty as paying back. In doing so, these rises fall in a range of effect sizes between 7.4% and 8.9%, thus verifying the research hypothesis that perceived unfair change in the workplace leads to an increase in tolerant attitudes towards staff dishonesty.

Vice versa, the largest effect of combined change perceptions on rises in a combined outcome of incapable guardianship and perceptions of staff dishonesty as paying back is 4.1%; thus being considerably smaller than the effect of perceived unfair change, and less than half as large than the effects of the dimensions of procedural injustice, distributive injustice and interactional injustice respectively. This indicates that perceived unfair reorganisations form the genuine predictor of rises in tolerant attitudes towards staff dishonesty, and proves that the perceived unfairness of reorganisations predicts larger rises in tolerant attitudes than mere perceptions of change or the change extent.

Furthermore, the theoretical framework which informed the design of factors measuring injustice in the course of reorganisations proved to deliver predominantly significant results. Only the outcome variable property deviance provided predominantly insignificant results, while production deviance attracted several small effects up to 2.5%, which result from rising perceptions of distributive injustice. Rises in incapable guardianship, in turn, can be explained to an amount of 6.6% by rises in perceptions of not being able to speak freely about the reorganisations taking place. Hence, this demonstrates that perceived unfair reorganisations do have significant, small to moderate effects on outcomes beyond perceptions of staff dishonesty as paying back as well.

The reference to frequent combinations of predictor items and outcome variables further demonstrates that combining these factors formed a suitable approach to reveal

larger effect sizes. In this regard, the potential to explain 11.8% of rises in a combined outcome of incapable guardianship and perceptions of staff dishonesty as paying back by means of a combination of the nine strongest predictor items underlines the usefulness of combining factors.

With a clear dominance of interactional injustice items, the composition of the nine strongest predictor items nevertheless reflects all of the four injustice dimensions derived from the theoretical framework of this thesis. Regarding the research hypothesis of this thesis, this shows that perceived unfair treatment in the course of reorganisations can be measured best when several injustice dimensions are considered. Thus, a combination of several dimensions of perceived unfair reorganisations delivered a comprehensive and suitable predictor to test the research hypothesis. Vice versa, the outcome variables used were suitable to test both the effect of single dimensions measuring perceived unfair reorganisations, and the effect of combined perceptions of unfair reorganisations.

This thesis hypothesises that perceived unfair reorganisations in the workplace lead to an increase in tolerant attitudes towards staff dishonesty. The research results show, that up to 11.8% of rises in tolerant attitudes towards staff dishonesty can be explained by perceived unfair reorganisations. Thus, the research hypothesis is verified.

Based on the results presented, the subsequent chapter will discuss these findings with reference to the literature and selected criminological theories.

## **Chapter Five: Discussion and Conclusion**

### **5.1. Introduction to Chapter**

As the previous chapter has demonstrated, perceptions of unfair reorganisations do predict rises in tolerant attitudes towards staff dishonesty. Building on these statistical findings, the purpose of this chapter is to discuss the research findings as related to the existing literature.

In order to enter into a discussion of the research findings of this thesis, the subsequent second section will briefly describe the shortcomings in the existing literature. It will be argued that the research hypothesis of this thesis, as well as the research design applied to test the hypothesis, focuses on these shortcomings and hence provides a basis to obtain results which offer an original contribution to knowledge. Furthermore, it will be argued that a lack of attention towards the workplace experience from an employee's point of view forms an element which connects all of the shortcomings identified; the prevailing neglect of change in terms of continuous reorganisations, employees' violated moral expectations at work, and a moral dimension of staff dishonesty. Having these shortcomings in mind, this chapter will continuously seek to relate the research findings to a staff perspective. In this regard, the results show that perceptions of strong change and being afraid of reorganisations are held by a majority of the respondents, hence displaying an attitude set which is typical for the Information and Communications Technology (ICT) sector. Thus, the findings underline the need to address employees' perceptions of a contemporary workplace experience.

Based on this confirmation of change pressures in the sector which serves as the research setting, the subsequent sections will first demonstrate that the dimensions of reorganisational injustice provide an alternative explanation and conceptual framework for negative workplace experiences. Second, it will be explained how perceived unfair reorganisations lead to a motivation to even the score, which is referred to as corrective justice in this thesis. Accordingly, it will be shown that the results of the present study provide evidence for a new approach to explain criminality: criminality as a situational motivation to correct perceived injustice.

Since perceived unfair reorganisations are examined and verified as a situational trigger of rises in tolerant attitudes towards staff dishonesty, the third section of this chapter will compare and contrast the four dimensions of reorganisational injustice with previous studies and literature on the effect of the workplace experience on staff dishonesty. Thus, the present study's findings on distributive injustice, procedural injustice, interactional injustice and moral injustice will be examined in detail, and it will be shown that the findings are in line with several studies, in particular those from Greenberg (1990) and Hollinger and Clark (1982b). Nevertheless, it will be also be shown that the measured staff perceptions of unfair reorganisations, which are referred to as reorganisational injustice in this thesis, provide an alternative explanation for the motivation to engage in staff dishonesty which was not conceptualised in the literature on staff dishonesty so far: moral injustice. Thus, it will be demonstrated that perceptions of immoral reorganisations provide an additional dimension of perceived injustice.

With reference to the explanatory nature of the design of reorganisational injustice items, it will also be discussed and interpreted how the particular composition of reorganisational injustice in the research setting is constituted. Finally, the section will conclude that reorganisational injustice forms a comprehensive concept to cover a negative workplace experience, and that moral injustice constitutes a neglected dimension of reorganisational injustice.

Based on this understanding of reorganisational injustice, its composition in the research setting and its comparison with the literature, the fourth section of this chapter will focus on the effect of reorganisational injustice on increases in tolerant attitudes towards staff dishonesty. In the course of this assessment, it will be concluded that criminality does not form a stable personality trait, and that criminality forms at least partly a situational variable when it comes to situational triggers of rises in tolerant attitudes towards staff dishonesty. In sum, it will also be shown that reorganisational injustice does not only increase tolerant attitudes towards staff dishonesty, but turns staff dishonesty into an act of corrective justice for some employees, thus giving staff dishonesty the meaning of a fair answer to perceived unfair treatment: a justified activity to even the score. Hence, this thesis will conclude that staff dishonesty as corrective justice forms a situational motivation to restore fairness in the condition of an

employer who is perceived as being guilty of reorganisational injustice from an employee's perspective. In this regard, both reorganisational injustice and corrective justice form concepts which are continuously perceived by employees; the present study focuses exclusively on perceptions of employees and not on objective or actual justice.

Having assessed these implications of reorganisational injustice, section four will further emphasise the implications of corrective justice as a situational motivation to engage in staff dishonesty; above all the potential of corrective justice in complementing Routine Activity Theory and a reflection of social constructionism when it comes to explanations of staff dishonesty.

With reference to the practical implications of the findings, section five of this chapter will describe the importance of considering the four dimensions of injustice in the course of business reorganisations. In doing so, the section will recommend ways to avoid injustice perceptions on the part of employees in the course of reorganisations in order to prevent motivations of corrective justice.

Focussing on the limitations of the conducted research, the limitations section will take particular features of the research setting into consideration, like the presence of Trade Unions which is not generalisable in every Western industry, or a research sample of employees without a known conviction of staff dishonesty, which could therefore only be addressed in terms of tolerance levels towards staff dishonesty. Finally, a personal reflection on the research findings will emphasise that constructionism in combination with morality perceptions forms a key role in both the thesis and the main conclusion the researcher takes from his research personally.

As outlined above, the second section will now illustrate the shortcomings in the existing research on explanations for staff dishonesty and starts with a reflection on change pressures in the research setting.

## **5.2 Lack of Attention Towards Change and Offender Motivation**

It was shown that the ICT sector has experienced a period of strong change pressures due to changes in technology, increased competition and declining revenues (Section 1.1.2). Furthermore, a study focussing on reorganisations in a North American ICT Provider, Pacific Bell, has demonstrated that reorganisations as a response to these change pressures encompassed cost cutting measures in the form of downsizing measures, consolidation and automation, which in turn leads to less creative tasks for employees (Biewener, 2008).

This view of the ICT sector is in line with the change perceptions of the research participants of the present study, most of whom agreed with the existence of a high extent of reorganisations in the last two years. Furthermore, more than two thirds of the respondents displayed attitudes that the jobs in the research setting have become increasingly insecure over the past years, which is in line with the findings in the North American ICT market (Section 1.1.2), where consolidation and automation lead to downsizing measures in terms of staff reductions (Biewener, 2008).

Beyond this confirmation of the change impact in the research setting, the respondents displayed critical attitudes towards change as well, as only half of the employees confirmed that most employees can handle reorganisations, whereas 82.9% of the respondents in the research setting indicated that most employees are afraid of reorganisations. These critical findings confirm the existence of workplace anxiety as an effect of reorganisations (Orange, 2015) and thereby demonstrate that “psycho-social risks and anxiety at work” (Orange, 2015, p. 38) are existent in the research setting as well. Accordingly, the research findings of this thesis confirm that change pressures and reorganisations form an important feature of the contemporary workplace experience of employees in the ICT-sector, and a large majority of research participants displaying perceptions of fear towards reorganisations clearly demonstrates that reorganisations do have strong negative implications on the workplace experience of affected staff.

In this context, an identified shortcoming in the existing literature is that the importance of change in the workplace experience of employees is rarely considered. Although several studies focus on the importance of the workplace experience as a

framework and trigger of staff dishonesty (Greenberg, 1990; Hollinger and Clark, 1982b), the continuous presence of change and the potential of perceived adverse change from an employee's point of view are not taken into consideration. Accordingly, single studies on the effect of adverse change measures, like pay cuts (Greenberg, 1990) exist, but perceived adverse change is not adhered to as a comprehensive concept.

Beyond these insights which are focussing on the importance of change, the literature on the impact of the workplace experience on staff dishonesty has shown that morality, ethics and fairness are frequently referred to, but not conceptualised as a dimension of unfairness in its own, which forms the second shortcoming. Hence, immorality, injustice and unfairness were not used as core factors to conceptualise a perceived unfair workplace experience, and in particular the immorality of reorganisations as such has not been conceptualised. Accordingly, a lack of attention towards change and reorganisations is accompanied by a lack of attention towards the morality versus immorality of reorganisations. Finally, a lack of attention towards change is applicable to the concept of criminality as well.

Existing approaches explain criminality, which forms an underlying concept to explain inclinations to engage in staff dishonesty, as a relatively stable personality trait. By hindsight, this perception of criminality refers to an objectivist ontological worldview which may have hampered criminological research from further insights into offender motivation. Vice versa, the research hypothesis of the present study argues that change in criminality can be triggered by situational factors like a perceived unfair workplace experience, which forms an external, situational-motivational trigger to engage in staff dishonesty - as opposed to an understanding of criminality as an internal and stable personality trait. As the research results of the present study demonstrate, this research hypothesis is true and perceived unfair change in the workplace leads to rises in tolerant attitudes towards staff dishonesty indeed – which in turn shows that a wide range of situational triggers of criminality has not been researched so far. Thus, the present study's approach provides a new way of measuring a negative workplace experience of employees and a new way of examining situational offender motivation.

In this regard, the motivation to engage in staff dishonesty has not been considered as a situational variable itself so far, but rather as a function of opportunity.

Criticism was already applied to opportunity-related theories like Rational Choice Theory and Routine Activity Theory, which cannot explain why some employees do not exploit opportunities, while others do.

The research hypothesis of the present study addresses each of the aforementioned shortcomings in the existing research on staff dishonesty; the importance of considering reorganisations in the workplace experience, the importance of morality in doing so, and the assumption that criminality is not stable and that the motivation to offend can form a situational variable. In doing so, the present study hypothesises that perceived reorganisational injustice, which comprises perceived unfair treatment in up to four injustice dimensions, forms a means to both comprehensively conceptualise a negative workplace experience - and to measure a potential effect in terms of a motivation to even the score.

Thus, both the comprehensive approach to measure a perceived unfair workplace experience and the verified hypothesis that perceptions of reorganisational injustice lead to an increase in tolerant attitudes towards staff dishonesty form an original contribution to knowledge. In this connection, the subsequent section will introduce the particular profile of reorganisational injustice perceptions discovered in the research setting and discuss its effect on tolerant attitudes towards staff dishonesty in comparison with the literature.

### **5.3 Reorganisational Injustice in the Research Setting**

The previous section has demonstrated that the research participants of the present study share prevailing perceptions of strong change, while a large majority of responding employees confirmed fearful attitudes towards reorganisations. Going into further detail, this section will now discuss that the reorganisations in the research setting are perceived as being unfair as well, and conclude that the overall findings support both the existence and the importance of an integrated approach measuring reorganisational injustice, the predictor variable of the research hypothesis. Moreover, it will be argued that the concept of reorganisational injustice forms a suitable approach to comprehensively measure the workplace experience of employees from a



criminological perspective, as the research findings firstly provide evidence that reorganisational injustice perceptions exist, and secondly demonstrate that injustice perceptions can be measured in each of the four dimensions tested.

In order to examine and discuss the meaning of the research findings, the results of the four injustice dimensions will be assessed one by one, and particular attention will be paid to the composition of the strongest single items which cover each of the four injustice dimensions used. In this regard, Chapter Four (Section 4.2.5) has already highlighted the dominant perception of unfairness; 14 out of 16 items measuring justice versus injustice perceptions measured dominant perceptions of injustice on the part of the research participants.

Having this prevailing staff perception of reorganisational injustice in mind, the subsequent section will discuss the first injustice dimension tested: distributive injustice.

### 5.3.1 Unfair Rewards, Lost Career Prospects and the Burden of New Tasks

Distributive injustice has been defined as an employee's perceived imbalance of inputs and outcomes at the workplace; a perceived unfair return for the work which is done from an employee's perspective. In the research setting, a majority of the research participants displayed attitudes of lost career prospects and increased workload as a consequence of reorganisations, and a majority of the respondents did not perceive new tasks as an opportunity as well. Vice versa, a clear majority of the respondents stated that employees in the research setting are rewarded fairly, hence adding a predominantly positive aspect to the three aforementioned negative perceptions of reorganisations.

Interestingly, increased workload provides no significant effect on rises in tolerant attitudes towards staff dishonesty, which is in line with the previous finding that it is not the amount of change, but the perceived unfairness of change which triggers criminogenic attitudes. Thus, more workload is not necessarily unfair. Apart from increased workload, the three remaining distributive injustice items provide the highest effect on rises in tolerant attitudes towards staff dishonesty, above all perceived unfair rewards, which predict up to 5.1% of rises in combined perceptions of staff dishonesty

as paying back - and incapable guardianship in terms of a lack of willingness to protect company property from being abused by others.

This finding is at first glance perhaps surprising, as the item measuring the unfairness of rewards was one out of only two items where a majority of the respondents felt being treated fairly. Accordingly, the comparatively strong effect was generated by a minority of the respondents who did not feel they were being rewarded fairly. Equity Theory's focus on an employee's perceived balance of inputs and outcomes (Adams, 1965) however, is in line with these research findings, as they support the assumption that it is above all unfair rewards which motivate employees to even the score. Whereas increased workload, lost career prospects and seeing no opportunity in reorganisations only measure change in an employee's input-outcomes ratio, they do not measure whether the ratio itself is fair or unfair in the very end. Hence, perceptions of distributive injustice in the research setting are not about giving more, but instead about not receiving the expected outcome.

Nevertheless, unfair rewards, lost career prospects and seeing no opportunity in new tasks were related to each other, and a combination of these factors provided the strongest impact on rises in tolerant attitudes towards staff dishonesty. This shows that it is not only pay cuts which lead to a potential increase in staff dishonesty (Greenberg, 1990), but also a stable salary in combination with lost career prospects. In Greenberg's experiment (1990), salary was reduced whilst testing the moderating effect of sensitive treatment and adequate explanations. The research setting of this thesis, vice versa, is a setting with a stable salary in combination with aggravating circumstances. The result nevertheless remained criminogenic in both cases: increased levels of theft, or, in this study, rises in tolerant attitudes towards staff dishonesty. Hence, the salary was regarded as not being fair respectively, and such an effect is also congruent with the finding that perceived low wages can trigger staff dishonesty (Ditton, 1977). This shows that disturbances on both an employee's input and an employee's outcomes can lead to an inequity which is perceived as a distributive injustice.

Moreover, the effect of distributive injustice perceptions rises when employees' perceptions of unfair rewards are combined with perceptions of lost career prospects and not seeing new tasks as an opportunity, and these combined features of distributive

injustice predict 8.2% of rises in perceptions of staff dishonesty as paying back. Thus, Equity Theory's notion that a perceived input-outcome ratio is not only related to material factors is confirmed (Adams, 1965), and the results of the present study also confirm that perceptions of distributive injustice do have an effect on rises in tolerant attitudes towards staff dishonesty. Beyond this, the research findings show that perceived negative modifications of immaterial rewards, like career prospects, can have an effect equal to that of a pay cut and thereby underline the importance of considering modifications in immaterial rewards in the course of reorganisations.

Having Equity Theory's emphasis on an employee's perceived balance of inputs and outcomes in mind, the research findings also confirm that tolerant attitudes towards reducing inputs in terms of incapable guardianship are triggered by distributive injustice perceptions, and hence serve as one out of several options to even the score. The effect of reducing input by means of working less is also reflected in a small rise of 2.5% when it comes to tolerant attitudes towards production deviance, and this effect is the highest rise in production deviance measured throughout this thesis. Although forming a comparatively small effect, this finding nevertheless informs further research on the motivation to engage in production deviance, as "withdrawal behavior has been extensively documented and researched; on the other hand, relatively little is known about the intentions underlying the choice to be absent" (Vardi and Weitz, 2004, p. 79). Accordingly, evening the score in a perceived condition of distributive injustice can form the intention underlying the choice to engage in production deviance. In this context, giving less in terms of production deviance supports Equity Theory once more, where such behaviour was already introduced as one of an employee's options to balance perceived injustice (Adams, 1965). Thus, applying the logic of Equity Theory provides a new insight into the motivation to engage in production deviance, and thereby offers an explanatory approach to a phenomenon which is well recognised in the disciplines of criminology, organisational psychology and management, as Chapter Two has shown.

As a whole, the research findings do not only demonstrate the profile of distributive injustice perceptions in the research setting, but also the usefulness – if not necessity – to measure explicitly negative effects of change in the workplace experience

in the domain of distributive injustice. In this connection, the findings on distributive injustice and its impact on staff dishonesty address the flipside of change management in the management literature (Vardi and Weitz, 2004; Mullins, 2005) which does respond to the impact of reorganisations with a focus on desirable outcomes like job satisfaction and productivity, or undesirable outcomes like fluctuation. Furthermore, the research findings of this thesis provide alternative explanations for the results of existing studies which measured the effect of broader concepts like job dissatisfaction and a negative workplace experience on staff dishonesty (Hollinger and Clark, 1982b), as distributive injustice was found to be a particular injustice dimension which can lead to a negative workplace experience and rises in tolerant attitudes towards staff dishonesty.

Having assessed the composition and meaning of distributive injustice in the research setting, the subsequent section will focus on a second dimension which has the potential to explain a negative workplace experience: procedural injustice.

### 5.3.2 No Voice, but Staff Dishonesty as a Choice

Procedural injustice was conceptualised as an employee's perceived absence of voice and choice; i.e. perceptions of not having sufficient chance to express one's point of view in the course of reorganisations and perceptions of not having a choice among feasible alternatives in the course of reorganisations.

With reference to voice, more than one third of the research participants displayed attitudes of not being able to speak freely about the reorganisations taking place. In this regard, a majority of the respondents displaying perceptions of having voice forms the second and last predictor where a predominant perception of fairness in the course of reorganisations exists. As related to the remaining items measuring procedural injustice, a majority of the employees in the research setting felt unable to shape decisions made about their daily tasks and perceived employees not to have a choice but to take the burden of reorganisations. In other words, a majority agreed to be able to utter one's opinion in the course of reorganisations, whereas a majority of the same sample declared that this does not help a lot anyway. Nevertheless, it is this

minority of the employees which provides the strongest effect on rises in tolerant attitudes towards staff dishonesty: the one-third of respondents who said they did not feel able to speak freely about the reorganisations taking place.

Just as minority perceptions of unfair rewards in the previous section provided a particularly strong feature of the distributive injustice dimension, one of the procedural injustice items provides a particular effect as well; the perception of not being able to speak freely about reorganisations taking place. This perceived absence of voice predicts 6.6% of rises in tolerant attitudes towards incapable guardianship, and thereby forms the strongest single item predictor of this criminogenic outcome in the research setting.

Although freedom of speech forms an important concept, it is rarely referred to in the literature on staff dishonesty. Greenberg's comparison of theft rates in plants includes voice as well, as employees were able to raise their concerns and ask questions when the necessity of pay cuts was carefully explained by the management, "and all questions were answered with sensitivity. Approximately 1 hr was spent answering all questions" (Greenberg, 1990, p. 563). Thus, the absence versus availability of voice may contribute to an explanation of Greenberg's (1990) assessment of rises in theft levels as a consequence of distributive injustice as well, although he claimed to focus on sensitive treatment and adequate explanations as a moderator of pay cuts. In hindsight, Greenberg's study on pay cuts (1990) had a larger scope than declared within the research design of his study, as one hour of answering the questions of employees demonstrates that employees had a chance to raise their concerns and to speak freely about the change measures taking place. Accordingly, distributive injustice, interactional injustice and procedural injustice perceptions were approached in his study, and having no voice in terms of a "lack of participatory input to decision making" (Folger and Cropanzano, 1998, p. 26) was already described as a powerful characteristic of procedural injustice (Folger, 1977).

In this connection, the research findings support the discussion on the expressive versus instrumental character of voice, which was already addressed (Section 2.4.2). The obtained results show that a perceived lack of the expressive feature of voice, i.e. not being able to speak freely, provides a stronger impact on rises in tolerant attitudes

towards staff dishonesty than the instrumental feature where the ability to shape decisions made about employees' daily tasks is addressed. This finding supports the importance of voice as an expressive means, where another party "listened attentively and treated the request seriously, despite then having to deny it in light of other legitimate considerations" (Folger and Cropanzano, 1998, p. 35).

Accordingly, the research findings of this thesis demonstrate that the expressive feature of voice is not only important as such, but even provides a stronger impact on rises in tolerant attitudes towards staff dishonesty than voice as a means to shape outcomes. This finding also supports the results of three studies which tested a rational perspective on the one hand, which assumed that the expressive feature of voice had no effect in a condition of uninfluenced results, versus a "value-expressive" (Tyler, Rasinski and Spodick, 1985, p. 72) perspective, which assumed that procedural justice perceptions rose even in conditions where the final outcome could not be influenced. All of the studies demonstrated, "that the chance to speak has value in itself. That value appears unrelated to the influence of voice on the decisions made" (Tyler, Rasinski and Spodick, 1985, p. 79). These insights are supported by the findings of this thesis and it is argued that the effect as such can be explained by the strength of moral expectations, which are even more important than expectations related to a personal gain as a result of having voice. In this manner, this thesis offers a missing explanation in the existing research on the nature of voice. In the discussion of their research results, Tyler, Rasinski and Spodick state that

Although the nature of the "value-expressive" rewards associated with voice are not clear from this study, it is clear that citizens do not act in the manner that would be expected of the sophisticated seekers of personal gain...Instead, they seem to be seeking the opportunity to be listened to, irrespective of whether that opportunity leads to favourable outcomes. (1985, pp. 79-80)

Hence, procedural injustice in terms of not having voice provides a dimension of fairness which is detached from the final balance of inputs and outcomes, but nevertheless supports the delineation of injustice dimensions tested in this thesis. Beyond these insights into the importance of morality as a feature of voice, the research findings of this thesis demonstrate that a perceived lack of voice leads to an increase in

tolerant attitudes towards staff dishonesty. Thus, the research findings also underline the importance of the workplace as a social construct where employees expect to be listened to – and to be able to speak freely about reorganisations taking place. Moreover, the present study's findings demonstrate what can happen when employees perceive themselves of not having voice; when moral expectations on how to be treated at work are perceived to be violated by an employer.

In this regard, the strongest impact of procedural injustice is delivered by the absence of voice as such once more, and 8.7% of rises in a combined outcome of incapable guardianship and perceptions of staff dishonesty as paying back can be predicted by a single item measuring the perceived absence of voice. Applied to the research participants, this means that injustice perceptions related to not being able to speak freely about reorganisations are stronger than the combined injustice perceptions in the dimension of procedural injustice, which provides further evidence that being able to express one's thoughts is considerably more important than finally being able to shape the desired outcome.

Besides delivering the strongest impact in the procedural injustice dimension, the perceived absence of voice also provides the strongest single item effect in the four dimensions of reorganisational injustice, which means that no other item measuring perceived injustice had a larger effect on rises in tolerant attitudes towards staff dishonesty among the research participants.

Accordingly, procedural injustice perceptions do exist in the research setting and constitute a valid second injustice dimension which is able to explain a situational motivation to engage in staff dishonesty. The relative strength of a perceived absence of voice is particularly surprising when the existence of strong Works Councils and Trade Unions in the research setting is considered, as Works Representatives could have been considered as a proxy for an employee's voice as well, or as a mediator of employee concerns. At least in the context of dispute resolution, it was found that mediation usually satisfies involved parties (Tyler, 1989); a finding which is not supported by the insights obtained in this thesis. Thus, it is assumed that the research respondents of the present study interpreted the item asking whether "employees can speak freely about the reorganisations taking place" in a very direct way.

Vice versa, the present study's results on the effect of denied voice show that one way to increase tolerant attitudes towards staff dishonesty is about an employer reorganising its company without listening to its employees, as staff perceptions of not having voice increase the likelihood to consider staff dishonesty as an appropriate means to even the score.

With reference to further literature examining the impact of voice, it is worth mentioning that management or organisational psychology literature take these concepts into consideration, but relates them exclusively to desirable outcomes like job satisfaction and professional development (Mullins, 2005; Vardi and Weitz, 2004). This focus on desirable outcomes relates to the subsequent injustice dimension of interactional injustice as well, where plenty of management literature exists.

### 5.3.3 Slightly More Disrespected than Uninformed

Interactional injustice was defined as a lack of an employer's adequate explanations for the necessity of ongoing reorganisations on the one hand, and a lack of an employer's sensitive, respectful treatment of employees in the course of reorganisations on the other hand. An assessment of the research results has already shown that all of the five items measuring interactional injustice perceptions provided significant results in the research setting, and that dominant perceptions of interactional injustice prevailed consistently.

Thus, a majority of the research participants denied that the reasons underlying the reorganisations were clearly explained, and almost two thirds of the respondents displayed attitudes that the employer has not communicated honestly about the reorganisations. In tune with this attitudinal milieu in the research setting, a majority of the respondents stated that most employees do not perceive reorganisations as being necessary for the company's survival. Hence, in terms of Greenberg's research on the moderating effect of adequate information for pay cuts (1990), the situation in the research setting of this thesis constitutes an inadequate information condition.

In this regard, the research findings confirm the importance of an adequate explanation or claim for the necessity of changes, which is also referred to as causal



account (Bies and Shapiro, 1987; Greenberg, 1990). Concerning the adequacy of the explanations given for the reorganisations in the research setting, the research participants declared these neither to be clear nor to be honest and correspondingly a majority reported not to understand the necessity of reorganisations for the company survival, although technological change and competition in the ICT sector delivers plenty of argumentation for an employer's claim that reorganisations are unavoidable (Section 2.3.2).

Accordingly, the research findings confirm that “the perceived adequacy of justification for a causal account claim is more important than the claim itself in explaining people's reactions to unfavourable outcomes” (Bies and Shapiro, 1987, p. 216), as the information given for the reorganisations were perceived as inadequate and triggered rises in tolerant attitudes towards staff dishonesty. Complementing the perceived inadequacy of the explanations for reorganisations in the research setting, employees' perceptions of a dishonest employer confirm the importance of another important feature of explanations, as honesty and adequacy of explanations are also referred to as being two separate important facets of explanations (Folger and Cropanzano, 1998). In sum, the research findings of this thesis support the importance of a clear and honest communication for the necessity of reorganisations and demonstrate that a perceived inadequate explanation alone leads to rises in tolerant attitudes towards staff dishonesty.

Beyond explanations, the remaining two items in the dimension of interactional injustice show that a majority of the respondents regard employees not to be treated respectfully in the course of reorganisations, while more than two thirds of the polled employees believe that the reorganisations have badly damaged the mutual trust between employees and employer. In sum, these attitudes display a considerably negative mood in terms of interactional injustice as well.

Within this generally negative set of attitudes related to interactional injustice, however, an internal comparison shows that the two strongest items in the interactional injustice dimension cover perceptions of insensitive treatment in the course of reorganisations, while the three weakest items cover inadequate explanations in the course of reorganisations. In this regard, the item addressing perceived disrespectful

treatment has the largest effect and explains rises of 6.7% in tolerant attitudes when the outcomes of incapable guardianship and perceptions of staff dishonesty as paying back are combined; a finding which further emphasises the consequences of a perceived lack of respectful treatment in the research setting.

In this context, a slight independence of the two sub-factors of interactional injustice: inadequate information and insensitive treatment, is in line with an examination of interactional injustice which proved that “each factor contributed additively and independently” (Greenberg and Scott, 1996, p. 140) to a modification of theft rates in an underpayment condition. Accordingly, the research findings of this thesis confirm a partial independence of the two factors in terms of strength whilst displaying a condition where insensitive treatment is perceived as being even worse than the inadequacy of information.

Nevertheless, the research findings of this thesis finally support the combined potential of the two factors, as up to 8.9% of rises in tolerant attitudes towards staff dishonesty as paying back can be predicted by a combination of the three strongest items, which encompass one item measuring the inadequacy of explanations. Thus, the research findings of this thesis support the use of interactional injustice as a concept which combines insensitive treatment and inadequate information as one factor and thereby constitutes an additional input to existing research which has already confirmed that both approaches, the split into two sub-factors and the combined interactional injustice factor, are supported by empirical evidence in different studies (Bies, 2005).

Beyond this, a situational motivation to engage in staff dishonesty is demonstrated by the research results once more, as it is proven that the respondents in the research setting hold perceptions of interactional injustice which in turn trigger rises in tolerant attitudes towards staff dishonesty. This shows that interactional injustice forms a valuable third injustice dimension to predict rises in tolerant attitudes towards staff dishonesty, and that employee perceptions can differ when it comes to inadequate information and insensitive treatment as predictors. Nevertheless, perceptions of an inadequate explanation for the reorganisations going on in the research setting exist as well; it is only their explanatory power towards rises in tolerant attitudes towards staff dishonesty which is comparatively weaker than perceptions of insensitive treatment.

Thus, employees in the research setting feel slightly more disrespected than uninformed, and both situational conditions lead to rises in tolerant attitudes towards staff dishonesty.

In this connection, the research findings are coherent with a study of Greenberg (1990), who examined the moderating effect of adequate explanations on theft levels as a response to pay cuts. Greenberg's study discovered that theft levels rose as a response to pay cuts, whereas theft levels rose less when an adequate explanation for the pay cuts was given (1990). In his conclusion, Greenberg argued that accordingly adequate explanations act as a moderator of perceived inequity triggered by pay cuts. Although the approach of considering adequate explanations as a moderator of distributive injustice forms a possible explanation, it remains questionable from the more comprehensive reorganisational injustice perspective of this thesis whether single injustice dimensions act as a moderator for others - or whether Greenberg (1990) may have measured a cumulative effect of distributive, procedural and interactional injustice.

Greenberg himself argued that his experiment (1990) comprised distributive and interactional injustice, and the previous section has already shown that procedural injustice was included in his experiment as well. One line of argument is indeed that interactional justice in terms of respectful treatment and adequate information can act as a moderator of distributive injustice. In this regard, further research underlines the importance of justifications as an important means to reduce the effect of distributive injustice as well (Darley and Pittman, 2003).

Another line of argument is nevertheless that separate dimensions of injustice exist, which sum up to a combined perception of reorganisational injustice. In his experiment, Greenberg (1990) first measured distributive injustice in combination with interactional injustice and procedural injustice in one plant, and distributive injustice in another plant.

Accordingly, his experimental design can also be interpreted as a measure of the cumulative effects of reorganisational injustice dimensions: In one plant, only distributive injustice was measured, as opposed to a measurement of distributive, procedural and interactional injustice in another plant. The cumulative line of

argumentation is supported by the research findings of this thesis, which is in line with a conceptually separate understanding of the injustice dimensions (Bies, 2005), where the strongest potential to predict rises in tolerant attitudes is related to a predictor which exploits the cumulative effect of the strongest items from different injustice dimensions. Hence, the present study offers a new way to comprehensively measure and examine a perceived unfair workplace experience on the part of employees, and this approach is based on an analysis of the cumulative effect of four injustice dimensions.

Despite this potential to provide an alternative explanation, however, the research findings cannot contradict the moderator approach (Greenberg, 1990) as they do not provide significant insights into property deviance as an outcome. Therefore, a further examination of the applicable line of argument, such as splitting the research population into groups with a higher and a lower perception of interactional injustice in order to measure deviations between distributive injustice versus property deviance coefficients in each group, is not feasible. Accordingly, Greenberg's (1990) line of argument with an emphasis on a moderating effect between injustice dimensions cannot be falsified, but a cumulative effect of single injustice dimensions is supported as an alternative explanation of Greenberg's (1990) findings.

Furthermore, the present study's findings provide another insight into perceptions and feelings of employees in the research setting, which declare that reorganisations have badly damaged the mutual trust between employees and employer. In this connection, the research findings of this thesis support studies which relate a breach of trust to deception and dishonesty (Bies, 2001), as perceptions of a dishonest employer coincide with perceptions of badly damaged mutual trust between employees and the employer. A more detailed examination of the perceived dishonesty on the part of the employer, however, cannot be conducted, as the questionnaire did not separate between e.g. an employer's broken promises or perceived lies attached to the ongoing reorganisations themselves (Bies, 2001).

Concerning the employee-employer-relationship, employees in the research setting are nevertheless not displaying attitudes "that both parties meet on a level field and equally embrace a spirit of fair play" (Folger and Cropanzano, 1998, p. 29), which is referred to as another precondition for fairness and trust in the dimensions of

interactional injustice. It is argued that this negative mood is already reflected among the responses to previous items where the inequality between employees and the employer was expressed, for example when the lack of alternatives to take the burden of reorganisations was stressed, when employees were described to be afraid of reorganisations, when employees were seen as not being able to speak freely, or when the employer was found to be dishonest. In this regard, the research findings of this thesis provide alternative explanations on the construction of interactional injustice perceptions which finally lead to a lack of trust in the employee-employer relationship.

Trust has been defined as an employee's belief in an employer's benevolence (Section 2.4.3). The present study's findings demonstrate that more than two thirds of the responding employees in the research setting reported a badly damaged trust relationship between the employer and the employees as a consequence of the reorganisations, and that this perceived decline in trust leads to a rise in tolerant attitudes towards staff dishonesty. In doing so, the research findings support the close link between trust and justice, as "Violations of trust and justice are seen as upsetting the "balance" of investments and returns expected in the transaction" (Lewicki, Wiethoff and Tomlinson, 2005, p. 261). Accordingly, trust forms another particular feature which clearly separates the dimension of interactional injustice from distributive and procedural injustice, as employers who are perceived to display "intentions more malevolent than benevolent cannot epitomize the essence of justice" (Folger and Cropanzano, 1998, p. 30). This shows once more that perceptions of interactional injustice in the research setting are multifaceted and contribute to the examination of a negative workplace experience, where things go wrong from an employee's perspective.

So far, the discussion has shown that a violation of employees' expectations and beliefs in right or wrong behaviour on the part of the employer, either in terms of distributive injustice, procedural injustice or interactional injustice, triggers rises in tolerant attitudes towards staff dishonesty. These expectations or perceptions of right and wrong underline the importance of morality within reorganisational injustice already. Nevertheless, the fourth and last dimension of injustice, which is discussed in the subsequent section will now refer to morality in terms of moral injustice as such.

#### 5.3.4 Could Have Done and Should Have Done

Moral injustice has been defined as employees' perceptions of an employer's unnecessarily harmful choice among feasible reorganisational alternatives, or, in other words, staff perceptions of an employer which could and should have reorganised differently in order to select the least harmful alternative for employees. In this regard, the research findings show that the item measuring employees' perceptions of an employer's feasible alternatives does not provide significant results. Accordingly, the "could" facet of moral injustice was not found to be significant in the research setting and therefore rather serves as a logical precondition of better alternatives in the theoretical framework of this thesis.

Vice versa, the "should" facet of moral injustice is clearly visible, as almost three quarters of the responding employees suggested that better alternatives to the reorganisations were frequently ignored, and more than two thirds of the responding employees stated that the reorganisations are a consequence of earlier mismanagement. In line with blaming the employer for mismanagement, more than three quarters of the research participants declared that most employees are angry about the way they are treated by the employer. Thus, the prevailing mood in the dimensions of moral injustice is explicitly negative once more and thereby complements to the predominantly negative attitude sets measured in the previous injustice dimensions.

Accordingly, the successful application of the concept of moral injustice confirms that "judging another's discretionary conduct by moral principles implies the contrast between what was done and what should have been done" (Folger and Cropanzano, 1998, p. 176). In doing so, the research findings of this thesis support the use of "should" – or violated moral expectations - as a separate dimension of injustice. Beyond supporting this separate dimension of injustice, the research findings also show that moral injustice predicts rises in tolerant attitudes towards staff dishonesty, and thereby provides a missing explanation of the implications of a perceived violation of moral principles. Having constructed the concept of the moral accountability of an employer which should have acted in another way from a staff perspective, Folger and Cropanzano underline the need for further research, asking "What, then, is the

magnitude of the implications? What makes such conduct so insulting - or is it really significant, after all?" (1998, p. 192).

In this connection, the research findings of this thesis do not only support the importance of violated moral expectations, but also successfully test them in the context of perceived reorganisational injustice in the ICT-sector. Furthermore, the present study provides evidence for the implications of moral injustice in the form of rises in tolerant attitudes towards staff dishonesty. Forming one of the largest single item effects, employee perceptions of being angry with the treatment received from their employer predict 7.2% of rises in tolerant attitudes towards staff dishonesty as paying back, and a combination of the three strongest moral injustice items predict 7.4% of rises in tolerant attitudes towards incapable guardianship and perceptions of staff dishonesty as paying back. This shows that implications of moral injustice exist, and that moral injustice as such forms an independent dimension of injustice which complements to the existing dimensions of organisational injustice discussed in the literature (Greenberg and Cropanzano, 2001; Greenberg and Colquitt, 2005; Cropanzano, Stein and Nadisic, 2011). Hence, morality is not only important as a key factor in the aforementioned injustice dimensions, but forms a trigger of criminality in its own. It is the constructionist nature of morality which provides a link between the four injustice dimensions, and employers need to keep in mind that they do not own truth or morality in the course of reorganisations, but have to keep employees' constructions of morality in mind instead.

Further theoretical approaches touching on the role of morality in the workplace experience support the research findings as well, although the potential to predict staff dishonesty is not explicitly covered. "The psychological contract held by an employee consists of beliefs about the reciprocal obligations that exist between that employee and his or her organizations" (Morrison and Robinson, 1997, p. 226). With reference to perceived reciprocal moral obligations, the research findings deliver a perception of moral injustice in the context of reorganisations, which is in line with a breach of beliefs underlying a psychological contract. Hence, it is argued that moral injustice as a dimension of reorganisational injustice may well form a particular approach to breach the beliefs underlying a psychological contract of employees.

In another context, beliefs are also a crucial element of Social Bond Theory, which regards inherent beliefs as a control factor which is able to stop people from committing crime. In doing so, beliefs are described as being based on “impressions and opinions that are highly dependent on constant social reinforcement...precarious moral positions much in need of social support” (Lilly, Cullen and Ball, 2011, p. 118). Thus, the research findings on moral injustice demonstrate that reorganisations form a scenario where constant social reinforcement for beliefs is reduced; the present study’s findings demonstrate that it is for example possible that staff perceptions of an employer’s morality can change situationally – depending on staff perception’s of an employer’s decisions in the course of reorganisations. Nevertheless, the concept of moral injustice as one of the four dimensions of reorganisational injustice does not consider morality as a control factor which is able to stop people from committing crimes, but, vice versa, as a potential trigger of staff dishonesty.

The difference between a control factor and a trigger of criminal motivation is fundamental, and this thesis argues that the contradicting view of beliefs is based on the predominantly realist view of morality in Social Bond Theory. A realist view of morality is defined as a worldview which believes in “the existence of objective, universal standards of right and wrong, good and evil” (Williams and Arrigo, 2006, p. 23). In line with such a world view, it can be argued that employees have a set of internal moral controls (Hirschi, 1969), and that wrongful behaviour on the part of employees occurs when these controls are weakened. As opposed to this realist view of morality, the understanding of moral injustice in this thesis provides a constructionist view of morality on the part of employees, which was already referred to (Section 3.2) and defined as

the view that all knowledge, and therefore all meaningful reality as such, is contingent upon human practices, being constructed in and out of interaction between human beings and their world, and developed and transmitted within an essentially social context. (Crotty, 1998, p. 42)

Accordingly, this thesis considers multiple possible constructions of right and wrong, moral or immoral, and the research findings demonstrate that perceptions of moral injustice may well be in conflict with an employer’s standards of right and wrong.



Thus, beliefs in terms of moral positions (Lilly, Cullen and Ball, 2011) are not only about a growing disagreement with the morality of an employer, but also about an employee's construction of a conflicting morality, where e.g. sick-day abuse becomes a fair response towards an employer who is perceived of acting unfairly. In this scenario, staff perceptions of moral injustice become a trigger of staff dishonesty as such, which goes beyond an objective, universal morality forming a control factor. This difference in perceptions of morality will be referred to in further detail in this chapter when the general implications of corrective justice are discussed (Section 5.4.1).

Finally, the close link between injustice and immorality has been addressed in the concept of a "deontic justice" (Folger, Cropanzano and Goldman, 2005, p. 229), which encompasses a reaction towards "violations of morally prohibited social conduct in dominance-submission terms" (Folger, Cropanzano and Goldman, 2005, p. 219), like those in an employer-employee-relationship. The concept of deontic justice is based on a construction of immorality which is related to the earlier "could and should" approach of the involved authors (Folger and Cropanzano, 1998), which was used for the conceptualisation of moral injustice as well. In the course of further examining the nature of deontic justice, several attributes of the responses to violated moral principles, labelled deontic response, were considered by Folger, Cropanzano and Goldman (2005). Accordingly, it could have been expected that the present study's findings on moral injustice are in line with the attributes of a deontic response.

Nevertheless, the concept of moral injustice developed in this thesis is not in accordance with four subsequently described attributes of a deontic response (Folger, Cropanzano and Goldman, 2005), and contradicts most of them instead. A first attribute of a response to a violated moral expectation is that humans construct these automatically, very fast and emotionally, or even in an unconscious manner. Although the research findings of this thesis cannot exclude that perceptions of moral injustice come up very fast and include emotional aspects, the concept of moral injustice demonstrates that the accountability of an employer is checked consciously, like in the case of perceived mismanagement. Furthermore, it is argued that a process of comparing employee's moral expectations with perceived feasible alternatives on the part of the employer follows a rather rational attempt to evaluate a violation of moral

principles. This is in particular the case when employees as a social group are taken into consideration, where the interest of a larger group of people overrides the interest of single employees (Mars, 1982).

In this regard, irrationality forms the second attribute of a deontic response, and beyond the above mentioned rationality of considering feasible alternatives and the accountability of an employer, this thesis argues that rises in tolerant attitudes towards staff dishonesty form a rational response where approaches to lower inputs or higher outcomes are considered. Hence, the research findings of this thesis demonstrate a rational response to perceived violated moral principles and thereby contradict the emphasis on emotional and unconscious responses as a consequence of immorality (Folger, Cropanzano and Goldman, 2005).

In line with the focus on emotion, the third attribute of a deontic response is that acts of moral retribution are “an action taken...in response to perceived injustice that is intended to satisfy the victim’s desire for punishment of the perpetrator” (Folger, Cropanzano and Goldman, 2005, p. 224). This construction emphasizes the act as an end in itself, a rather emotional expression of dissatisfaction, while the research findings of this thesis show that perceived moral injustice can also lead to attempts to even the score, like in the case of an increase in tolerant attitudes towards production deviance or incapable guardianship. Measuring the effect of moral injustice on property and production deviance, however, provided only non-significant or small effect sizes, so that these responses do not support the rationality of increasing inputs or reducing outcomes.

Hence, an increase in tolerant attitudes towards incapable guardianship could either be rooted in a motivation to punish the employer or to reduce input. Nevertheless, perceptions of staff dishonesty as paying back include property deviance (“pilfering can be just paying back for being treated unfairly”) and production deviance (“pretending to be sick can be just paying back for experienced injustice”), and it is therefore argued that the motivation to even the score overrides the motivation to punish the employer, as for example some additional free days provide a personal benefit to the employee rather than a punishment for the employer. Accordingly, the research findings of this thesis support a rational motivation to even the score rather than an emotional motivation to

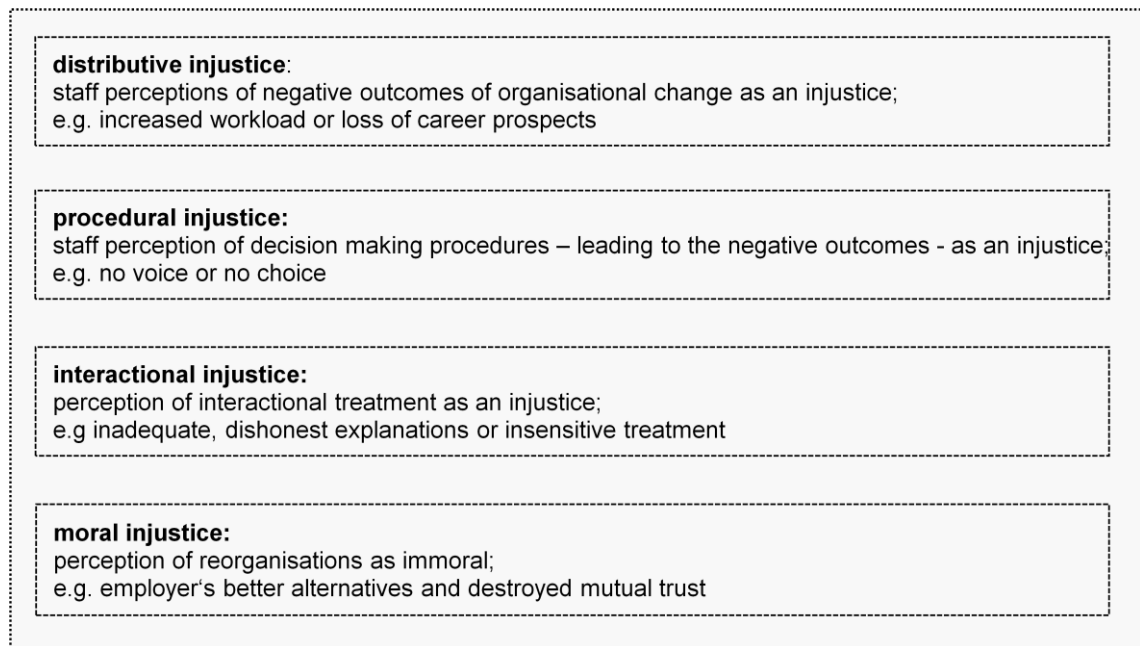
punish the employer as a consequence of employees' violated moral expectations and principles.

In this context, "emotion as the driver of behavior" (Folger, Cropanzano and Goldman, 2005, p. 225) forms a further attribute of a deontic response, which has been compared and contrasted already. Nevertheless, the repeated link towards emotions as a key factor for responses towards perceived injustice underlines the main contradiction with the research findings of this thesis, which tested moral injustice as a trigger to rationally even the score. In this regard, the present study's findings also demonstrate that moral injustice forms an independent injustice dimension which is providing effect sizes close to the impact of distributive, procedural and interactional injustice. Hence, a situational motivation to engage in staff dishonesty can be triggered by the belief that an employer behaves immorally in the course of reorganisations.

Furthermore, this moral injustice stimulus is accompanied by significant stimuli in the dimensions of distributive, procedural and interactional injustice, and the next section will examine the effect of a combination of the strongest injustice items from each of the four dimensions.

As a whole, findings could be obtained in four injustice dimensions which were introduced in Chapter Three (Section 3.4.1): distributive injustice, procedural injustice, interactional injustice, and moral injustice, and these four dimensions form the concept of reorganisational injustice, as displayed in Figure 5.

**Figure 5: Overview of Injustice Dimensions Constituting Reorganisational Injustice**



In this connection, the explorative nature of the concept of reorganisational injustice was addressed in the Chapter Three as well, and composing several items within four injustice dimensions respectively did not only serve hypothesis testing, but also constitutes theory building when it comes to an assessment of reorganisational injustice as a predictor of rises in tolerant attitudes towards staff dishonesty, as will be shown in the subsequent section.

### 5.3.5 Reorganisational Injustice

The aforementioned dimensions of reorganisational injustice have demonstrated that a negative workplace experience can be conceptualised by means of distributive injustice, procedural injustice, interactional injustice and moral injustice. This illustrates that each of these four separate dimensions of reorganisational injustice forms an important feature of the workplace experience of employees. Furthermore, each of the four dimensions of reorganisational injustice proved to be suitable to predict rises in tolerant attitudes towards staff dishonesty, and thereby deliver a valuable conceptual

framework for criminogenic effects of a perceived negative workplace attitude of employees.

With reference to different dimensions of injustice, little is known about possible interactions between the dimensions (Fortin, 2008), although it was already demonstrated that an interaction between distributive, procedural and interactional injustice exists (Skarlicki and Folger, 1997). In this regard, the research findings of this thesis complement existing research on organisational injustice, as they prove that single features of the different injustice dimensions can be combined to an overarching reorganisational injustice factor whilst considering an additional dimension of moral injustice. When the strongest items out of the injustice dimensions are combined, this reorganisational injustice factor includes elements of each of the four dimensions of reorganisational injustice. Furthermore, this new factor predicts rises in tolerant attitudes towards staff dishonesty of up to 11.8%, thus providing a larger effect size than each single dimension of injustice.

The strongest reorganisational injustice perceptions of the research participants reflect an attitude set which is composed out of nine items encompassing five items measuring inadequate explanations and insensitive treatment, and hence the complete dimension of interactional injustice. Thus, the research findings of this thesis once more support findings related to the importance of interactional injustice (Fortin, 2008; Skarlicki and Folger, 1997). This illustrates a perception of reorganisational injustice which emphasises the treatment received in the course of reorganisations, and not the material implications of the reorganisations themselves, be it more workload or receiving less outcomes.

Beyond interactional injustice, two items measuring the absence of voice and choice, and hence the two items which produced significant results in the procedural injustice dimension, proved to be of an increased importance for the research participants as well, accompanied by another single item measuring perceptions of unfair rewards, which forms the key element of distributive injustice. These results are consistent with research that investigated the combined effect of distributive, procedural and interactional justice (Greenberg, 1990; Skarlicki and Folger, 1997) and thereby confirm the cumulative effect of injustice dimensions. Finally, one item measuring

better alternatives, and hence the main element of moral injustice, forms a key element of reorganisational injustice perceptions in the research setting as well. This result highlights that immorality is not only a feature which is close to injustice in general, but that immorality in terms of moral injustice also forms a separate dimension which contributes to perceptions of reorganisational injustice in the research setting. In doing so, moral injustice provides an impact at the same level as for example distributive injustice does, both in terms of the effect size of the dimensions and the number of items involved in a general perception of reorganisational injustice. Thus, injustice perceptions in the research setting are less about what an employer gives to – and demands from – its employees, and more about how employees perceive the treatment received by their employer, be it inadequate information, a lack of respect, or the absence of voice and choice.

Nevertheless, an employee's perception that better alternatives to the reorganisation were ignored coincide with perceptions of an unfair input-outcomes ratio (Adams, 1965), and with attitudes of being treated without respect whilst at the same time having no choice or voice in the course of reorganisations. In this regard, the comparative strength of the different injustice perceptions provides further insights into perceived reorganisational injustice in the research setting. Despite the fact that five out of nine items belong to the dimension of interactional injustice, the three strongest single items within the group of the nine strongest items are about not having voice, which reflects procedural injustice, not feeling treated respectfully, and perceptions of a destroyed mutual trust between the employees and the employer, which reflects interactional injustice.

The comparatively weaker representation of distributive injustice is not surprising in this regard, as the reorganisations in the research setting did not encompass straightforward triggers of distributive injustice, like pay cuts, but probably less harmful distortions of the input-outcomes ratio, like the loss of career prospects and the necessity to cope with new tasks. This comparative absence of distributive injustice is also confirmed by a majority of 77.3% of the respondents who perceived themselves to be rewarded fairly, hence making this item one out of the two where a majority of the respondents held positive attitudes towards the employer. On the other hand, however,

those 22.7% of the respondents who did not consider they were being rewarded fairly proved to be a sub-group with a significant propensity towards tolerant attitudes towards staff dishonesty.

Hence, the wide range in considering immorality, unfairness and injustice as a theoretical framework for the composition of injustice items in four reorganisational injustice dimensions proved to be useful in examining a particular reorganisational injustice profile of the research setting. This is not to say that the less significant items should be excluded in other settings; the research findings prove that the four separate dimensions of injustice exist, and the particular shape of reorganisational injustice is likely to be research setting specific.

Beyond the aforementioned focus on injustice, the composition of reorganisational injustice also supports the consideration of change in contemporary organisations in the ICT sector. In this regard, reorganisations in the research setting proved to be a suitable context to conceptualise change and thereby provide empirical evidence that “Justice perceptions at any one time are related to both past experiences and present circumstances, and are likely to affect expectations of future treatment” (Fortin, 2008: 111). Accordingly, it has to be kept in mind that the present study’s ability to explain rises in tolerant attitudes towards staff dishonesty is related to perceived reorganisational injustice, and hence a concept which encompasses injustice and change. Having developed a particular reference to change whilst testing the criminogenic impact of reorganisational injustice, the present study’s results provide alternative explanations for existing research on changing psychological contracts as well (Cropanzano and Prehar, 2001). In their examination of psychological contract breaches in the context of change, Cropanzano and Prehar assumed that in particular downsizing and increased workload (2001) lead to rises in the motivation to revenge. In this connection, the wider understanding of downsizing matches with the concept of distributive injustice developed within this thesis, as it encompasses the loss of career prospects, increased workload and the necessity to deal with new tasks (Cropanzano and Prehar, 2001). Hence, the research findings of this thesis support findings that change in terms of downsizing can lead to a breach of the psychological contract, and provide

further insights that a broken psychological contract leads to rises in tolerant attitudes towards staff dishonesty.

Vice versa, the burden of an increased workload did not trigger a significant effect on rises in tolerant attitudes, although 87% of the responding employees confirmed that an increase in workload did indeed take place. Accordingly, the research findings of this thesis contradict the assumption that an increased workload leads to perceptions of unfairness (Adams, 1965) or a broken psychological contract (Cropanzano and Prehar, 2001). Nevertheless, the present study supports an ongoing focus on change and injustice in the literature on psychological contracts, as the research findings confirm that when dealing with an environment where “change is systematic, then any perspective on organizational justice that does not deal with change is inherently limited” (Cropanzano and Prehar, 2001, p.266). In this context, systematic change in a workplace environment nevertheless refers to groups of people, as opposed to the psychological contract of a single employee, and the subsequent section will refer to the social dimension of reorganisations.

Beyond change and injustice, the social nature of reorganisational injustice is a further feature worthy of discussion. It has already been argued (Sections 2.2.4 to 2.2.6) that the workplace experience forms a social construct where groups of employees interact, and where group norms (Mars, 1982), workforce attitudes (Boye and Jones, 1997) and an attitudinal milieu (Horning, 1970) of the workforce as a whole exists which in turn shapes the behaviour and attitudes of single employees. The social dimension of workforce attitudes is also described “as a set of values, norms, attitudes, and rules that is shared by the majority of employees and that to a large extent determines their behavior and attitude” (Cools, 1991, p. 7). In this connection, the research findings support the emphasis on group attitudes as, firstly, the design of the items in the questionnaire consistently referred to “employees in the research setting”, and secondly, a further facet of obtaining patterns in the feedback of a representative sample of 463 responding employees is that these constitute a shared attitude set within the research setting, as opposed to scattered mind sets of individual employees. Accordingly, staff perceptions of reorganisational injustice as well as the increases in



tolerant attitudes towards staff dishonesty mirrored in the present study reflect a criminogenic attitudinal milieu within the research setting.

In sum, each of the injustice dimensions tested predicts rises in tolerant attitudes above 7%, which shows that corrective justice motivations are consistently related to the unfairness of reorganisations, and not to the extent of reorganisations, which was found to trigger much smaller rises in tolerant attitudes towards staff dishonesty (Section 4.4). This demonstrates that the broad concept of reorganisational injustice was applicable to the research setting, as each of the dimensions provided moderate and significant results. Moreover, a comparison of the single dimensions shows that the respectively strongest impacts fall into a narrow range, hence displaying a homogenous significance of the four dimensions. Thus, the perception of reorganisational injustice displayed by the research sample has no outstanding injustice dimension, but displays a variance when it comes to separate features of a workplace experience which are perceived as being unfair. Nevertheless, particular items composing features of the four injustice dimensions proved to be stronger than others, hence constituting the particular injustice profile of the research setting.

Having assessed the existence, shape and significance of reorganisational injustice, and thus having focussed not exclusively, but predominantly on reorganisational injustice as a predictor, the next section will examine the impact on tolerant attitudes towards staff dishonesty, and hence the outcome, in further detail.

#### **5.4 Paying Back and Turning a Blind Eye**

The previous section has already demonstrated that reorganisational injustice predicts rises in tolerant attitudes towards staff dishonesty. Hence, the research results of this study contribute to one of the key questions in the field of criminology, the “why” question, which asks why people are motivated to commit crimes. In this regard, corrective justice has already been defined (Sections 2.5, 2.5.1) as a situational motivation where employees feel morally entitled to engage in dishonest behaviour - affecting the employer - as a response to perceived mistreatment on the part of the employer. Offering a partial explanation for the “why” question, and thus providing an

original contribution to knowledge, this section will conclude that the research findings of this thesis prove that corrective justice forms a situational motivation to engage in staff dishonesty in a perceived scenario of reorganisational injustice.

Common labels for such behaviour are ‘paying back’ or ‘evening the score’, and the present study provides further insights into predictors in the field of injustice and forms of staff dishonesty as an outcome. In doing so, the four outcome variables designed to test the research hypothesis – and to examine the configuration of corrective justice in the research setting - attracted different effect sizes, as can be seen in the Table 47, which displays the strongest effects of either combined or single items in the injustice dimensions respectively. These differences between the four outcomes of increased tolerance for production deviance, increased incapable guardianship, increased perceptions of staff dishonesty as paying back, and finally a combination of increased incapable guardianship and increased perceptions of staff dishonesty as paying back, will now be referred to subsequently.

**Table 47: Overview of Injustice Dimensions (Left Column) and Predicted Rises in Tolerant Attitudes Towards Staff Dishonesty (Right Column)**

Independent Variables	Predicted Rise in %	Dependent Variables
Distributive Injustice	2.5 %	Increased Tolerance for Production Deviance
Procedural Injustice	6.6 %	Increased Incapable Guardianship
Interactional Injustice	7.2 %	Increased Staff Dishonesty as Paying Back
Moral Injustice	7.2 %	Combined Staff Dishonesty as Paying Back and Incapable Guardianship
Reorganisational Injustice	8.2 %	
	8.9 %	
	11.1 %	
	8.7 %	
	6.6 %	
	7.4 %	
	11.8 %	

As displayed in the dependent variables column, property deviance is missing as it proved not to constitute a significant outcome at all. This is not surprising, as the research setting was an office environment in the Information and Communications Technology sector, and hence an environment which is less crime prone for property deviance than for example the retail sector. Beyond that, the present study argues that property deviance forms the most straightforward form of staff dishonesty which is addressed in the questionnaire, as this form of dishonesty encompasses an active form of behaviour, whereas production deviance and incapable guardianship address more passive forms of deviance, where the dishonesty lies in not acting and not delivering the required outcome.

In this connection, the absence of property deviance as a significant factor conforms to research on the links between job dissatisfaction, property deviance and production deviance in the retail, hospital and manufacturing sector (Hollinger and Clark, 1982b), which argues that low levels of property deviance can be related to a lack of attractive targets for this form of staff dishonesty, and that existing dissatisfaction can express itself in other forms of misbehaviour which are feasible for employees, like production deviance.

Correspondingly, the present study's results demonstrate that a comparatively small effect on production deviance can be predicted by distributive injustice. Thus, production deviance attracts considerably smaller rises in tolerant attitudes towards staff dishonesty than the two remaining outcome factors, incapable guardianship and perceptions of staff dishonesty as paying back. Nevertheless, incapable guardianship forms a rather critical precondition or criminogenic factor which is related to staff dishonesty, whereas perceptions of staff dishonesty as paying back address the motivation to engage in staff dishonesty in combination with the deviant act itself. Accordingly, it is argued that the respondents to this thesis's questionnaire were likely to display resentment when it comes to confessing tolerant attitudes towards property and production deviance. Furthermore, it is also possible, if not likely, that the number of actual offenders in the research setting is smaller than the number of witnesses and accessories, hence making responses towards for example incapable guardianship more

accessible for the research participants than responses towards property and production deviance itself.

This is nevertheless not to say that the significance of the outcomes of property and production deviance is small as such, and the subsequent reflection on the concept of staff dishonesty as paying back will demonstrate that reflections towards property and production deviance are much stronger when they are combined with the motivation to even the score. As indicated above, the item asking the respondents “pilfering can be just paying back for being treated unfairly” provided no measurable effect in combination with the property deviance items, while the item “pretending to be sick can be just paying back for experienced injustice” triggers only a small effect in combination with the production deviance items.

On the contrary, the potential to predict rises in tolerant attitudes towards staff dishonesty rose considerably when the two paying back items were combined with the items “employees think that the employer deserves to be cheated” and “honesty pays off” in order to create a new factor which combined and measured the morality of paying back. Hence, the research participants displayed more tolerant attitudes when deviant behaviour was directly linked to the morality of paying back, and less tolerant attitudes when property or production deviance as such were addressed, which supports the existing emphasis on a reactive construction of staff dishonesty in the literature (Darley and Pittman, 2003; Greenberg and Scott, 1996; Greenberg, 1990).

In this regard, it is argued that morality forms the key concept to understand both reorganisational injustice and corrective justice: it is about employees’ situational constructions of right and wrong in the course of reorganisations, and not about any perceived actual morality on the part of the employer. When it comes to staff dishonesty as the right answer, a comparison of the different outcome variable configurations shows that a maximum effect of 2.5% of rises in tolerant attitudes towards production deviance can be predicted by injustice perceptions, whereas property deviance attracts no significant results as a combined outcome factor at all. Vice versa, a clustering of perceptions of production deviance and property deviance as paying back with two items measuring the morality of paying back, which is referred to as “staff dishonesty as paying back” in Table 47, explains 11.1% of rises in tolerant attitudes towards staff

dishonesty as an outcome factor. In this connection, the items measuring perceptions of staff dishonesty as paying back address both pilfering and sick day abuse in a straightforward manner – which demonstrates that reorganisational injustice affects tolerant attitudes towards property and production deviance as well. Taking the remaining two items into consideration, the notion that the employer deserves to be cheated – or neglecting that honesty pays off – are equally blunt.

A possible explanation for the increased predictive potential of the “paying back” items measuring property and production deviance is that the moral aspect within these items provides a much stronger link than the reference to a potential target, which underlines the importance of considering immorality in the course of reorganisations once more (Folger, Cropanzano and Goldman, 2005; Bies, 2001; Folger and Cropanzano, 1998). Beyond the importance of immorality, it is argued that the concept of staff dishonesty as paying back encapsulates a motivational aspect underlying staff dishonesty itself, as the items encompass being dishonest in order to pay back to an employer which deserves to be cheated. These findings support research on the reactive nature of staff dishonesty (Darley and Pittman, 2003; Bies and Tripp, 2001; Giacalone and Greenberg, 1997; Greenberg and Scott, 1996; Hogan and Emler, 1981), which will be referred to subsequently in this section.

As these differences in the present study’s outcome factor configurations demonstrate, property and production deviance are much more accessible as a motivation when they are designed and clustered in a reactive context, which relates staff dishonesty to previous misbehaviour on the part of the employer. Despite this further support for a reactive motivation which is encompassed in the concept of corrective justice, the research findings of this thesis contradict some of the previous interpretations on the reactive nature of staff dishonesty in the literature.

A broad conceptual interpretation of reactive motivations for staff dishonesty separates between a rational restitution motivation and an emotional retaliation motivation (Greenberg and Scott, 1996). Nevertheless, this approach does not deliver further insights into the situational features and circumstances which explain the occurrence of staff dishonesty as being either a rather emotional or rational response. Going into further depth in this regard, Darley and Pittman (2003) argued that

employees' perceptions of an employer's ill intent form the decisive factor to assess staff dishonesty as an attempt to restore equity. Whereas perceived ill intent on the part of the employer leads to a punitive reaction, labelled retributive justice, perceived negligence or carelessness is regarded to lead to a compensatory form of staff dishonesty, labelled compensatory justice, while perceived accidental harm leads neither to punishment nor to compensation (Darley and Pittman, 2003).

The research findings of this thesis, in contrast, do not support the assumption that the perceived degree of an employer's ill intent forms a decisive factor for two reasons. Firstly, four injustice perceptions in separate dimensions were successfully tested as independent and cumulative factors. This proves that injustice perceptions are not exclusively related to the perceived illness of an employer's intent; distributive injustice for example can lead to a motivation to even the score in itself. This finding is also supported by Greenberg (1990) who finally proved that theft rates increased less, but nevertheless increased, when the employer behaved fairly in terms of procedural and interactional justice.

Secondly, Darley and Pittman (2003) assume that an assignment of moral blame does not appear in the scenario of a perpetrator who is not perceived as guilty in terms of displaying ill intent, and that therefore a motivation to punish or compensate for an experienced damage does not arise as a motivation as well. Vice versa, the present study's findings once more support the findings of Greenberg (1990), that a motivation to even the score can be triggered by an imbalance of an input-outcomes ratio itself. Accordingly, the present study's decisive trigger to even the score is an employee's perceived unfair imbalance in the input-outcomes ratio in combination with several forms of injustice, like having no voice or being treated without respect in the course of reorganisations. Therefore, the perceived damage or unfair treatment itself, and not the motivation of a perpetrator or employer who is held accountable for more or less ill intent in the course of causing this damage, constitutes the focal point. The present study argues that corrective justice motivations are above all focussing on a perceived harm on the part of the employee as a victim, and only partially – or collaterally - on a perceived immoral conduct on the part of the employer as a perpetrator. In this manner,

it is argued that corrective justice is about balancing the score in favour of the employee, and not about punishing the employer.

Thus, a limitation of the present study's approach is that perceived reorganisational injustice is measured as a comparatively rational construct which leads to an employee's motivation to even the score. Only one item explicitly measures an emotional perception of reorganisational injustice, and more than three quarters of the respondents confirmed that "many employees are angry about the way they are treated by the employer". Interestingly, being angry about the treatment received by the employer forms the strongest item in the dimension of moral injustice, and predicts 7.2% of rises in tolerant attitudes towards staff dishonesty as paying back. Accordingly, the research findings of this study support the importance of morality and emotions in the course of assessing injustice perceptions in four injustice dimensions, but do not provide further insights to test an emotional versus rational nature of the consequences of reorganisational injustice.

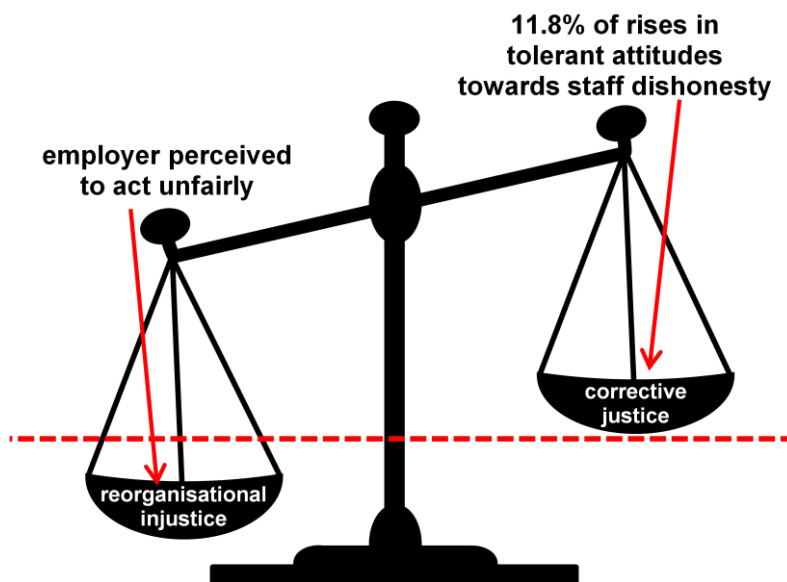
Based on these limitations, it cannot be excluded that perceptions of unfair reorganisations may lead to expressive and punitive acts against the employer as well, and a negative workplace experience was already found to trigger emotional responses like aggression (Newman and Baron, 1997) or revenge (Bies and Tripp, 2001), which are related to the punishment of a perpetrator. Hence, reorganisational injustice might have increased tolerance levels related to sabotage as well, which did not fall into the definitions of staff dishonesty looked at in this thesis. Such punitive action can nevertheless also be conceptualised as being reactive in terms of paying back, which underlines the importance of considering the morality of restoring fairness; the conceptualisation of corrective justice and paying back as a morally entitled action in order to restore fairness.

Finally, incapable guardianship constitutes another variable which delivers insights, as rises in tolerant attitudes towards a combination of perceptions of staff dishonesty as paying back and a lack of willingness to engage in capable guardianship form the strongest effect measured in the present study. The previous section has already illustrated how perceptions of reorganisational injustice are constituted in the research setting. Correspondingly, a decreased motivation to engage in capable

guardianship and an increased tolerance towards staff dishonesty as paying back form the most likely outcomes of reorganisational injustice in the research setting. In this regard, it is argued that the two outcomes build a logical match: Why should fellow employees be motivated to tell on offending colleagues when the latter are perceived to be morally entitled to strike back?

As a whole, the aforementioned findings deliver detailed evidence to verify the research hypothesis that perceived unfair reorganisations lead to an increase in tolerant attitudes towards staff dishonesty, which is illustrated in Figure 6.

**Figure 6: Corrective Justice Effect in the Research Setting**



As Figure 6 illustrates, employees' expectations of giving and receiving equal value are out of balance in the research setting, where predominant reorganisational injustice perceptions are measured. Forming a direct consequence, a motivation to correct this injustice arises among research participants, which is expressed in an increase of 11.8% in tolerant attitudes towards staff dishonesty.

Furthermore, the finding that each of the injustice dimensions predicts rises in tolerant attitudes towards staff dishonesty clearly verifies the research hypothesis of this thesis, and thus delivers several triggers which finally lead to an employee's situational



motivation to consider staff dishonesty as corrective justice. Based on this proven causal relationship between reorganisational injustice and rises in tolerant attitudes towards staff dishonesty, the following sections will consider the general and motivational implications of these findings in detail.

#### 5.4.1 General Implications of Corrective Justice

As the previous section has shown, reorganisational injustice forms an important feature of the workplace experience. In this context, the four dimensions of reorganisational injustice provide a suitable approach to measure perceived unfair change in the workplace experience, and a lack of recognition towards change in the workplace experience was found to be one of the shortcomings in existing research.

Furthermore, it was also proven that moral injustice constitutes a valuable dimension to measure injustice perceptions at the workplace, as employees assess an employer's decisions made in the course of reorganisations in terms of being right or wrong, fair or unfair, moral or immoral; thus displaying underlying beliefs whether an employer made the right choice among feasible alternatives or not. As a whole, it became evident that moral injustice is worth being conceptualised as an independent injustice dimension in order to measure violations of employees' beliefs and their psychological contract, as perceived moral imperatives go beyond superficial measures like pay cuts, which are nevertheless situational as well. Accordingly, a hitherto existing shortcoming in the existing literature, a lack of recognition towards the importance of morality in the workplace experience, could be tackled as well.

Having the impact of perceived reorganisational injustice on rises in tolerant attitudes towards staff dishonesty in mind, the research findings of this thesis prove that criminality is not necessarily a relatively stable personality trait, as implied in several definitions, which define criminality as "criminal motivations – deep rooted inclinations or dispositions to commit crime" (Clarke and Cornish, 2001, p. 33) or "relatively stable differences among individuals in their propensity to engage in criminal or equivalent acts" (Hirschi, 1986, p. 114). Although employees may differ in terms of their crime readiness in a relatively stable way which is also referred to in Tilley's crime readiness

continuum (1997), the motivation to even the score against an employer which is perceived as being guilty of reorganisational injustice is clearly a situational one, and not exclusively an intrinsic personality trait of an employee.

Thus, the present study's research findings illustrate the shortcomings of perceiving criminality as a relatively stable personality trait, as this leads to a lack of recognition towards situational factors which can shape criminal motivations to engage in staff dishonesty and are hence worth being researched. Accordingly, it is demonstrated that a constructionist view of the morality of staff dishonesty as right behaviour needs to be considered on the part of employers, which do not own actual morality in the course of reorganisations. With regard to the constructionist worldview underlying the present study, an actual morality in the context of reorganisations does not exist, as judgements on the morality of such reorganisations are made by staff, and not by the employer.

In hindsight, the research definition of criminality in the context of staff dishonesty is accordingly about "a ratio of an employee's individual crime readiness on the one hand and a situational motivation to correct perceived reorganisational injustice on the other hand; whereas strong perceptions of reorganisational injustice can lead to considerable shifts in crime readiness". In this connection, it is argued that potentially considerable shifts in criminality correspond to respectively strong perceptions of reorganisational injustice: the main motivation to even the score implies that a perceived larger imbalance being created by an employer triggers a respectively larger motivation to correct such perceived injustice. Accordingly, the present study's findings support and confirm Tilley's conceptualisation of crime readiness as a scale from high to low readiness where the situational and social context may lead to shifts in crime readiness (Tilley, 1997). Hence, the research findings highlight the importance of a perceived situational morality which serves to even the score. This is not to say that an offender's personality traits are unimportant or less important, but it shows that situational triggers which refer to an offenders intrinsic motivation to offend do exist beyond a mere situational focus on opportunity. Hence, corrective justice forms a further situational criminogenic factor which is worthwhile being considered: the increased likelihood of a motivation to pay back in a condition of perceived injustice.

With an ongoing focus on the situational logic behind the motivation to even the score, the subsequent section will focus on the nature of corrective justice from a theoretical perspective.

#### 5.4.2 Theoretical Implications of Corrective Justice

When criminality forms a function of individual crime readiness and a situational motivation to correct injustice, this implies that staff dishonesty as corrective justice goes beyond the belief that only one morality; i.e. a prevailing morality that declares staff dishonesty as wrong, exists. Vice versa, Neutralisation Theory (Sykes and Matza, 1957) for example assumes that a commitment to conventional behaviour exists, and that five neutralisers enable offenders to engage in deviant acts whilst holding a non-deviant self-concept.

In this regard, the research findings of this thesis provide an alternative, if not contradictory approach towards Neutralisation Theory (Sykes and Matza, 1957), as it remains questionable whether employees who engage in corrective justice hold a non-deviant self-concept. Quite the contrary, the present study argues that employees can be completely aware of their behaviour being deviant from an employer's perspective, but hold a conflicting set of moral values instead: the belief, that they are entitled to correct reorganisational injustice in order to even the score. In this case, a motivation to correct injustice implies that the correcting act constitutes an act of justice in itself, hence forming a motivation which goes beyond neutralisation, and the five techniques of neutralisation will now be briefly compared and contrasted with the reactive morality of corrective justice.

An employee's denial of responsibility describes a scenario where the deviance from company rules or laws is recognised, but not the responsibility for the deviant act. On the contrary, corrective justice implies that both the recognition and the responsibility for the perceived corrective action is recognised; as the only perceived wrongfulness in the concept of corrective justice is the one attributed to a previous misconduct of the employer. Correspondingly, the reactive morality underlying corrective justice does not support the denial of an injury as well (Sykes and Matza,

1957), where an employee recognises the deviant nature of his action, but claims not to cause any damage. In contrast, corrective justice forms a motivational concept where employees recognise the perceived morality of their conduct whilst accepting and intending to cause damage to the employer; being motivated to pay back is considerably separate from neutralising to do something wrong.

Constituting the third neutraliser, a denial of the victim forms a neutralisation technique which can be in line with corrective justice, as an action denying that the employer is a victim “is a form of rightful retaliation or punishment” where “the delinquent moves himself into the position of an avenger and the victim is transformed into a wrong-doer” (Sykes and Matza, 1957, p. 668). Accordingly, the concept of corrective justice supports the distinct logic of a denial of a victim, but contradicts the conceptualisation of this technique as a neutralisation of wrongful behaviour. By and large, the same relationship is applicable to the fourth technique of neutralisation, the condemnation of the condemners, where “The delinquent shifts the focus of attention from his own deviant acts to the motives and behavior of those who disapprove of his violations” (Sykes and Matza, 1957, p. 668). Hence, the condemnation of the employer forms a technique where an employee denies the employer to label employer-damaging conduct as wrong. Like in the case of a denial of the victim, the technique is in line with corrective justice, but its conceptualisation as a neutralisation of wrongfulness is in conflict with the conflicting morality of an employee, who does not necessarily need to suppress an employer’s moral authority which is finally or subliminally accepted as a universal truth.

The fifth technique of neutralisations is described as an appeal to higher loyalties, which are described as “sacrificing the demands of the larger society for the demands of the smaller social groups to which the delinquent belongs” (Sykes and Matza, 1957, p. 669). This definition is in line with the logic of corrective justice, where an employee holds higher loyalties than the one to his or her employer in accordance with the attitudinal milieu of staff in a company. Nevertheless, an appeal to higher loyalties is also described as a technique where “the delinquent does not necessarily repudiate the imperatives of the dominant normative system, despite his failure to follow them” (Sykes and Matza, 1957, p. 669), which reflects once more a perspective

where the acceptance of an employer's morality is assumed. Therefore, this link of higher loyalties to the rightness of an employer's normative system is once more not in accordance with the concept of corrective justice.

In sum, this is the main controversy between the construction of corrective justice and Neutralisation Theory, as the constructionist approach of this thesis focuses at contradicting views of a normative system, where a conflicting morality is in the centre of explaining a situational offender motivation: staff dishonesty as a means to restore justice.

Such a construction of meaning has already been referred to when ontological constructionism was introduced (Section 3.2). The key concepts of this thesis; reorganisational injustice and corrective justice, are subjective perceptions of the workplace experience. In doing so, these constructions of an employee's workplace experience contradict the objectivist and realist worldview of morality in terms of "objective, universal standards of right and wrong, good and evil" (Williams and Arrigo, 2006, p. 23). Accordingly, the notion of corrective justice follows the constructionist stance of social science, and rejects the objectivist stance that staff dishonesty is – despite of its already negative label – always wrong. In this context, it is argued that it is worthwhile to take contradicting perceptions of morality into consideration in order to further evaluate the motivation to engage in staff dishonesty. The previously discussed definitions of criminality as well as the theories dealing with morality, like Neutralisation Theory (Sykes and Matza, 1957), fail to take this constructionist diversity of morality into account. Thus, it is also argued that the present study provides an initial blueprint for further research in the field of corrective justice and related situational criminogenic motivations to engage in staff dishonesty.

In this connection, the shortcomings in considering situational morality apply to Rational Choice Theory (Cornish and Clarke, 1986) and Routine Activity Theory (Cohen and Felson, 1979) as well, which do not only exclude intrinsic situational morality, but take motivation as such as a precondition of crime. Cohen and Felson themselves declare: "we do not examine why individuals or groups are inclined criminally, but rather we take criminal inclination as given" (1979, p. 589). Such a lack of interest in intrinsic situational offender motivation presumably reflects a traditional

objectivist position which accepts that some humans are motivated while others are not, because criminality is perceived to form a facet of an individual's personality. Complementing this lack of interest, recent literature argues that Rational Choice Theory and Routine Activity Theory are "concerned with crime and not with criminality. Their focus is not on what occurred in the distant past but rather with what is occurring in the present situation" (Lilly, Cullen and Ball, 2011, p. 328). Accordingly, the research results of this thesis, as a contrary, demonstrate two things: firstly, that this lack of attention towards offender motivation forms a waste of the potential to gain further insights into the way humans construct a motivation to offend, and secondly, that such a construction of corrective justice is situational as well and hence worth being considered in the present situation. Thus, corrective justice forms a concept which links crime and criminality.

This thesis argues that corrective justice has the potential to complement opportunity-focussed approaches to explain staff dishonesty without contradicting or challenging the logic of rational choices or the importance of suitable targets and incapable guardianship as important situational determinants of crime. "Although largely disinterested in why people are motivated to offend" (Lilly, Cullen and Ball, 2011, p. 335), Routine Activity Theory nevertheless acknowledges a motivated offender as a necessary pre-condition of crime. Therefore, corrective justice is not contradicting the opportunity-related focus at all, but complements situationally to the rather uncommented assumption of the availability of motivated offenders.

As already outlined in Chapter Three (Section 3.2), corrective justice reflects, like opportunities, probabilistic situational causation (de Vaus, 2001); the increased likelihood of tolerant attitudes towards staff dishonesty in a condition of reorganisational injustice. This is not to say that corrective justice collides with perceptions of suitable targets; it is rather the case that the availability of targets is assumed in the same way the motivated offender is assumed to exist from an opportunity related angle. Accordingly, a situational rise in crime readiness complements to any profile of available opportunities.

In this regard, Hollinger and Clark (1982b) have already researched the impact of employee dissatisfaction on staff dishonesty, and the researchers discovered an

increase of property deviance in the hospital and retail sector as opposed to an increase of production deviance in the manufacturing sector. This implies that a given motivation to engage in staff dishonesty is directed to available opportunities and targets for staff dishonesty, and the researchers concluded that property and production deviance in the different settings formed an expression of the same dissatisfaction of employees. In the same manner, the present study argues that the predictive potential of reorganisational injustice and corrective justice can be related to different sets of given opportunities in different research settings. Accordingly, the concept of corrective justice can explain why some employees are motivated to exploit opportunities, while others are not. Hence, the concept of corrective justice provides an original contribution to knowledge to the existing literature on staff dishonesty - and complements the situational scope of Routine Activity Theory. Furthermore, this approach supports Routine Activity Theory's emphasis on the importance of criminogenic situations, as opposed to larger social and societal problems (Felson, 2002), when it comes to tackling crime.

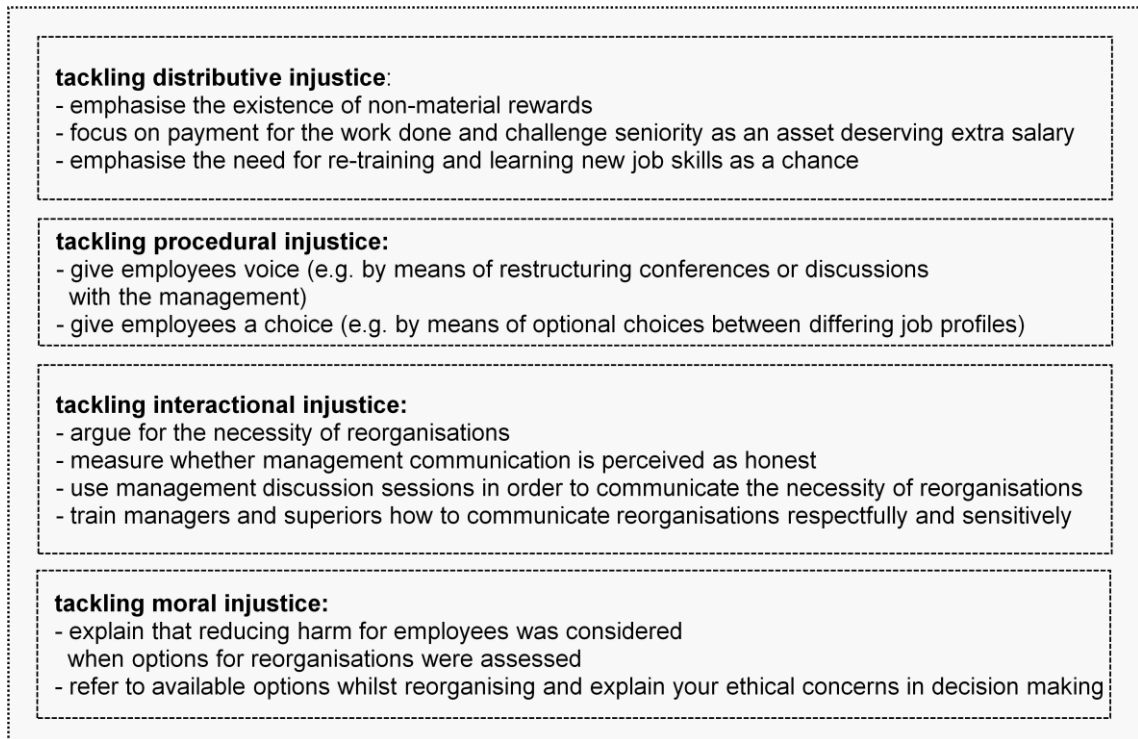
Situational morality, both in terms of perceptions of reorganisational injustice and corrective justice, forms the key to the situational explanation of offender motivation. In this regard, insights about reorganisational injustice and corrective justice inform the adequate handling of reorganisations as well, and the subsequent section will discuss how reorganisations might be better handled in order to reduce corrective justice motivations on the part of employees.

## **5.5 Delivering Perceived Fair Reorganisations**

Each of the four dimensions of reorganisational injustice was found to be able to trigger rises in tolerant attitudes towards staff dishonesty. Hence, delivering reorganisations which are perceived to be conducted fairly from an employee's point of view should address each of the dimensions respectively. Nevertheless, the effort required to access injustice dimensions differs from dimension to dimension, as it is for example easier to shape the perceived adequacy of information than to influence deep rooted moral beliefs and convictions which are held by employees. In order to discuss the preventive potential of perceived fair reorganisations in further detail, an overview

of possible management options to avoid injustice perceptions on the part of employees is displayed in Figure 7.

**Figure 7: Management Options in Tackling Injustice Dimensions**



Distributive injustice as the first dimension which bears the risk of perceived unfairness is a cognitively generated concept of an individual employee or groups of employees, and distributive injustice perceptions include an employee's inputs and outcomes beyond salary. Accordingly, an employer could emphasise the existence of non-material rewards within a company in order to stabilise the perceived input-outcomes ratio of employees in times of change. References could for example be made to a company's investment in work-related training and education and hence the professional development of employees who wish – or need - to move to another job-cluster. In this connection, an employer needs to make sure that professional development in terms of learning new job skills is accepted as a chance for further development and hence constitutes an employer's investment in the employability of employees. Vice versa, retraining should not be perceived as a burden on the part of affected staff. Hence, it has to be considered in the course of reorganisations that



retraining forms an employer's investment which is prone to conflicting perceptions on the part of staff. An employer's mere consideration of retraining as an objective or actual benefit to employees fails to take injustice perceptions into account, which can be related to retraining indeed, as the results of the present study show.

Another approach to tackle distributive injustice perceptions could be to challenge perceived input in the form of seniority or job tenure in a company by an emphasis on payment for the work done. This means that some employees could be addressed with an argumentation that challenges their expectation level in the input-outcomes ratio. As these examples show, several options to shape perceptions of distributive injustice exist.

From an operational angle, tackling distributive injustice perceptions in a workplace setting can take place in two steps. Firstly, distributive injustice perceptions can be assessed by the use of interviews with major stakeholders, like Works Councils, human resources departments or employees. Based on the findings of the interviews, targeted communication measures can be designed which address an employer's view of relevant issues in the dimension of distributive justice versus injustice, like pay cuts or an investment in trainings. These measures can for example take place in the form of emails or articles in company-internal media. Hence, communication with employees forms the key, both in examining employees' particular distributive injustice perceptions and in justifying an employer's view.

The second cluster of management options refers to procedural injustice; an injustice dimension which is even more susceptible for an employer's modification. The present study's findings underline the importance of an employee's perceived voice and choice in the context of reorganisations, and the perception of not being able to speak freely about reorganisations taking place was found to be the largest trigger of rises in tolerant attitudes towards staff dishonesty in this injustice dimension. Whatever it may cost an employer to listen to the employees; in any case, it costs something not to listen to them as well, and "the organization of restructuring conferences, the signing of several agreements with representative unions, and the rollout of an employee satisfaction survey" (Orange, 2015, p. 38) are examples of successful measures where a company increased employees' chances to speak about the perceived unfairness of

reorganisations. Greenberg (1990) has already demonstrated that discussions between the management and employees which had enough time to raise their concerns helped to reduce unfairness perceptions on the part of staff. With reference to the contemporary utilisation of social networks, such discussions can also be facilitated in the social network of companies. Thus, granting employees voice and the chance to discuss with the management should be given priority in the course of reorganisations.

Beyond voice, reorganisations should also include the option to choose between two or more options, as a lack of choice was found to upset employees (Cropanzano and Folger, 1989). In this regard, the present study argues that multi-skilling or project management focussed organisations should be able to provide optional choices in terms of at least slightly differing job profiles. Once more, this scenario can also be related to retraining, as differing or new job profiles are likely to be related to the need to learn new job skills. Accordingly, an employer's investment in procedural justice and retraining offers a huge potential in reducing related unfairness perceptions.

In this connection, tackling procedural injustice perceptions from an operational angle requires comparatively more resources and active management participation than tackling distributive injustice perceptions. Restructuring conferences, employee satisfaction surveys and reorganisations with an interactive offer of differing job profiles require intensive planning and, like in the case of satisfaction surveys, evaluations and feedback towards staff. This means that comparatively higher resources in terms of personnel and budget are required, while interview series and communication measures can be achieved with a comparatively lower budget. Nevertheless, options to tackle procedural injustice perceptions on the part of employees are clearly available as well.

Like in the case of procedural injustice, the third cluster, interactional injustice perceptions, is easily accessible for an employer as well. With regard to preventive measures, it is for example possible to design communication measures which address the necessity of reorganisations in a wider context of competitive pressures, technological change or changing customer demands. As the present study has shown, existing explanations did not convince the majority of the employees in the research setting, which demonstrates that considerable room for improvement exists. In this

connection, the present study argues that a combination of management explanations and discussions which allow employees to raise questions and raise their concerns (Greenberg, 1990; Orange, 2015) forms a combination of procedural and interactional measures where fairness perceptions in both dimensions mutually increase each other. It is further argued that personal management answers to employees' questions are more likely to constitute a perceived adequate explanation, in particular when open or critical issues can be discussed, while at the same time employees are having the voice to bring forward their issues and questions personally.

Beyond voice, the interactional injustice dimension offers the potential to correct sources of perceived injustice, like an employer's perceived insensitive behaviour in the course of reorganisations. In the latter case, a preventative measure could for example take place in terms of training managers and superiors in organisations where reorganisations are planned. In this regard, the training should encompass both argumentation aids related to the fairness of ongoing of future reorganisations and a training on communicating these arguments sensitively. In doing so, even those employees without a motivation to engage in staff dishonesty or incapable guardianship are likely to gain from measures to tackle perceptions of reorganisational injustice, but these effects fall into the domain of motivation, management theory and organisational psychology, and are therefore not in the focus of this thesis.

In sum, measures in order to tackle interactional injustice perceptions among staff rely on communication and therefore a comparatively lower resource availability once more, but it has to be considered that employee's attitudes towards the adequacy of information have to be examined as well; there is no benefit in management communication which is not believed on the part of employees.

Fourth and last, moral injustice constitutes another injustice dimension with a potential to reduce perceptions of reorganisational injustice. As this thesis has demonstrated, employees can construct the morality of reorganisations in terms of an employer's selection of the least harmful option among feasible alternatives. Hence, the knowledge about this facet of reorganisational justice can be tackled by several measures. Addressing the necessity and morality of reorganisations directly can serve as a focus of an adequate explanation for reorganisations, and the communication of this

necessity could be implemented in the course of reorganisational conferences or discussions between management and employees. With reference to morality, it also appears worthwhile to consider the moral dimension of retraining once more. The research results of this thesis have revealed that a majority of the respondents does not consider new tasks as an opportunity. Nevertheless, an employer could argue that new tasks and retraining are the least harmful alternative – as opposed to staff cuts in combination with hiring new staff with a different skill set. Hence, the morality of change can - and has to be - defended by an employer in connection with new tasks and retraining in order to reduce perceptions of moral injustice.

With regard to morality, an employer could also strive to influence perceptions of corrective justice as such, arguing that there is no excuse for damaging an employer which strives to arrange the least harmful alternative for its employees whilst reorganising. Such communication, however, is sensitive and should only be applied where staff dishonesty has been identified and motivations of corrective justice were discovered. The above described measures show that moral injustice perceptions can once more be tackled by a combination of, firstly, measuring staff attitudes and, secondly, designing communications measures to emphasise the ethical considerations within an employer's point of view.

On the whole, a look at the available preventative approaches tackling the four injustice dimensions emphasises the importance of increased communication in two ways: Firstly in order to examine and understand injustice perceptions - and secondly in order to address injustice perceptions by either interactional change measures, like conferences, or further communicative attempts to reframe an understanding of injustice by justifying an employers point of view and decision making.

Hence, the dimensions of reorganisational injustice provide both insights into an employee's construction of a negative workplace experience and the potential to combine preventative approaches which link to separate dimensions of injustice. These findings of the present study, however, pose some ethical concerns as well, as derived management measures might be perceived as merely done for "window dressing and impression management purposes" (Fortin, 2008, p. 118) in order to increase employees subjective fairness perceptions in the course of reorganisations without investing further

into concessions towards employees. Accordingly, findings related to the construction of reorganisational injustice perceptions of employees are not free from the risk of being abused by an employer.

Whereas this abuse potential reflects a potential risk related to management immorality, some further limitations of the research findings need to be kept in mind as well, and these limitations will be discussed in the subsequent section together with general limitations of the research findings.

## **5.6 Limitations**

Although the research design proved to be suitable to verify the research hypothesis, several general limitations of the chosen approach remain beyond the operational constraints of designing a self-completion online questionnaire. In this regard, the limitations addressed in the Chapter Three, like overcoming social desirability bias by means of not addressing respondents personally, will not be reconsidered at this point.

A first limitation of the research design is that a representative sample of employees in the research setting was addressed, and hence a sample without a known conviction of staff dishonesty. Accordingly, tolerant attitudes towards staff dishonesty were tested as an outcome, and not staff dishonesty itself. Although research on the workplace as a determinant of crime has already shown that tolerant attitudes towards staff dishonesty form a valuable indicator of staff dishonesty itself (Jones and Terris, 1983), future research will have to examine to what extent a sample of employees with a known conviction of staff dishonesty might deviate from the findings on corrective justice which were gained from a sample of employees without a known conviction of staff dishonesty.

Furthermore, another limitation of the generalisability of the present study's findings is related to the social and cultural context of the company setting, which constitutes a large company in the Information and Communications Technology sector. Research has already found that justice perceptions differ between different cultural settings (Greenberg, 2001), and the research setting of the present study constitutes a

Western European company with strong Works Councils, which were also referred to in Chapter Three. Hence, a research setting with less powerful employee representatives, or a non-European footprint, may produce slightly different results when perceptions of unfairness are addressed, in particular when it comes to procedural injustice and employees' options to address and shape reorganisations. In this case, procedural injustice perceptions and a perceived lack of having voice could be even more severe.

Beyond culture, change has been a focal point of the examination of reorganisational injustice as well. Accordingly, the attitudes of the research participants reflect a mindset which was related to the particular period when the present study's online self-completion questionnaire was published. Hence, it has to be kept in mind that injustice "perceptions at any one time are related to both past experiences and present circumstances, and are likely to affect expectations of future treatment" (Fortin, 2008, p.111). Thus, employees in the research setting might have shared justice expectations which differ from the level of expected fairness in other settings or cultures, as the belief in a fair employer or even a fair world could have been shaped by past experiences in one way or another, "taking into account eventual history of unjust treatment" (Fortin, 2008, p. 113). In this regard, justice expectations can also vary among staff with a comparable workplace experience, or even vary among the majority of staff and single employees. Finally, a reference towards an employee's individual perceptions, expectations and feelings also refers to a rather emotional versus rational construction of reorganisational injustice and corrective justice, which might stem from experiences beyond the place of work.

In this connection, a further limitation of the research findings is related to the open question whether corrective justice forms a rather emotional or rational motivation (Darley and Pittman, 2003; Greenberg and Scott, 1996). One way to answer this question is that the difference does not matter, as the outcome – staff dishonesty - stays the same. Nevertheless, the research hypothesis of this thesis implies a rather rational approach to even the score, which is also reflected in outcomes which include self-benefitting behaviour, and exclude emotional outcomes like sabotage or vandalism. One exception is the item addressing anger about the way employees feel being treated by the employer, which attracted the highest single item effect to predict perceptions of

staff dishonesty as paying back. Hence, reorganisational injustice does not only trigger a rational motivation to even the score, but feelings of resentment as well.

In this context, it is argued that emotional versus rational facets of corrective justice do not exclude each other, but may well interact in various strengths. In order to measure the relative strength of expressive versus rational motivations underlying corrective justice, a slightly different set of questionnaire items would be required, which allows a separation between either emotional versus rational motivations, or self-benefitting versus emotional forms of staff dishonesty, like theft and vandalism. In sum, a particular differentiation between rational versus expressive forms of corrective justice was not in the focus of this thesis, but may well be interesting for further research.

Finally, it is worthwhile to consider that future research addresses the cumulative versus moderator effect of the four injustice dimensions. In doing so, it would be interesting to examine whether each single injustice dimension can trigger critical attitudes towards staff dishonesty in a condition where all other dimensions do not provide perceptions of injustice. For one dimension, Greenberg (1990) already examined that this can be the case, as theft levels rose in a scenario of distributive injustice, even when conditions of procedural justice and interactional justice were provided. Exactly the other way round, future research could also examine whether staff dishonesty can be triggered in a scenario where distributive injustice perceptions of employees are low, while other dimensions of injustice score high. Furthermore, moral injustice was not considered in previous studies, as it was first conceptualised and tested within this thesis, and therefore provides a suitable focus for future research.

In the larger context of research in the field of staff dishonesty, there are further factors in place which influence an offender's decision making; however, the present study has proven that corrective justice forms a new concept which deserves attention when it comes to situational triggers of criminality. One of the key questions in criminology is about why people offend, and corrective justice delivers a further concept to answer this question, as will be discussed in the subsequent and final section.

## **5.6 Personal Reflection and Conclusion**

A main issue the researcher takes from this thesis is about the importance of ontological constructionism as a pre-condition of corrective justice, or, vice versa, the pitfalls of not being aware of the sociological theories and the simple question of whether a researcher acknowledges a social reality existing external to humans – or conceives social reality as an exclusive construction of humans. Likewise, an employer is at risk of not considering fairness perceptions on the part of employees in terms of the way employees construct the fairness or unfairness of ongoing reorganisations. It is crucial for employers to understand that morality forms an important factor, and that morality is always perceived by employees, and not actual. Accordingly, employers have to continuously defend reorganisations, and thereby themselves, as the research findings of the present study show that perceptions of injustice can be made in four injustice dimensions on the part of staff.

In this context, the present study also offers a framework for an employer's preventive consideration of employees' constructions of reorganisational injustice. The dimensions of distributive injustice, procedural injustice, interactional injustice and moral injustice provide a framework to measure unfairness perceptions – and their effect on tolerant attitudes towards staff dishonesty – while a means to manage injustice perceptions is provided by the four dimensions as well. Each injustice dimension is composed of particular injustice perceptions which can be tackled for preventive purposes, like offering employees more space to raise their concerns or providing a more sensitive and convincing explanation for the need to reorganise.

With reference to the measured effects of this thesis, up to 11.8% of rises in tolerant attitudes towards staff dishonesty can be explained by perceived reorganisational injustice. Another indicator of the importance of perceived reorganisational injustice is the direct comparison of items measuring injustice dimensions with items focussing on change itself, which provided a much smaller explanation for shifts in tolerant attitudes towards staff dishonesty. This means that it is not change or the extent of change which triggers corrective justice, but the perceived unfairness of reorganisations; a finding which complements the verification of the research hypothesis.



Thus, the research hypothesis of this thesis is not only verified, but the findings demonstrate that an employer's increased attention towards change, morality perceptions of employees and the risk of shifts in offender motivation among staff deserve close examination in order to carefully plan reorganisations which do not provoke a motivation of corrective justice. Morality forms the key element of the research hypothesis, and if the morality of reorganisations is not shaped by an employer, it will nevertheless be constructed by employees. Accordingly, employers need to keep this constructionist nature of morality in mind instead of considering reorganisations objectively right or moral, in particular in sectors where change and reorganisations are the norm and not the exception, like in the ICT sector.

Apart from reorganisations, the pitfalls of an unchallenged objectivist truth are also inherent in the language of criminology, as labels like dishonesty, deviance, misconduct, breach of trust or misbehaviour imply the wrongfulness of such behaviour in itself. Interestingly, these labels represent an objectivist view of morality which stems from ancient philosophy, where "crime was regarded as a form of vice or immoral behavior" (Williams and Arrigo, 2006, p. 6) and a theological perspective in the middle ages where crime was regarded as a sin and hence as something immoral as well.

Having in mind that our language is already pre-programming us with moral imperatives, and having in mind that employees nevertheless construct the meanings of right and wrong in a way which reflects their respective worldview, the importance of morality as a means to explain staff dishonesty as a form of corrective justice can be comprehended.

In this regard, it is not surprising that morality forms the major ingredient of reorganisational injustice and corrective justice; what could be more prone to constructionism than perceptions of right and wrong?

## **Appendix A**

*Please note: The online-questionnaire was presented in groups of questions per screen, whereas this appendix displays the questions in one.*

### **Welcome to the Online-Feedback “Fairness in the employer-employee relationship”**

#### **Your opinion is important!**

Dear Colleagues,

First of all thank you very much for taking the time to participate in my study concerning fairness in the employer-employee relationship.

The questionnaire is divided into two sections:

The first section aims at finding out how fairly you as an employee feel being treated by your employer. In doing so, the reorganisations of the past years serve as a reference point.

The second section of the questionnaire strives to find out how fair or unfair exemplary employee behaviour towards the employer is experienced.

All of the questions refer to your own impressions at the workplace. If possible, please answer the questions spontaneously on the basis of your perceived atmosphere at work.

Your participation is of course voluntary. Your input will be treated strictly confidential and the data examination will be executed anonymously.

Many thanks in advance for your participation

Michael Wuest

...please tick the circles ~~X~~

item 1	Age	< 30 <input type="radio"/>	30-39 <input type="radio"/>	40-49 <input type="radio"/>	50+ <input type="radio"/>	n.s. <input type="radio"/>		
item 2	Length of service in the company in years	< 5 <input type="radio"/>	5-10 <input type="radio"/>	11-20 <input type="radio"/>	21-30 <input type="radio"/>	>30 <input type="radio"/>	n.s. <input type="radio"/>	
item 3	Gender	female <input type="radio"/>						
		male <input type="radio"/>						
item 4	To what extent has your Business Unit experienced reorganisations in the last two years?	very large extent  <input type="radio"/>	large extent  <input type="radio"/>	rather large extent  <input type="radio"/>	rather low extent  <input type="radio"/>	low extent  <input type="radio"/>	very low extent  <input type="radio"/>	not at all  <input type="radio"/>

Level of agreement

1 = strongly agree

4 = tend to disagree

2 = agree

5 = disagree

3 = tend to agree

6 = strongly disagree

...please tick the circles ~~X~~

At my business unit...

item 5	...jobs have become increasingly insecure over the past years.	1 0	2 0	3 0	4 0	5 0	6 0
item 6	... most employees can handle reorganisations.	1 0	2 0	3 0	4 0	5 0	6 0
item 7	....most employees are afraid of reorganisations.	1 0	2 0	3 0	4 0	5 0	6 0
item 8	...most employees lost their career prospects in the course of reorganisations.	1 0	2 0	3 0	4 0	5 0	6 0
item 9	...reorganisations have increased the workload for most employees.	1 0	2 0	3 0	4 0	5 0	6 0
item 10	...most employees view new tasks as an opportunity.	1 0	2 0	3 0	4 0	5 0	6 0
item 11	...employees are rewarded fairly.	1 0	2 0	3 0	4 0	5 0	6 0
item 12	...employees are able to speak freely about reorganisations taking place.	1 0	2 0	3 0	4 0	5 0	6 0
item 13	...employees can shape the decisions made about changes in their daily tasks.	1 0	2 0	3 0	4 0	5 0	6 0
item 14	...employees have no choice but to take the burden of reorganisations.	1 0	2 0	3 0	4 0	5 0	6 0

item 15	...external factors (e.g. competitive pressure) leave the employer with no other choice than to reorganise.	1 0	2 0	3 0	4 0	5 0	6 0
item 16	...better alternatives to the reorganisations were frequently ignored.	1 0	2 0	3 0	4 0	5 0	6 0
item 17	...the reorganisations are a consequence of earlier mismanagement.	1 0	2 0	3 0	4 0	5 0	6 0
item 18	...the reasons underlying the reorganisations were clearly explained.	1 0	2 0	3 0	4 0	5 0	6 0
item 19	...the employer has communicated honestly about the reorganisations.	1 0	2 0	3 0	4 0	5 0	6 0
item 20	...most employees understand that the reorganisations are necessary for the company's survival.	1 0	2 0	3 0	4 0	5 0	6 0
item 21	...employees were treated respectfully in the course of reorganisations.	1 0	2 0	3 0	4 0	5 0	6 0
item 22	...reorganisations have badly damaged the mutual trust between employees and employer.	1 0	2 0	3 0	4 0	5 0	6 0
item 23	...many employees are angry about the way they are treated by the employer.	1 0	2 0	3 0	4 0	5 0	6 0
item 24	...employees treat company property with care.	1 0	2 0	3 0	4 0	5 0	6 0

item 25	...employees know what is allowed and what is not allowed at work.	1 0	2 0	3 0	4 0	5 0	6 0
item 26	...now and then it is ok for some employees to take home company property for private use.	1 0	2 0	3 0	4 0	5 0	6 0
item 27	...pilfering can be just paying back for being treated unfairly.	1 0	2 0	3 0	4 0	5 0	6 0
item 28	...some pilferage does not harm the company.	1 0	2 0	3 0	4 0	5 0	6 0
item 29	...it is ok for some employees to spend hours a workday surfing the internet for private purposes.	1 0	2 0	3 0	4 0	5 0	6 0
item 30	...pretending to be sick can be just paying back for experienced injustice.	1 0	2 0	3 0	4 0	5 0	6 0
item 31	...some pretended sick days do not harm the company.	1 0	2 0	3 0	4 0	5 0	6 0
item 32	...some employees come to work whilst ill because they are concerned about losing their job.	1 0	2 0	3 0	4 0	5 0	6 0
item 33	...some employees think that the company deserves to be cheated.	1 0	2 0	3 0	4 0	5 0	6 0
item 34	...telling on colleagues is wrong.	1 0	2 0	3 0	4 0	5 0	6 0

item 35	...there are good reasons for turning a blind eye on pilferage.	1 0	2 0	3 0	4 0	5 0	6 0
item 36	...reporting concerns about internal deviance can damage one's career.	1 0	2 0	3 0	4 0	5 0	6 0
item 37	...honesty pays off.	1 0	2 0	3 0	4 0	5 0	6 0

## **Appendix B**

### **Fairness in the Employer-Employee Relationship**

Dear colleagues

In addition to my work with (company name), I am studying part-time and conduct a survey focussing on the perceived fairness in the employer-employee relationship. Accordingly, this is not a survey of the employer, and the results of the study will only be used for the purpose of the study without the company having access to it.

The first half of the questionnaire will focus on the perceived fairness of the treatment employees receive by an employer in the course of organisational changes (e.g. the closing down of sites, staff cuts, new tasks, restructuring). The second half of the questionnaire will focus on the perceived fairness of exemplary ways the employees treat their employer (without reference to reorganisations).

The participation in the survey is voluntary and takes place without logs, which means that the answers cannot be traced back and the study is hence anonymous. The answering of the 37 questions will presumably last 5-6 minutes.

Here is the link: (...)

I would be very happy about your participation

Best wishes

Michael Wuest



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