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# **Fair Project Governance: An Organisational Justice Approach to Project Governance**

Christine Unterhitzberger<sup>1</sup> and Dietmar Möller<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>University of Leeds, <sup>2</sup>Merck KGaA

## *Abstract*

Project governance is traditionally associated with aspects such as directing, controlling or holding to account. However, the good governance principle of fairness has long been neglected. This paper investigates project governance through the theoretical lens of organisational justice, which is concerned with the perception of fairness in the working environment and theoretically introduces the concept of fair project governance. A single holistic case study provides in-depth insights into the lived experience of participants through a phenomenological analysis. Features of fairness in project governance which are aligned to the dimensions of organisational justice (interactions, distribution of resources and decision process) are identified and a four-step approach to implement and sustain fair project governance is developed: establishment, development, demonstration and reciprocation.

**Keywords:** project management, organizational justice, case study

## 1. Introduction

The project environment has long been characterised as being adversarial and fragmented with a focus on low price rather than added value and little interest in sharing risks (Morledge et al., 2009). Various approaches have been undertaken to address these issues from integrated supply chains (Lockamy and McCormack, 2004; MacCarthy et al., 2016) to alliances (Dainty et al., 2001; Dutta and Hora, 2017) to partnering (Meng, 2012) to cross-sector development partnerships (Manning and Roessler, 2014) or collaboration standards (Chakkol et al., 2018) – all of which show varied degrees of success in their application and impact. This is especially applicable for large capital investment projects, where inexperienced owners need to navigate an opaque marketplace (Barbosa et al., 2017). None of these approaches has provided the “holy grail” to overcome the deficiencies in projects. With this research, we do not propose a “holy grail” either, but we suggest moving away from the mere focus on contractual arrangements, which are prevalent in the previously mentioned approaches, to a more holistic view, which integrates formal mechanisms with individual behaviours.

For this purpose we utilise project governance which has been defined as “the framework within which decisions are made” (Garland, 2009, p. 10). It is traditionally aligned with the core principles of good corporate governance which have long been accepted as the pillars of governance: transparency, accountability, responsibility and fairness (Millstein et al., 1998; Müller, 2017). However, the principle of fairness has been widely neglected by project governance researchers who mainly focus on processes and policies (Musawir et al., 2020). Therefore, for this work, we propose to use the construct of organisational justice as a theoretical lens to shed light onto the good governance principle of fairness. The construct of organisational justice has so far not been utilised in the context of project governance. It is

concerned with the perception of fairness in the workplace in regard to an employee's treatment by an authority (e.g. manager or organisation) and how this impacts on their performance and well-being (Crawshaw et al., 2013). We transfer this to the project environment with the authority being the client and the employees the project team members (Unterhitzberger and Bryde, 2019), i.e. we investigate the fairness of the client's behavior perceived by project team members. The construct of organisational justice provides a set of justice rules (Colquitt et al., 2005) which can be used as a guide on how individuals – or in our case project team members – perceive fairness and will support us in identifying how this relates to the fairness principle of governance. By viewing project governance through the lens of organisational justice we expect to create a framework for fairness in project governance which is based on these justice rules and facilitates the conversion of benefits of organisational justice into the project environment. By doing so we are introducing the term 'fair project governance' and aim to explore how this concept can be characterised, implemented and sustained. Against this background we set out to answer the following research questions: *What are the features of fairness in project governance? How can fairness be implemented and sustained throughout a project?*

We investigate these questions by elaborating on theory (Ketokivi and Choi, 2014) – in contrast to generating or testing it. With a single holistic case study, which provides us with rich data through multiple sources of evidence, we explore project governance through the lens of organisational justice. Our case is a large capital investment project in a corporate organisation in Germany, where we conducted a two-day workshop, 17 interviews and analysed a number of documents and hence, got insights from operational/project management level as well as top management internal and external to the project. A phenomenological analysis of the data allowed us to extract the lived experience of the participants (Moustakas, 1994; Creswell, J., 2013) and to identify features of fair project

governance such as decision processes, distribution of resources, interactions and client's approach and attitude as well as mechanisms for its implementation and sustainment.

With this study, we make multiple contributions to theory and practice. Firstly, this study introduces the term *fair project governance* and identifies features for fairness in project governance which are aligned to the different dimensions of organisational justice. Secondly, four mechanisms are proposed for the successful implementation and sustainment of fair project governance. These findings will also allow corporate organisations to develop appropriate settings for capital investment projects to be governed and delivered successfully.

## **2. Theoretical background**

In the following we critically review the relevant literature associated with the two key constructs of our study, namely governance and organizational justice. By doing so, we establish the current state of knowledge in the area, demonstrate the need to for this research and build an argument for the suitability of organizational justice as a theoretical lens.

### **2.1. Governance**

In general, governance – which originates from the Latin word “gubernare” meaning “to steer” (Samset and Volden, 2016) – puts in place a framework in an organisation which supports ethical decision making and managerial action (Zwikael and Smyrk, 2015). There has been the widespread recognition that projects as temporary organisations require their own governance structures due to their distinct strategic objectives and organisation (Biesenthal and Wilden, 2014; Zwikael and Smyrk, 2015). According to Ahola et al. (2014) there is no shared or universally accepted definition available in the literature and it seems that there is also no agreement regarding the structures or levels of project governance models (Zwikael and Smyrk, 2015). However, a recent comprehensive review of the

literature suggests that McGrath and Whitty (2015, p. 781) captures the substantial characteristics best by defining project governance as a “system by which a project is directed, controlled and held to account” (Musawir et al., 2020). It is also perceived as a multi-level phenomenon spanning from the client organisation via the project through to contractors and suppliers (Turner and Müller, 2017), with the majority of governance studies focusing on stakeholders internal to the project (Derakhshan et al., 2019).

Based on the diverse research undertaken in this field two streams have developed over time which do not interact much with each other (Ahola et al., 2014): one stream views project governance as external to any specific project and would be applicable mainly for project-based organisations, whereas the other stream views project governance internal to a specific project and would be applicable to large-scale inter-organisational projects. Our work focuses on the second stream, i.e. a project governance that is set up for the purpose of a specific project and where the project itself is regarded as a powerful temporary organisation. The particular challenges in this context are goal incongruence amongst different legally independent firms and synchronisation of activities by the different firms (Ahola et al., 2014). Project governance for such inter-organisational projects needs to provide mechanisms to overcome these challenges which so far have not been identified.

Project governance is often viewed from a financial perspective, i.e. regarding the processes, systems and regulations a financing body needs to have in place to enable the strategic and tactical success of projects (Samset and Volden, 2016). In line with this, Joslin and Müller (2016) suggest that it plays an important role as a success factor, which is also supported by subsequent studies which find strong links between project governance and project success (Musawir et al., 2017; Sirisomboonsuk et al., 2018). Past theoretical lenses which were adopted to investigate project governance are transaction cost economics, stakeholder theory,

institutional theory, contingency theory or network theory (Musawir et al., 2020), whereas the most common ones are agency theory (Eisenhardt, 1989a) and stewardship theory (Donaldson and Davis, 1991). Müller et al. (2014) and Müller and Kvalnes (2017) suggest that transparency and relationship issues are less prevalent in projects if a stewardship approach is chosen and more so if an agency approach is adopted. They also propose that project success correlates with the stewardship approach, which indicates that project success is more likely if the governance structures adopted have a stakeholder orientation (Donaldson and Davis, 1991) instead of an orientation towards self-interest fuelling mistrust and opportunistic behaviour (Eisenhardt, 1989a). Additionally, it is suggested that it is also more likely that benefits are managed well and realised if an effective project governance is in place (Joslin and Müller, 2016). This indicates that an appropriate project governance has an impact beyond the immediate project timeline and even facilitates processes for benefits realisation after project completion.

However, despite all the work outlined above which includes various definitions, different theoretical lenses as well as challenges and impact of project governance we do not really know how project governance is characterised, or more specifically: what are features of project governance? Ahola et al (2014) asked the question ‘What is project governance and where does it come from?’, but they merely focus on the earlier discussed two streams of project governance and the origins of project governance based on published work. On closer inspection they fail to identify what project governance is due to a lack of work in this area and our work will contribute to close this gap.

As mentioned earlier, Millstein et al. (1998) outlined core principles of good corporate governance as transparency, accountability, responsibility and fairness. These principles are applied in corporate organisations across all levels and hence, can and should also be

transferred to the temporary organisation of projects (Müller, 2017). The principles of transparency, accountability and responsibility are addressed widely in project governance research as concluded in Musawir et al. (2020) earlier cited systematic literature review: a definition of project governance which focuses exclusively on directing, controlling and holding to account (McGrath and Whitty, 2015) is characterised as “captur[ing] the essence of project governance” (Musawir et al., 2020, p. 7). Notably, this widely accepted definition neglects the principle of fairness and by doing so reflects the broad tendency in project governance research to omit this important aspect. Nevertheless, Müller (2017) highlights that this principle contributes to good governance in aspects like avoidance of inappropriate practices and respect of cultural sensitivity, but also links it to morality and ethics. He states that it is “concerned with the equal and fair treatment of employees, suppliers, contractors, etc.” (Müller, 2017, p. 16), but currently there is a lack of empirical evidence to support these statements and to develop an in-depth understanding of fairness in the context of project governance. Therefore, with our work we intend to close this gap and investigate the fourth principle of good governance, i.e. fairness. We chose organisational justice, which is concerned with how people perceive fairness in an organisation, as the theoretical lens for this work (Colquitt et al., 2005) and will introduce this construct in the following section.

## **2.2. Organisational justice**

Organisational justice refers to multiple facets of fairness as people are concerned about whether they are paid fairly, whether promotions are granted on a fair basis, whether decision-making processes are fair or whether they are treated fairly by an authority in the organisation. Generally, organisational justice is defined as “the extent to which an aspect of the organizational environment is perceived as fair, according to a certain rule or standard” (Moliner et al., 2017, p. 1; Cropanzano et al., 2001). We have formed our understanding of

organizational justice based on this and other associated definitions (Greenberg and Colquitt, 2005; Greenberg, 1990; Greenberg, 2009) as well as the wider organizational justice literature, which clearly supports that organizational justice is concerned with a dyadic relationship, namely that between an authority (either organization or individual) and an individual working for or with that authority. It does not matter if the individual is internal or external to the organization of the authority, as long as there is some form of hierarchical relationship. This is the case between the client and project team members where the hierarchical relationship is present due contractual agreements.

Research suggests that if people perceive fairness in their working environment, then positive outcomes are to be expected for the organisation as well as for the employees themselves.

Amongst other positive outcomes, it has been found that employees support the legitimacy of an authority (Tyler and Lind, 1992), promote the acceptance of organisational change (Greenberg, 1994) or refrain from disruptive behaviour (Greenberg and Lind, 2000).

Furthermore, justice perceptions have been linked to ethical or unethical behaviour at work (Jacobs et al., 2014) and it has also been suggested that values play an important role in terms of moderating the relationship between justice perceptions and work behaviour (Fischer and Smith, 2006).

It has been widely recognised that the construct of organisational justice is comprised of three different dimensions (Colquitt et al., 2001; Viswesvaran and Ones, 2002; Colquitt and Rodell, 2015): Firstly, distributive justice which is concerned with the fair distribution of outcomes. It is assumed that the three allotment rules of equality, equity and need are used by individuals to evaluate their perception of distributive justice (Cropanzano et al., 2007); Secondly, procedural justice which is concerned with the procedures which are used for decision making. Justice rules associated with procedural justice are process control, decision

control, consistency, bias suppression, accuracy, correctability, representativeness and ethicality (Thibaut and Walker, 1975; Leventhal, 1980). And thirdly, interactional justice which is concerned with the communication of outcomes and procedures. It has been suggested that individuals utilise four criteria to assess their perception of interactional justice: truthfulness, justification, respect and propriety (Bies and Moag, 1986). A summary of the different dimensions and their associated justice rules is provided in Table 1. These different dimensions interact with each other and can strengthen the positive impact of justice or reduce the negative impact of injustice depending on their presence or absence (Goldman, 2003; Colquitt et al., 2013).

Type		Name	Description
Procedural <sup>a</sup>		Process control	Procedures provide opportunities for voice
		Decision control	Procedures provide influence over outcomes
		Consistency	Procedures are consistent across persons and time
		Bias suppression	Procedures are neutral and unbiased
		Accuracy	Procedures are based on accurate information
		Correctability	Procedures offer opportunities for appeals of outcomes
		Representativeness	Procedures take into account concerns of subgroups
		Ethicality	Procedures uphold standards of morality
Distributive <sup>b</sup>		Equity	Outcomes are allocated according to contributions
		Equality	Outcomes are allocated equally
		Need	Outcomes are allocated according to need
Interactional	Interpersonal <sup>c</sup>	Respect	Enactment of procedures are sincere and polite
		Propriety	Enactment of procedures refrain from improper remarks
	Informational <sup>c</sup>	Truthfulness	Explanations about procedures are honest
		Justification	Explanations about procedures are thorough

Table 1 – Justice rules [Table adapted from Colquitt and Rodell (2015); <sup>a</sup> Rules taken from Thibaut and Walker (1975) and Leventhal (1980); <sup>b</sup> Rules taken from Adams (1965) and Leventhal (1976); <sup>c</sup> Rules taken from Bies and Moag (1986) and Greenberg (1993)]

A number of instrumental models of justice, which attempt to explain why employees are concerned about fairness and react to fairness perceptions, is focused on resource and exchange based concerns between an individual and the organisation (Blader and Tyler, 2005). Amongst them, social exchange theory, which is a broad conceptual paradigm

(Cropanzano et al., 2017), is regarded as the most predictive framework to explain justice reactions (Colquitt et al., 2013). Its essence is that “social exchange comprises actions contingent on the rewarding reactions of others, which over time provide for mutually and rewarding transactions and relationships” (Cropanzano and Mitchell, 2005, p. 890). More specifically, it has been found that being treated fairly is regarded as an advantage by employees which is worthy of reciprocation and hence, they feel a duty to give back to their organisation (Blader and Tyler, 2005). This means that fair treatment leads to positive behaviour from employees such as positive attitude, organisational citizenship behaviour or enhanced commitment (ibid). In contrast to this, fairness heuristic theory aims to explore the cognitive processing of fairness information and by doing so, to understand why individuals respond to perceptions of justice (Blader and Tyler, 2005; Lind, 2001). Its key notion is that employees generally work in an uncertain and risky environment and that they use early judgements of fairness as cues if they are safe within their working environment (Proudfoot and Lind, 2015). This use of fairness as a heuristic directs their future behaviour and processing of information. Important in this context is, that individuals usually do not make constant new justice judgements, but that they draw on early experiences in the working relationship (ibid).

A recent study by Unterhitzberger and Bryde (2019) investigated the effects of organisational justice in the project context and they suggest that there is a correlation between organisational justice and project performance. The nuances of this study are particularly interesting as they found that procedural justice has the strongest impact, followed by distributive justice and interactional justice. This suggests that if project team members feel that fair and consistent processes and procedures are in place and that they had the opportunity to contribute to their implementation, they will make the biggest effort to deliver a successful project. However, a more detailed understanding of fairness perceptions

in the project context is still missing and we intend to contribute to this understanding by using organisational justice as a theoretical lens to investigate project governance.

### 2.3. Summary

Based on these considerations we have established that project governance has been investigated widely and yet, there is still a number of shortcomings in the literature such as a lack of a generally accepted definition (Musawir et al., 2020; Zwikael and Smyrk, 2015; Ahola et al., 2014), non-agreed upon features of project governance (Levie et al., 2017; Musawir et al., 2020) or unclear conceptualisations (Too and Weaver, 2014; Zwikael and Smyrk, 2015). One aspect which stands out is that project governance research generally accepted to be mainly concerned with directing, controlling and holding to account (McGrath and Whitty, 2015; Musawir et al., 2020). Our Figure 1 showcases how this focus generates a significant gap in project governance research:

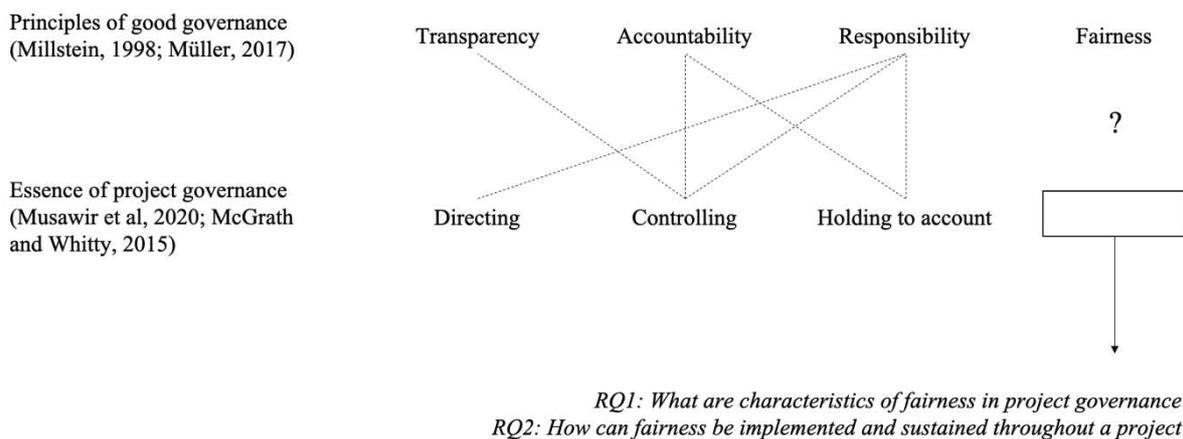


Figure 1 – Gap in project governance research

The current focus of project governance on directing, controlling and holding to account omits the good governance principle of fairness (Millstein et al., 1998; Müller, 2017) which

gets only marginal attention in the literature and lacks empirical investigation and evidence. Fairness is a concept each and every individual has a subjective perception of and is also characterised as being “in the eye of the beholder” (Colquitt et al., 2018, p. 159), however utilising the construct of organisational justice as a theoretical lens to investigate this governance principle will provide the required rigour and theoretical underpinning to generate relevant insights. We argue that the adoption of justice rules – especially in terms of procedural justice – to the implementation of an appropriate project governance has positive effects on the project as well as on the project team members of such complex projects. This is based on the widely established benefits of organisational justice such as positive attitude, organisational citizenship behaviour or enhanced commitment (Blader and Tyler, 2005) as well as enhanced wellbeing and performance (Shao et al., 2013). These benefits have been established in permanent organisational contexts with employees at the centre of the investigation, however we will transfer them to the context of the project environment – and more specifically project governance – and put the project team member at the centre of the investigation. This means we will be focusing on the project team member’s perception of fairness regarding the treatment by an authority, i.e. the client. By doing so we will also explore if the governance principle of fairness through the lens of organisational justice can provide solutions to the main challenges of the governance of inter-organisational projects such as goal incongruence and synchronisation of activities (Ahola et al., 2014). Overall, we aim to identify features of fairness in project governance and examine appropriate measures for its implementation and sustainment.

### **3. Research method**

In order to address this aim, we adopt the philosophical lens of interpretivism as it recognises humans as social actors and emphasises the importance to understand differences between

them (Saunders et al., 2016; Creswell, J.W., 2009). This perspective is appropriate for research undertaken with humans where we try to understand the participants' world from their point of view, i.e. we seek to elaborate our understanding of how individuals' perception of fairness may impact project governance for large capital investment project. We investigate this through a single case study. Unlike more traditional case research which aims to generate theory (Eisenhardt, 1989b; Yin, 2018), we aim to elaborate existing theory utilizing an abductive approach (Ketokivi and Choi, 2014; Meqdadi et al., 2018). We do this by undertaking a controlled iteration between general theory and empirical data (Ketokivi and Choi, 2014). The abductive approach allowed us to obtain new insights into the existing phenomenon of project governance by studying it from the new perspective of organisational justice (Kovács and Spens, 2005). This application of new theory to the existing phenomenon serves as the starting point of the abductive investigation (Kovács and Spens, 2005). The next step involved "going back and forth" (Dubois and Gadde, 2002, p. 556) between our theoretical framework, our data sources and data analysis, whereby the combination of multiple sources of evidence enabled us to reveal aspects which were previously unknown to us. This research strategy made it possible us to uncover how the adoption of justice rules contributes to the establishment of fair project governance and the impact this can have on implementation and sustainment measures.

### **3.1. Case selection**

As mentioned previously, we conducted a holistic single case study to obtain an in-depth understanding of the social and organisational processes related to fair project governance. Single case studies can be a very powerful way to "get much closer to theoretical constructs and provide a much more persuasive argument about causal forces than broad empirical research can" (Siggelkow, 2007, p. 22f). Furthermore, there are various rationales for when a

single case study is an appropriate design, of which being a “*common case*” is one (Yin, 2018, p. 50). With our common case, we aim to understand the circumstances, requirements and facts of an ordinary situation to draw lessons for theory elaboration and practice. The common case also enables us to illustrate conceptual contributions through the more direct access to constructs and causal relationships (Siggelkow, 2007).

Our case was selected through non-probability purposive sampling which is useful and appropriate for this type of illustrative research utilising a common case (Saunders et al., 2019). The case was chosen based on the selection criteria of a) being a large-scale strategic investment project which was b) conducted by an inexperienced client who has very limited expertise in delivering this type projects and c) spans across multiple organisations, i.e. is inter-organisational. Based on these criteria we were able to select a common (or representative) case which is pertinent to the research question, where the phenomenon we are interested in can appear, which is feasible and also ethical in terms of obtaining access and informed consent from participants (Miles and Huberman, 1994). Our common case is a large capital investment project by an international pharmaceutical and chemical company in Germany with an annual turnover of more than £10 billion. The project encompasses the construction of an innovation centre and employee restaurant between 2014 and 2018 with a total value of more than £250 million. It was a major investment for the organisation and can hence be defined as a large capital investment project. The innovation centre and employee restaurant were not only supposed to provide a new physical location for employees; they were also expected to facilitate a change in mind-set in the organisation. They were supposed to open up the organisation towards the public, to modernise it and to change the internal communication culture in time for significant anniversary celebrations of the organisation.

The project was an internal project for the organisation (client), which was supported with external expertise as required. The project was outside the business-as-usual environment due to its scale and significance and therefore the client can be classified as inexperienced in these types of projects. The joint project responsibility lay with the internal Project Lead and the Head of Architectural Design who were supported by an external project management consultancy, various internal sub-project managers who dealt with the day-to-day business, an internal M&E engineer and an internal controller. The project's outputs were produced by the project team, which was led by the external architect who sub-contracted the relevant engineering and consultancy services and who managed the external contractors who were directly commissioned by the client. We classify our case as a common case based on the selection criteria outlined above: it is an everyday situation that large scale international corporations invest vast amounts of their capital into strategic construction projects. These strategic construction projects are usually outside the organisations' business-as-usual and hence, they often do not have the resources, expertise and/or knowledge to manage the projects successfully. For this purpose, it is common practice that separate organisational structures are created and external experts are consulted and contracted.

### **3.2. Data collection**

Data collection for this case study took place approx. 6 – 12 months after project completion. This allowed us to obtain a comprehensive picture about the behaviours, perceptions, processes and policies during the project as the participants had sufficient time to reflect, but it was not too long in the past for them to have forgotten about important issues. We used the following sources of evidence in order to develop converging lines of inquiry (Yin, 2018) and to allow for triangulation (Voss et al., 2016; Voss et al., 2002): workshop, interviews and document analysis. Firstly, we conducted a two-day workshop with 11 key project team

members (see Table 1 for details of the participants). The aim of the workshop was to review the project and its key aspects, to discuss its success factors and lessons learned. It was facilitated by the project management consultant's project lead (PMC1) based on a previously agreed detailed agenda and objectives (workshop protocol). The workshop enabled us to get a very good overall understanding of the project and the individuals' behaviours and perceptions as well as the processes and policies adopted. The workshop was audio recorded and transcribed (total 14.5 hours of audio material). The flipcharts created during the workshop were also transcribed and used as data. Furthermore, we used an observer to take field notes during the workshop to record non-verbal behaviours. Secondly, 17 interviews with a variety of project team members were conducted. With the sampling of the interviewees we ensured to obtain insights from different perspectives: a) we interviewed representatives from the top management as well as the middle management/operative roles and b) we interviewed representatives from the client, the consultants and the contractors (see Table 2 for details of the interviewees). This enabled us to get a unique rich picture based on a variety of perspectives. The interviews followed an interview protocol and the questions asked were open ended and hence, allowed for the interviewees to elaborate on important aspects. Follow-up questions and prompts were asked where the interviewees seemed reluctant to go into more depth. At the end, the interviewees were given the opportunity to add anything they felt was important but had not yet been covered in the interview. Where possible, the interviews were conducted in person (10), but if this was not possible the interviews were conducted via video-conferencing (7). All interviews were audio recorded and transcribed (total 10.6 hours of audio material). Thirdly, we analysed documents related to the case. We used two different types of documents: a) project documents, which we were granted access to (contracts, project kick-off documentation, project closure documentation, design guidelines, fact sheet) and b) publicly available newspaper articles, web resources,

published articles in professional magazines and a book publication on the project. The documents were available electronically.

Role	ID	Internal / external	Workshop / Interview	Experience	Top Management	Operative level
Chairman of the Board and Group CEO (at the time of the project)	CEO	Internal	I	>40 years	X	
Division CEO	DCEO	Internal	I	>30 years	X	
Project lead	ProL	Internal	W/I	>30 years		X
Head of Architectural Design	HAD	Internal	W/I	>30 years		X
Project manager	PM	Internal	W/I	>25 years		X
Project controller	PC	Internal	W	>20 years		X
M&E engineer	MEI	Internal	W	>20 years		X
Project management consultant (member of executive board, project lead)	PMC1	External	W/I	>25 years	X	
Project management consultant	PMC2	External	W/I	>10 years		X
Project management consultant	PMC3	External	W/I	>10 years		X
Project management consultant	PMC4	External	W	>10 years		X
Architect (CEO)	Arch1	External	W/I	>40 years	X	
Architect (project lead)	Arch2	External	I	>30 years		X
Architect (construction manager)	Arch3	External	W	>20 years		X
M&E engineer (CEO)	MEE	External	I	>20 years	X	
Structural engineer (project lead)	SE	External	I	>20 years		X
Façade contractor (CEO)	FC1	External	I	>20 years	X	
Façade contractor (technical project lead)	FC2	External	I	>15 years		X
Façade contractor (commercial project lead)	FC3	External	I	>25 years		X
Building contractor (project lead)	BC	External	I	>30 years		X
M&E contractor (CEO, project lead)	MEC	External	I	>20 years	X	

Table 2 – Workshop and interview participant details

### **3.3. Data analysis**

The data analysis was guided by the principles of phenomenological research (Creswell, J., 2013; Moustakas, 1994; Van Manen, 2016), which has its focus on describing the joint meaning of a lived experience of a concept or phenomenon for various individuals (Creswell, J., 2013). This analysis is particularly appropriate for our case study research as we have a group of individuals who participated in the research and we aim to explore a description of the universal essence, i.e. a composite description of the phenomenon – in our case the adoption of justice rules to project governance (ibid). The analysis was guided by two questions: What have the individuals experienced and how have they experienced it (Moustakas, 1994)? Analysis undertaken using phenomenological research traditionally follows a structured approach comprising of various steps from identifying the phenomenon to pointing out the researcher's individual experience to determining significant statements, meaning units and mid- and high-level themes to the development of a textural and a structural description (Creswell, J., 2013; Moustakas, 1994).

The analysis was conducted manually and in parallel to the data collection, i.e. once the workshop was completed the transcripts of the data were carefully read through, significant statements were identified, and the first meaning units and medium-level themes were generated. At this stage we brought in the theoretical construct of organizational justice by linking the themes with the different dimensions. The same process was used to analyse the interviews and the documents. This meant that at every stage of the research we went back and forth between the empirical data we collected and the theoretical constructs (Dubois and Gadde, 2002). Hence, our coding was guided by the qualitative data but took into account concepts from theory and therefore followed the abductive approach (Ketokivi and Choi, 2014). An example of our analysis process is provided in Appendix 3. The analysis was

conducted by the first author of the paper, but the co-author, who was not involved in gathering data in the field, contributed through critical discussions about the codes and the themes.

### **3.4. Validity and reliability**

A particular emphasis was put on the validity and reliability of the study following the recommendations by Yin (2018), Riege (2003) and Gibbert et al. (2008) For example, we ensured reliability in the design phase and data collection phase a case study protocol was established and used ensuring a rigorous process across the different data collection methods. To ensure construct validity, we used different sources of evidence during the data collection phase and by doing so were able to establish a chain of evidence which allows for sufficient citations and cross check. To ensure internal validity in the data collection phase we interviewed only the most knowledgeable, key informants on operational and top-management level und utilised triangulation between the different sources of evidence during the data analysis phase. To ensure external validity, we defined boundaries for analytic generalisation during the design phase and applied a rigorous coding process following the structured approach of phenomenological research during the analysis phase. Further details on reliability and validity are summarised in Appendix 2 following the examples by Wilhelm et al. (2016) and Sayed et al. (2020).

## **4. Findings**

In this section, we present the amalgamated findings from the workshop, interviews and document analysis, which revealed four high-level themes. These themes provide deeper understanding of the application of justice rules to project governance in the context of large capital investment projects and hence, enable us to address the aim of identifying features of

fairness in project governance and examining appropriate measures for its implementation and sustainment. Overall, the project participants on all levels (top management as well as middle management/operative level) characterised the project as representing a high degree of fairness as is demonstrated by some exemplified quotes: *“not only a certain, but a high fairness was present”* [Arch1]; *“fairness – yes, on all accounts”* [FC1]; *“fair and based on partnership”* [BC]. Through the identified themes, we will be able to link this perception of fairness to project governance. This integration of fairness and project governance is led by the organisational justice dimensions and its associated justice rules which were used as theoretical framework for the data analysis as outlined earlier. The themes are as follows: decision processes (1), distribution of resources (2), interactions (3) and client’s approach and attitude (4). Details for each of the high-level themes are provided hereinafter.

#### **4.1. Decision processes**

There was the general perception in our case that decision processes were transparent and appropriate for the project (*“Well, transparency was always present”* [MEC] *“Transparency was a very important criterion – transparency and comprehensibility.”* [DECO]) and that decisions were well prepared and consistent (*“There was no behind-the-scenes – one does it this way and the other one that way”* [PMC1]). Furthermore, it was acknowledged that decisions were made in a contemporary and timely fashion without unnecessary delays (*“Smaller topics were solved exceptionally timely and simple, it’s almost not worth mentioning”* [FC3]) and that the client took an active role in facilitating decisions when necessary (*“There were so many parties involved, that is was really difficult to organise. But [the client] took charge to implement it promptly.”* [FC3]).

The client also ensured that *“decisions were made, where they were made best”* [ProL] in terms of hierarchy and role. This gave a clear decision authority to the project leadership and

the project team, which guaranteed that decisions were consistent (*“The project leadership could really decide within their authority, no one was behaving like a loose cannon, this was really a great cooperation of everyone”* [PMC1]). This also enabled the project team to know how decisions are made, who makes them and how the process works (*“And this is how we know how decisions are made. And sometimes you knew, okay – this decision will not be made by the team, but maybe by the CEO or by the project lead.”* [MEC]).

Another important aspect when it came to decision making was the involvement of all parties in the decisions. Firstly, the client showed an active interest in the project and the associated decisions and made sure that they have all the information required to make the decision (*“So, one has the topics openly described, constructively discussed them and then also decided fairly.”* [FC1]). Secondly, the external experts were always allowed to have a voice when it came to technical decisions in order to get the best possible solution (*“There was no top-down structure in the technical decision making; indeed they listened to the aspects of the contractors and consultants.”* [FC2]). Generally, all decisions in the case were guided by a clear goal orientation, i.e. to achieve the project’s main objective, which was the timely completion for the corporate’s anniversary. This provided distinct decision guidelines and made sure, that decisions were made consistently across individuals and in the best interest of the project. This even filtered down to the individual contractors who also considered the overarching goal in their own decision making (*“And that the opening ceremony and all that is not questioned. (...) How do I deal with it, if the other one doesn’t do their job?”* [MEC]).

The procurement process and contract terms provided the regulatory framework and basis for decision making in our case. The procurement process was very transparent and inclusive, enabling the client as well as the contractors to understand each others’ objectives for and approach towards the project (*“We had very good, very transparent contract negotiations, I*

*have to emphasise this. (...) On the other side, and I have to say this, we always had people who concerned themselves with what we did, who questioned and who appreciated. We don't always have that.*” [BC]), whereas the contract defined processes which facilitated decision making (*“That's why we defined in the contract how it needs to be structured so that it can be considered quickly; everything ok – documented. And then you can come to a decision quickly.”* [PMC1]).

The decision processes adopted in our case clearly demonstrated alignment with the justice rules of the procedural justice dimension such as process control, decision control, consistency, accuracy, correctability or representativeness (Colquitt and Rodell, 2015). By analysing the governance aspect of decision-making through the theoretical lens of organisational justice – and specifically procedural justice – we were able to identify process characteristics and responsibilities which contribute to an environment of fair project governance.

#### **4.2. Distribution of resources**

In terms of the distribution of resources, it was an essential feature of the project that it was sufficiently financed i.e. it was possible to deliver the requested output with the budget available including a dedicated budget for contingency and risk (*“We had money (...) the project was estimated with contingency (...) we were adequately financed. If we were underfinanced, the whole thing would not have been possible.”* [ProL]). The client put an emphasis on the appropriate distribution of rewards in regards to the tasks and the requested performance (*“And of course, you don't want to overload one party and the other one takes a rest”* [DCEO] and *“We demanded high performance, but also paid adequately for it.”* [ProL]), which was also recognised by the consultants and contractors (*“The client demonstrated a sympathetic attitude.”* [Arch1]). However, it was acknowledged that nothing

was given away for free as it was highlighted that the *“the result was fair, the interactions were fair, but the discussions were tough”* [FC2].

Another important aspect was the time available to plan and execute the project. The project had a hard completion date, which was non-negotiable: the corporate’s anniversary. This hard date was viewed as positive from some project team members as it provided them with focus (*“We had an endpoint and that’s good”* [Arch1]) whereas others admitted that it proved a manageable challenge (*“The time we had available for the project was – as it is always with such projects – tight”* [BC]). Overall, however, the timeframe was viewed as feasible – also due to the effort, which was put into planning, and scheduling of the project (*“The time span was fair and adequate (...) and they have put a lot of thought into a schedule.”* [FC3]).

The client honoured good effort and proactive behaviour by the contractors by agreeing certain key milestones and rewarding them with a bonus as a positive incentive (*“You don’t get a penalty with us, but you get a bonus, if you achieve what we ask you to do.(...) The relationship is different. (...) The contractors make an effort to achieve the goal together”* [HAD]). Contractors recognized the bonus regulation as positive encouragement, which supported the clear overall goal of the project (*“I think that’s good. (...) You need to set clear goals for such projects.”* [BC] and *“I think this bonus approach is very good.”* [MEC]), but also identified over time that it can deviate attention from reaching the goal to only securing the bonus (*“Afterwards I realised that it is a huge danger. The whole project only focusses on the bonus milestones (...) and this created such unhealthy internal pressure.”* [FC3]).

Dedicated resources were also of considerable significance for the project (*“The model with the dedicated project team, which has high visibility. This was indeed an important contribution to success.”* [DCEO]). It was recognised early on in the project, that the client’s traditional approach to organising project teams with people remaining in their functional

roles during the project, was preventing the project from kicking off properly (*“There was on the one hand side the detention of relevant key personnel in the functional organisation (...) and the project leader was virtually nice-to-have, without a project team.”* [PMC1]).

Therefore, the client’s project team was separated from the traditional functional organisation and a project organisation with dedicated resources was initiated (*“So this had to be disconnected”* [Arch1] and *“And we were removed from the functional organisation. We were our team, we could try together to find solutions for problems.”* [ProL]). In addition to the dedicated resources it was also aimed for sufficient expertise on the project. The client recognised for example, that there were not sufficient project management capabilities available in-house and hence, decided to employ a project management consultancy (*“I think to take a project management consultancy on board is not particularly innovative, but it generates different discussions.”* [ProL]). There was also the approach to find the right consultants and contractors (*“You got together and supported, so that you find the most suitable contractors, who can achieve the aim.”* [PMC1]) and once they were on board to let the experts get on with their work (*“That you let the people, who have a certain expertise, or contractors, you let them do what they can do best.”* [PMC1]). This was also positively acknowledged by the contractors (*“On the other side there was a lot of expertise, and this carried forward into the project”* [BC] and *“The two representatives, they had gigantic expert knowledge across all trades.”* [FC3]).

This demonstrates that the client adopted clear policies for the project in regard to the provision and distribution of resources and outcomes which were guided by the distributive justice rules of equity, equality and need (Colquitt and Rodell, 2015). These policies were recognised by all parties involved in our case and provided them with sufficient information to make judgements about the distribution and provision of resources.

### 4.3. Interactions

The interactions between the client and the project team members were characterised by respect, fairness and politeness (“*Yes, the contact was always respectful.*” [Arch1] and “*In any case respectful and polite*” [MEC] and “*The dealing with each other was fair*” [FC2]). It was emphasised that this was positively different to what project team members have experienced on other projects in the past (“*Well, that was, if we want to talk about the construction Knigge [German equivalent to Debrett’s guide to good manners], that was – I could have taken my sisters, who are pedagogues, to the meetings and would have said ‘Come join us’. I wouldn’t do that for other on-site meetings.*” [FC3]). Another unique feature in the dealings with each other was the use of humour and the demonstration of collegiality (“*We laughed a lot, which I think is good. So, laughing is a good sign.*” [Arch1] and “*Oh, that was always good. We had lots of fun in our team and it was casual. (...)* Collegial and good – no matter of the affiliation.” [ProL]).

An aspect, which was very valued by the project team members, was that the client was always prepared to listen – in terms of listen to the project team members’ point of view, but also listen in regards to their needs and issues (“*Our needs were always listened to, (...) they engaged with it, they wanted to hear the different perspectives*” [FC2]). By being aware of the issues, consultants and/or contractors were facing during the project, the client was in a position to actively support them in case of any difficulties (“*We had difficulties to staff the project adequately, I have to admit that. But the client supported us here. And in the end, we completed it successfully.* [BC] and “*If problems arise, you have to help each other, because we can only win together or loose together.*” [ProL]). This was then also reciprocated by project team members as they supported each other (“*Then everybody is glad, if they are not*

*in a good mood and is being helped, then they will also help, when someone needs support.”* [PMC1]).

The interactions were influenced by the role the client adopted. The client decided to act as a broker in the project to mediate and moderate the relationships amongst the project team members (*“And this is where the client said, he will take on more of a moderator role.”* [Arch1] and *“I think the biggest challenge for the project leadership was to be the mediator.”* [FC3]). By doing so, the client facilitated a problem-solving culture instead of a blaming culture (*“They wanted to understand the problem, wanted to bring across, that we are working towards a joint aim and that the problems are to be solved.”* [FC1]). The client also volunteered information to the project team members and wanted to be as transparent as possible (*“It becomes fatal for my understanding if you purposefully try to restrict the flow of information and build barriers.”* [ProL]). This was facilitated by an emphasis on shared offices and presence on site (*“who sat together in a room and through this – of course – the exchange of information was very close”* [PMC1]).

Overall, the interactions in the project were based on principles of respect, propriety, truthfulness and justification in line with the informational and interpersonal justice dimensions (Colquitt and Rodell, 2015). These interactions were led by the client’s exemplified behaviour which is manifested in their approach and attitude as described next.

#### **4.4. Client’s approach and attitude**

Another important aspect for the project was the approach the client chose for this project. There are four aspects worth highlighting within the client’s approach and attitude: First, the mind-set. It was recognised that the people leading and working on the project need *“the right mind-set”* [PC]. This refers to the *“building of the mind-set for the project and*

*consciously uncoupling from the corporate processes” [HAD] as well as “the conscious decision of like-minded people with the same philosophy to work in partnership” [ProL].*

Second, the top management support. The project was given top priority by the CEO due to its relevance for the organisation (*“And this is why I gave it top priority, which is atypical for construction projects. I not only accompanied the project very closely, but I was also involved in the decisions during essential phases of the project.” [CEO]*). This was also evident throughout the project by means of active support when required (*“This request was in fact denied, but I knew I need it and then somehow through [CEO] it suddenly worked” [ProL]*) and *“That they knew at any time, if they are blocked somewhere in the organisation, they can come to me immediately and they knew they will have the support, that it will be implemented.” [CEO]*). Third, the adoption of a top-down approach in regards to the conscious choice of the establishment of processes, policies and responsibilities which are guided by justice rules as well as its maintenance through sustained exemplification (*“So that was a top-down approach, but not in a negative sense, rather reinitiated from above and then well maintained. And that's why I felt that positively” [MEC]*). Fourth, the project team members’ response to the client’s approach and attitude. Through the client’s continuous demonstration and exemplification of fair processes, policies and responsibilities the project team members developed trust in the client’s words as they will be followed by actions (*“But here it was really extraordinary. But I think that's what the client has to live by it and then it works.” [FC1]*).

## **5. Discussion**

With this study we investigate the features of fairness in project governance and how it can be implemented and sustained. We utilize the justice rules established through the theoretical construct of organizational justice (Colquitt and Rodell, 2015) to identify and explain this

good governance principle. By doing so, we expand the project governance literature and enhance the understanding of fairness in the context of project governance. Based on our evidence, we identified features of fairness in project governance as well as certain mechanisms, which support its implementation and sustainment.

### **5.1. Features of fairness in project governance**

Ahola et al. (2014) ask the question ‘what is project governance?’ and try to provide an answer to this by investigating definitions and origin of project governance. However, this only partly answers the question as it does not provide us with a more in depth understanding of how project governance is characterised. The majority of the extant literature on project governance is concerned with structural issues around governance, challenges or very specific project types. And McGrath and Whitty (2015, p. 28) even go as far as defining project governance as “the system by which a project is directed and controlled and held to account” whilst fully neglecting the good governance principle of fairness. Our study enables us to obtain a more in-depth understanding of fairness in project governance and establishes that the construct of organisational justice is a suitable lens to do so. Previous conceptual work by Müller (2017, p. 16) proposes that fairness in project governance is “concerned with the equal and fair treatment of employees, suppliers, contractors, etc.” and with this study we establish features of this equal and fair treatment based on empirical evidence (Figure 2).

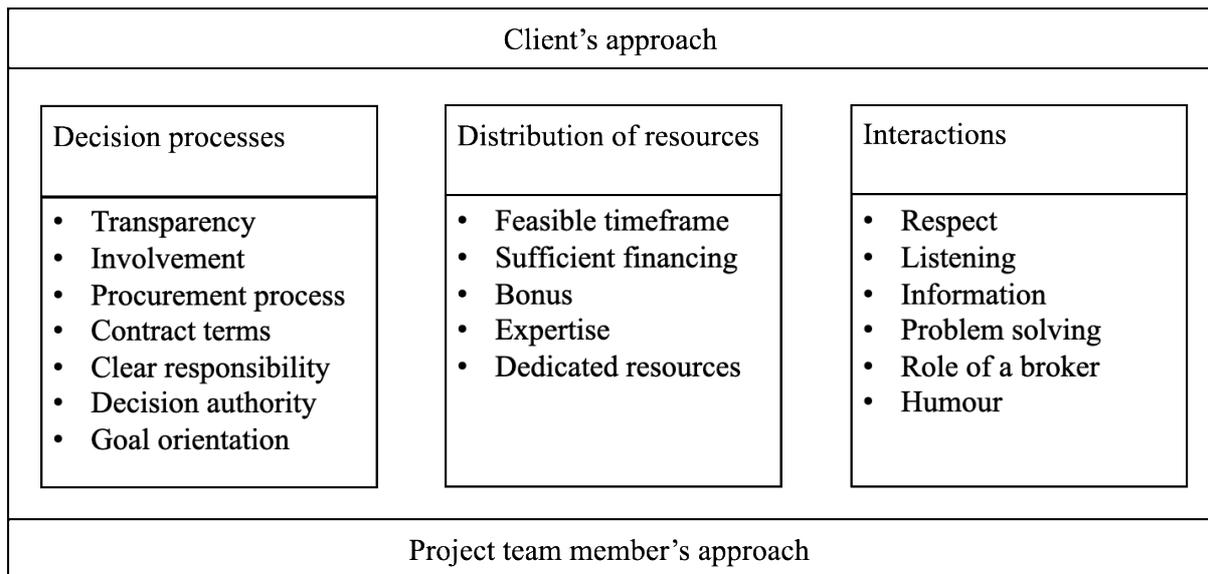


Figure 2 – Features of fairness in project governance

In line with our abductive and theory elaborating approach (Ketokivi and Choi, 2014) we were guided by the general theory, i.e. the construct of organisational justice, and applied it to the new empirical context of project governance without defining a priori themes, but by going back and forth between the theoretical framework and the empirical data. The features we identified are aligned with the organisational justice dimensions (Colquitt et al., 2005) and we expand and adapt how they are characterised in the context of the fairness principle of good project governance. The dimension of procedural justice (Thibaut and Walker, 1975; Leventhal, 1980; Colquitt et al., 2001) is represented through decision processes in project governance and we determine that aspects such as transparency, involvement or procurement terms are key elements of fairness in project governance when it comes to decision making. However, two features stand out in particular as they address both of the challenges of inter-organisational project governance identified by Ahola et al. (2014): goal incongruence amongst legally independent firms and synchronisation of activities by these firms. The feature of goal orientation in the decision process has led to project team members perceiving the decision making as fair. This suggests that if through project governance a clear goal

orientation is provided – and this is demonstrated by the client throughout the project (see next section for discussion) – goal incongruence does not arise, and the benefits of perceived fairness can be harnessed (Cropanzano et al., 2015). Furthermore, the feature of clear responsibilities supports the challenge of synchronisation of activities by different organisations. By allocating clear responsibilities through the project governance the client empowered the project team as they knew exactly who was responsible for what but also that they had a joint responsibility towards finishing the project on time. Again, this created a sense of fairness for the project team members and we suggest that this also minimised the difficulties of synchronisation of activities.

The dimension of distributive justice (Cropanzano et al., 2007) is represented through the distribution of resources in project governance. We found that aspects such as a feasible timeframe for the often scarce resource of time in projects creates a perception of fairness amongst project team members just as a sufficient overall financing of the project did. The feature of incorporating a bonus system, and hence rewarding good performance, also contributed to fairness perceptions and we argue that it also plays an important role in overcoming the challenge of synchronising activities of different independent organisations (Ahola et al., 2014) as it encouraged organisations to work together instead of blaming each other which is often the case when malus systems are used. And lastly the dimensions of interpersonal and informational justice (Bies and Moag, 1986) is represented through the interactions facilitated by project governance. Aspects such as respect, listening and the use of humour were found to lead project team members to make positive justice judgements. The interactions again contribute to overcoming challenges in the governance of inter-organisational projects, for example by the client adopting the role of a broker and mediator. This facilitates goal orientation and supports debates around the alignment of activities.

These features of fairness in project governance were identified through utilising organisational justice as a theoretical lens and hence, investigating the project team members' perception of fairness in our case project (Crawshaw et al., 2013). By doing so we enhance our understanding of the good governance principle of fairness in the project context and move the debate around project governance beyond the focus on directing, controlling and holding to account (McGrath and Whitty, 2015).

## **5.2. Implementation and sustainment mechanisms for fairness in project governance**

Establishing the features of fairness in project governance as outlined in Figure 3 is the initial step in creating an environment of fair project governance. Fairness perceptions are of particular importance at the early stages of new working relationships which are often defined by uncertainty, unknowns and risk. Project team members use fairness perceptions as heuristics to evaluate if they are safe and secure in this new working environment and if they can trust the other parties involved (Blader and Tyler, 2005; Lind, 2001; Proudfoot and Lind, 2015). In our case the client made choices early on how they intend to govern the project and developed the fairness perceptions in the initial stages with the individual partners through the design and conduct of contract negotiations and procurement processes. During this process there was also a focus on the development of a shared mind-set expressed through the client's and the project team member's approach which was recognised as an important aspect framing the features of fairness in project governance.

However, our findings also indicate that establishing the features of fairness in project governance and the development of initial fairness perceptions is insufficient to sustain its benefits throughout the project duration. Whilst fairness perceptions are particularly important when individuals start working together for the first time, they appear to remain

relevant throughout the project duration. We found that project team members made justice judgements even later on in the project and that the extent of fairness perception had an impact on their behaviour no matter when it occurred. This is in contrast to findings from fairness heuristic theory, which assumes that individuals do not make constant justice judgements, but rely on early experiences (Proudford and Lind, 2015). We presume that this is due to the fact, that unlike in more stable corporate environments, the relationships in a project environment remain uncertain and risky due to the temporariness of a project and the involvement of multiple legally independent firms (Ahola et al., 2014). Hence, the continued demonstration of the features of fairness in project governance is just as significant as it is in the initial stages of a working relationship.

This demonstration will then result in reciprocal behaviour, i.e. project team members who perceive to be treated fairly by the client perceive this as an advantage which they feel like returning (Blader and Tyler, 2005). By returning the advantage they are prepared e.g. to put extra effort into the project, to undertake additional work without full contractual arrangements and to allocate their best resources to the project (Colquitt et al., 2013; Cropanzano and Mitchell, 2005). We have identified this behaviour on multiple occasions in our findings were project team members refer to actions by the client which led to favourable actions on their side. These mechanisms for the implementation and sustainment of the features of fairness in project governance is visualised in Figure 3. By adopting these mechanisms an environment of fair project governance can be facilitated.

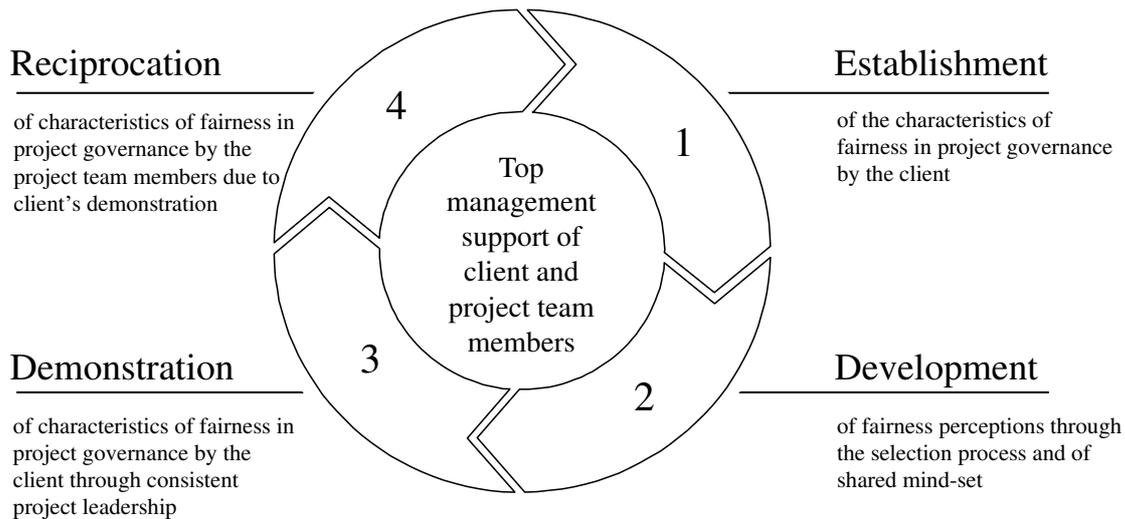


Figure 3 – Implementation and sustainment mechanisms for fair project governance

## 6. Conclusion

Our analysis demonstrates the importance of addressing the widely neglected fourth principle of good governance – fairness – and taking the debate around project governance beyond the classic aspects of directing, controlling and holding to account. We identified features of fairness in project governance through the use of organisational justice as a theoretical lens. By doing so we provide empirical evidence of what fairness stands for in the context of project governance. Aligned to the dimensions of organisational justice, we determined three dimensions of fairness in project governance: decision processes, distribution of resources and interactions. We have found that through the adoption of these features typical challenges associated with inter-organisational project governance can be addressed and overcome. Additionally, we propose a four-step approach based on mechanisms for the implementation and sustainment of features of fairness in project governance, i.e. establishment, development, demonstration and reciprocation. We suggest that through these mechanisms an environment of fair project governance can be facilitated. This research provides a useful addition to the existing project governance literature by demonstrating that the adoption of

organisational justice as a theoretical lens is valuable and beneficial in introducing fair project governance. Our work also makes a contribution to practice. It provides corporate organisations with an understanding of features of fairness in project governance and – more importantly – mechanisms on how they can implement and sustain them. This will allow them to develop the appropriate setting for their large capital investment projects and support them in the delivery of a successful project.

Inevitably, our study has some limitations: The context of the study was a large capital investment project in a corporate organisation and the findings are only applicable to this specific setting. Whilst we acknowledge that there are other settings for projects, we still believe there is value in the findings due to the frequent occurrence of this setting.

Furthermore, the findings are based on a single case study, which does not allow for overall generalisation. We did not set out to achieve overall generalisation, but rather analytic generalisation based on an elaboration of theory (Yin, 2018). This means that our findings can be generalised beyond this one case study and that they may potentially apply to a variety of situations in the context of the theories investigated (ibid). Future studies could test the findings of this case study quantitatively and aim for statistical generalisation. Other avenues for further research would be the investigation of other good governance principles in relation to project governance, of the impact of fair project governance on project performance as well as of the role of fair project governance in addressing ethical issues.

## Appendix 1 – Interview protocol

The interviews were conducted as semi-structured interviews and the question list below served as a guide to structure the conversations. The order, wording and use of questions was adapted to the conversation flow.

### 1. Introduction

- a. Could you please tell me a little bit about your background, your role in the company and your role in the project?

### 2. Characterization of fair project governance.

- a. How would you describe the relationship between the client organisation and the project in terms of structures?
- b. What does project governance include for you? What does it mean?
- c. Would you say that there was fairness in project governance in the project?
- d. How would you define fair project governance?
- e. On the basis of which factors did the you perceive the project governance as fair?
- f. Let's take a closer look at the fairness aspect:
  - i. Would you say that the resources in the project were distributed fairly (e.g. personnel, fees, time, etc.)? Examples?
  - ii. Would you say that the decision-making processes in the project were laid down transparently and enabled everyone involved to participate?
  - iii. How would you describe the handling in the project? Was the dignity of each individual respected and were the project members generally treated with respect? Were discussions conducted objectively? Was there a reason why information was shared or not shared with project members? Was it communicated truthfully?

- g. What do you think was the predominant aspect?
- h. What influence did the project governance have on the project participants?

4. Investigation of the influence of fair project governance on project success.

- a. Was the project successful?
- b. What criteria do you use to rate the project as successful?
- c. Did the introduction or adoption of fair project governance make a difference to the success of the project? If yes how?
- d. Which aspects of fair project governance had an influence on the success of the project?
- e. Which elements of the project success were particularly influenced by fair project governance?

5. Identification of the client role in relation to fair project governance.

- a. Who was the driver behind the introduction/adoption of fair project governance?
- b. Was it a top-down approach or was it something that emerged from the team members working together?
- c. Who is responsible for project governance?
- d. Was the project governance static or was it adjusted during the course of the project? How and why?

6. Lessons learned

- a. What lessons have you learned from this project, which you may apply to other projects?

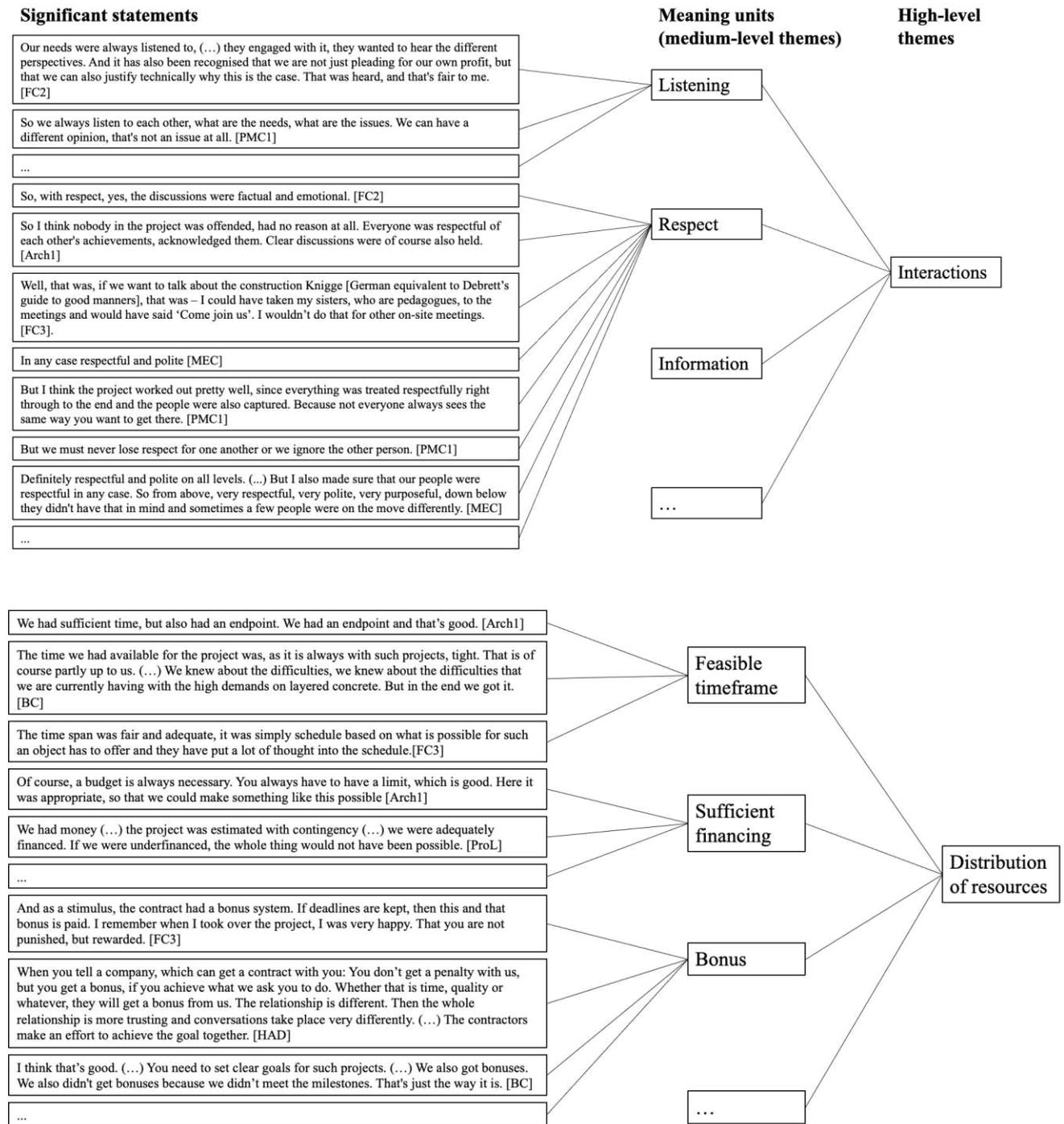
7. Final question

- a. These were all of my questions. Would you like to add anything else?

## Appendix 2 – Validity and Reliability

Criterion	Research Phase		
	Design	Data Collection	Data Analysis
<b>Reliability</b> (demonstrating that the operations can be repeated with the same results)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development of a case study protocol</li> <li>• Assurance of congruence between research issues and features of study design</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use of the case study protocol</li> <li>• Development and use of a workshop and interview protocol including session structure, aims and objectives as well as semi-structured interview guidelines</li> <li>• Establishment of a case study database</li> <li>• Maintenance of a chain of evidence</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rigorous coding process following the structured approach of phenomenological research</li> <li>• Involvement of co-author who has not been in the field gathering data</li> <li>• Maintenance of a chain of evidence</li> </ul>
<b>Internal Validity</b> (establishing a causal relationship whereby certain conditions are believed to lead to other conditions)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• n/a</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interviewing of most knowledgeable, key informants on operational and top management level</li> <li>• Transcription of workshop and interviews</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establishment of a clear research framework based on theory</li> <li>• Data triangulation between interview data, workshop, observations and documents</li> <li>• Pattern matching</li> </ul>
<b>Construct Validity</b> (establishing correct operational measures for the concepts being studied)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adoption of questions linked to extant governance and organisational justice literature</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use of multiple sources of evidence – interviews, workshop, observations and documents</li> <li>• Establishment of chain of evidence to allow for sufficient citations and cross checks</li> <li>• Inclusion of client, consultant and contractor interviewees</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review of draft case study reports by co-author</li> <li>• Data triangulation between interview data, workshop, observations and documents</li> </ul>
<b>External Validity</b> (establishing whether and how a case study's findings can be generalised)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Define scope and boundaries of reasonable analytical generalisation for the research</li> <li>• Predetermine questions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inclusion of client, consultant and contractor</li> <li>• Gathering data on the case context</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rigorous coding process following the structured approach of phenomenological research</li> <li>• Consideration of case context</li> <li>• Compare evidence with extant literature on governance and organisational justice</li> </ul>

### Appendix 3 – Data analysis process (extract)



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