CHAPTER 3

# *The Capability Approach in Relation to Contributive Justice*

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## Introduction

In this chapter, I argue for using contributive justice as a necessary complement to distributive justice and as the preferred form of social justice in work situations in combination with the capability approach (CA).

In line with this, my argument for this chapter focuses on three elements: 1) in work situations, contributive justice is a necessary overarching framework for distributive justice; 2) contributive justice fits the CA better than distributive justice does; and 3) most people are inclined to make prosocial contributions under the right circumstances.

As in the first chapter, we use an anecdote to introduce and support the argument. This anecdote comes from Amartya Sen's seminal book *The Idea of Justice* [1]. In the anecdote, three children – Anne, Bob, and Carla – are arguing over who should receive a flute. Anne makes a claim to the flute on the grounds that she is the only one of the three who knows how to play the flute (the others do not deny this). If that's the only information we have, Anne has a strong case. However, Bob then takes the floor and says that he is the only one of the three who is so poor that he has no toys of his own. The flute would give him something to play with (the other two recognise that they are richer and well-stocked with toys). If we had only heard Bob, he would have a strong point. However, then Carla takes the floor and points out that she has toiled for many months to make the flute (the others confirm this), and therefore she has the right to keep it. If we only heard Carla's argument, we might have given her the flute in recognition of her claim to something she made herself.

When we hear all three children and their arguments, it is not easy to make a decision. Distributive justice theorists of different persuasions, such as utilitarians, economic egalitarians, or no-nonsense libertarians, will each see one clear and just solution, but the respective solutions will each be completely different and point to a different child getting the flute.



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In work situations, contributive justice is a necessary overarching framework for distributive justice.

## Contributive Justice as a Necessary Overarching Framework

We can learn from this story that there is no unambiguous perspective on distributive justice, let alone one comprehensive theory that clearly solves all problems. In my view, this problem arises because we start from the idea of distributive justice.

The situation of the children is outlined from the perspective of a distribution problem (who gets the flute) and from the perspective of classical property right theory (who holds use and transfer rights on the flute), which is rooted in the theory of distributive justice. However, there are other theories and perspectives on social justice. One such perspective is that of Kulkarni [2]. He draws on the CA and Amartya Sen's concept of "justice as freedom (the equal freedom to realise capabilities)" as a normative basis for corporate strategy. Kulkarni focuses on the ability of stakeholders to "have a voice" and the managerial ability to "use the knowledge to give stakeholders a voice and freedom." This view of social justice allows for a different view of the situation of the three children and thus a completely different framework, not determined by the question "who gets the flute" but by the capability-conform question: "Can the children derive equal freedoms from the situation to realise capabilities?" In the recent concept of contributive justice, the question is: "What equal freedoms, rights and obligations to realise capabilities and well-being do children derive from their participation in and contribution to the situation?" This entails an entitlement to the environment but also an obligation to enable equal freedom of capabilities through contribution. In this way, beyond Kulkarni's conceptualisation, the question of distribution is placed in the context of a situation in which capabilities are realised through contribution. This context of contribution gives even more voice than does Kulkarni's conceptualisation. In line with this, we adapt Kulkarni's definition of social justice as 'equal freedom of capabilities' to 'equal freedom of capabilities in contribution'.

I will now indicate, somewhat simplistically, that distributive justice concerns the question: "Who gets what and how much", whereas contributive justice can be described as follows: "the right and obligation each of us has to contribute to civil society and to our collective wellbeing". This is based on the idea that what we do in life has at least as much influence on who we become and the quality of our lives, as does what we

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get [3]. These two concepts of justice are not mutually exclusive but can complement each other, certainly also at the meso level of the organisation.

## Contributive Justice

To clarify our argument, we explain contributive justice. The perspective of justice in contributive justice is the right to participation of people in all their diversity in terms of background and possibilities. Thus, a different perspective than in distributive justice: not (just) the right to a piece of the pie, but the right and responsibility to participate in decision-making about and in the creation of a pie and in decision-making about how the pie optimally contributes to people's needs and thus to their well-being. The context in which one participates can vary. In this book, we focus on the work context. The right to participation also entails obligations: the obligation to contribute to business operations to the best of one's ability. Contribution presupposes a purpose, a goal to which one contributes. The purpose of the context (in this book, the work organisation) is central here; one realises individual goals (capabilities) in accordance with the organisational goal.

Therefore, for this reason, we do not start from individual well-being to arrive at collective well-being, as is usual in standard theories (as in neoliberal theory at the macro level and human relations, human capital, and employee well-being theories at the meso level of the organisation). However, the contribution to collective well-being is the determining context within which the individual position, goal, and well-being (capabilities, rights, and obligations) take shape. In this respect, too, there is a radical reversal of perspective.

By way of illustration, I transform the thought experiment of the three children and the flute into a frame of contributive justice. The question then is not "who gets the flute?" but "how are the children's rights and responsibilities to contribute to a just situation that leads to the realisation of capabilities (to well-being), respected and guaranteed?"

For the current situation of the children, in a framework of contributive justice, the three children (participants) have the right and responsibility to determine what happens to the flute, within the context in which it was introduced. Therefore, it is important to know what Carla's motivation was for making the flute. It makes a difference and is even decisive, whether she brought the flute to a music school, an organisation that aims to redistribute toys between poor and rich children, or a company that makes self-build packages for musical instruments on a commercial basis.

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In the context of a music school, the goal is for the children to practise and learn to play the flute. Within that goal, the children must decide how often each uses the flute. One option is for Anne to teach the other two the basic principles of flute playing. Additionally, within the other goals, the children have to decide how the flute contributes to that goal; the choices will be different there.

This interpretation of the anecdote may be at odds with classical property rights theory. In contributive justice theory, user rights of the means of production are analysed through the lens of 1) fair contribution, 2) ethical responsibility and 3) social responsibility.

1. Equal (fair) access to the means of production prevents monopolies: in contributive justice, participants should have equal opportunities to access the means of production by contribution rather than through competition. This is crucial to prevent monopolised situations, which can lead to exploitation and disparities in power and wealth and to ensure that all individuals can contribute to and benefit from economic activities [4]. Gomberg discusses how equal opportunity to contribute is a central aspect of this view, arguing against competitive opportunities that inherently favour the privileged [5]. In this argument, Gomberg assumes that perfect competition cannot exist.
2. Ethical stewardship and the responsible use of production resources: ownership of production resources entails significant ethical responsibilities. Owners must use these resources to create value for the broader community of the organisation, not solely for personal gain. This includes fair treatment of all stakeholders and beneficiaries and sustainable practices. Graeber [6] highlights the need for ethical considerations in how production is managed and the importance of meaningful work in contributing to human dignity [4, 5, 7].
3. Social responsibility: an important aspect of contributive justice is the involvement of workers and community members in decision-making processes related to the use of productive resources. This participatory approach increases inclusivity and fairness in production processes, leading to a more equitable distribution of burdens and benefits [4].

The ownership of the means of production should be oriented towards community benefits. This perspective ensures that economic activities contribute to collective well-being and that owners are obliged to use their resources in a sustainable and socially responsible way, reduce inequality, and support the overall development of society [5].

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These points collectively underscore the central tenets of contributive justice in relation to the ownership and management of the means of production, advocating for fairness, responsibility, and communal benefits for the organisation.

### *Private Property and Distributive Justice*

The deeply rooted idea in our society and economy that private property prevails over communal property has led to distributive justice becoming the most appropriate theory of social justice. The primary interest is how the benefits are distributed. This certainly also applies to companies. In organisational theory, a classic moral hazard is how the interests of shareholders, as providers of risk capital, can be protected against opportunistic behaviour by more knowledgeable managers that could infringe on the residual rights to the profits of shareholders.

This is a narrow view of financial value and partly counterintuitive because a company's mission almost always falls back on the initial ambition of that company and the broader value perspective associated with it. Making profits in a strictly financial sense (as a reward for shareholders or the company itself) is rarely mentioned in the mission as a main goal, whereas in practice, this often seems to be the main motivation. Additionally, on a personal level, we rarely translate important things in life (such as love, friendship, relationships) into financial benefits.

Despite this counterintuitiveness, many problems have recently arisen in society and the economy that are partly the result of the (too) great influence of financial property rights (think of exploitation in companies such as Amazon, or downright unethical behaviour such as making people addicted to substances or services). Of course, the theory of distributive justice is not responsible for these excesses, but they arise within this concept of justice, especially if it is combined with utilitarianism.

This should not be seen as a plea for a society without private property rights. However, this chapter argues for examining private property rights through the lens of contributive justice in the context of corporations. Now, shareholders, who have a financial claim on the corporation that entitles them to a share of the profits, have exclusive transfer rights. For other stakeholders, such as employees, these rights are limited in contractual agreements such as noncompete clauses. In contributive justice, every contribution to the value of the corporation gives user rights but not necessarily unconditional transfer rights. Inequality in transfer rights is a significant source of injustice in organisations. because residual rights are

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exclusively allocated to shareholders. In a situation of contributive justice, the decision about transfer rights belongs to the collective. This conditionality of transfer rights is consistent with stewardship theories, which also emphasise the primacy of communal thinking. In contributive justice, the added assumption is that stewardship is extended to all stakeholders (i.e., all stakeholders are regarded as principals). Stewardship theories are gaining popularity and influence (see also Chapter 7). It may sound utopian, but people tend to behave prosocially when they are in a prosocial context (see later in this chapter).

## Social Justice as a Combination of Contributive and Distributive Justice

Our introduction of contributive justice is not meant as an argument against distributive justice. However, as we have seen, within the framework of distributive justice, relevant questions remain unanswered, and problems persist that remain unsolved. The concept of distributive justice can undoubtedly have a place in the context of contributive justice; the question of 'who gets what' focuses then on what is needed for optimal participation and equal freedom to achieve capabilities. For this relationship between contributive justice and distributive justice, several authors on contributive justice, for example, Dempsey [8], Gomberg [9], and Timmermann [4], identify a hierarchy between the more comprehensive concept of 'contributive justice' and 'distributive justice' as a narrower form of justice. Contributive justice shapes 'rightness' – with its associated entitlements and responsibilities – in, for example, an organisational context, thereby serving as a framework for the application of distributive justice, often denoted as 'fairness'. The contributive interpretation of the anecdote with the flute shows that the joint contribution to collective well-being using the flute provides the framework for a distribution on the basis of collective needs. Therefore, distribution finds a place within the context of contribution.

The relationship between the two theories of justice does not always have to be hierarchical. It can also be complementary. This depends on the role that justice plays in a specific situation and context.

### *Contributive Justice Focused on Organisations and Work*

Focusing on organisations and in line with what we have said earlier in the chapter, Timmermann states that distributive justice is generally

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concerned with generating a fair distribution of what is already in existence [4]. In contrast, contributive justice is focused on bringing opportunities into existence and thus creating value and shaping the organisational context within which fair distributions can occur. It is about the needs that individuals have for realising that participation, about what one needs and not what one has a distributive right to.

Gomberg argues that contributive justice proposes that each flourishes by advancing the flourishing of others [9]. The contributive interpretation of the anecdote illustrates this: by contributing their own talent, the children make the contribution and flourishing of others possible, depending on the context. Zamagni defines contributive justice as "the responsibility each of us has to contribute to civil society, and to our collective well-being. Contributive justice matches a person's obligations with his or her capabilities and role in society" [10, p. 2].

In this book, this translates to work and organisations. Organisations are always goal oriented. As we have seen, goal orientation and, of course, making contributions are also important aspects of contributive justice.

According to Morrison, complex, interesting work allows workers not only to develop and exercise their capacities and gain the associated satisfaction of achieving the internal goods of a practice but also to gain the external goods of recognition and esteem [7]. It is, according to Morrison, a matter of contributive justice to share these goods and to object to a minority hoarding all the interesting, pleasant tasks and leaving the tedious and unpleasant ones to the rest.

On the basis of the literature, Timmermann identifies six central elements of contributive justice [4]. These are:

1. opportunities to participate;
2. opportunities to develop skills that lead to satisfaction and self-esteem;
3. opportunities to learn to be productive, where it may be necessary to transfer property rights for people to be able to secure their livelihoods by their own means (cf. Claassen [11]);
4. fair evaluation of inputs, where it is vital that people are assured that their contributions will be fairly evaluated – especially for disadvantaged groups, levelling the playing field will not be enough (this is a crucial point in the CA, too);
5. meaningful work and tedious tasks should be evenly distributed; and
6. the duty to do one's share according to one's capacities.

The first five of the six elements that Timmermann mentions concern claims or entitlements that one has on the (organisational) context. The

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sixth element concerns the duty to do one's part according to one's capacity. The six aspects together reflect a combination of normativity, contextuality, and a focus on agency.

## *Contributive Justice Fits the Capability Approach Better than Distributive Justice*

In this section, we discuss why contributive justice fits well with the CA. We discuss four important arguments that CA scholars give, without explicitly mentioning contributive justice, in the context of work. We then discuss, in more detail, several points that follow from the conceptualisation of contributive justice and the CA, as we have already described.

The points from the literature are individual agency, diverse values, empowerment, and structural considerations.

### *Emphasis on Agency and Participation*

The CA focuses on what individuals can do and be, emphasising the importance of agency [12]. Contributive justice, which focuses on individuals' opportunities to contribute meaningfully to society, resonates with this focus. In contrast, distributive justice primarily concerns the allocation of resources or outcomes, overlooking individuals' roles as active participants.

### *Recognition of Diverse Work Values*

The CA acknowledges that individuals value different aspects of work beyond income, such as autonomy, creativity, and social interaction [13]. Contributive justice accommodates this diversity by emphasising the value of individuals' contributions, whereas distributive justice does not fully capture these qualitative dimensions.

### *Focus on Empowerment and Development*

By prioritising capabilities, the approach supports the development of individuals' skills and opportunities to contribute [14], aligning with the principles of contributive justice. Distributive justice, with its focus on outcomes, does not adequately address the processes that empower individuals to participate meaningfully in work.

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*Addressing Structural Inequalities*

The CA considers the social and institutional structures that affect individuals' ability to work and contribute [15]. Contributive justice aims to create conditions that enable all members of society to participate, whereas distributive justice takes less account of these structural factors.

The conceptual point is as follows:

> First, we saw in the discussion of the story of the three children that the question of what is just is posed differently in the CA – we adhere to Kulkarni's perspective on the CA – than from the perspective of the distribution of resources (the flute in the anecdote). In the CA and in Kulkarni, it is about equality in freedoms (capabilities) and the entitlements the children have. In contributive justice, it is added that these freedoms and entitlements are in the context of the right (and obligation) to contribute. In the anecdote, the children can derive the right and obligation from their participation in the situation. The CA and contributive justice have in common that they ask different questions and thus arrive at different answers than just the question of who gets the flute.
>
> Second, in both approaches, the freedom of responsibility to realise important goals is central. Sen explicitly develops a concept of freedom in his writings. In the CA, freedom is an essential aspect of capability. In contributive justice, freedom is not explicitly but implicitly an important foundation of the theory.

In Sen's notion, freedom is essential for realising important values and goals in the context of other people. It is thus not only the freedom to be free from constraints (referred to by Berlin as negative freedom [16]; often interpreted as being free from constraints to perform selfish behaviour) but, in contrast, the positive freedom to realise capabilities, which is bounded by the freedom of others to realise their capabilities.

The theory of contributive justice, which emphasises the rights of individuals to contribute to the community according to their abilities and receiving benefits in proportion to their contributions, does not explicitly address the concept of freedom. However, an implicit concept of freedom can be derived from this theory, which stresses that individuals should have the freedom to develop and exercise their ability to contribute meaningfully to society and/or institutions. This involves having access to education, resources, and opportunities that enable individuals to achieve their potential.

Therefore, for both approaches, freedom is positive freedom aimed at realising important goals or capabilities. Positive freedom is always

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bounded by the freedom of others to realise their capabilities; in general, the freedom of others is deeply respected. This understanding of freedom gives entitlements in both directions, not only rights to the context that should facilitate the achievement of capabilities but also the obligation and responsibility towards oneself and others to pursue capabilities.

In the CA, important concepts related to the realisation of freedom, such as autonomy and control, are linked to what people find important and valuable. One can score high on lists that measure control or autonomous behaviour, but if this concerns things that one does not find important, a high score contributes little to achieving capabilities and well-being. A pragmatic approach is used on the basis of what is important to people in realising valuable beings.

Third, pragmatism is a common factor between contributive justice and the CA. To illustrate this, we return to the anecdote with the flute with which this chapter began. The anecdote, as indicated, has been adapted to argue that contributive justice yields more inclusive responses, tailored to practical situations, than distributive justice does.

The anecdote and the myriad and deep issues involved are reflected in the title of Sen's book, in which he is featured: *The Idea of Justice*. This title is a tip of the hat to John Rawls, who wrote the profound and now classic treatise called *A Theory of Justice* [17]. Sen's title reflects that there is no one comprehensive "ideal" theory of justice; in line with this, the title reflects Sen's pragmatic view that it is better to start from a real-world or factual situation with an idea of what is just than to pursue a spot on the horizon, which may theoretically be perfect but to which there are no visible roads. Sen argues that it may perhaps even be better to have an idea of what is unjust (because collectively, we can more easily recognise injustice and are generally motivated to redress situations that are clearly unjust).

In line with this, the extent to which contribution-based distribution leads to a fair solution in a factual situation will vary depending on that situation. In the anecdote with the three children and the flute, there is a large difference whether Carla donates the flute to a music school or an organisation that aims to redistribute toys between rich and poor children or in a context where a company offers self-assembly kits for musical instruments on a commercial basis.

This pragmatic and situational approach – 'Nyaya', as we saw in Chapter 1 and a starting point for Sen – is thus also characteristic of the situation-dependent realisation in contributive justice.

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Fourth, Timmermann's argument about contributive justice focusing on new values and opportunities parallels the CA [4]. This parallel lies, on the one hand, in the aspect of 'opportunities'; capabilities are, in fact, opportunities or freedoms. On the other hand, it lies in the dynamic and process-oriented character that both approaches share.

In the CA, something that has been realised (a functioning) can create new possibilities. This is called iteration, a term from dynamic systems theory: a repetition in which the previous step influences the next step [18]. Realising a functioning at a certain moment influences the resources, conversion factors, and capabilities afterwards, whereby the result can lead to more capability (fruitful functioning), or not realising functionings can lead to less capability (corrosive disadvantages according to Wolff and de-Shalit [19]). This dynamic, in the case of a fruitful functioning, allows room for creation and not a static view of what is already present.

In line with this, creating conditions rather than making adjustments is a hallmark of real (contributive) justice. Real justice, the real freedom to achieve the ability to contribute, occurs when all stakeholders can participate without personal assistance through systemic measures.

The images in Figure 3.1, at least Figure 3.1(a) and Figure 3.1(b), have already been used in Chapter 1 to illustrate the difference between Equity in resources versus equity in capabilities. In Figure 3.1(a), it is assumed that everyone will benefit from the same support: equality. In Figure 3.1 (b), stakeholders are given different support to acquire equal access to the game: equity. In Figure 3.1(c), all three can see the game through a transparenr glass fence without any personal adaptations or accommodations because, on a systemic level, the cause of the inequality and inequity was removed: Justice in which everyone can participate without personal adaptations.

Fifth, multiculturality is a hallmark of both approaches. The CA has, in the person of Amartya Sen, but also, theoretically, Western and non-Western roots and applications. Contributive justice has mainly Western roots, but its emphasis on community thinking rather than individualism has more resonance in non-Western contexts than in Western ones. One of the perspectives with which both CA and contributive justice resonate is the African perspective of Ubuntu. Ubuntu is an important realisation of how people in practice seek justice, in my opinion, contributive justice. The CA and contributive justice might form a basis for a philosophical underpinning of the impressive practice of Ubuntu thinking.

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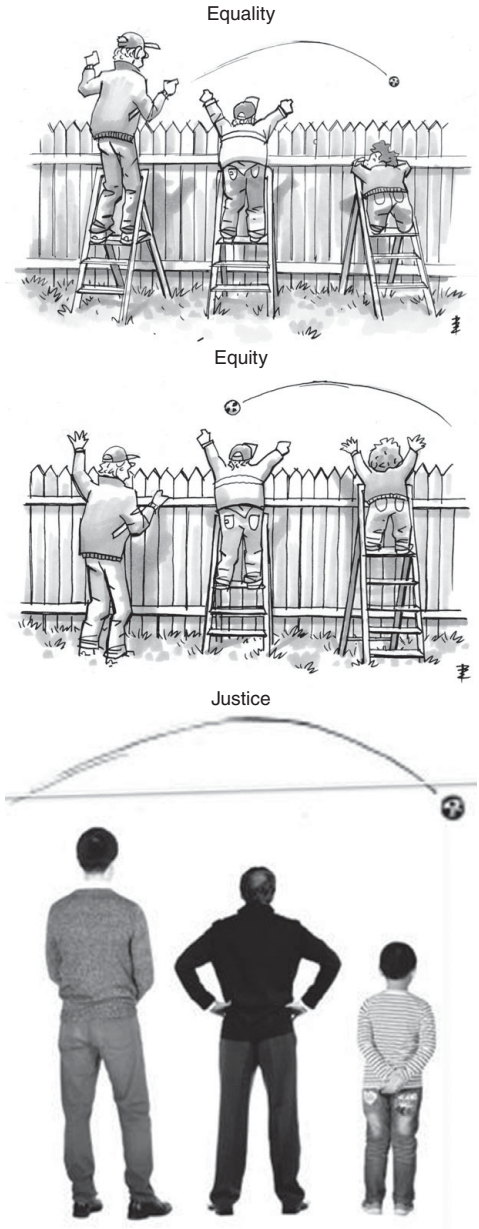



Figure 3.1 Equality, equity, and justice.
Note for (a) and (b): Artist: Bert Cornelius, © by Jac van der Klink. The image might be inspired by a picture of the Interaction Institute for Social Change, Artist: Angus Maguire.

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In conclusion, in the important areas of normativity, freedom, inclusivity, contextuality, pragmatism, and multiculturality, there are great similarities between the CA and contributive justice, and as a theory of social justice, contributive justice has greater added value for the CA than distributive justice does.

## The Social and Organisational Challenge: Human Ambivalence

In our everyday experience, most people are inclined to make prosocial contributions under the right circumstances. This positive view assumes that, if given the opportunity, people will exhibit prosocial behaviour. To shape this, contributive justice, as well as the CA [20], places great value on democratic deliberation. As with Habermas, the quality of the process (i.e., the throughput, in addition to the input and output) is important [21, 22, 23]. Here, too, a positive view (of humanity) underlies the belief that high-quality deliberation always leads to consensus.

This positive view of humanity, which underlies both the capabilities model and contributive justice, as well as stewardship models, has been criticised for being naive and unworldly. Critics argue that it is not self-evident that autonomous people subordinate their personal interests to the interests of others and to the interests of the community.

In philosophy, the positive view of humanity was challenged, as early as the 1950s and 1960s, by Arendt, who analysed the structures and ideologies that foster human evil and the "banality of evil" when people become thoughtless, obedient, and lack moral reflection [24, 25]. Moreover, these days, we see all around us that, on the one hand, there are people who use (in fact, abuse) the democratic system to gain power and then secure it in an autocratic manner. On the other hand, there are people who, whether or not led by conspiracy theories, deliberately seek to undermine the system. In the theory of human ambivalence, this spectrum of human behaviour is highlighted (see later).

However, we can maintain a positive image of man because it appears on theoretical and practical grounds that, in a prosocial context, the vast majority of people behave prosocially. It is therefore important to create prosocial environments. In Chapter 7, it is argued that, in the company, corporate governance is an important means for this purpose.

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The small percentage of people who want to abuse the circumstances and the institutional context for malicious purposes must be combatted. We argue that if the preventive policy of creating prosocial environments fails, contributive justice provides a structure in which actors with malicious intent can be identified, either before they join the organisation (by asking them whether they endorse the purpose) or at an early stage, when someone's actions show that they[1] does not endorse the purpose. A stakeholder who has not yet joined can be prevented from entering the organisation; if someone is already in, what legal means are available to exclude the stakeholder from the organisation can be investigated.

Next, I first argue that prosocial behaviour does occur in organisations. Then, I will examine theories of ambivalence, and it will be argued that contributive justice might be well suited to handle malicious individuals.

A large amount of literature has developed in the domain of social psychology, which illustrates that human beings generally reciprocate other-regarding behaviour and sometimes even act against their own interest. Research on organisational behaviour indicates that perceived justice has a positive effect on the willingness to cooperate [26]. In addition, perceived justice is positively related to the acceptance of and degree of commitment to decisions [27, 28, 29], confidence in management [30], and innovative capacity in teams [31]. Employees who perceive high justice in their organisation show more voluntary help and a greater willingness to accomplish tasks [32]. This extra-role behaviour is known as organisational citizenship behaviour (OCB). People who exhibit OCB support collective interests [33], distinguish themselves by making positive contributions to the work environment, actively support the purpose of the organisation, and agree with the organisational rules [34, 35]. OCB reflects an individual's willingness to be involved in an organisation [36, 37]. Because of this involvement in the organisation, employees will want to put in extra effort, which leads to positive outcomes for the organisation [38, 39].

Hernandez contrasts OCB with stewardship behaviour [40]. According to Hernandez, OCBs are discretionary activities that target other individuals in the workplace with mainly short-term consequences – for example, helping co-workers or communicating changes that affect others – and the organisation itself – for example, actively participating in group meetings or representing the organisation positively to outsiders. In contrast,

[1] For reasons of clarity and inclusivity, this chapter uses the singular "they" as a gender-neutral pronoun rather than "she," "he," or "s/he," following Cambridge University Press policy.

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stewardship behaviours arise from a consideration of the long-term consequences for others and collective welfare [41, 42].

In addition, research in the domain of sociology has demonstrated that agents disapprove of the favourable treatment of other agents or their own unfavourable treatment [43, 44], which is perceived as unjust. Moreover, human beings find justice important not only for themselves but also for others [45]. Thus, individual well-being is affected positively or negatively by the business's treatment of agents, including other agents [46]. People are universally concerned about a lack of justice or a violation of justice in their organisation or community, even if these violations do not directly affect them. They use similar criteria, at least on an abstract level, to estimate what is just [47], with the indication, as we have seen above, that human beings usually have a better idea of what is unjust because they collectively recognise the unjust better and are more inclined to action to alleviate injustices [1, 46]. When people experience justice, they are more tolerant of unpleasant decisions [45], indicating that the assessment of justice in an organisation is related to the affirmation of one's own identity within the community [39]. To conclude, the answer to the question of the extent to which autonomous individuals are inclined to act just voluntarily is that agents generally take the needs and interests of other actors into account, and perceived justice is generally reciprocated.

### *Theories of Human Ambivalence*

It is a common prejudice, sometimes even with practical consequences, that people act either selfishly or prosocially. Chrisman claims that it is highly unlikely that pure self-serving and pure other-serving actors exist, making any assumption on the basis of that extreme notion unrealistic and irrelevant to organisational governance [48]. Whether individuals behave as one or the other is likely to vary according to the situation and over time. Indeed, as stewardship theorists note [40, 49], the tendency of individuals to behave in either way can be influenced by the management philosophies of principals (e.g., risk orientation; time frame considered; objectives), psychological mechanisms within individuals (e.g., reward motivations; identification; use of power), and situational mechanisms within organisations and societies (e.g., cultural differences such as power distance and individualism/collectivism). Theories of human ambivalence allow for puzzling and contradictory ethical attitudes in business, such as a simultaneous disposition towards comparatively more self-interest and more charitable behaviour. More specifically, Segal and Lehrer

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acknowledge that people face tensions with norms and values alternating in their situation, leading to oscillating behaviour over time [50]. Hence, the values of organisational members or stakeholders can be seen as characterised by pluralism [51]. Organisational participants are subject to mental negotiation processes influencing their personal hierarchies of values. These inner tensions of ambivalence are, among others, influenced by corresponding organisational configurations of control and trust that trigger individual values, norms, and behaviours towards pro-organisational commitment on the one hand or more self-serving intentions and behaviours on the other hand. Aware of this spectrum of organisations, Bridoux and Stoelhorst, assuming that there is a comparable range of individual behaviours on the 'selfish–prosocial' continuum, advocate that actors may self-select into organisations that similarly induce selfish or prosocial behaviour [52]. In our normative view, based on the behavioural perspective and contributive justice, members of organisations should be encouraged and further motivated to opt for just behaviour voluntarily, provided that the institutions themselves demonstrate and facilitate such activities. This dynamic between structures and processes may thus trigger and facilitate personal inclination and agency towards self-serving or pro-organisational behaviour, respectively.

We have thus developed the challenge of just behaviour as a challenge of (corporate) institutional design, among others. Addressing this challenge can be done in both reactive and proactive ways. In the reactive approach, institutions are developed to correct or enforce the right behaviour, assuming that corrections are needed to take away injustice. For instance, institutions help secure fairness in distribution ex post, that is, establish distributive justice or fairness through the (re)allocation of outcomes over actors. In the proactive approach, institutions trigger and facilitate prosocial behaviour ex ante. In a proactive institutional context, people behave (more) prosocially, with an eye to communality. The focus will be more on contributions and the rights and obligations of actors to contribute to justice. To put it differently, the focus will be on creating contributive justice.

### *A Contributive Perspective and Malicious People*

The proactive, preventive approach to achieving prosocial behaviour through the way in which organisations and organisational culture are shaped is strongly preferred and finds a solid basis in the CA and contributive justice. This is in line with the results of McGregor's famous X and Y experiments, in which he already showed in the 1960s that people

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behave according to the expectations placed on them [53]. Many practical situations show that people in environments where selfish behaviour is the norm start to behave selfishly. In a prosocial context, people behave prosocially. Therefore, displaying prosocial behaviour provokes prosocial behaviour in others, and an organisation where prosocial behaviour is the norm triggers prosocial behaviour.

This guiding role of the organisation has its counterpart in the way empathy and inclusivity relate to each other. Empathy is a personal expression that not everyone feels towards everyone else. This can hardly be influenced on a personal level. Inclusion is a policy feature of an institution where everyone, regardless of their specific characteristics, is considered valuable. This can be influenced at the organisational level. In an inclusive organisation, people will feel 'inclusive-minded' and, therefore, empathetic in the sense of being open to others. This can be an important aspect in experiencing organisational justice.

In the organisational context, it is crucial not only to connect but also to do so by connecting to the organisational purpose. In contributive justice, contributing presupposes that one contributes to something: a common goal or purpose. This is clearly important for organisations: they always have a mission/purpose. Shaping an organisation in which stakeholders commit to a relevant purpose and shape it in a pro-organisational manner is the responsibility of the management of the organisations. Chapter 7 details the repercussions this has for the organisation's governance.

Even in a prosocial context, the assumption that all people are good under all circumstances is likely naive and inconsistent with people's everyday experiences. Indeed, it is a shared experience in which, even in a prosocial context, there are people with malicious intentions: on the one hand, those who use the democratic system to realise autocratic purposes; on the other hand, those who deny any (democratic) authority and want to undermine the system.

I argued earlier that in an environment shaped by contributive justice with a focus on participation directed towards a common goal, destructive or sabotaging behaviour is revealed at an early stage. Where prevention does not work, contributive justice creates a system that guarantees 'early diagnosis'.

## Conclusion

This chapter has argued that many of the questions raised and problems that arise from the perspective of social justice, in which distributive justice

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is dominant, can be answered and resolved in a framework defined by contributive justice, within which distributive justice can play a role. It was further argued that there is a very good fit between the CA and contributive justice. Finally, contributive justice provides a framework for prosocial behaviour in the organisation.

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