

## **Relational Justice in Organizations: The Group-Value Model and Support for Change**

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*This paper examines the psychological dynamics of the Group-Value Model for a behavioral orientation which has seldom been considered in the social justice literature: acceptance and support for change. A field study was conducted, with 176 participants members of an organization which was undergoing a change process. Participants were asked (a) to think of a specific relevant conflict situation with their supervisor; (b) to evaluate supervisor's behavior in that situation, with respect to relational and distributive justice; (c) to state the justice aspects most valued in conflict situations with their supervisor. A test of the model was conducted through a mediation analysis. According to the Group-Value Model (GVM), respect experienced within the group and pride in the group were mediating variables between justice judgements and orientation toward acceptance and support for change in the organization. Interactional and procedural aspects (relational judgements) were the only ones to predict pride, respect, and behavioral orientation, and were also the ones most valued in general conflict situations with the supervisor. The model was also tested at three different levels of analysis: organization as a whole, department, and work group. This confirmed pride and respect within the group as mediating variables between relational justice judgements and orientation toward acceptance and support for change at the department and workgroup levels.*

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**KEY WORDS:** relational justice; Group-Value Model; organizational change; interactional justice; procedural justice; distributive justice.

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## INTRODUCTION

Thibaut and Walker (1975) opened up a new line of research on justice perceptions—procedural justice. Their research, in the context of law and courts, compared reactions of litigants which differed in the amount of direct control those litigants had over the decision-making process (process control) and outcomes (decision control). Their conclusion was that perceived control over procedures (by having “voice”) made the outcomes seem fairer and be better accepted, even when these were not favorable. This hypothesis was applied, with similar results, to different organizational situations, like, for instance, performance appraisals (Greenberg, 1986; Landy *et al.*, 1978, 1980) and organizational decision-making processes (Rasinsky, 1992).

In the 80s, Leventhal suggested other aspects of procedural justice. Accurate information gathering for decision-making, representation of those concerned with the decision-making process, consistency (across people and time) of patterns and criteria for decision making, the possibility to modify and reverse decisions when new information was available, and bias suppression in decision-making processes, were all found to be criteria frequently used by organization members to evaluate procedural justice, and outcome decisions or distributive justice (Leventhal, 1980; Leventhal *et al.*, 1980).

The question, then, was to know whether procedural justice criteria were important for organization members, and whether they were able to distinguish these criteria from distributive justice criteria. In general, the studies conducted showed that, for organization members, procedural and distributive justice were two clearly separated domains of justice, and that procedural justice criteria were relevant for the evaluation of organizational processes (e.g. Alexander and Ruderman, 1987; Folger and Konovsky, 1989; Fryxell and Gordon, 1989; Gordon and Fryxell, 1989).

According to Tyler (1987), up until this point, the concern for procedural justice was motivated by “self-interest” meaning that fair procedures are instrumental for good outcomes.

However, Bies and Moag (1986) empirically proposed and tested a new hypothesis: procedural justice perceptions were not necessarily linked to outcomes received or to be expected, and were not based on only formal aspects of the decision-making process. Rather, this type of justice has an intrinsic value in itself, and based on the communication in social exchange situations: honesty, courtesy, timely feed-back, and respect for personal rights, were also frequent criteria for evaluating justice. This latter fact was the reason for conceiving a new type of procedural justice perception: interactional justice (Bies and Moag, 1986; Bies and Shapiro, 1987, 1988; Tyler and Bies, 1989).

Since then, research on organizational justice was concerned with those three different aspects—outcomes, procedures, and interaction—their interrelations and

their impact on organizational behavior (Barling and Phillips, 1993; Brockner *et al.*, 1990; Caetano and Vala, 1996). For instance, Greenberg (1993) studied the consequences of interactional, procedural, and distributive justice perceptions for theft situations, and showed that procedural and distributive factors were equally important in justice perceptions for performance appraisals (Greenberg, 1986). In turn, Lamego (1997), in a field study on justice and performance appraisal, demonstrated that perception of accuracy of the performance appraisal process is more closely correlated with procedural and interactional justice than with distributive justice. On judgements about salary, Theotónio (1997) demonstrated that those who received a favorable outcome evaluated the justice of salaries in function of the outcome received, and also in function of the procedure. These results are conflicting with the ones obtained in an experiment by Greenberg (1987), in which procedural judgements are most relevant when outcomes are low.

After demonstrating the relevance of procedural and interactional factors for organizational processes, it was important to understand its underlying psychological mechanisms. An answer to this question is offered by the Group-Value Model (GVM) proposed by Lind and Tyler (1988), which is based on the critical distinction between *motives related to instrumental resources and factors* (distributive or procedural), and *relational motives and factors* (procedural/interactional), related to the quality of the treatment received from formal organizational or institutional authorities. According to this model, relational motives are the ones which can most adequately explain the relevance of justice judgements originating from procedural and interactional factors.

This model is based on well-established Social Identity Theory (SIT) hypotheses (Tajfel and Turner, 1979). According to these, the GVM proposes that "... people use evidence that they are receiving distributive, procedural, and retributive justice as an indicator of the quality of their social relationship to the group and its authorities. If people receive unfairly low outcomes, are subjected to rude or insensitive treatment, or fail to have wrongs against them avenged, these experiences communicate marginal social status. Conversely, if people receive fair outcomes from others, are treated respectfully, and have wrongs against them avenged, they feel valued by their group." (Tyler and Smith, 1998, p. 612). Therefore, justice judgements are not related solely to rewards. Justice judgements show an underlying concern with identity, and an influence of the relationship between the individual and his group: fair treatment communicates respect and value, enhances individual self-esteem, and fosters acceptance of authorities and their norms. However, GVM proposes the critical role, in these processes, of three interactional or relational justice variables. This role is supposed to be more critical than the one which can be attributed to distributive justice or to instrumental dimensions of procedural justice—people evaluate decisions made by formal authorities on the basis of *neutrality*, on respect for the individual as a person and his/her *status* within the group, and on his/her ability to consider authorities as

*trustworthy*. Evaluations based on these three dimensions will be the ones to have more impact on group evaluations, and on individual-group relationships.

The generic hypotheses of GVM, which were studied and globally validated across very different contexts (family, work, organizations, and political arena) by Tyler *et al.* (1996) are the following:

- a) *Relational/procedural justice perceptions translate into symbolic messages about the value of the individual within the group.* Tyler and his colleagues are not denying the existence of instrumental concerns, but they are saying, first, that interpersonal treatment and procedures, viewed as fair, are prime indicators, for the individual, of respect from authorities and from their group, the contrary implying marginality and disrespect (Tyler, 1994; Tyler *et al.*, 1996; Tyler and Lind, 1992). Second, this relational/procedural justice perception is also a prime indicator of whether individuals can take pride in their group, since authorities are, by definition, main representatives of groups, embodying the opinions, norms, and core values of the group.
- b) *Respect and pride lead to positive behaviors toward the group and to enhanced individual self-esteem.* This hypothesis is derived, as formerly discussed, from SIT (Tajfel and Turner, 1979). Based on this theory, GVM proposes that individuals who identify with and positively evaluate the group, tend to internalize its objectives to the point of, consciously or unconsciously, mixing them with their own interests. Therefore, they are more likely to view authorities as legitimate (Tyler, 1997; Tyler and Degoey, 1995), to accept group rules (Tyler, 1994), to wish to remain in the group and even to display extra-role behaviors (Smith and Tyler, 1997; Tyler *et al.*, 1996). Tyler *et al.* (1996) add that, whereas for SIT, pride in group (or identification with the group) is an important variable for the explanation of intergroup behavior, for the GVM respect within the group should be more salient than pride to explain intragroup behavior. Also, according to SIT, individuals use the groups they belong to as important sources of information about themselves. Therefore, the GVM assumes that pride in group and respect within the group should positively correlate with individual self-esteem (Koper *et al.*, 1993; Smith *et al.*, 1998; Smith and Tyler, 1997; Tyler *et al.*, 1996).
- c) *The relationship between the former two hypotheses offers an explanation which is mainly aimed at understanding relationships within groups.* Whereas SIT wants to explain how social identity and social change strategies derive from intergroup relations, namely from perceived status of the ingroup vs. outgroup status, the GVM focuses on consequences for the individual (in terms of his social identity and his behaviors), which derive from intragroup relations, namely from his relations with the formal authorities who represent the group (Tyler, 1994; Tyler and Lind, 1992).

## THE GROUP-VALUE MODEL AND SUPPORT FOR CHANGE

In this context, we feel it is important to evaluate the GVM for a behavior which has seldomly been considered in the social justice research literature, but which is generally viewed as being of the utmost practical relevance for organizations: acceptance and support for change. Further, in terms of the organizational consequences of relational judgements, the GVM authors have mainly studied the impact of those judgements on passive-positive behavioral orientations (such as rule acceptance), and active-positive behaviors (such as “extra-role behaviors”). However, acceptance and support for change not only implies these two types of behaviors, but also the willingness to accept facts and situations which frequently run against the individual organization member’s short term best self-interest. Often, in the organizational context, change can only be pursued at considerable individual cost, at least for some members.

We found some empirical support for this hypothesis, although an indirect one, in a study by Kim and Mauborgne (1991). These authors demonstrated that procedural justice of decisions made by the head office, perceived by subsidiary top managers, positively affected their commitment and trust in the organization. Kim and Mauborgne (1993) also demonstrated, for the same research context, that perceived procedural justice positively affected the acceptance of strategic decisions taken by the head office. Daly and Geyer (1994) studied commitment to change when “voice” was perceived to be given and when change was adequately justified. In this case, seven private sector facilities were to be relocated in the context of strategy/structure changes in the organization considered. These authors demonstrated that justifications correlated with procedural justice, which in turn were correlated with the intention to stay in the organization. Kirkman *et al.* (1996) studied the opinions of the employees from two large corporations about the change to self-managed work-teams. Procedural and interactional justice were found to be important for performance appraisal, decision-making and leadership in the new system.

Cobb, Wooten, and Folger (1995) draw attention to the scarcity of studies demonstrating the functional role of justice for planned organizational change and development. In their opinion, as well as ours, organizational change and the effort needed to manage it are inherently ambiguous, involving frequent conflict situations, adversity, and loss. At the same time, those affected by change are called to enhance their effort and commitment to the organization.

For Cobb *et al.* (1995), procedural justice (namely the opportunity to present information and opinions, as well as Leventhal’s justice criteria) is particularly important in change contexts. Procedural justice constitutes the organizational frame through which members obtain information about the changes which are to affect them, making possible the understanding, acceptance, and/or negotiation of new rules. This is particularly relevant since change contexts are frequently prone to broken, inconsistent, and vague communication.

Interactional justice is also of main relevance because dependency of employees on their supervisors (which tend, in these circumstances, to personify the organization) is increased for conflict resolution, attribution of voice and just results. In change contexts authorities are thus regarded as role models: if they are interactionally just, it is more probable that employees behave in the same way. It is also more probable that these accept decisions which although seeming to jeopardize their short-term interests defend their long-term ones, as well as those of their organization as a whole.

In this research we will consider, explicitly, as relational judgements, in our analysis, not only the three aspects proposed by the GVM (neutrality, trust, and status recognition), but also the aspects suggested by Leventhal (1980), since these maybe only apparently “more formal” dimensions are usually present in problem or conflict interactions with authorities. Although the author thought of those aspects in an instrumental sense, that hypothesis was never tested, and there is reason to believe they can also be relational in nature. In fact, “Procedural elements and rules proposed by Leventhal also present information gathering, representativeness, among other aspects, which lead to an active participation of the individual in the process and, therefore, to an interpersonal, communicational relationship, between the individual and the decision maker” (Theotónio, 1997, p. 102). These comments are very much in line with Tyler’s “These results (from former research) strongly support the suggestion that procedural justice judgements are relational in character. . . .” (Tyler and Smith, 1998, p. 613).

We then formulate our first hypothesis: *The more the authority is perceived to be interactionally and procedurally just, the more organization members will feel proud of it, the more they will feel respected within it, and, consequently, the more they will accept and support organizational change.*

### **The Group-Value Model and Organizational Levels**

In spite of empirical evidence on the GVM, for the organizational context, studies supporting this model (Tyler, 1994; Tyler *et al.*, 1996) do not distinguish the different levels of the organizational structure, for instance—the work group, the department, and the organization as a whole. The model predicts consequences derived from the relationships between individuals and close “authorities” (the immediate supervisor), but, empirically, considers these consequences solely at the level of the organization as a whole. Also, when operationally measuring pride in group and respect within the group, this group turns out to be the organization the individual is working for. However, as it is well known, organizations are not homogeneous entities, individuals belong to different groups, and therefore, the processes described by the GVM may not work in the same way at the levels of the work group, the department, or the organization as a whole.

Consequently, our second hypothesis states that *relational judgements will have more impact on processes which take place closer to the individual—work group and department—and less impact at the general organizational level, although the influence predicted by the GVM can also be verified at this level, as shown in former studies.*

This hypothesis derives from Self-Categorization Theory (SCT) (Turner *et al.*, 1987). According to this theory, the more an individual associates a certain group to his self-concept, the more he will try to follow rules and values felt as being prototypical of that group. Further, the GVM assumes that, specially for hierarchical groups, such as organizations, the information which is relevant for a person to identify with a group is communicated by the group leader or authority. SCT assumes that a recognized leader or authority is seen as the most prototypical group representative, setting forth the behaviors that group members ought to adopt (Hogg *et al.*, 1998). Therefore, a close authority, as it is the case in this research, may be viewed as a more prototypical representative of close groups (the department or the work group), but not necessarily as a true representative of the larger group—the organization as a whole.

Therefore, and as far as procedural justice relevance is concerned, it will be important to acknowledge the nature of conflict or problem situations with the authority, from which justice judgements originate, and to ascertain the value attributed, by organization members, to different justice criteria in those situations.

To test our hypotheses, we conducted the following research, in an organization undergoing a change process, where support for change was formally asked from organization members. After being reprivatized, the organization selected—an insurance company—underwent a process of structural and strategic change. This implied the replacement of most top and first-line managers, and early retirements throughout the organization. At the time of this study, change also implied large scale new technology introduction and a market-driven, consumer-oriented approach. This approach was in sharp contrast to the former bureaucratic, inwardly-centered state-owned organization.

## METHOD

### Respondents

From a universe of 1100 qualified employees<sup>3</sup> of a portuguese insurance company, 200 were randomly selected. For organizational reasons other employees were also allowed to join in. The members of the organization were free to participate in the study and 167 qualified employees actually did. These were joined by 12 administrative employees. The 179 participants were qualified employees

<sup>3</sup>Of these 1100 organization members, 63% had no managing responsibilities, 31% were low managers, and 6% were middle managers.

with no managing responsibilities (59%), low (31%) and middle managers (14%), and administrative employees (7%). Other characteristics of this sample were Mean age: 40.7 years; gender: 66.5% Males, 33.5% Females; education – compulsory: 10%, high school: 38.2%, graduate: 51.8%; permanence in the company – up to 10 years: 52.5%; 11 to more than 20 years: 57.4%.

### **Procedure**

A self-administered questionnaire aiming to study organizational culture dimensions was delivered, and total anonymity of responses was guaranteed to participants. It was individually completed in the presence of the first author, during continuous group sessions, in one work day, at the company main office. Only three questionnaires were excluded from the analysis, because of too many nonresponded items, and the remaining 176 valid cases were then used in the research.

### **Variables and Measures**

#### *Type and Relevance of Reported Justice Situations*

In the beginning of the questionnaire participants were asked “to think of the person with whom they had more contact, and who had more decision power over their work and their career.” In the same question, participants were asked “to think of conflict or problem situations with that person, and which they considered relevant.” This was a question where participants were asked to choose as many alternatives as they wanted from the following items: “work organization,” “objectives,” “deadlines,” “career,” “salary,” “benefits,” “promotions,” “performance appraisal,” “other.” In the following question, participants were asked “to concentrate in only one of those situations, which had occurred during the last year,” so that participants could remember it better, and, also, “which was considered as having been most relevant to them.” Here participants chose only one from the above mentioned alternatives and had six lines to briefly describe the situation selected. To be better assured of the relevance of the situation selected, another item was introduced: “To what extent was the situation you selected really important to you?” A 6-point scale (anchored at all points) was used (1 = not at all, and 6 = a very great deal).

#### *Measure of Relevance of the Different Justice Items*

To be able to answer our question about the relevance of the different items that constitute a justice judgement, respondents were asked to rate the importance (1st, 2nd, 3rd) of the items in a list (see next point for a description of the different justice items used in this research). Participants had to read all the items first



and then ranked only the three items which were most important to them. (As an example: "In conflict situations with the person I thought of at the beginning of this questionnaire it is important to me that he/she . . . *treats me politely*"). The ratings were later recoded into a scale where 1 = not chosen, 2 = 3rd, 3 = 2nd, and 4 = 1st.

*Measure of Supervisor Behavior Evaluation: Relational  
and Distributive Justice Judgements*

*Relational Judgements.* INTERACTIONAL JUDGEMENTS: To measure this type of judgements we used the three dimensions proposed by Tyler (1989; Tyler *et al.*, 1996) "status recognition," "neutrality," and "trust." Six items were used, two for each dimension. Therefore, participants were asked to think about the person and the recent and relevant situation previously selected, and to use the before mentioned 6-point scale to state their opinion on the following items: "To what extent were you treated politely by that person?"; "To what extent did that person show concern for your rights?" (*Status*); "To what extent did that person make an effort to adequately explain the decisions made in that situation?"; "To what extent to you think the reasons stated by that person were the true reasons for the decisions made?" (*Neutrality*); "To what extent did that person pay attention to your opinions when decisions were made to solve the problem in question?"; "To what extent did that person make an effort to consider your needs?" (*Trust*).

PROCEDURAL JUDGEMENTS: These items were based on Leventhal (1980), who proposes five dimensions or criteria for decision-making process justice evaluations: "Accuracy," "Representativeness," "Consistency," "Correctability," and "Bias suppression." Therefore, thinking of that person and situation, participants were asked to answer: ". . . do you think that person: accurately gathered the relevant information needed to make the decisions which were adequate to the situation?" (*Accuracy*); ". . . gave you the opportunity to describe your problem before decisions were made?" (*Representativeness*); ". . . used clear patterns and criteria so that decisions could be made consistently?" (*Consistency*); ". . . provided the opportunity to challenge and modify decisions if needed?" (*Correctability*); ". . . was objective and impartial in solving the problem?" (*Bias suppression*).

*Distributive Judgements.* The scale constructed to this effect is concerned directly with the outcomes (or solution) for the situation, and its underlying criteria are outcome favorableness and acceptability, as well as distributive justice criteria. Therefore, participants were asked to state, using the previously mentioned scale "whether the outcome (or solution) had been "favorable to you," "easily accepted by you," "according to your needs in the situation," "the one you think you deserved," "according to the solution found for others in the same circumstances" (Baron and Pfeffer, 1994; Elliot and Meeker, 1986; Tyler, 1994).

A Principal Components Factor Analysis with Varimax Rotation extracted three factors with eigenvalues superior to 1. The third factor was clearly saturated by distributive items. However, the remaining two factors did not allow a clear distinction between interactional and procedural items. Therefore, we asked for a two-factor solution with Varimax rotation which allowed the distinction between relational (interactional and procedural) and distributive justice dimensions (see Appendix 2). Based on this factorial solution, the items with higher factor loading in each factor allowed the construction of two new variables: *relational judgements* ( $\alpha = .94$ ,  $M = 3.46$ ,  $SD = 1.06$ ); and *distributive judgements* ( $\alpha = .93$ ,  $M = 3.13$ ,  $SD = 1.23$ ).

### *Measure of Group Pride and Respect Within the Group*

*Group Pride.* Using the previously mentioned 6-point scale, organization members were asked to answer to what extent they agreed with the following statements (scale items) with respect to their organization as a whole: "I am proud of being part of this company," "When someone praises other members of my company it feels like a praise to me," "I tell my friends how much I like being a part of this company," and "When I think about other companies I feel even prouder of being part of this one." Participants also evaluated the same, although adapted, statements for their department and their work group. The first three items are very similar to the ones in Tyler *et al.* (1996) and Smith and Tyler (1997). The last is used to introduce a social comparison dimension (Ambrose *et al.*, 1991).

*Respect Within the Group.* Using the same scale, organization members answered to what extent they agreed with the statements (scale items) for their organizations as a whole, their department, and their work group: "I feel that the majority of members . . . of my company . . . of my department . . . of my work group . . .," "respect me as a person," "recognize the value of my work," "recognize my contributions," "value what I say and do," and "view me as a valuable member." This scale is similar to the one in Tyler *et al.* (1996), and includes some items from the social self-esteem scale from Luthanen and Crocker (1992).

In order to test whether these two dimensions of the relationship between the individual and the group were felt as clearly distinct, a Principal Components Factor Analysis, with Varimax rotation, was conducted for the above mentioned items, in what concerned the organization, the department, and the work group. Two factors were extracted for the three cases: one for pride and another for respect (explained variances between 77 and 79%). The items with higher factor loadings in each factor allowed the construction of an index for pride and another for respect (the  $\alpha$  range between .83 and .91 for pride, and between .75 and .93 for respect). Correlations were computed for these indexes and for the three cases considered (organization, department, and work group) (see Appendix 1). Pearson correlations are between .45 and .46. Taken together, these results indicate the presence of

two different, although related, dimensions of the identity concept (pride in the organization as a whole:  $\alpha = .91$ ,  $M = 4.20$ ,  $SD = 1.04$ ; pride in the department:  $\alpha = .90$ ,  $M = 4.28$ ,  $SD = 1.07$ ; pride in the work group:  $\alpha = .90$ ,  $M = 4.43$ ,  $SD = .99$ ; respect within the organization as a whole:  $\alpha = .93$ ,  $M = 4.02$ ,  $SD = .82$ ; respect within the department:  $\alpha = .93$ ,  $M = 4.33$ ,  $SD = .84$ ; respect within the workgroup:  $\alpha = .93$ ,  $M = 4.71$ ,  $SD = .76$ ; global pride:  $\alpha = .93$ ,  $M = 4.30$ ,  $SD = .89$ ); global respect ( $\alpha = .94$ ,  $M = 4.35$ ,  $SD = .66$ ).

*Measure of Behavioral Orientation Toward the Acceptance  
and Support for Organizational Change*

Participants were asked to state, separately for each organization level (organization as a whole, department and work group) to what extent “they had observed important changes,” “they had favorably accepted those changes,” and “they had willingly supported those changes.” The first item aims at evaluating the organizational change perception. Global results indicate that respondents are clearly aware of the change process ( $M = 4.16$ ,  $SD = .92$ ), considering the results at the three different levels—perception of change in organization as a whole:  $M = 4.49$ ,  $SD = 1.01$ ; department:  $M = 4.17$ ,  $SD = 1.17$ ; work group:  $M = 3.85$ ,  $SD = 1.27$ . The remaining items were used to evaluate the behavioral orientation towards the support for change in the organization (in organization as a whole:  $\alpha = .83$ ,  $M = 4.30$ ,  $SD = 0.78$ ); in the department ( $\alpha = .87$ ,  $M = 4.19$ ,  $SD = 0.97$ ); and in the work group ( $\alpha = .91$ ,  $M = 4.21$ ,  $SD = 1.13$ ); mean global results are:  $\alpha = .98$ ,  $M = 4.24$ ,  $SD = .82$ ).

## RESULTS

### Types of Conflict Situations and the Relevance of Relational Justice

Results show that “work organization,” “objectives,” and “deadlines” are the most frequent conflict situations with the supervisor (42.8%). These are daily situations, strongly interactional and procedural in nature. The specifically distributive situations (“salary,” “career,” “promotions,” and “benefits”) are less relevant (32.3%). As to the most relevant conflict situation selected by participants, although “work organization” keeps its first place (followed by “objectives”), “performance appraisal” becomes more relevant than before. Distributive situations, taken together (26.8%), show a frequency value lower than the one that was found for the previous question. The conflict situation selected by each participants, and to which justice judgements refer in this research, was really relevant:  $M = 4.71$ ,  $SD = 1.03$ .

Participants were also asked to choose and rank the three most important items from the set of interactional, procedural, and distributive items used in the

research. Data analysis shows that items relative to relational justice (interactional and procedural) are more relevant ( $M = 1.99$ ,  $SD = .14$ ) than the items related to distributive justice ( $M = 1.18$ ,  $SD = .32$ ;  $F(1, 143) = 468.6$ ,  $p < .001$ ).

### **Test of the Group Value Model for Acceptance and Support for Change**

The model was tested through a mediation analysis (Baron and Kenny, 1986) for global acceptance and support for change and also, separately, for the three organizational levels considered—organization, department, and work group.<sup>4</sup>

#### *Stage 1 of Mediation Analyses—the Relationship Between Independent Variables (Justice Judgements) and Mediating Variables (Pride and Respect)*

Two types of analyses were conducted at this stage: first a regression of pride and respect was conducted, separately, on both types of justice judgements (relational and distributive); a second analysis added, separately, the dependent variable to the regression equation, in order to control for covariation between dependent and mediating variables.

Table I shows the results for variables “pride” and “respect.” According to Baron and Kenny (1983), the independent variable (relational judgements) was expected to affect each mediating variable, even after controlling for the dependent variable (acceptance and support for change). It is clear that the GVM hypothesis can be confirmed: interactional and procedural (relational judgements) show a clear relationship with global pride and respect, whereas no relationship is found for distributive (instrumental) judgements. As expected, after controlling for the dependent variable in the second regression equation, a significant relationship between evaluation of the authority and pride and respect is still found.

When we consider the results obtained for the three organizational levels it is again clear that the GVM hypothesis can be confirmed: interactional and procedural (relational judgements) show a relationship with pride, whereas no relationship is found for distributive (instrumental) judgements. The relationship between relational judgements seems to be particularly strong in the case of the department. For respect, a very similar pattern is shown in what concerns the relevance of relational judgements. Again, stronger results are observed for the department, although an increase of relational relevance is also observed for respect within the organization as a whole.

<sup>4</sup>Since the correlation between the independent variables “relational judgements” and “distributive judgements” is high (.72), we tested the multicollinearity. The tolerance coefficient ( $1 - r^2$ ) is .4816 and the VIF (1/.4816) is 2.076. The condition index is 6.923. According to Hair *et al.* (1995), the conditions for multicollinearity are, simultaneously, a tolerance under .10, a VIF over 10, and a condition index above 30.

**Table 1.** Stage 1: Relationship Between Dimensions of Justice Perception, Pride and Respect in Group

Dimensions of justice perception and dependent variables	Pride						Respect			
	Global			Work group			Work group			
	Global	Organization	Department	Global	Organization	Department	Global	Organization	Department	Work group
Relational judgements	.35***	.21**	.40**	.39***	.33***	.40***	.39***	.33***	.40***	.24***
Distributive judgements	ns	ns	ns	ns	ns	ns	ns	ns	ns	ns
R <sup>2</sup>	.12	.05	.16	.16	.11	.16	.16	.11	.16	.06
Relational judgements	.22**	ns	.31***	.28***	.28***	.31***	.28***	.28***	.31***	.18*
Distributive judgements	ns	ns	ns	ns	ns	ns	ns	ns	ns	ns
Acceptance and support for change	.37***	.23**	.23**	.33***	.36***	.25**	.33***	.36***	.25**	.26**
R <sup>2</sup>	.25	.20	.20	.25	.24	.21	.25	.24	.21	.13

Note. ns: nonsignificant.

\*  $p < .05$ ; \*\*  $p < .01$ ; \*\*\*  $p < .001$ ; values are standardized beta weights.

As expected, after controlling for the dependent variable (acceptance and support for change) in the second regression equation (see Table I), a significant relationship between evaluation of the authority and pride and respect is still found, to the only exception of pride in the organization, when support for change was controlled.

*Stage 2 of Mediation Analyses: The Relationship Between Mediating and Dependent Variables*

The first step of this new stage consisted of regressing the dependent variable, separately, on global pride and respect, controlling, afterwards, for the relationship between the dependent variable and justice judgements, by entering these together with pride and respect in different regression equations. The mediating variables were expected to affect the dependent variable. The same should happen after controlling for the independent variables. Looking at Table II we find a strong and significant relationship between global pride, respect and global acceptance and support for change. When we consider the three organizational levels of analysis, we find a strong and significant relationship between support for change and pride and respect for the groups considered; especially for the organization as a whole. In this case, the relationship between the dependent variable and respect is reinforced when judgements are controlled. At the three levels, it is important to note that pride seems more relevant than respect for acceptance and support for change.

**Table II.** Stage 2: Relationship Between Pride, Respect and Support for Change

Pride and respect and independent variables	Support for change			
	Global	Organization	Department	Work group
Pride	.45***	.48***	.35***	.41***
R <sup>2</sup>	.21	.23	.12	.17
Pride	.37***	.45***	.23**	.37***
Relational judgements	.22**	ns	.31***	.20***
Distributive judgements	ns	ns	ns	ns
R <sup>2</sup>	.24	.21	.20	.21
Respect	.38***	.36***	.32***	.28***
R <sup>2</sup>	.14	.13	.10	.08
Respect	.34***	.40***	.25**	.26**
Relational judgements	.20*	ns	.29***	.22**
Distributive judgements	ns	ns	ns	ns
R <sup>2</sup>	.21	.16	.20	.15

Note. ns: nonsignificant.

\*  $p < .05$ ; \*\*  $p < .01$ ; \*\*\*  $p < .001$ ; values are standardized beta weight.

**Table III.** Stage 3: Relationship Between Dimensions of Justice Perception and Support for Change

Dimensions of justice perception and mediating variables	Support for change			
	Global	Organization	Department	Work group
Relational judgements	.35***	ns	.39***	.30***
Distributive judgements	ns	ns	ns	ns
R <sup>2</sup>	.12	—	.16	.09
Relational judgements	.22**	ns	.31***	.20*
Distributive judgements	ns	ns	ns	ns
Pride	.37***	.45***	.23**	.37***
R <sup>2</sup>	.24	.21	.20	.21
Relational judgements	.20*	ns	.29***	.22**
Distributive judgements	ns	ns	ns	ns
Respect	.34***	.40***	.25**	.26**
R <sup>2</sup>	.21	.16	.20	.15
Relational judgements	.17*	ns	.29***	.19*
Distributive judgements	ns	ns	ns	ns
Pride	.28**	.33***	ns	.36***
Respect	.19*	.23**	.27**	ns
R <sup>2</sup>	.26	.24	.20	.21

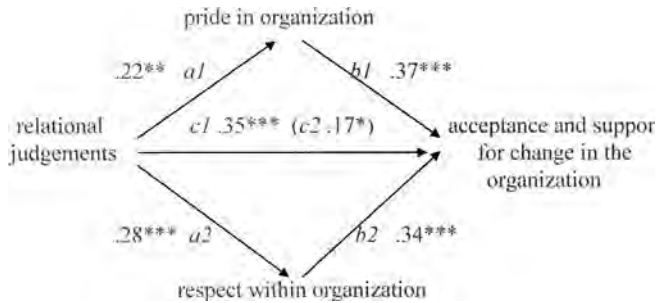
Note. ns: nonsignificant.

\*  $p < .05$ ; \*\*  $p < .01$ ; \*\*\*  $p < .001$ ; values are standardized beta weight.

*Stage 3 of Mediation Analyses: The Mediating Role of Pride and Respect Between Independent and Dependent Variables*

At this stage the direct impact of the independent variable—relational judgements—was tested. For a perfect mediation, this relationship should disappear after including the mediating variables. Table III shows the results with respect to the mediating role of pride and respect between relational justice judgements, acceptance and support for change. The first equation shows the direct relationship between judgements and dependent variable (the second and third equations repeat previous results for the sake of clarity), and the fourth and last equation represents the final test of mediation, where pride and respect were simultaneously entered, in order to control for covariation between these two variables. An imperfect mediation of pride and respect for “acceptance and support for change” is observed, since the relationship between judgements and this behavior does not completely disappear after simultaneously including pride and respect. However, we observe a very substantial decrease of the former direct relationship.

When we consider the results for the three different levels of analysis, on the mediating role of pride and respect between relational judgements and acceptance and support for change, an imperfect mediation of pride and respect is observed at the department and work group levels, since the relationship between judgements and support for change does not completely disappear after controlling for pride and respect. However, we cannot speak of mediation for the organization as a whole,



**Fig. 1.** Global acceptance and support for change in the organization. a1 and a2: beta values, controlling for dependent variable (stage 1); b1 and b2: beta values, controlling for judgements (stage 2); c1 and c2: beta values, respectively before and after mediation, controlling, in this case, pride and respect simultaneously (stage 3). \*  $p < .05$ ; \*\*  $p < .01$ ; \*\*\*  $p < .001$ ; values are standardized beta weight.

since no relationship was found between relational judgements and acceptance and support for change in this case. (See Figs. 1 and 2)

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

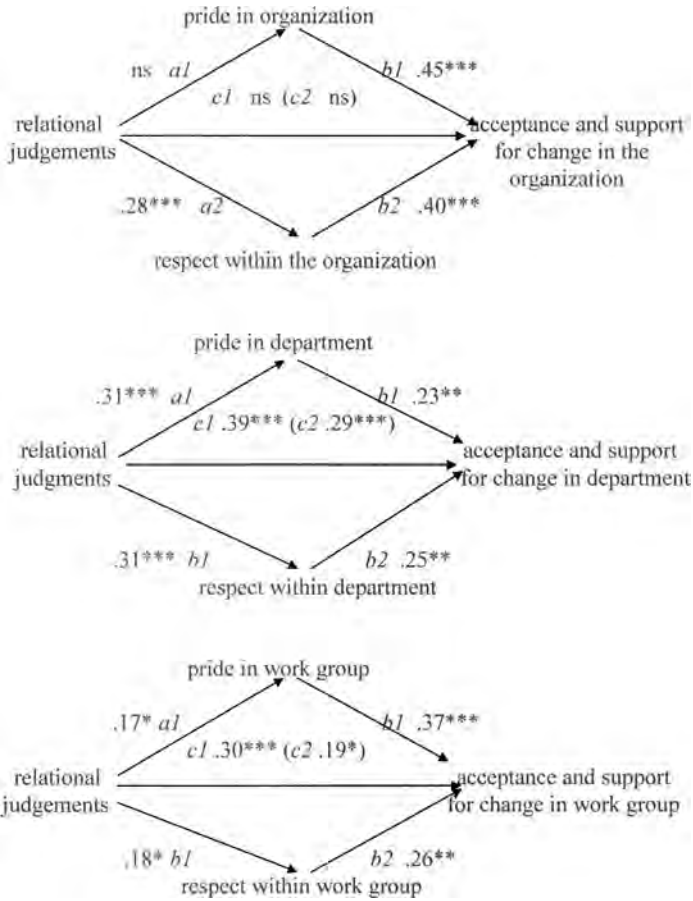
### Robustness of the Group-Value Model and Support for Organizational Change

In a national context different from the ones where the model has been tested, the results of the present research globally support the predictions of the GVM. As predicted by the model, not only did pride and respect appear as two clearly existing and distinct dimensions, but also was a relationship observed between relational judgements and pride in the group as well as respect within the group, but not between instrumental judgements and those two dimensions of the individual–group relationship. However, we are aware that, like in former research by Tyler and associates (1996), our independent variables are highly correlated ( $r = .75$ ), meaning that they share more than 50% of their variances. Therefore, distributive judgements have some impact too.

Nevertheless, our findings seem consistent with the assumed GVM hypothesis about the relevance and distinction between distributive/instrumental justice aspects and relational aspects (interactional/procedural). To the quest for a strict and formal distinction among distributive, interactional and procedural justice, a more realistic approach, based on justice motives can be opposed—instrumental versus relational justice. These concepts seem not only theoretically accurate, but also better able to translate the justice representations shared by organization members.

These ideas are reinforced when we consider the relevance, for organization members, of the different justice dimensions. Our results show that for the specific





**Fig. 2.** Acceptance and support for change at three different organizational levels. a1 and a2: beta values, controlling for dependent variable (stage 1); b1 and b2: beta values, controlling for judgements (stage 2); c1 and c2: beta values, respectively before and after mediation, controlling, in this last case for pride and respect simultaneously (stage 3). ns: nonsignificant. \*  $p < .05$ ; \*\*  $p < .01$ ; \*\*\*  $p < .001$ ; values are standardized beta weight.

situation selected, the most relevant aspects are interactional and procedural aspects of the relationship with organizational authorities, while distributive judgements do not seem relevant. These conclusions are again reinforced when we consider the justice criteria ranked as most relevant in the case of any eventual problem or conflict situations with the authority: relational justice criteria are again considered most important by organization members.

We also observed the mediation, predicted by the model, between perceptions of relational justice and a newly tested group behavioral orientation: acceptance

and support for change. The hypothesis, proposed by Tyler *et al.* (1996), is that, in the context of SIT, pride in group should be more relevant to explain behaviors, whereas, in the context of the GVM, respect should be more relevant. Our results show that pride seems more relevant to explain orientation toward acceptance and support for change. It is possible that pride and respect have a different explaining power, according to the behavior under consideration and also to group type. For instance, results from Sousa (2000) show that respect is a much stronger mediator between relational judgements and organizational identification.

These results are important for the development of the GVM. A review of former research on this model may lead to the belief that positive judgements on relational justice will necessarily result in passive behaviors (in the sense of status quo acceptance, such as acceptance of group rules or the wish to remain in the group). However, our results seem to indicate that relational judgements may also encourage an innovation and change acceptance attitude. These results can be considered in light of SCT (e.g. Hogg, 1996; Turner *et al.*, 1987). According to this theory, identification with the group encourages conformity to the prototypical norms of the group. In the same sense, when belonging to a certain group becomes salient for an individual, the group leader becomes representative, or prototypical, of that group. The normal consequence will be that the behaviors encouraged by the group leader are, therefore, likely to be followed and internalized by the individual group member. Thus, if the group norm is supposed to be focused on change, it is logical that we find a clear relationship between relational judgements and support for change, a relationship which was mediated by pride and respect perceived within the group.

It is also important to note that this study was based on a single problem or conflict situation between organization members and their supervisors. It was possible to demonstrate that a single relevant situation had an impact on acceptance and support for change in the organization studied. Therefore, and in terms of the implications of this study for the analysis of organizational behavior, we are able to draw conclusions which run contrary to the rather common assumptions, present in organizational and corporate contexts: that organization members are inclined to frame their attitudes and behavioral strategies solely by the results they are able to obtain/negotiate from the authorities. Instead, we observe that a positive evaluation, in justice terms, of the treatment received from the supervisor, and of the procedures used in decision-making and problem solving, contributes to positive behavioral orientations toward the organization. Above all, it is important to stress that the GVM was able to work for a very complex behavioral orientation—acceptance and support for change—which implies authority legitimation, and rule and decision acceptance. These questions are at the very roots not only of the concern for justice, but also of the concern with positive values internalization, an aspect which is critical for the maintenance and development of organized societies throughout the world.

### **Organizational Levels of Analysis and the Group-Value Model**

This study also aimed at evaluating the GVM at different structural levels of an organization—the work group, the department, and the company as a whole. Results seem to support the hypothesis relative to the differentiation proposed, to the extent that, in this research, the model seems to work better at the department and work group levels. Conversely to what happened for the work group and, especially, the department, we could not find a direct relationship between relational judgements and acceptance and support for change for the company as a whole, suggesting the possibility of moderating variables between evaluation of supervisor behavior and behavioral orientations in this case. The relationship between relational judgements and pride in the company was also not found for the company as a whole. However, the relationship between pride, respect, acceptance and support for change at the company level, shows values which are substantially stronger, than for the cases of the department and the work group.

According to SCT and the relational model of authority in groups (Tyler and Lind, 1992), it is possible that the department and the work group may be particularly relevant groups for the individual and also that the supervisor may be seen, in this case, by organization members as a true representative of the department and the workgroup, but not of the organization as a whole.

### **The Group-Value Model and Social Identity Theory**

The theoretical status, attributed to “pride” in the group may, however, be questioned. In fact, in terms of SIT, the phenomena this variable intends to capture relate to the identification with the group, or to the relationship between group and the self-concept, and, simultaneously, to the perception of group value. It is, therefore, a composite measure, which includes identification, as well as group evaluation. In turn, this evaluation corresponds to the private-collective self-esteem dimension—individual perception of the group value (Luthanen and Crocker, 1992). In future research it may be important to control the particular meaning of these two dimensions.

In the same sense, the meaning of “respect” within the group is close to social self-esteem dimensions. “Respect” is a dimension that is not usually considered in SIT studies, or in studies on the multidimensionality of the social self-esteem concept (e.g., Luthanen and Crocker, 1992), but that can, nevertheless, be related to this concept. What is evaluated by the items for respect in Tyler *et al.* (1996) is the perception that is constructed by each organization member about his reputation, or about the personal consideration he feels entitled to by the group. It is important to note that one of the dimensions of social self-esteem, such as proposed by Luthanen and Crocker, is supposed to address the self-evaluation, by each individual, of his value as a group member (membership esteem), while “respect” addresses individual perceptions of the way one is considered by others as a group member.

The proposed relationships between variables “pride” and “respect,” and concepts of identity and social self-esteem are important, in the sense that the GVM is assumed to be an intragroup extension of SIT.

In the context of the relationship between SIT and the GVM, it is particularly important to mention that, for SIT, social comparison processes are of utmost relevance. The GVM evaluates relational judgements, but does not take into consideration the role of social comparison processes, which can turn out to be a limitation of the model. This seems especially true when the model is applied to organizations, where members have different memberships and different comparison referents (other individuals or groups). It is important to note that in this research organization members stressed “consistency,” and “to obtain a result according to the solution found for others in the same circumstances” as valuable justice criteria, what indeed seems to point to the empirical relevance of social comparison processes. Finally, in terms of SIT and of the questions raised by our research, the GVM should be developed in the context of intergroup relations in organizations. We demonstrated that the processes analyzed by the GVM seemed to be particularly relevant at the department level. This suggests that relationships between departments and identification degrees at different organizational levels (e.g. Ashforth and Mael, 1989) are relevant for the processes that the GVM aims at explaining. Since any company comprises different groups, more or less explicit intergroup conflicts are bound to occur and to impact justice perceptions (e.g. Vala *et al.*, 1988).

## APPENDIX 1

Pearson Correlations Between Variables

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
1 Relational judgements														
2 Distributive judgements	.72													
3 Global pride	.36	.28												
4 Pride in organization	.21	ns	.84											
5 Pride in department	.41	.36	.91	.65										
6 Pride in work group	.30	.22	.85	.51	.70									
7 Global respect	.41	.24	.52	.37	.46	.50								
8 Respect within organization	.34	.18	.43	.46	.35	.30	.76							
9 Respect within department	.41	.29	.46	.25	.45	.47	.87	.46						
10 Respect within work group	.26	ns	.38	.20	.35	.45	.82	.38	.66					
11 Global support for change	.34	.19	.46	.39	.42	.37	.38	.34	.33	.28				
12 Support for change in organization	.17	ns	.41	.48	.34	.24	.31	.36	.20	.19	.76			
13 Support for change in department	.37	.25	.34	.24	.35	.28	.31	.22	.32	.22	.89	.56		
14 Support for change in work group	.29	ns	.44	.32	.41	.41	.35	.31	.28	.28	.88	.48	.68	

Note. ns: nonsignificant ( $p > .05$ ).

## APPENDIX 2

Principal Components Factor Analysis for Relational and Distributive Justice Dimensions

	Factor I	Factor II
Relational judgements		
Polite treatment	.52	.42
Concern for rights	.73	.39
Effort to explain decisions made	.66	.41
Truth of reasons for decisions	.69	.40
Attention to opinions when decisions are taken	.71	.50
Effort to consider individual needs	.71	.52
Accuracy	.71	.17
Representativeness	.85	.17
Consistency	.84	.34
Correctability	.72	.19
Bias suppression	.78	.29
Distributive judgements		
Results favorable	.41	.80
Results easily acceptable	.33	.81
Results according to needs	.40	.83
Results deserved	.43	.76
Results like for others in the same situation	.07	.78
Percentage of explained variance	60.5	9.1

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