The Relationship between Organizational Climate, Perceived Organizational Support, Employee Participation, and Readiness for Change within the Norwegian Police Service

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Abstract

The aim of this study is to explore the relationship between organizational climate and individual readiness for change, and the mediating effects of perceived organizational support and employee participation. More specifically, this thesis examines the human relation climate as conceptualized by Quinn and Rohrbaugh (1983), and the direct effect it has on readiness for change, and the indirect effects through perceived organizational support and employee participation. The study proposes nine hypotheses regarding the relationship between the mentioned variables, tested through a structural equation model on a sample consisting of 853 respondents from the Norwegian police service.

The Norwegian Police Service is currently undergoing a large reform, which makes it interesting to examine factors related to individual change readiness, as it has been identified as an important driver for change success. Organizational climate is interesting because it has been recognized as one of the most important factors that either decreases or increases individual readiness for change, but has mostly been studied as the mediator of different relationships, while studies examining the mediators between climate and outcomes are more rare.

The findings indicate that a human relation climate positively predicts individual readiness for change, and that the relationship is fully mediated through employee participation and perceived organizational support. Further, there is a positive direct effect of perceived organizational support on participation. This study contributes to the field by extending the knowledge of how organizational climate affects change readiness, and discusses practical and theoretical implications.
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Introduction

Globalization, technological advances and rapid changing demographic patterns poses new demands for the police. The crime is changing character, getting more mobile and organized. The police service has to develop in order to respond to this new complex, serious and borderless crime (Politiet, 2018; Yilmaz, 2013). At the same time, the police is expected to deliver safety, law and order all over the small local communities which characterizes Norway (Politiet, 2018). Together with long discussions of the police efficiency, organizational structure and culture, this has been the background for the new police reform termed “Nærpolitireformen”. The purpose with the reform is to make the police better equipped at meeting these new challenges, improve collaboration between different units and districts, and shifting responsibility towards a stronger focus on core tasks (Politiet, 2018).

Due to the large organizational change and the social mission the police possesses, it is of interest to investigate which factors might inhibit or promote change processes, in order to get a clearer understanding of organizational change and how to best manage it. In fact, one of the defining features of contemporary organizations is change (Choi & Ruona, 2011). In general, change can be viewed as the way people talk about an event in which something turns into something else, and this something else is seen as an outcome or result (Ford & Ford, 1994). In the organizational change literature, there are two fundamental approaches to change. One is the strategic management perspective, which views organizational change as the process of implementing strategy created by the management and decision makers. The other one is the organizational development perspective, which regard change as an intentional effort introduced to enhance individual development and improve organizational performance (Choi & Ruona, 2011). It is estimated that about two thirds of all change projects fail, with the cause often considered to be an implementation failure, instead of the change initiative in itself (Burnes & Jackson, 2011; Choi & Ruona, 2011).

This thesis will examine the concept of readiness for change and how it is related to organizational climate. Historically, police research has focused on police culture, and how it is distinct and universal compared to other occupational cultures (Loftus, 2010; Lone et al., 2017). In short, police culture is characterized by a sense of mission, suspiciousness, internal solidarity and pragmatism, shaped by the occupation (Loftus, 2010). Where culture research is mainly focused on beliefs, values and assumptions, climate research is more concerned with practices, policies and procedures (Schneider, Ehrhart, & Macey, 2013). Organizational climate is interesting because it is related to a range of both individual and unit-level
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performances. In addition, climate has been associated with a wide variety of psychological states such as job satisfaction, work engagement and commitment (Carr, Schmidt, Ford, & DeShon, 2003; Kuenzi & Schminke, 2009; Lone et al., 2017; Schneider et al., 2013).

Organizational climate (OC) has often been studied as the mediator of different relationships, while studies examining the mediators between climate and outcomes are more rare (Kuenzi, 2008). The current study will look at the human relation climate as defined in Quinn and Rohrbaugh’s Competing Values Framework (Quinn & Rohrbaugh, 1983), and propose a model for how the human relation climate affects change readiness, through the constructs perceived organizational support and employee participation.

First, the thesis will address the concept of readiness for change (CHA), before taking a deeper look at the organizational climate literature and how the human relation climate (HR) might relate to employee participation (PAR), perceived organizational support (POS) and change readiness. Based on empirical climate research, a structural equation model consisting of nine hypotheses is presented and tested on a sample from the Norwegian police, gathered shortly before the reform was introduced. Following this is a discussion of the results, with implications, limitations and suggested future research.

**Background**

**Construct definitions**

**Readiness for change**

Employees’ readiness is essential because it has been proven to play a vital role in every organizational change, and is also an important driver of change success (Armenakis, Harris, & Mossholder, 1993; Oreg, Vakola, & Armenakis, 2011; Vakola, 2014). If the employees don’t believe that change is needed, then change initiatives may fail (Alannah E. Rafferty & Simons, 2005). As Vakola (2014) puts it “An individual ready to change is one who exhibits a proactive and positive attitude toward change, which can be translated into willingness to support change and confidence in succeeding in change” (p. 196). Some employees might view the change as a possibility to benefit and improve their status, whereas others might feel threatened and therefore develop negative attitudes and resistance towards it (Vakola, 2014).

One of the most accepted definitions of change readiness was proposed by Armenakis, Harris & Mossholder (1993), which states that readiness for organizational change refers to individuals’ “beliefs, attitudes, and intentions regarding the extent to which changes are needed and the organization’s capacity to successfully undertake those changes.” Large
organizational changes such as mergers, restructures and downsizing have become very common, and several studies have found that changes of big magnitude often are associated with significant negative consequences for individuals’ well-being (Pollard, 2001; Alannah E. Rafferty & Simons, 2005). It is therefore of great interest to examine which factors might influence readiness for change, in order to increase the odds of successfully implementing a reform.

One of the earliest definitions of organizational change was proposed by Kurt Lewin, who’s model consists of the three stages unfreezing, changing and refreezing (Lewin, 1951). According to this tradition, readiness for change will be linked to the unfreezing stage. The unfreezing stage is the process in which the employees’ beliefs and attitudes about an upcoming change are altered so that the employees view the change as both necessary and likely to succeed (Eby, Adams, Russell, & Gaby, 2000). Readiness can thus be viewed as the cognitive precursor to the behaviors of either support or resistance to a change effort (Armenakis et al., 1993).

Readiness for change is conceptualized as an individual perception, meaning it reflects an individual’s unique subjective perception of whether the organization is ready for a change or not, and thus is not necessarily shared by all employees in the same unit or work group (Eby et al., 2000). Several studies suggest that employees are much more likely to be influenced by their own perception, rather than some objective reality of the organization (Eby et al., 2000; Spreitzer, 1996; Thomas & Velthouse, 1990). Through their own interpretation of the organizational surroundings, the employees may deem the organization as more or less ready to undergo a change (Eby et al., 2000). This thesis will therefore examine how organizational climate and other organizational factors, where the group or organization is the point of reference, might influence the individual’s perception of change readiness.

**Organizational Climate**

Organizational climate has been recognized as one of the most important factors that either decreases or increases individual readiness for change (Choi & Ruona, 2011; Haffar, Al-Karaghouli, & Ghoneim, 2014; Jones, Jimmieson, & Griffiths, 2005; Weiner, 2009), and has therefore started to get considerable attention within the organizational research literature. Climate research focuses on policies, procedures and practices within organizations, and studies show that organizational climate is linked to a range of individual attitudes, such as satisfaction, commitment, absenteeism, performance and effectiveness, among others (Kuenzi, 2008; Kuenzi & Schminke, 2009; Lone et al., 2017; Schneider et al., 2013).
As with many psychological constructs, there is a lot of different definitions of what constitutes organizational climate. In their article, Verbeke, Volgering, and Hessels (1998) identified as much as 32 different definitions of work climate in the literature. According to James et al. (2008), organizational climate can be viewed as shared psychological meanings, derived from aggregating individual perceptions of a work environment. This also aligns with one of the most adopted definitions from Schneider and Reichers (1983) who defines organizational work climates as “a set of shared perceptions regarding the policies, practices, and procedures that an organization rewards, supports, and expects.”

One important feature with organizational climate is its perceptual nature, in contrast to an objective characteristic with the organization. Further, organizational climate is a collective phenomenon, meaning climate represents the employees shared perceptions of the work environment (Schneider et al., 2013). Thus, the origins of organizational climate lie in individual perceptions of the unit, which when aggregated reflect the climate. This implies that climate can be viewed as the collective perception of the organizational context, and a framework for understanding how the employees derive meaning from this perception (James & Jones, 1974; Kuenzi & Schminke, 2009).

Organizational Climate and Culture

For a deeper understanding of organizational climate, it can be useful to distinguish it from other similar, yet different constructs, such as organizational culture. Some of the differences stems from different academic roots. Climate research has a much longer tradition, stemming from Lewinian psychology. Culture, on the other hand, has its roots from anthropological research (Schneider et al., 2013). Both climate and culture deal with the ways individuals make sense of their environment and work place through interacting with other members of their groups. Organizational culture generally focus on deeper dimensions than climate and at a more abstract level, whereas climate research focus on more surface-level manifestations (Kuenzi & Schminke, 2009; Schneider et al., 2013).

However, despite the different theoretical conceptualization of organizational climate and culture, several of the empirical studies referred to in this study uses the two concepts interchangeably, see for example Haffar et al. (2014). This means that what different researchers refer to as climate and culture, might not always be the same and can explain some of the confusion in the field.

Competing Values Framework

Although several studies have examined how different individual characteristics is related to readiness for change (Drzensky, Egold, & Van Dick, 2012; Pollard, 2001; Alannah
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E. Rafferty & Simons, 2005), newer research has started to examine how organizational climate affects change readiness (Haffar et al., 2014; Jones et al., 2005). One of the most renowned models used in organizational climate research, is the Competing Values Framework (CVF) (Quinn & Rohrbaugh, 1983). The framework was originally developed in order to capture the effectiveness of organizations. According to the model, the effectiveness criteria can best be understood when organized along two fundamental dimensions; external versus internal focus, and flexibility versus control. In addition, there is a third set of organizational dilemma; means versus ends (Quinn & Rohrbaugh, 1983). When organizing these value dimensions in a diagram, we get four different climate types, as shown in figure 1.

![Diagram of Molar climate types](kuenzi_2008)

According to the CVF, the different climate types are made up of a combination of the organization’s focus and structure. The different climates possess their own set of beliefs, behaviors and values which impact the organization’s effort to achieve distinct organizational ends (Jones et al., 2005). This means that different climate types are related to different organizational effectiveness indicators (Hartnell, Ou, & Kinicki, 2011). The open system model (flexibility and external focus) is associated with an innovative environment that places
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high value on growth and responds rapidly to changes in the external environment (Patterson et al., 2005; Quinn & Rohrbaugh, 1983). The rational goal model (control and external focus) is concerned with strict planning and goal-setting in order to achieve high productivity and efficiency (Quinn & Rohrbaugh, 1983). The internal process model (control and internal focus) is often associated with bureaucratic organizations, where information management, formal rules and procedures are important means to achieve stability and control. The human relation model (flexibility and internal focus) is concerned with the development of human resources and the well-being of the employees (Lone et al., 2017; Patterson et al., 2005; Quinn & Rohrbaugh, 1983), and will be treated with more detail below.

Although there are four major climate types, it is important to point out that it is very common for an organization to have elements from several different climate types at the same time. This means that it is expected to find different combinations of values within the same organization, with some being more dominant than others (Haffar et al., 2014; Kuenzi, 2008).

Measuring organizational climate

The definition of organizational climate proposed by Schneider and Reichers (1983) is a definition of a global (also called molar) climate. In addition, researchers have started to examine so-called focused or facet-specific climates. A facet-specific climate differs from global climate in the way that it is concerned with a more specific strategic focus, such as climate for innovation, climate for service, or climate for diversity (Kuenzi & Schminke, 2009; Lone et al., 2017). This implies that researchers concerned with specific outcomes should use a more focused climate approach, whereas researchers interested in global outcomes, such as work-unit performance, should use a global climate approach (Kuenzi & Schminke, 2009; Lone et al., 2017; Schneider et al., 2013).

In this study, the main objective is to examine how a certain type of global climate (the human relation model) is related to perceived organizational support, employee participation and readiness for change. Therefore, a scale measuring global climate is used, derived from the Competing Values Framework (Kuenzi, 2008; Quinn & Rohrbaugh, 1983).

The CVF has been used as theoretical basis for developing different scales for measuring global climate. One example is the Organizational Climate Measure (OCM), developed by Patterson et al. (2005), which consists of 17 climate dimensions distributed across the four CVF quadrants. The OCM consists of 82 items covering a broad range of different climate dimensions, instead of measuring global climate directly (Kuenzi, 2008; Patterson et al., 2005). The current study is based on the climate measure developed by Kuenzi (2008), who’s global assessment does not cover many different climate dimensions
like the OCM, but instead measure global climate as a construct by itself, with four distinct climate types corresponding to the four quadrants in the CVF.

Kuenzi (2008) argues that there is a lack of a strong theoretical foundation for global climate, and therefore proposes a new theoretical framework based on the global impact of organizational values on outcomes. The scale was developed by returning to the roots of organizational climate research by looking at the effectiveness literature. Drawing on the CVF, the scale focuses on how values that exist in organizations impact organizational outcomes. Values have been proven to play a vital role in shaping individuals’ perceptions of climate, and serve as a way for employees to make sense of their organizations goals and priorities (Kuenzi, 2008). As opposed to OCM, Kuenzi (2008) argues that molar climate should be measured directly, and not by different factors corresponding to different quadrants; Global values are reflected in the policies, procedures, and practices of the organization. It is individuals' perceptions of these policies, procedures, and practices that make up the climate in organizations. As a result, molar climate within organizations should parallel the four competing values quadrants. (Kuenzi, 2008, p. 86).

**Human relations model**

The Human relations model is one of the four climate types in the CVF. An organizational climate emphasizing human relations values will place much importance on high levels of cohesion and morale among employees through training and development, as well as participative decision-making (Quinn & Rohrbaugh, 1983). Another word for the human relations model is *clan culture*. A core belief in clan cultures is that the organization is committed to the employees and facilitates open communication and employee involvement. Associated behaviors include teamwork, participation and involvement (Hartnell et al., 2011)

A study by Lone et al. (2017) examined the relationship between organizational climate and investigation performance in the Norwegian Police Service building on the CVF. The findings suggest that a human relation climate enhances investigation performance through its effects on human capital (knowledge, skills, and abilities), and through enhancing cooperation and coordination of resources between units, and between districts and special agencies (Lone et al., 2017). In addition to these findings, the current reform and changes that the Norwegian Police is implementing, makes it interesting to examine if, and how, a human relation climate is related to readiness for change.
Perceived organizational support

Perceived organizational support refers to the extent that individuals believe that their organization values their contributions and cares about their well-being (Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchison, & Sowa, 1986). According to organizational support theory, POS is developed by employees’ tendency to give their organization humanlike characteristics (Eisenberger et al., 1986). According to the reciprocity norm, a strong organizational support will likely create an obligation to care about the organization’s welfare and objectives (Rhoades, Eisenberger, & Murphy, 2002). The reciprocity norm stems from social exchange theory, which states that when one person is treated favorably, the norm of reciprocity obligates the return of the same well-treatment (Gouldner, 1960). This way employment can be viewed as an exchange between loyalty and dedication from the employee, and benefits like approval, pay, information and other aid necessary for executing the job, from the employer (Rhoades et al., 2002).

Research on perceived organizational support has found evidence that employees tend to believe that the organization has a general positive or negative orientation towards them, in regard to both their contributions and their well-being. High levels of POS have been found to be strongly related with affective commitment and positive mood (Eisenberger et al., 1986; Lynch, Eisenberger, & Armeli, 1999; Rhoades et al., 2002).

Organizational support from both coworkers and supervisors, has also been linked to increased psychological well-being, which in turn influences job involvement and satisfaction (Häusser, Mojzisch, Niesel, & Schulz-Hardt, 2010). In 1979, Robert Karasek introduced the Job Demand-Control (JDC) model, consisting of the two dimensions job demands and job control, which outlines the relationship between different job characteristics and well-being. In this model, job demands are conceptualized in quantitative terms such as time pressure and workload. Job control, on the other hand, refers to the extent a person can control their own tasks and work activity (Karasek Jr, 1979). According to Karasek Jr (1979), jobs high on demands and low on control, so called “high strain jobs” poses the biggest risk of illness and low well-being.

The JDC was later extended by integrating a third fundamental dimension – social support, naming it the Job Demand-Control-(Support) (JDCS) model (Johnson & Hall, 1988). According to the extended model, social support moderates the negative effects of high strain jobs. This indicates that the most harmful work situations, are those with high demands, low control and low social support (Häusser et al., 2010).
Social support can be divided into two main components; emotional or affective support, and instrumental support. Emotional support refers to whether the individual perceives the organization or coworkers as concerned for their well-being, whereas instrumental support refers to providing aid and information in the work setting (Frese, 1999). These aspects of social support will in most cases be highly correlated; “If coworkers help another employee, for example, to finish a task, they often concurrently give affective support in addition to direct aid. In doing all of this, the coworkers also confirm the other person's belongingness to the group.” (Frese, 1999).

Several studies have found a clear direct link between social support and decrease in several health variables, such as mortality and cardiovascular diseases (Frese, 1999; Uchino, Cacioppo, & Kiecolt-Glaser, 1996). The notion that social support protects employees from the negative impact of work stressors present in jobs with high demands and low control, is known as the buffer hypothesis. Although there have been mixed results in studies examining the buffer effect, there are longitudinal and meta-studies that have demonstrated that social support does protect individuals from negative effects of work stressors (Frese, 1999; Uchino et al., 1996). Perceived organizational support are therefore likely to reduce the stressful effects of an organizational change, which is often associated with high demands and low control (Van der Doef & Maes, 1999).

**Employee participation**

Several findings indicate that during times of change, the greater the extent of participation, the more satisfied employees tend to be, as well as meeting production goals quicker (Holt, Armenakis, Feild, & Harris, 2007). As mentioned, much emphasis is placed on participative decision-making within organizations high on human relations values. This is a term also known as involvement, empowerment, and industrial democracy, among others. In this thesis it will be referred to as employee participation, an umbrella term for initiatives which aim to engage employees in decision-making (Busck, Knudsen, & Lind, 2010).

In Norway, employee participation has a political as well as theoretical tradition, which shares a similar understanding of the concept. Dietz, Wilkinson, and Redman (2010) describe employee participation as “employer-sanctioned schemes that extend to employee collectivities a ‘voice’ in organizational decision-making in a manner that allows employees to exercise significant influence over the processes and outcomes of decision-making” (p. 247). This implies that employee participation involves a range of activities and initiatives introduced by the employer, which may vary in depth, scope and level (Busck et al., 2010; Wilkinson & Dundon, 2010; Wilkinson, Gollan, Marchington, & Lewin, 2010).
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Depth refers to the degree of influence employees can exercise, ranging from receiving information (shallow depth), being consulted, joint decision-making, to self-determination (greater depth). Scope refers to in which domains the employees can participate, varying across operational, tactical and strategical domains. Level refers to the hierarchical level the participation takes place, varying from individual, department to corporate level (Busck et al., 2010; Cotton, Vollrath, Froggatt, Lengnick-Hall, & Jennings, 1988). Employee participation also vary in form, from surveys, focus groups and face-to-face interaction, among others. There is also an important distinction between direct and indirect participation, where the latter refers to processes in which the employees are represented through elected representatives or a union (Busck et al., 2010). This thesis will focus on direct participation. Due to the instrument used and the focus of the thesis, I will adopt a climate perspective on employee participation, which captures varying depths and scope of participation at several levels of the organization.

Development of hypotheses

Human relation climate relationship with perceived organizational support and readiness for change

Organizations with high emphasis on the human relations values, believe that in order to succeed they must hire, develop and retain their human resource base. In other words, there is a high trust and commitment to the employees working in the organization (Hartnell et al., 2011). Consequently, these organizations value attachment, affiliation, membership, and support (Cameron & Quinn, 1999). Several studies examining the CVF has found evidence that a human relations climate is related to support from the organization (Carr et al., 2003; Goodman, Zammuto, & Gifford, 2001; Haffar et al., 2014; Schulte, Ostroff, Shmulyian, Kinicki, & Kozlowski, 2009). It is also argued that perceived organizational support share many similarities with a human relation climate, with its emphasis on the well-being and development of employees (Lone et al., 2017). It therefore expected that a human relation climate will have a positive relationship with perceived organizational support.

There are some empirical studies that have found evidence that perceived organizational support is related to readiness for change (Eby et al., 2000; Jones et al., 2005; Alannah E. Rafferty & Simons, 2005). This is believed to be because adopting a positive attitude towards change is a way for individuals to help an organization achieve its goals. Experiencing high levels of POS will likely make the employees feel that they are taken care off in a change process and thus support it (Eby et al., 2000). The underlying mechanism is
believed to be the reciprocity norm, in which POS produces a perceived obligation to help the organization reach its objectives, such as an organizational change. Perceived organizational support is also linked to other outcomes, such as increased affective commitment and work performance in the police (Armeli, Eisenberger, Fasolo, & Lynch, 1998). This could also indicate that a human relation climate has an indirect effect on readiness for change, through POS. It is therefore hypothesized that:

**H1a:** There is a positive direct effect of the human relation model on perceived organizational support

**H1b:** There is a positive direct effect of perceived organizational support on readiness for change

**H2:** There is a positive indirect effect of the human relations model on readiness for change through perceived organizational support

Another factor that is likely to influence change readiness is the perception of organizational flexibility. An organization with high emphasis on human relations values, will also score high on the flexibility dimension. An organization that is flexible in terms of its ability to implement policy and structural changes rapidly will also likely result in high change readiness (Eby et al., 2000; Jones et al., 2005). Therefore, the following hypothesis is formulated:

**H3:** There is a positive direct effect of the human relation model on readiness for change over and above the effect that could be explained through perceived organizational support and employee participation.

**Human relations model relationship with employee participation and readiness for change**

Organizations high on human relation values will typically provide a climate where employee participation and involvement are valued. Participation in change has been identified as a critical component for reducing resistance to change, and researchers have found that employees who have influence over change processes have significantly lower levels of heart disease, absenteeism and depressions, compared to employees who do not have any influence. High levels of participation have also been found to be associated with beliefs that change will be beneficial for the organization (Jones et al., 2005).

In addition, there are studies suggesting that if an employee views their work climate as highly participative, they will be more receptive and experience the organization as more...
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ready to undergo a large organizational change (Eby et al., 2000). Employee participation is also linked to commitment, increased responsibility and avoidance of conflicts in connection with changes. This is partly because participation leads to higher degrees of well-being, through motivation and empowerment (Busck et al., 2010). Participation has also been found to be negatively related to resistance to change, and positively related to achieving intervention goals (Lines*, 2004; Nielsen & Randall, 2012). It is therefore hypothesized that:

**H4a:** There is a positive direct effect of the human relation model on employee participation  
**H4b:** There is a positive direct effect of employee participation on readiness for change  
**H5:** There is a positive indirect effect of the human relations model on readiness for change through employee participation

**Perceived organizational support relationship with employee participation**

In addition to the proposed hypotheses, there are reason to hypothesize that perceived organizational support will have a direct effect on employee involvement (Lynch et al., 1999). One of the mechanisms linking POS with employee participation, is increased commitment to the organization (Armeli et al., 1998; Leveson & Joiner, 2006). The considerations that lead employees towards a decision to participate are based on the exchange between the individual and the organization. An employee will balance the incentives provided by the organization against the contributions needed to be a member of the organization (Mayer & Schoorman, 1992). This kind of organizational commitment is often called “continuance commitment” and is related to perceived organizational support (Lynch et al., 1999; Mayer & Schoorman, 1992). Continuance commitment can be defined as the desire to remain a member of the organization, and will produce a motivation to participate (Mayer & Schoorman, 1992). Thus, when POS is high, the incentive to participate will increase, following the norm of reciprocity (Rhoades et al., 2002). The last two hypotheses are therefore:

**H6:** There is a positive direct effect of perceived organizational support on employee participation  
**H7:** There is a positive indirect effect of the human relations model on readiness for change through perceived organizational support and employee participation
In sum, this thesis proposes nine hypotheses in total which are summarized in figure 2:

![Diagram of hypothesized relations among variables]

**Figure 2.** Graphical representation of the hypothesized relations among the variables.  
*Note.* Hypotheses H2 (HR → POS → CHA), H5 (HR → PAR → CHA) and H7 (HR → POS → PAR → CHA) are not displayed in the figure.

**Method**

**The Project**

This study was conducted as part of a collaboration research project between the Work and Organizational Psychology department at the University of Oslo, and the research department at The Norwegian Police University College. The aim of the overall research project is to examine factors related to development, change and learning within the Norwegian Police Service. The research and analysis will focus on how these themes are associated with motivation, change willingness and stress, among others.

As mentioned, this thesis will focus on the relationship between organizational climate, more specifically the human relation model as defined by Quinn and Rohrbaugh (1983), and how this climate type relates to change readiness. In addition, I will examine the perceived organizational support and employee participation construct, and propose a model for how the human relation model is related to change readiness through these two constructs.

**The Norwegian Police Service**

At the time of the data gathering, which was shortly before the police reform was initiated, the police consisted of twenty-seven Police Districts and seven special agencies. Each district is managed by the Police Chief, responsible for the results in their respective district. The constitutional responsibility for the Norwegian Police lies with the Ministry of
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Justice and Public Safety, whereas the Directorate of the Police has the responsibility for the professional management and development of the Police Service (Koritzinsky, 2015).

Data Collection
The data was collected between December 2015 and January 2016, and the response rate was 58%. The surveys were distributed on paper and consisted of 144 items in addition to some demographic information (gender, age, job tenure, region, district). Participants were asked to base their answers on their own experiences with working in the police, and to answer all the questions as far as possible. In total, the survey entailed nine measures, but this study will only use four of the scales, presented in the following section.

Sample
The dataset (N=940) was cleansed for any missing data in the relevant items. There are different ways of handling missing data, such as imputation or removing the missing data. In this thesis, I decided to remove the missing data, due to the low percentage of uncompleted responses. This left a sample consisting of 853 respondents from, at the time, three different police districts. Age group range was from 23 years or younger to 64 years or older, with the most frequent age group being 24 – 27 years (17.1%). The sample consisted of 52.9% male and 47.1% female respondents. The majority of the respondents worked with criminal investigation (26%), operational tasks (21.3%), or was employed with civilian background (26.4%).

Measures
This thesis uses four different scales for measuring the constructs of interest: human relation model, perceived organizational support, employee participation and readiness for change. Two of the measures, the human relations model and readiness for change, have been piloted in a previous study of the Norwegian police, see Koritzinsky (2015). The employee participation measure is developed from Burke (2014), and Wilkinson and Dundon (2010), whereas Perceived Organizational Support is based on Lynch et al. (1999). For a full overview of the measures with its items in Norwegian, see Appendix 1. All the measures were rated on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from definitely false (1) to definitely true (5). The middle value (3) was “neither true nor false”, which allowed for neutral responses. Before the analysis, all the negatively worded items were reverse coded. The degree of internal consistency for all the measures was examined by calculating Cronbach’s alpha, where a value of $\alpha \geq .70$ implies adequate reliability (Kline, 2011).
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**Human Relation Model.**

The items making up the Human Relation Model in this thesis, is obtained from Kuenzi’s (2008) "four-component model of molar work climate", as described earlier. In this measurement, the CVF is used as a framework for assessing climate, as opposed to organizational effectiveness (Kuenzi, 2008). The scale has been translated by the Work and Organizational Psychology research group at the University of Oslo, and used in a previous study as part of an instrument developed for measuring police climate (Koritzinsky, 2015). The measure originally consisted of 8 items.

**Perceived Organizational Support.**

The Perceived Organizational Support measure is translated from the Survey of Perceived Organizational Support, obtained from Lynch et al. (1999). This is a unidimensional measure consisting of 8 items. The scale measures whether the employees perceive that their organization cares about their well-being, are concerned about the opinions of the employees, and are willing to help if the employees are in need of any special favors. Thus, the scale measure both instrumental and emotional support. Two example items are “My organization strongly considers my goals and values” and “Help is available from my organization when I have a problem” (Lynch et al., 1999).

**Employee Participation.**

The employee participation measure consists of 6 items obtained from Burke (2014). In addition, it was extended with 6 items from Wilkinson and Dundon (2010) in order to capture the before mentioned differences in depths of participation, such as information, communication, consultation and control. The measure has previously been used in a thesis examining Employee Participation in Norwegian healthcare organizations (Lømo, 2017), and translated to Norwegian by the Department of Psychology at the University of Oslo. An example item is: “Subordinates have an opportunity to contribute to the setting of their department’s goals”.

**Readiness for Change.**

The outcome variable in this thesis is individual readiness for change, as it has demonstrated high importance for a successful change implementation to occur (Jones et al., 2005; Alannah E Rafferty & Jimmieson, 2010; Alannah E. Rafferty & Simons, 2005; Vakola, 2014). The measurement consists of 6 items adopted from Vakola (2014), who define individual readiness for change as “…willingness to support change and confidence in succeeding in change” (Vakola, 2014, p. 196). The measurement has previously been translated to Norwegian by the Organizational Psychology research group, at the University
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of Oslo (Koritzinsky, 2015). Example items are: “When changes occur in my company, I believe that I am ready to cope with them” and “I don’t worry about changes in my company because I believe that there is always a way to cope with them” (Vakola, 2014).

Analysis

Preliminary analysis.

The preliminary and descriptive analysis was conducted with the software SPSS 24.0. Before the factor analysis and the SEM-analysis, the data was evaluated for normality, examining the degree of skewness and kurtosis. The skewness values ranged from -1.291 to -0.147, and the kurtosis values ranged from -0.774 to 2.270. This means that none of the indicators had values indicating problematic skewness or kurtosis, which according to Kline (2016) is an absolute value of >3.0 for skewness, and >10.0 for kurtosis. Additionally, linearity was inspected through examining the scatter plots between the sum scores of each construct, and collinearity by examining the VIF-values which where all below 3 (Kline, 2011). Both were satisfactory.

In some cases when using self-composed or relatively new measures, it can be useful to perform an exploratory factor analysis, in addition to the confirmatory factor analysis. However, because the scales are obtained from well tested instruments, and some of the scales have been used in similar settings before, I chose to rely on the CFA.

Structural Equation Modelling.

To examine and test the hypotheses, structural equation modeling (SEM) were conducted. SEM-analysis is a statistical analysis technique which allows for testing of multiple relationships between latent variables simultaneously. It can be thought of as a combination of both confirmatory factor analysis and regression analysis, which makes it possible to achieve better estimates of the effect sizes between constructs, because it controls for the unique variance in indicators not attributable to their common latent factor (Hair, 2014; Kline, 2011). To conduct the SEM-analysis, the software AMOS 24.0 was used, with maximum likelihood estimation and bootstrapping of the estimates to obtain the 95 % confidence interval of the effects.

Bootstrapping is a nonparametric resampling procedure, often used to test mediation that does not impose the assumption of a normal distribution in the sample. The procedure involves repeatedly sampling from the data set, and estimates the indirect effect in each resampled data set. When repeating this process thousands of times, it produces an approximation of the distribution which is used to construct confidence intervals for the effects (Preacher & Hayes, 2008). This method is often preferred over the Sobel or causal test.
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approach, because it has higher power while maintaining more control over the Type 1 error rate (Preacher & Hayes, 2008).

When conducting a SEM-analysis, the theorized model is split into a measurement model and a structural model. The measurement model ascribes the relationship between the different indicators and their respective latent factors (known as a confirmatory factor analysis), whereas the structural model determines the relation between the latent factors (the hypotheses) (Kline, 2011).

To evaluate how well the theorized model fits with the observed data, several estimates produced by the SEM-analysis are examined. The overall model, or global fit, is inspected by different goodness-of-fit (GOF) indices, which indicates how well the model is able to reproduce the observed covariance matrix among the items. In this thesis the following indices: Chi-square, CFI, RMSEA and SRMR are used as recommended by Kline (2011).

The chi-square ($\chi^2$) is an index which assesses the absolute fit by examining if the specified model is significantly different from the observed covariance matrix. If the chi-square is non-significant ($p>.05$), this indicates a good fit. However, the $\chi^2$ is very sensitive to large sample sizes and models with many indicators, as one or both will inflate the $\chi^2$ and make it difficult to obtain a good model fit (Hair, 2014). In models where N<250, a significant chi-square is expected, which was also the case in this analysis.

The Comparative Fit Index (CFI), is an index ranging from 0-1, where values closer to 1 indicates a good fit. The CFI examines how well the specified model fits the observed data compared to a null model where all the indicators are uncorrelated. According to Hair (2014), a model with N>250 and number of indicators >30, should have a CFI above .92 to indicate good global fit.

Both the Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) and the Standardized Root Mean Residual (SRMR), are badness-of-fit statistics, where values close to zero implies good absolute fit. Together with a CFI above .92, the RMSEA should be less than .08 and the SRMR below .09 to indicate good fit. The RMSEA is often reported with a 90% confidence interval. The SRMR uses the residuals (difference between the estimated and observed covariance) to calculate the average standardizes residuals which indicates how well the overall model fits with the data (Brown, 2015; Hair, 2014).

In addition to global fit, it is important to examine local fit in order to see if there is some particular part of the model that needs to be modified. This is because the global fit estimates do not identify which part of the model needs to be adjusted. To discover local poor-fit, the residuals, modification indices, factor loadings and regression coefficients are
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examined. The standardized covariance residuals are a useful statistic, as it makes it possible to detect if specific indicators are problematic. Due to the size of the sample, the standardized covariance residuals approximate a standardized normal distribution, meaning less than 5% of the residuals should fall outside the range of -2 to +2. Any residuals above an absolute value of 4, raises serious concerns (Hair, 2014; Kline, 2011).

In addition, the estimated parameters of the model need to be inspected. The factor loadings should be above .50, and ideally above .70, be statistically significant and in the predicted direction. Finally, an overall evaluation of both global and local fit is performed, and the model is either retained, modified or rejected (Hair, 2014; Kline, 2011).

Reliability and Validity.

Because the surveys were distributed in pen and pencil format, and not electronically, and was later coded by different coders, it was decided to do an interrater reliability test with five different raters. 100 surveys were coded, each by two raters, and then compared with the original data file. The reliability of agreement was then assessed by calculating Fleiss Kappa, and average pairwise percent agreement. The Fleiss Kappa is a measure which calculate the degree of agreement compared to what would be expected by chance. In general, a coefficient above .75 is considered acceptable (Howell, 2012). The results demonstrated a Fleiss Kappa above .98, and average pairwise agreement above 98% for all scales, indicating high interrater reliability.

Internal consistency and convergent validity in a SEM-analysis is estimated by calculating composite reliability (CR) of the scales. CR is the ratio of explained variance over total variance (Kline, 2011). Values over .70 indicates acceptable reliability (Hair, 2014). In this sample, composite reliability (CR) was above .70 for all constructs, demonstrating satisfactory internal consistency and convergent validity for all scales; Employee participation (CR= .89), Perceived organizational support (CR= .91), Human Relation Model (CR= .88) and Readiness for Change (CR= 0.79).

In addition, construct validity and discriminant validity needs to be examined. This means that items aimed at measuring a particular construct should share a substantial amount of variance, and the constructs needs to be distinct from each other. In other words, the items should have a high loading on one factor, and the constructs should not be highly correlated (Kline, 2011). Discriminant validity can be assessed by examining the factor correlation matrix after the extraction. The correlations between factors should not exceed .70, which was the case for this sample, as this would indicate the factors have a majority of shared variance (Hair, 2014).
Sample Size.

There are different recommendations and requirements for sample size when conducting a SEM-analysis, often N>200. Sample size has been proven to be sensitive to normality, missing data and model complexity (e.g. number of latent variables and paths). In this relatively simple model where N>800, there should be no problem regarding sample size to carry out a SEM-analysis (Hair, 2014)

Ethical Considerations

The study was approved by the Norwegian Centre for Research Data. All respondents were informed about the purpose of the study, how the data was stored and that no individual responses would be disclosed. The participation was voluntary and it was possible to withdraw the consent at any time.

Results

Results of the Descriptive and Preliminary Analysis

In table 1, the means, standard deviations, Cronbach’s alpha and inter-correlations between the measurements before the factor analysis are presented. All the constructs demonstrated moderate to large correlations, and a mean above the response scale center (3), indicating that the sample has a positive degree of employee participation, perceived organizational support, readiness for change, and that they score high on human relation model values.

Table 1

Mean, standard deviation, cronbach’s alpha and zero-order correlations for all constructs before factor analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Construct</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>α</th>
<th>1.</th>
<th>2.</th>
<th>3.</th>
<th>4.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Employee Participation</td>
<td>3.411</td>
<td>.933</td>
<td>.902</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Organizational Support</td>
<td>3.417</td>
<td>.947</td>
<td>.896</td>
<td>.611*</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Human Relation Model</td>
<td>4.034</td>
<td>.820</td>
<td>.882</td>
<td>.678*</td>
<td>.510*</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Readiness for Change</td>
<td>3.794</td>
<td>.801</td>
<td>.730</td>
<td>.295*</td>
<td>.266*</td>
<td>.188*</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Hypothesis Testing – Structural Equation Modelling

Measurement model.

The first step of the SEM-analysis is to establish a measurement model, also known as a confirmatory factor analysis. The first CFA with all the items included (model 1), did not
PREDICTORS OF READINESS FOR CHANGE

meet all the criteria for a good model fit, see table 3. A path diagram of the initial model, can be seen in Appendix 2. As expected due to sample size and number of indicators, the Chi-square was significant. The RMSEA was acceptable, but the CFI was too low and the SRMR to high.

To improve the measurement model, several modifications were made step by step, to check for improvements in the model fit statistics. The CFA revealed some problematic items, indicating that the items PAR3, PAR4, HR7 and HR8 should be excluded from the model due to low factor loadings. The item CHA4 was also excluded due to several high standardized covariance residuals. In addition, after examining the modification indices, some of the error terms belonging to similarly worded questions were allowed to covary (as displayed in figure 3), as it is possible they share some unique variance. One example of this is item PAR1 (Employees are given the opportunity to influence the goal of the department) and PAR2 (Employees are given the opportunity to influence each other’s goals).

Other error terms were also allowed to covary based on similarity in content. For example, HR2 (The working environment at our unit is such that we get along well with each other) and HR3 (We have little conflict between us at our unit), can be explained by the similarity in themes – how the working environment at the unit is experienced. The presence of conflict might indicate that the police officers don’t get along well with each other.

Table 2
Mean, standard deviation, chronbach’s alpha and zero-order correlations for all constructs after factor analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Construct</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>a</th>
<th>1.</th>
<th>2.</th>
<th>3.</th>
<th>4.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Employee Participation</td>
<td>3.357</td>
<td>.949</td>
<td>.901</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Organizational Support</td>
<td>3.417</td>
<td>.947</td>
<td>.896</td>
<td>.604*</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Human Relation Model</td>
<td>4.222</td>
<td>.758</td>
<td>.881</td>
<td>.587*</td>
<td>.469*</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Readiness for Change</td>
<td>3.933</td>
<td>.782</td>
<td>.763</td>
<td>.337*</td>
<td>.323*</td>
<td>.229*</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

The path diagram for the initial measurement model (model 1) with all the original items is presented in Appendix 2, and the model’s respective communalities can be seen in Appendix 3. An overview of the GOF-indices for both the initial model (model 1) and the modified model (model 2), can be seen below in table 3.
Table 3

Measurement model Goodness of Fit statistics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>$\chi^2$</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>$\chi^2$/df</th>
<th>CFI</th>
<th>RMSEA [CI]</th>
<th>SRMR</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>3011.26*</td>
<td>523</td>
<td>5.76</td>
<td>0.833</td>
<td>0.075 [0.072, 0.077]</td>
<td>0.066</td>
<td>All items included</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>1115.99*</td>
<td>364</td>
<td>3.07</td>
<td>0.941</td>
<td>0.049 [0.046, 0.053]</td>
<td>0.047</td>
<td>Items: HR7, HR8, PAR3, PAR4 and CHA4, are excluded</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Chi-square significant at the 0.05 level.
190 % confidence interval of the RMSEA.

After the modifications, the GOF indices indicated a good fit. A common question when conducting a SEM-analysis is when to stop modifying it to achieve even better fit. As a general rule, when the initial model fits well, it is recommended to stop modifying it as any further modifications might just be fitting the model to small idiosyncratic characteristics in the sample (MacCallum, Roznowski, & Necowitz, 1992).

**Structural model**

After the measurement model has been modified, the next step in the SEM-analysis is to specify the structural model by introducing the paths between the latent variables (the hypotheses). The complete model can be seen in figure 3. The estimates displayed between the latent variables, are interpreted as standardized regression coefficients ($\beta$). The estimates between the items and their factor is the factor loadings, whereas the estimates displayed on the double-headed arrows are correlations. The structural model produced the same goodness-of-fit indices as the modified measurement model (model 2), presented in table 3, and was therefore retained.
Before the mediating latent variables were introduced, the direct effect between the human relation model and readiness for change was examined, showing a significant positive effect (β=.275). This was done in order to establish whether or not there was a relationship to be mediated. Table 5 presents the direct, indirect and total effects between all the latent variables. All the effects, except the direct effect between the human relation model and readiness for change, were significant (p <.05) and in the expected direction. Hypothesis 3 was therefore rejected, indicating a full mediation effect. There was a significant positive direct effect of the human relation model on both perceived organizational support (H1a: β=.533) and employee participation (H4a: β=.436). Perceived organizational support had a significant positive effect on both participation (H6: β=.444) and readiness for change (H1b:
PREDICTORS OF READINESS FOR CHANGE

β=.166). Employee participation had a significant direct effect on change readiness (H4b: β=.299). In addition, there was a positive indirect effect of human relation model through employee participation (H5: β=.132), and through perceived organizational support (H2: β=.090) to change readiness. The effect of the human relation model on perceived organizational support through employee participation to readiness for change was also significant (H7: β=.070). In total, the model explained 18% of the variance in readiness for change, whereas the human relation model explained 59% of the variance in employee participation, and 28% of the variance in perceived organizational support.

Table 4
Estimates of direct, indirect and total effects between latent variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parameter</th>
<th>Unstandardized</th>
<th>SE</th>
<th>95% CI</th>
<th>Standardized</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HR → POS</td>
<td>0.904*</td>
<td>.070</td>
<td>[0.770, 1.049]</td>
<td>.533</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HR → PAR</td>
<td>0.479*</td>
<td>.045</td>
<td>[0.395, 0.569]</td>
<td>.436</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>POS → PAR</td>
<td>0.288*</td>
<td>.029</td>
<td>[0.233, 0.349]</td>
<td>.444</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>POS → CHA</td>
<td>0.081*</td>
<td>.030</td>
<td>[0.023, 0.140]</td>
<td>.166</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PAR → CHA</td>
<td>0.227*</td>
<td>.054</td>
<td>[0.123, 0.336]</td>
<td>.299</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HR → CHA</td>
<td>-0.011</td>
<td>.051</td>
<td>[-0.112, 0.092]</td>
<td>-.013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HR → POS → CHA</td>
<td>0.073*</td>
<td>.028</td>
<td>[0.022, 0.130]</td>
<td>.090</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HR → PAR → CHA</td>
<td>0.109*</td>
<td>.028</td>
<td>[0.059, 0.169]</td>
<td>.132</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HR → POS → PAR → CHA</td>
<td>0.059*</td>
<td>.015</td>
<td>[0.032, 0.094]</td>
<td>.070</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total indirect effect</td>
<td>0.241*</td>
<td>.036</td>
<td>[0.174, 0.319]</td>
<td>.292</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total effect</td>
<td>0.230*</td>
<td>.041</td>
<td>[0.151, 0.314]</td>
<td>.003</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. HR= Human relation model, POS= Perceived organizational support, PAR= Employee participation, CHA= Readiness for change, CI= Bias-corrected confidence interval
Confidence intervals and standard errors are based on non-parametric bootstrapping. Number of bootstrap samples = 10000.
* Coefficient is significant at the 0.05 level.
Discussion

The objective of this study was to explore the relationship between a human relation climate as defined by Quinn and Rohrbaugh (1983), and perceived organizational support, employee participation and readiness for change. More specifically the aim was to investigate whether the human relation model had a direct effect on readiness for change, and if there were any indirect effects through employee participation and perceived organizational support. The thesis presented nine hypotheses which were examined in a sample from the Norwegian Police Service, tested in a structural equation model.

The first hypotheses looked at the relationship between the human relation model, perceived organizational support and readiness for change. Hypothesis H1a proposed that there is a direct and positive relationship between the human relation model and perceived organizational support, and hypothesis H1b stated that there is a direct positive effect of perceived organizational support on readiness for change. Both hypotheses produced significant results as predicted. This indicates that individuals working in an organizational climate high on human relation values also experience high perceived organizational support, which on the other hand is related to enhanced levels of readiness for change. This is further supported by hypothesis H2 which proposed that there is a positive indirect effect of the human relation model on readiness for change, through perceived organizational support. This indicates that some of the positive effect a human relation climate has on change readiness goes through the enhanced levels of perceived organizational support.

Further, the model examined the direct effect of the human relation model on employee participation (H4a), and of employee participation on readiness for change (H4b). Both produced significant results in the predicted direction, indicating that human relation values are positively related to higher degrees of employee participation. The results also indicate that organizations that have a high degree of employee participation will experience more readiness for change among their employees. The human relation model also has an indirect effect on readiness for change through employee participation, supporting hypothesis H5.

The model also proposed a positive relationship between perceived organizational support and employee participation (H6), which was supported. This indicates that organizations that have a high level of perceived organizational support also experiences higher employee participation. In addition, there was a small indirect effect of the human relation model on readiness for change through perceived organizational support and employee participation (H7).
Lastly, it was hypothesized that there is a positive direct effect of the human relation model on readiness for change, over and above the effect that could be explained through perceived organizational support and employee participation (H3). This hypothesis was not supported, indicating that there is a full mediation effect of perceived organizational support and employee participation on readiness for change.

In summary, the results suggest that an organizational climate high on human relation values, characterized by high flexibility and an internal focus, positively affects perceived organizational support and employee participation, which in turn influences individual readiness for change. All the hypotheses except for H3 were supported, and examination of the global and local fit gives support for the theorized model. Examination of the effect sizes, ($\beta$ and $R^2$), shows medium to strong relationships between the variables. These findings have important and interesting theoretical and practical implications.

**Implications**

**Theoretical implications**

The current study examines factors related to readiness for change as conceptualized by Vakola (2014), which is useful at both a practical and theoretical level. At the theoretical level, the proposed model provides information and knowledge that can better our understanding of the organizational change process in general, and in the police specifically. In addition, it sheds light on important factors related to change readiness and how this is associated with organizational climate. The findings also provide a broader theoretical and operational understanding of the constructs readiness for change, organizational climate, employee participation and perceived organizational support.

**Readiness for change**

Readiness for change is an important and interesting construct, as a low level of individual change readiness has been identified as the major reason for failure in implementing a successful organizational change (Armenakis et al., 1993; Haffar et al., 2014). This is because “organizations only change and act through their members, and even the most collective activities that take place in organizations are the result of some amalgamation of the activities of individual organizational members” (George & Jones, 2001, p. 420).

Many studies have examined the antecedents of readiness for change. One critical factor is the change message communicated to the employees. It has been argued that the message should address the need for change, the confidence in the ability of the organization and the employees to undertake the change, as well as indicating that support for the change exists (Armenakis et al., 1993; Alannah E. Rafferty & Simons, 2005). Other important factors
related to readiness for change, is the perceived participation at the workplace and trust in peers. Individuals who regard organizational policies as flexible rather than inflexible, also show higher support for change initiatives (Eby et al., 2000). This might explain the strong relationship found between change readiness, employee participation and perceived organizational support.

The results from this study confirm findings from other studies that have linked a human relation climate to enhanced readiness for change (Choi & Ruona, 2011; Eby et al., 2000; Alannah E Rafferty & Jimmieson, 2010). In addition, the results further the understanding of mechanisms contributing to this effect, as the relationship is fully mediated by employee participation and perceived organizational support. Theoretically, this gives a broader understanding of how organizational climate perceptions can affect readiness for change at an individual level. For example, researchers such as Holt et al. (2007), have treated change readiness as a multidimensional construct, including management support for the change as an important dimension. This might explain the strong relationship found between POS and readiness for change.

**Human relation climate**

The findings in this study provide further evidence that a human relation climate can positively affect individual readiness for change. As Jones et al. (2005) points out, there are similarities between the human relation values and the notion of reshaping capabilities. More specifically, this means that an organization with emphasis on human relation values will enhance participation and development, which facilitates individual and group behaviors towards better change outcomes (Jones et al., 2005).

In addition, an organization with high emphasis on human relations is characterized by the training and development of its human resources, which may relate to employees’ capability to undertake new workplace challenges, such as a change initiative. Factors such as communication and employee involvement, which is empirically demonstrated to be associated with readiness for change, are also characteristics of the human relations model (Haffar et al., 2014; Jones et al., 2005). As a result of adequate training and awareness in connection with the proposed change initiative, members of a clan organization are likely to have high levels of readiness for change. They are also more likely to believe that their organization won’t introduce any changes that will negatively affect its members (Haffar et al., 2014).

As noted by Eby et al. (2000), the perception of the organization’s flexibility seems to play a vital role in the employees’ perception about the organization’s change readiness. If the
Predictors of Readiness for Change

An organization is good at adapting and changing their policies in response to the change, individual readiness for change seems to increase. However, in the proposed model, the relationship between the human relation climate and change readiness, was fully mediated by employee participation and perceived organizational support. This might imply that POS and involvement in decisions is related to how flexible the organization appears. This is possibilities for future research.

**Perceived organizational support**

Perceived organizational support was strongly positively related with readiness for change, supporting other studies (Eby et al., 2000; Alannah E Rafferty & Jimmieson, 2010). This is believed to be because employees’ views having a positive mindset to the organizational change as a way to support the organization and help it receive its goals.

Organizational support can be viewed as a primary intervention, which may help prevent employee health being damaged by the stress often evident in large organizational changes (Arnold & Randall, 2016). As opposed to secondary and tertiary interventions, primary interventions deal with problems identified by a large proportion of the employees, targeting the group instead of the individual. The emotional support from the organization, which has been linked to reduced stress and improved well-being, might explain the strong relationship seen between POS and change readiness (Arnold & Randall, 2016; Weiner, 2009).

A human relation climate often uses teamwork as a way to organize the work, which has been proven to increase social support as employees get to solve problems together and influence decisions (Nielsen & Randall, 2012; Parker & Williams, 2001). This can explain the strong link seen between HR and POS, and between POS and PAR. One of the mechanisms that explains why POS has a positive impact on participation, is believed to be the increase in commitment to the organization (Leveson & Joiner, 2006). Because the employee wants to be a member of the organization, the incentive to participate increases (Rhoades et al., 2002).

However, it is also possible to imagine that an increase in participation will lead to an increase in perceived organizational support. As discussed earlier, instrumental and emotional support tends to be highly interrelated, indicating that when coworkers work together and participate, they will also experience social support (Frese, 1999). Thus, they might mutually enhance each other.

**Employee participation**

The findings that employee participation is positively related to individual readiness for change, is consistent with Armenakis et al. (1993) initial model of change readiness, and is
also supported by other current theorizing (Eby et al., 2000; Spreitzer, 1996; Thomas & Velthouse, 1990). This indicates that involving employees in decisions and providing information, will also increase their positive attitude towards the change, and the perceived likelihood of the change being successful (Armenakis et al., 1993).

The scale used in this study measures direct participation, meaning that the employees have power to influence decisions. Participation can be viewed as a development process, where the employees interact with the management through dialogue and co-determination in order to reach decisions (Rasmussen & Nielsen, 2011). The strong relationship between the human relation climate and employee participation, can be attributed to the learning culture which characterizes human relation values. A learning culture is characterized by encouraging employees to develop their skills and undertake organizational inquiries. This creates an environment in which individuals can share their knowledge, and constantly develop and modify their image of their own abilities and of the organization. This gives rise to new procedures and routines, which again can change the organization’s “best practice” (Argyris & Schön, 1997; Choi & Ruona, 2011). Thus, the learning culture encourages and enables employees to be learning agents and be ready for the organizational change on behalf of their organization (Choi & Ruona, 2011; Rasmussen & Nielsen, 2011).

**Practical implications**

A lot of research on organizational change has focused on resistance to change, instead of factors influencing readiness for change (Choi & Ruona, 2011). Getting more knowledge about change readiness can have many practical implications when creating and successfully implementing organizational change initiatives. The information about how organizational climate relates to readiness for change can, for instance, be used in the diagnostic phase when planning an organizational change (Eby et al., 2000). As Jones et al. (2005) notes, “[…] readiness for change may be the mechanism through which an organizational culture emphasizing human relations values impacts on successful change outcomes” (p. 380).

The objective of organizational change is very often to increase the effectiveness and cut expenses. According to Cameron and Quinn (2011), ignoring the effects of organizational climate is one of the biggest barriers in implementing new change initiatives. They recommend to always starting with diagnosing and assessing the current status of the OC before starting the change process. Both general factors (such as climate) and more specific factors (such as participation and support), may represent conditions necessary for a successful implementation of a change effort (Eby et al., 2000; Haffar et al., 2014).
PREDICTORS OF READINESS FOR CHANGE

One approach could be to assess the OC and identify the gap between the current position of the OC and the wanted characteristics required to achieve higher readiness for change. This can make it easier to identify changes needed to build a more supportive and participative climate. If considerable gaps are detected and nothing is done to improve it, one can expect to find low levels of readiness for change, consequently threatening the change implementation (Haffar et al., 2014).

The findings of this study also indicate that directing attention and effort toward increasing perception of support and employee participation might have a positive impact on readiness for change. This can be achieved in numerous ways, such as providing skills training and creating discussion forums in which the employees can participate in decisions relevant to the change effort (Eby et al., 2000).

When discussing the practical implications of employee participation, it is important to acknowledge the unique position of the Nordic countries. In Norway, the Norwegian Work Environment Act, establishes rights and obligations regarding both direct and indirect participation (Gustavsen, 2011). It is therefore adjacent to expect that a Norwegian sample might have different expectations regarding employee participation, compared to a sample from another country. Managers are also legally required to involve the employees in matters regarding their work. This is also evident in the low scores the Nordic countries have in power distance (Hofstede & Hofstede, 2005). This indicates that the findings might not be applicable to other countries with very high power-distance. However, direct participation is still very dependent on the type of leadership being applied also in Norway (Gustavsen, 2011; Rasmussen & Nielsen, 2011).

For the police, the findings imply that in addition to enhancing investigation performance (Lone et al., 2017), a human relation climate also positively impacts readiness for change. For a successful implementation of the reform, the results indicate that creating arenas for participation, as well as an active supporting management and organization, might make the organizational change more likely to succeed through enhancing change readiness.

The police reform is based on a planned approach to organizational change, which has its roots from Kurt Lewin, as mentioned in the introduction. Within the organizational psychology literature, there is also another approach to organizational change, known as the emergent approach (Arnold & Randall, 2016). Advocates for the emergent approach argues that change is a continuous process in which the organization has to adapt rapidly to unpredictable situations. This means that the change process can be viewed as a constant experiment where the organization has to adjust itself to meet the new environment. Although
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a human relation climate is characterized by flexibility, it is also known for having an internal focus, thereby not as concerned with the external environment as for example the open system climate (Schneider et al., 2013). How well suited an organization with large emphasis on human relation values will handle sudden and rapid changes in the environment, is something that should be investigated further.

Limitations

This study has some methodological as well as theoretical limitations that need to be addressed. The first limitation concerns that this study uses a cross-sectional research design, instead of a longitudinal design, meaning that all the data was gathered at the same time. This restricts the possibility to study the development of the variables over a period of time (Haffar et al., 2014). This also implies that it’s not possible to draw any conclusions regarding the causal relationship between the variables.

To get even broader and deeper information about organizational climate’s influence on readiness for change, it is possible to supplement with in-depth interviews, a so-called mixed methods design. This study uses self-report measures in order to examine individuals’ perceptions and attitudes directly. However, because the same employee report on both the predictors and criterion variable, there is an increased risk of measuring variance that is attributable to the measurement method, and not to the constructs the measures are meant to represent. This is called common method variance (CMV) (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee, & Podsakoff, 2003). The real effects between the factors can be distorted because variables related to the respondent or the measurement instrument might systematically impact the covariance between the variables (Lømo, 2017). By including in-depth interviews, the validity and reliability of the findings would increase, and the degree of bias would be reduced (Haffar et al., 2014). In addition, this study is limited to the Norwegian police service, and the results should therefore not be generalized to other sectors. As mentioned, the police culture is very distinctive and shaped by the occupation, meaning that another sample might not produce the same findings.

Even though the model provides evidence of a positive relationship between a human relation climate, perceived organizational support, participation and change readiness, it does not conclude what comes first. The direction might be different than this model proposes, and other variables not included in the model might explain the positive association. For instance, the presence of high organizational support and employee participation might be antecedences of a human relation climate, and not the other way around. Or they might mutually enhance each other. As Kuenzi (2008) points out in her review, there is a lot less research on the
antecedents of climate than on the consequences of climate. There exist some theoretical papers suggesting how climates are formed (Schneider & Reichers, 1983), but very few empirical studies confirming the theory. There are even fewer studies researching the antecedents of how climate change. This implies that more research is needed to understand the causal relationship and direction between global climate and changes in policies and practices (Kuenzi, 2008).

Other possible limitations include the conceptualization of change readiness, and thereby the scale used to measure it. The readiness for change scale is adopted from Vakola (2014), and treats readiness for change as an unidimensional construct, focusing on the individuals’ own beliefs in their abilities to cope with the change, and intention to support it. The scale was developed for the purpose of Vakola’s study based on existing literature, as there was no other relevant instrument measuring readiness for change as a single factor (Vakola, 2014).

Other studies have used a wider and multidimensional approach to change readiness, arguing that it consists of both change-specific efficacy, management support, personal benefit for the change, and the appropriateness of the change (Holt et al., 2007). A much referred to instrument created by Holt et al. (2007), defines readiness for change as a comprehensive attitude influenced by content (what is being changed), how the change is being implemented, the context, and the individual characteristics of those participating in the change (Holt et al., 2007). For this reason, some might argue that the scale used in this study does not fully capture existing definitions of readiness for change, and should be improved upon in future studies.

However, the scale developed by Holt et al. (2007) consists of 25 items, which would make the questionnaire very long, increasing the risk of fatigue. One could also argue that some of the additional dimensions included in Holt et al. (2007) instrument, might be covered by other scales, such as perceived organizational support.

Finally, the question of whether or not CVF is a good climate measure, should be addressed. The scale used in the current study is obtained from Kuenzi (2008), which treats molar climates as its own construct. Some argue that the CVF is a good way to generate a global view of organizational climate, but that it might lack the level of detail required for an intervention (Scott, Mannion, Davies, & Marshall, 2003). The CVF was originally a measure of organizational effectiveness based on values which indicates what’s important in the work environment (Kuenzi, 2008; Schneider & Reichers, 1983). These values affect policies, practices and procedure in the organization. How the employees perceive these practices will
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then make up the work climate perceptions (Kuenzi, 2008). However, other researchers, such as Patterson et al. (2005), argues that global climate is a multifaceted construct, and should therefore not be measured directly.

Other criticism towards the CVF addresses whether or not it is possible to measure organizational climate by only using two or three dimensions. Those who advocates the use of the model claims that it is not created to explore the panorama of organizational climate, but instead looks at value dimensions related to effectiveness. This way, it is a useful tool which integrates most of the climate dimensions evident in the literature (Yu & Wu, 2009). This is a subject that requires more research.

**Future research**

Drawing on the findings and limitations of this study, there are several possibilities for future research that could enhance the understanding of the relationship between organizational climate and readiness for change. In addition to the topics mentioned in the discussion, this study opens up for several interesting research subjects.

Firstly, this study only examines the human relation climate and its relationship with change readiness. To the authors’ knowledge, there is only one study that looks at the relationship between all the four quadrants in the competing values framework and individual readiness for change, and this study is limited to the Syrian manufacturing service (Haffar et al., 2014). Other studies have suggested that the open system climate might also have a positive impact on readiness for change, with mixed results (Eby et al., 2000; Haffar et al., 2014; Jones et al., 2005). This is something that should be investigated further.

Lastly, the findings in this study should be studied using a longitudinal design, in order to better assess the causality between the variables. As of today, little research exists on the antecedents and changes in organizational climate. In order to affect organizational climate and related outcomes, more research is needed to establish the directional relationships between the associated behaviors, such as individual readiness for change.

**Conclusion**

Readiness for change is a concept which has gained a lot of attraction due to the importance it has in successfully implementing an organizational change (Armenakis et al., 1993; Oreg et al., 2011). The current study has examined the relationship between organizational climate and change readiness, and proposed a model for how a human relation climate affects readiness for change through perceived organizational support and employee participation.
The thesis presented a structural equation model consisting of nine hypotheses, in which eight produced significant results. The findings suggest that perceived organizational support and employee readiness are important mediators explaining the relationship between human relation values and readiness for change.

Hopefully the findings can be used to get a broader understanding of how organizational climate affects change readiness in general, and in the police specifically, which has both practical and theoretical implications.
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PREDICTORS OF READINESS FOR CHANGE


PREDICTORS OF READINESS FOR CHANGE


PREDECTORS OF READINESS FOR CHANGE


PREDICTORS OF READINESS FOR CHANGE


### APPENDIX 1: Measures in Norwegian

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Construct</th>
<th>Item name</th>
<th>Item statement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Human relation model</td>
<td>HR1</td>
<td>Vi utvikler støttende, positive arbeidsforhold her på enheten</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>HR2</td>
<td>Arbeidsmiljøet er sånn at vi på enheten kommer godt overens med hverandre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>HR3</td>
<td>Vi har lite konflikt mellom oss på enheten</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>HR4</td>
<td>Vi er forpliktet til hverandre her på enheten</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>HR5</td>
<td>Det er høy moral blant ansatte på enheten</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>HR6</td>
<td>På min enhet hjelper vi ansatte hverandre når det trengs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>HR7</td>
<td>Hver ansatt har muligheter for utvikling her på enheten</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>HR8</td>
<td>Hver ansatt har muligheter for faglig utvikling her på enheten</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employee participation</td>
<td>PAR1</td>
<td>Medarbeidere gis mulighet til å påvirke de mål enheten setter seg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PAR2</td>
<td>Medarbeidere har anledning til å påvirke hverandres arbeidsmålsetninger</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PAR3</td>
<td>Medarbeidere deler sine tanker og meninger med hverandre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PAR4</td>
<td>Medarbeidere på denne enheten mottar sjelden tilstrekkelig informasjon i forkant av endringer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PAR5</td>
<td>Medarbeidere gis anledning til å påvirke den generelle retningen til enheten</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PAR6</td>
<td>Nærmeste leder og underordnede evaluerer i fellesskap hvordan arbeidsoppgaver utføres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PAR7</td>
<td>Det er en effektiv kommunikasjonskanal mellom ledelsen og de ansatte på denne enheten</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PAR8</td>
<td>Endringer som har innvirkning på enheten blir planlagt i fellesskap mellom ledere og medarbeidere</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PAR9</td>
<td>Medarbeidere har anledning til å påvirke hvordan kollegaer utfører sine arbeidsoppgaver</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construct</td>
<td>Item name</td>
<td>Item statement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Predictors of Readiness for Change</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PAR10</td>
<td>Medarbeidere drøfter i fellesskap med kollegaer hvordan arbeidsoppgaver utføres</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PAR11</td>
<td>Medarbeidere mottar tilstrekkelig informasjon til at de kan gjøre seg opp en mening om beslutninger som treffes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PAR12</td>
<td>Ledelsen er tilstrekkelig informert om saker som er viktige for denne enheten</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived Organizational Support</td>
<td>POS1</td>
<td>Denne organisasjonen bryr seg virkelig om de ansattes velvære</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>POS2</td>
<td>Denne organisasjonen tar i stor grad hensyn til de ansattes målsettinger og verdier</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>POS3</td>
<td>Denne organisasjonen viser lite omsorg for de ansatte</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>POS4</td>
<td>Denne organisasjonen bryr seg om hva de ansatte mener</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>POS5</td>
<td>Denne organisasjonen er villig til å hjelpe de ansatte om de har behov for en spesiell tjeneste</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>POS6</td>
<td>Hjelp er tilgjengelig fra denne organisasjonen når de ansatte har et problem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>POS7</td>
<td>Denne organisasjonen ville tilgi de ansatte om de gjorde en ærlig feil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>POS8</td>
<td>Gitt muligheten, ville denne organisasjonen utnyttet de ansatte</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change readiness</td>
<td>CHA1</td>
<td>Når endringer skjer på min enhet tror jeg at jeg er klar for å takle dem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CHA2</td>
<td>Jeg prøver vanligvis å overbevise folk på min enhet om å akseptere endring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CHA3</td>
<td>Når endringer skjer på min enhet pleier jeg å klage på dem heller enn å gjøre noe med dem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CHA4</td>
<td>Jeg tror at jeg er mer klar for å akseptere endring enn mine kollegaer på min enhet</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Predictors of Readiness for Change

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Construct</th>
<th>Item name</th>
<th>Item statement</th>
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<tr>
<td>CHA5</td>
<td></td>
<td>Jeg er ikke bekymret for endringer på min enhet fordi jeg tror at det er en måte å takle dem på</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHA6</td>
<td></td>
<td>Når endringer skjer på min enhet har jeg stort sett til hensikt å støtte dem</td>
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APPENDIX 2: Measurement model 1 – Path diagram
APPENDIX 3: Measurement model 2: Communalities

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<tr>
<td>HR1</td>
<td>0.634</td>
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<td>0.593</td>
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<td>0.484</td>
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<td>0.507</td>
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<td>0.518</td>
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<td>0.544</td>
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<td>PAR1</td>
<td>0.467</td>
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<td>0.412</td>
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<td>0.658</td>
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