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Resistance to Change -**

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## **Abstract**

Organizations are continually confronted with the need to implement changes in order to compete, prosper and survive. Therefore, understanding what makes a change implementation successful or not is crucial. This study investigates the relationship between an individual's internal inclination to resist change and affective, behavior and cognitive resistance to change. We further propose that this relationship is moderated by a relatively new concept, Perceived Perspective Taking.

We distributed one web-based questionnaire to employees ( $n = 373$ ) at a large Scandinavian bank that had recently gone through a comprehensive office move, which involved moving all employees into another building. The employees also switched from designated working spaces, to open working spaces with "first come, first serve" policy. Based on the valid responses obtained ( $n = 125$ ), three hierarchical regression analyses were conducted. We found a direct positive relationship from dispositional resistance to all three forms of resistance to change. A moderating effect of perceived perspective taking was only found for the relationship between dispositional resistance and cognitive resistance. However, this effect was not sustained when controlling for trust and gender.

The results confirm Dispositional Resistance to Change as predictor of all three dimensions of change, and thus also the view of resistance to change as a tridimensional construct. Although no decisive effect was found from perceived perspective taking, our research contributes to the exploration of a fairly new concept in organizational research. In light of these findings we discuss theoretical contributions, limitations, directions for future research and implication for practice.

## Introduction

It might be a cliché to say that organizations continuously change, but it does not make it less true. It is well known that organizations are continually confronted with the need to implement changes in order to compete, prosper and survive (Armenakis, Harris & Mossholder, 1993; Carter, Armenakis, Feild & Mossholder, 2013; Kotter & Schlesinger 1979). In the past decade, organizational change initiatives have increased as organizations face a more globalized world characterized by fast-paced technological advancement, economic instability and high competition (Burnes, 2004; Madsen, Miller & John, 2005). It is clear that organizational changes to a high degree affect organizational performance (Huber, Sutcliffe, Miller & Glick, 1993). Therefore understanding what makes a change implementation successful or not is a highly important and interesting research area.

Several factors are contributing to the effectiveness of change implementation in organizations. One commonly known factor is organizational and individual readiness for change (Armenakis et al., 1993; Carter et al., 2013; Sonenshein, 2014)). There seems to be consensus among researchers that organizations must be in a continued state of change readiness (Madsen et al., 2005; Rowden, 2001; Smith, 2005) and that employees must be open, prepared and ready for change in order for the change to be successful (Backer, 1995; Eby, Adams, Russell & Gaby, 2000). Still, 25 % of Norwegian employees think there are too many changes in their workplace, even though 62 % state that they understand why the changes are being carried out (Ennova A/S, 2016). Thus, by understanding the underlying mechanisms that influence change attitudes one can prevent organizations from spending significant amounts of time and resources dealing with resistance to change (Smith, 2005).

Many researchers refer to the importance of change readiness, openness and commitment when discussing organizational change (Armenakis et al., 1993; Madsen et al., 2005; Rowden, 2001; Smith, 2005). However, they could have referred to resistance, as it is argued that these are similar concepts and can be viewed as different ways of describing the same phenomenon (Oreg, Vakola & Armenakis, 2011). Readiness has been seen as the cognitive precursor to support or resist behaviors towards a change initiative (Armenakis et al., 1993; Backer, 1995) and it is therefore reasonable to believe that the mechanisms that increase

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employee readiness will decrease employee resistance to change (Palmer, 2004; Smith, 2005).

The objective of this study is to uncover a more detailed picture of resistance to change. We will, like other researchers before us, address the call to understand resistance to change as a multifaceted phenomenon, consisting of employees' feelings, behaviors and thoughts towards change (Oreg, 2006; Piderit, 2000; Schlesinger, 1982). This view is according to Oreg (2006) capturing complexity of the phenomenon and may provide a better understanding of resistance and its antecedents and consequences.

We further explore whether resistance to change is predicted by personality, or whether it depends upon other factors such as context or relationships. Oreg (2003) explains that people react differently to change, and therefore they also differ in the internal inclination to adopt or resist changes. These differences can predict how people express their resistance. This internal inclination is referred to as dispositional resistance to change, and is conceptualized as a stable personality trait (Oreg, 2003, 2006).

Resistance has been seen as a function of interpersonal relationships (Ford, Ford & D'Amelio, 2008; Powell & Posner, 1978). Hanpachern, Morgan and Griego (1998) found that social relationships significantly relate to readiness for change and Cunningham et al. (2002) found that supportive colleagues play an important role in employee efforts to cope with the stress of organizational change. Several have argued that such an effect occurs due to the fact that social relationships create a sense of reciprocity, leading workers to "pay back", for instance by not resisting new initiatives (Battilana & Casciaro, 2013a; Kouzes & Posner, 2011; Walumbwa, Cropanzano & Goldman, 2011).

By taking the former discussion into consideration, we introduce perceived perspective taking as a moderator of the relationship between dispositional resistance and affective, behavioral and cognitive resistance to change. Perspective taking is known as the ability to put oneself in another person's situation and understanding how that person thinks about a problem (Falk & Johnson, 1977). Perceived perspective taking on the other hand, is a relatively new concept and occurs when a person believes that another is actively taking their perspective (Ferguson, 2016). Although there has been limited research on perceived perspective taking it is believed to have the same interpersonal benefit as perspective taking (Goldstein, Vezich and Shapiro, 2014). This is notable as

research demonstrates that perspective taking facilitates more rewarding and smoother interpersonal relationships (Davis, 1983). Additionally, it motivates helping behaviors towards the target of the perspective taking (e.g. Batson, 1994; Chartrand & Bargh, 1999).

Our objective in this study is to make a contribution to theory within organizational change, by investigating how resistance to change is predicted, expressed and moderated. We will test the effect of dispositional resistance on affective, behavioral and cognitive resistance, in order to assess whether it is a predictor of all three types. Thus, we hope to support the notion of resistance as a tridimensional construct. Further, we investigate how interpersonal relationships between subordinates and leaders, in this case expressed by perceived perspective taking, moderate the aforementioned relationships.

## **Theory**

### **Resistance to Change**

A change can be understood as a situation that interrupts normal patterns of organizations and requires participants to enact in new ways (Mintzberg & Waters, 1985). It has further been defined as “the difference in how an organization functions, who its members and leaders are, what form it takes, or how it allocates its resources” (Huber et al., 1993, p. 216). In the same vein, the organizational development perspective sees change as an intentional effort to make differences in the organizational work setting, where the main purpose is to improve organizational development and enhance individual performance (Porras & Robertson, 1992).

It was once accepted that everyone will resist change (Kirkpatrick, 1985), and employees that show resistance to organizational change have often been blamed for sabotaging the process. Such resistance have often been considered one of the main reasons for why change processes fail (Sonenshein, 2014), however it is now known that the way people are treated during the change implementation can considerably influence employee resistance (Cobb, Folger & Wooten, 1995).

A great amount of studies have explored resistance to change and the majority of these have defined resistance as negative behaviors towards a specific change (Armenakis et al., 1993; Brower & Abolafia, 1995; Coch & French 1948). However, over the years, researchers have called for a more complex definition to better capture the phenomena (Giangreco and Peccei, 2005; Oreg, 2006; Oreg et

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al., 2011; Piderit, 2000; Powell & Posner, 1978). Three lines of arguments have been prevalent here.

**Resistance is not purely negative.** Giangreco and Peccei (2005) emphasize the importance of adopting a broader concept of resistance to change, which includes both positive and negative change behaviors. In line with this, change recipients reactions are not necessary obstacles (Sonenshein, 2014). Knowles and Linn (2004) argue that resistance can be a resource in implementing change and making it successful. Correspondingly, Ford and colleagues (2008) argue that resistance can help to keep conversations active and give agents an opportunity to clarify and legitimize the change. Thereby, change recipients can better understand and accept the change (Barret, Thomas & Hocevar, 1995; Coghlan, D., 1993; Ford et al., 2008).

**Resistance is more than behavior.** In a 60 years review of quantitative studies, Oreg and colleagues (2011) found that change reactions had been described as both affective, behavioral and cognitive. However, few of these studies have addressed all three dimensions of resistance simultaneously (for exceptions see Ashford, 1988; Herscovitch & Meyer, 2002; Oreg, 2003, 2006; Piderit, 2000). The distinction between the affective, behavioral and cognitive has been commonly used in psychology (Breckler, 1984; Insko & Schopler, 1967; Montoya & Insko, 2008; Robinson, Stimpson, Huefner & Hunt, 1991) however, Piderit (2000) was one of the first to investigate this in relation to change. She highlighted that people differ in what they feel, think and do in regards to change, and that these facets are influenced by and react differently to the same antecedents. In the same vein, Oreg (2006) argued that a three dimensional approach that include affective, behavioral and cognitive reactions would better capture the full picture of resistance to change.

The tridimensional approach to change has now been used and confirmed in several studies and the facets have shown to be both separated and linked (e.g. Chung, Su & Su, 2012; García-Cabrera & Hernández 2014; Oreg, 2006; Szabla, 2007). Chung and colleagues (2012) have found evidence that the three forms of resistance are linked such that what you feel about the change, influence what you think about it, and thereby how you behave towards it. Thus, they established the importance of paying “attention to employee’s feelings and communicate with them to reduce their intentions to resist change” (Chung et al., 2012, p. 743).

Similarly, Schlesinger (1982) viewed resistance as a process following a



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sequence of interpretation, cognition, affect and action. The A-B-C model of personality follow the same logic, where an activating event (A) causes a belief (B) that again might cause emotional or behavioral reactions (C) (Bovey & Hede, 2001; Corey, 1996). Thus, behavior does not occur without underlying thoughts and feelings. Along the same line, earlier research has established that thoughts and feelings appear before behavior, but are not necessarily expressed in behaviors (Ellis and Harper, 1975; LaPiere, 1934).

**Resistance is a function of relationships.** Resistance is not only a response residing completely “over there” in the change recipients, it is a rather function of the quality of the relationship between the change agents and recipients (Ford et al., 2008). Social relationships in the workplace are based on “employees’ feelings, attitudes, and perceptions (positive or negative) toward workplace colleagues (supervisors, subordinates, and peers) with whom they work directly or indirectly” (Madsen et al., 2005, p. 217). Much research has been conducted on this particular relationship and how different aspects of it relate to resistance (Battilana & Casciaro, 2013b; Hanpachern et al., 1998; Kouzes & Posner, 2011).

It has been found that strong working relationships between leaders and subordinates can enhance commitment, socialization and work performance, as well as reduce the risk of burnout and resistance (Battilana & Casciaro, 2013b; Kouzes & Posner, 2011; Kuvaas, Buch, Dysvik & Hærem, 2012; Thomas & Lankau, 2009). Likewise, Hanpachern and colleagues (1998) found that social relationships significantly relate to readiness to change, when the emphasis is on employees enjoyment related to interacting, talking and working with colleagues. Social exchange theory partly explains this by emphasizing that a good relationship between leaders and their subordinates may cause reciprocation or the felt obligation to “pay back” (Settoon, Bennett & Liden, 1996). In turn, this may explain why workers are willing and motivated to go along with initiatives or increase their effort on behalf of the organization or their supervisor (Walumba et al., 2011).

Battilana and Casciaro (2013a) found evidence that strong ties between change agents and those who support the change does not make a remarkable impact on the implementation of the change. For organizational members that resist a change one the other hand, strong ties with change agents can function as a mean of affective cooptation. This cooptation increases the probability that the

organization will adopt the change. This effect is only established when the change diverges little from institutionalized practices, which means that it does not violate and require dramatic shifts in values and practices, but rather builds on them (Battilana & Casciaro, 2013b). Thus, investigating how interpersonal relationships affects resistance to change seems interesting to do in a less divergent change process.

Ford and colleagues (2008) present another view by arguing that the relationship between change agents and recipients may foster resistance. Leaders may for instance contribute to the inclination of resistance in their subordinates if they do not take signs of resistance seriously. If they fail to treat the concerns and proposals expressed by their subordinates as genuine and legitimate, they themselves may be seen as resistant, which again may foster resistance in the subordinates. This may create a vicious cycle where resistance produces resistance (Ford et al., 2008). Thus, the way subordinates perceived their leaders might affect the level of resistance.

### **Dispositional Resistance to Change**

Oreg (2003, 2006) suggests that there are individual differences in the internal inclination to resist or adopt changes, which is referred to as dispositional resistance to change. He describes dispositional resistance as built up by four factors. The first one, routine seeking, concerns an individual's preference for stable and routine environments. The second one, emotional reaction, is about the extent to which an individual feel stressed and uncomfortable about an imposed change. Thirdly, short-term focus, concerns to which degree an individual is preoccupied with short term over long term benefits of change. Lastly, cognitive rigidity, involve the stubbornness and unwillingness to deal with alternative perspectives and ideas (Oreg, 2003, 2006).

Dispositional resistance to change is conceptualized as a stable personality trait that can predict individuals' attitudes towards both voluntary and imposed changes (Oreg, 2003, 2006). According to Oreg (2003), people who score high on dispositional resistance to change are those who find it hard to break away from routines, that are emotionally stressed in change processes and that find it difficult to change their minds (Nov & Ye, 2008; Oreg, 2003). It is therefore reason to believe that dispositional resistance will be linked to your emotions, your behaviors and your thoughts towards the change process.

**Affective resistance.** In his study from 2003, Oreg found a strong relationship between dispositional resistance to change and affective resistance. This is also indicated in earlier studies where strong relationships have been found between personality and different affective reactions (e.g. Larsen & Ketelaar, 1991). For instance, Costa and McCrae (1980) found that extraversion and neuroticism are consistently related to heightened levels of positive and negative affect respectively. Oreg (2003) found a relationship between these two personality traits and dispositional resistance to change. It is therefore reason to believe that individuals who are less emotionally stable are more likely to feel threatened by change and resist it.

**Behavioral resistance.** Oreg (2003) found that people who scored high on dispositional resistance are less likely to incorporate changes in their lives. He found a relationship between predispositions for resistance and the extent to which students would change their academic schedules or professors would try out new products. Moreover, he found that dispositional resistance is a better predictor of these change related behaviors than related personality characteristics, such as risk-aversion (Slovic, 1972) and sensation-seeking (Zuckerman & Link, 1968). Similarly, Nov and Ye (2008) found a link between dispositional resistance to change and the reluctance to try out new technological systems.

**Cognitive resistance.** Oreg (2006) did not investigate the effect of dispositional resistance to change on cognitive resistance, however we could not find a clear rationale for why this relationship was excluded. More recent research confirms that testing this relationship seems reasonable and might make a valuable contribution to organizational change literature.

It is for instance found that the main difference between employees that are resistant to change and those who are not, lies in their cognitive styles (Durisic-Bojanović, 2016). A person's cognitive style is a fairly consistent way of perceiving and interpreting information from the environment when thinking (Riding & Cheema, 1991). Thus, it seems reasonable that an individual's way of thinking about an organizational change will be largely determined by his or hers cognitive style. Similarly, Durisic-Bojanović (2016) found that employees' cognitive styles are related to readiness to change.

Cognitive rigidity is similar to cognitive flexibility and is referred to as a person's willingness to adapt to the situation and see other options and alternatives (Chung et al., 2012; Oreg, 2003). Therefore, it is interesting to note

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that Chung and colleagues (2012) found cognitive flexibility to be negatively related not only to affective and behavioral, but also cognitive resistance.

**The stability of dispositional resistance.** A large study including Norway and 16 other countries found that dispositional resistance is a stable predictor of resistance to change across countries (Oreg et al., 2008). In another study, Michel, Todnem By and Burns (2013) investigated whether dispositional resistance is stable across organizational context. They found that dispositional resistance is important for establishing the general readiness for change in individuals. However, when it comes to determining employee resistance towards a specific change, they found that organizational context, experience with previous changes and the nature of the change itself were more important. Saksvik and Hetland (2009) on the other hand tested the dispositional resistance to change scale up against the big five personality traits and found that the scale give in-depth information about individual dispositions toward a specific change, not just tendencies across situations. Due to these conflicting findings, further testing the resistance to change scale seems valuable.

As seen from the theoretical review above, extensive literature has investigated the concept of resistance to change. Much theory supports the use of the tridimensional approach to resistance and we therefore see it as relevant to include the three dimensions as dependent variables in our research. Further, we expect that employees' dispositional resistance to change will be related to employees' affective, behavioral and cognitive resistance. Thus, our first hypotheses are as follows:

***H1a:** Employees' dispositional resistance to change will be positively related to employees' affective resistance to the change at hand.*

***H1b:** Employees' dispositional resistance to change will be positively related employees' behavioral resistance to the change at hand.*

***H1c:** Employees' dispositional resistance to change will be positively related to employees' cognitive resistance to the change at hand.*

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**Perceived Perspective Taking**

Arguments have been made for the direct relationship between dispositional resistance to change and affective, behavioral and cognitive resistance to change respectively. We expect that perceived perspective taking will act as a condition under which these relationships are weakened. Perspective taking can be defined as “the cognitive process of putting of oneself in the place of another and understanding how the other thinks about a problem” (Falk & Johnson, 1977, p. 64) while perceived perspective taking occurs when a person believe that another is actively taking their perspective (Ferguson, 2016).

Davis (1983) argued that perspective taking facilitates more rewarding and smoother interpersonal relationships. Indeed, a wide range of later studies have emphasized that considering another person's perspective has several beneficial effects in social interaction. For instance, taking the perspective of another can increase the liking of, help provided to and compassion towards the target of the perspective taking (Batson, 1994; Chartrand & Bargh, 1999). Further, taking the perspective of others can enhance closeness with that person (Davis, Conklin, Smith & Luce, 1996), have benefits in negotiations, facilitate social interactions and foster social bonds through self–other merging (Galinsky, Ku & Wang, 2005; Galinsky, Maddux, Gilin & White, 2008).

In literature, perspective taking has mainly been investigating the psychology of the perspective taker. However, a recent development in this area has been to examine the target’s belief that another is actively taking their perspective (Ferguson, 2016), a phenomenon Goldstein and colleagues (2014) refers to as Perceived Perspective Taking. To our knowledge they are some of the first to begin to fill this surprisingly large gap in literature (Goldstein et al., 2014).

Goldstein and colleagues (2014) argue that perspective taking and perceived perspective taking share the same psychological commonalities as “both phenomena involve the temporary, but psychologically powerful merging of two minds” (p. 944). In their research, they found perceived perspective taking to have many of the same interpersonal benefits as perspective taking. For instance, one’s self-other overlap with the perspective taker and the amount of empathy one perceives the perspective taker to feel, operate in tandem to mediate the link between perceived perspective taking and liking for the perspective taker. Further,

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they found a meditational path from perceived perspective taking to helping behavior through liking<sup>1</sup>. A direct relationship from perceived perspective taking to helping behavior was also found (Goldstein et al 2014).

Goldstein and colleagues (2014) touched up on whether their findings are caused by reciprocity. The motivation for reciprocation is established in a wide range of areas such as liking, trust, support and respect (Liden, Wayne, Kraimer & Sparrowe, 2003; Michel & Tews, 2016). For instance, it has been found that if you experience that a person likes you, it will make you reciprocate positive feelings, thoughts and behaviors towards that person (Montoya & Insko, 2008).

As discussed above, when a subordinate believes that his or her leader is taking their perspective it may enhance the interpersonal relationship and reciprocity between them. Perceived perspective taking has previously shown to enforce interpersonal relationships, while interpersonal relationship in turn has shown to decrease resistance to change (Ford et al. 2008; Kouzes & Posner, 2011; Ilies, Nahrgang & Morgeson, 2007). We therefore have reason to believe that perceived perspective taking will have the same effect on resistance to change. Based on this our second hypotheses are as follow:

***H2a:** Perceived perspective taking moderates the relationship between dispositional resistance and affective resistance to change.*

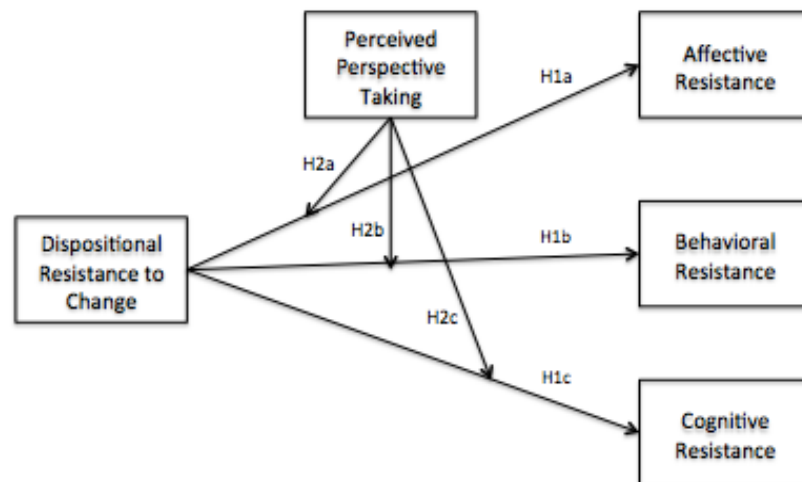
***H2b:** Perceived perspective taking moderates the relationship between dispositional resistance and behavioral resistance to change*

***H2c:** Perceived perspective taking moderates the relationship between dispositional resistance and cognitive resistance to change*

Our conceptual model with hypotheses is presented in figure 1.

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<sup>1</sup> Initially this study was investigating the mediated moderation of perspective taking through liking. However, analyses showed almost total overlap of the constructs, making them too similar to investigate further in the same study.

**Figure 1.** Conceptual Model with Hypotheses

## Methodology

### Sample and Procedure

During the spring 2016, we distributed one web-based questionnaire to employees in a large Scandinavian bank. The 2000 employees who work at the main office had recently gone through a comprehensive office move. The move had been planned for several years and entailed moving all employees from one building to another. Additionally, it involved employees switching from designated working spaces, to open working spaces with “first come, first serve” policy.

First, the questionnaire and a detailed information sheet were sent to all leaders. In the information sheet we explained the objective of the study, confidentiality of participation and anonymity (See Appendix A). Norwegian Social Science Data Services approved the process, procedure and information sheet. All leaders were given the option to either redistribute the questionnaire and the information sheet themselves, or give us the approval to do it. This resulted in half of the surveys being sent directly by us and the other half being sent by leaders.

The questionnaire was sent to a total of 373 employees. Out of these, 136 employees filled out the questionnaire, resulting in a response rate of 36 %. Out of the respondents, 38 % were men and 57 % were female. When it comes to age, 32 % were under 40 years old, 51 % were between 41 and 60 years old and 9 % were over 60 years old. The largest portion of those who filled out the questionnaire had worked in at the company for more than 16 years (47 %), the second largest group had worked there for less than 6 years (25 %) while the minority had

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worked in the company between 7 and 16 years (20 %). Lastly, 80 % of the people reported that they had been through an office change before, while 16 % had not. Missing percentages correspond to the number of people choosing not to answer a question.

### **Measures**

The scales included in the questionnaire were originally in English, and therefore we followed Brislin's (1986) recommendation for translation. The questionnaire was translated from English to Norwegian and then back-translated to English by a bilingual. In retrospect, we compared the back-translated version with the original version and based on this made a few minor adjustments.

Unless stated otherwise, all items were measured using a seven-point Likert scale ranging from "strongly disagree" (1) to "strongly agree" (7), as it argued that a seven-point scale provides a more accurate measure (Finstad, 2010). We therefore changed the scales that were not seven-point scales originally. This was the case for dispositional resistance to change, perspective taking and trust. As some of the questions could be experienced as rather personal, we included the option "*I chose not to answer*" for all questions.

The questionnaires were administered four months after the office move was carried out, and therefore the questions related to thoughts about the change process, were phrased in past tense. Hence, the participants were asked to report what they experienced when the change was first introduced and how they experienced the change while it happened. See Appendix B for all items used in the questionnaire.

Common method bias may cause severe effects on the findings in a study (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee & Podsakoff, 2003). One source of common method bias is measuring the predictor and criterion variable at the same point in time. To avoid this, our initial objective was to distribute the survey in two waves, two weeks apart, using cross-lagged research design (Anderson & Kida, 1982; Podsakoff et al., 2003). However, as the company recommended us, and preferred, that we distributed the survey in one wave, we chose to follow this advice. To check for common method variance, we conducted a Harman's single factor test. An unrotated solution with one variable extracted accounted for 21 % of the total variance and thus do not explain the majority of the variance (Podsakoff et al, 2003).



**Affective, behavioral and cognitive resistance to change.** To measure affective, behavioral and cognitive resistance to change, we used Oreg's Change Attitude Scale (2006), which consists of a total of 15 items, five for each of the three dimensions. All questions were negatively framed, with the exception of four items that were reversed and positively angled. Inclusion of such items can reduce common method variance (Chung et al., 2012). The scale's validity and reliability have been validated in previous studies (Oreg, 2003, 2006; Oreg et al., 2008), meaning the scale has been found to measure what it claims to measure and it has shown consistent result under consistent conditions (Hair, Black, Babin & Anderson, 2010).

**Dispositional resistance to change.** Dispositional resistance to change was measured with the 17-item Resistance to Change Scale by Oreg (2003). The scale is built up by four factors (routine seeking, emotional reaction, short-term focus and cognitive rigidity) which together composite the overarching resistance to change disposition. Earlier research has established the scale's validity, together with satisfactory reliability in a variety of contexts under both voluntary and imposed conditions (Oreg, 2003, Oreg et al., 2008). In 2008, Oreg and colleagues tested the resistance to change scale in several countries, including Norway. We did not succeed in locating the resistance to change scale used in this study and therefore we decided to translate the original one (Oreg, 2003).

**Perceived perspective taking.** To our knowledge, perceived perspective taking has only been investigated through experiments (Goldstein et al., 2014). In order to measure perceived perspective taking quantitatively, we therefore chose to utilize a modified, reversed version of the seven items Perspective Taking Scale, by Davis (1983). The questions are adapted so that they assess the employees' perceived perspective taking from their immediate leader, rather than the employee's own perspective taking ability. For example, the original question was "*I believe that there are two sides to every question and try to look at them both*", while our reframed question was "*My leader thinks that there are two sides to every question and tries to look at them both*".

**Control variables.** Age, gender and tenure were included as control variables, as these variables have previously been linked to acceptance of change (Caldwell, Herold & Fedor, 2004; Iverson, 1996; Madsen et al., 2005). Since employees' previous experiences may impact their reactions to similar situations later on (Buch, Kuvaas & Dysvik, 2012; Michel et al., 2013), we also included

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previous experience with office change. For these questions the answer options were categorized or dichotomous, but it was still possible to not answer the questions.

Since studies have found that information sharing may reduce resistance (e.g. Miller, Johnson & Grau, 1994) and Oreg (2006) surprisingly found that less information about the change led to less behavioral and cognitive resistance, we included information as another control variable. This was controlled for by using Wanberg and Banas' (2000) modified version of Miller et al.'s (1994) scale.

Oreg (2006) found that trust in management reduces all three types of resistance and therefore it was also included as a control variable. It was measured using a three-item scale designed by Oreg (2006). Lastly, participation in the change process has been found to impact behavioral resistance (Van Dam, Oreg & Schyns, 2008) and was therefore included as well. It was measured with a slightly adapted three-item scale from Wanberg and Banas (2000).

### **Analyses**

We explored the data and tested the hypotheses by using IBM SPSS Statistics, version 23. Before testing our hypotheses we investigated the missing data. The seriousness of missing data depends on the pattern of the missing data, how much is missing and why it is missing. We decided to delete full responses in which all items of one variable were missing, so that the percentage of missing responses for all variables was below the preferred threshold value of 5 % (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013).

An exploratory factor analysis was conducted in order to determine the item retention (Hayton, Allen & Scarpello, 2004) and to establish the structure among measures, in order to find out whether it loaded as implied by theory (Suhr, 2006). As suggested by Hair et al., (2010), we decided to suppress values below 0.4 in the analysis. The exploratory factor analysis was done using promax with Kaiser Normalization rotation. Promax is an Oblique rotation which allows the factors to correlate. In social sciences we expect some correlation among factors, since behavior is rarely separated into units that functions independent of each other. Therefore using an Oblique rotation will render a more accurate solution than an orthogonal rotation that may result in loss of valuable information (Osborne & Costello 2009).

Information about extraction methods' strengths and weaknesses is limited (Osborne & Costello, 2009), however, it is stated that if the assumption of

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normality is violated, principal factor methods should be applied (Fabrigar, Wegener, MacCallum & Strahan, 1999). As our data indicated skewedness, we chose to follow this advice and use principal axis factoring. After exploring factor loadings, we assessed the reliability of scales to decide which to keep in our further analyses.

To test our hypotheses, we conducted three hierarchical moderated regressions, with affective, behavioral and cognitive resistance as outcome variables. In order to check for the moderation effect, we calculated the interaction term by multiplying dispositional resistance and perceived perspective taking. We decided to keep the variables in their raw form instead of mean-centering them. According to Dawson (2014) this decision does not make any difference to the testing of the interaction term, with the exception of extreme multicollinearity.

A three-step hierarchical regression analysis was conducted for each one of the dependent variables. In step one we included the independent variable (dispositional resistance) and the interaction term of the independent variable and the moderator (Perceived Perspective Taking). Step two controlled for trust, information and influence, while step three controlled for age, gender, tenure and previous experience with office change.

## **Results**

When assessing the data, it seemed like data was missing at random and not missing at random. The majority of variables had missing values under the threshold value of 5 % (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013) and the distribution of these seemed random. The perceived perspective taking variable on the other hand had several missing values and it did not seem random. Out of the items, *ppt2* had the highest missing percentage (11,8 %). According to theory, we therefore decided to delete every case where every item measuring perceived perspective taking was missing (11 cases) in order to get below the suggested threshold value (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013), leaving us with a sample of  $n=125$ .

In order to assess the suitability for factor analysis, we inspected the correlation matrix and it revealed many coefficients of .3 and above. We also conducted a Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin test and the value was .733, which exceeds the recommended value of .60. Further, Bartlett's test of Sphericity was statistically significant ( $p < .01$ ) (Pallant, 2016).

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The exploratory factor analysis indicated that there were four overarching constructs in our data (Appendix C). These had eigenvalues above 1 and explained 23,6 %, 9,9 %, 7,5 % and 5,8 % of the variance. According to theory, dispositional resistance to change and resistance to change (affective, behavioral and cognitive) can either one be used as one overarching measure, or as separate scales (Oreg, 2006). In our analyses, dispositional resistance will be further treated as one construct, while resistance to change will be treated as three different constructs. Trust, information and influence fell in one construct. This is not surprising as they earlier have been referred to under one umbrella term, Change Process Characteristics (Van Dam et al., 2008). In spite of this, we will treat them as separate constructs in our study.

SPSS suppressed *routine1* and *routine4* as well as all cognitive rigidity items (*crigidity1*, *crigidity2*, *crigidity3* and *crigidity4*). According to Oreg and colleagues (2008), others have also had problems with the cognitive rigidity items, as they sometimes do not load with the rest of the dispositional resistance scale. Still, they strongly advice to keep cognitive rigidity in the scale as it measures a unique portion of variance in individuals' resistance to change. They further note that other researchers have experiences problems with *routine4*, however they follow the same line of argumentation and advice to keep all items in the scale to capture the whole picture (Oreg et al., 2008). We therefore decided to keep every cognitive rigidity item, as well as *routine1* and *routine4*, as a part of the dispositional resistance scale. Lastly, *Affect4* cross-loaded on two factors, but since the distance between the loadings was larger than 0.2 we did not remove it (Van Dyne, Graham & Dienesch, 1994).

To assess the reliability of the scales, we used Cronbach's alpha. All scales reported respectable reliability values as they all exceeded 0.7 (Field, 2013; Pallant, 2016). Means, standard deviations, correlations and coefficient alphas for the variables in this study are presented in table 1.

Table 1.

*Descriptive Statistics: Mean, Standard Deviations, Pearson Correlations and Scale Reliability*

Variables	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	
1. Dispositional Resistance	2.95	.61	1	(.80)							
2. Perceived Perspective Taking	4.96	1.14	-.219**	1	(.86)						
3. Affective Resistance	2.17	1.02	.433**	-.102	1	(.84)					
4. Behavioral Resistance	2.02	.87	.289**	-.094	.755*	1	(.72)				
5. Cognitive Resistance	2.50	1.23	.393**	-.259**	.701**	-.795**	1	(.87)			
6. Trust in Management	5.82	1.14	0.004	.178	-.328**	-.458**	-.426**	1	(.95)		
7. Opportunity to Influence	3.73	1.69	-.268**	.188*	-.283**	-.291**	-.343**	.487**	1	(.83)	
8. Information	5.84	1.11	-.110	.144	-.346**	-.286**	-.322**	.788**	.546**	1	(.94)

*Note.* N=125; Coefficient alphas indicating scale reliabilities are displayed on the diagonal in parentheses

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

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

To test for composite reliability, we calculated a composite reliability index (CRI) and average variance extracted (AVE) (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). According to Škerlavaj, Štemberger, Škrinjar and Dimovski (2007), “composite reliability assumes that a set of latent construct indicators is consistent in the measurement” (p. 355). The AVE and CRI values for the variables in this study are presented in table 2, and the calculations are presented in Appendix D.

Even though there is no generally accepted value of CRI (Škerlavaj et al., 2007), it is suggested that it should be above 0.60 (Diamantopoulos & Siguaw, 2000). Yet, others present a stricter threshold value of 0.80 (Koufteros, 1999). When it comes to AVE, the cut off value most commonly used is 0.50 (Bagozzi & Yi, 1988; Hair et. al, 2010). That being said, values above 0.40 have also been considered acceptable (Diamantopoulos & Siguaw, 2008).

As some items in the dispositional resistance to change scale did not load properly in the exploratory factor analysis, but were kept based on theory, we calculated the CRI and AVE values based on the loadings we did obtain. As presented in table 2, all scales exceed the threshold values suggested for CRI. Affective resistance and information however, did not exceed the values for AVE. Removing the lowest loading items of the affective resistance and influence scale, did not lead to significant changes in the AVE values. Taking this into consideration, alongside with the fact that the scales had satisfying CRI and Cronbach’s alpha values, we decided to keep all scales without changing them.

Table 2.

<i>Construct Reliability</i>		Lambda	AVE	CRI
Variables	Items	Standard		
Dispositional Resistance	rutine1			
	rutine2	.548		
	rutine3	.588		
	rutine4			
	rutine5	.639		
	emotion1	.695		
	emotion2	.646		
	emotion3	.571		
	emotion4	.531		
	stthinking1	.610		
	stthinking2	.743		
	stthinking3	.575		
	stthinking4	.547		
	crigidity1			
crigidity2				
crigidity3				
crigidity4				
Perceived Perspective Taking	ppt1	.784	0,686*	0,828*
	ppt2	.863		
	ppt3	.805		
	ppt4	.428		
	ppt5	.794		
	ppt6	.547	0,531	0,914
Affective Resistance	affective1	.616		
	affective2	.619		
	affective3	.538		
	affective4	.511		
	affective5	.568	0,237	0,791
Behavioral Resistance	behavior1	.578		
	behavior2	.764		
	behavior3	.770		
	behavior4	.759		
	behavior5	.437	0,456	0,866
Cognitive Resistance	cognitive1	.848		
	cognitive2	.889		
	cognitive3	.698		
	cognitive4	.587		
	cognitive5	.415	0,503	0,883
Trust in Management	trust1	.765		
	trust2	.805		
	trust3	.802	0,621	0,898
Information	info1	.832		
	info2	.926		
	info3	.893		
	info4	.898	0,788	0,965
Opportunity to Influence	influence1	.573		
	influence2	.565		
	influence3	.468	0,289	0,649

Note. \*AVE/CRI calculated based on available data

Further, the multicollinearity of the data was investigated. VIF values above 10 and tolerance values below 0.10 indicate that there is multicollinearity in the data (Hair et. al, 2010; Pallant, 2016). For our data, all values were within the recommended values for tolerance and VIF, thus violating the multicollinearity assumption. Moreover, the data set did not contain any extreme outliers that could influence the results. The results from the hierarchical regression model are presented in table 3.

Table 3.

*Regression Analysis Predicting Affective Resistance*

Variables	Step 1				Step 2				Step 3			
	b	s.e.	$\beta$	t	b	s.e.	$\beta$	t	b	s.e.	$\beta$	t
dresistance	.730	.182	.434	4.021**	.660	.178	.393	3.702**	.750	.177	.447	4.250**
moderator	-.001	.026	-.003	-.029	.014	.025	.058	.563	.014	.025	.056	.545
trust					-.235	.128	-.262	-1.844	-.319	.130	-.355	-2.450*
info					-.095	.135	-.102	-.706	-.066	.134	-.071	-.492
influence					.006	.064	.010	.095	.049	.064	.080	.759
gender									.369	.176	.177	2.094*
age									.034	.111	.044	.311
tenure									.019	.102	.027	.184
officechange									.636	.286	.217	2.225*
<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup>	.187				.302				.375			
$\Delta R^2$	.171				.267				.315			
F	11.634**				8.499**				6.265**			

Note. n=125; Bold values indicates hypothesized relationships  
 dresistance= dispositional resistance; modertor= dresistance X perceived perspective taking  
 \* p < .05  
 \*\* p < .01

*Regression Analysis Predicting Behavioral Resistance*

Variables	Step 1				Step 2				Step 3			
	b	s.e.	$\beta$	t	b	s.e.	$\beta$	t	b	s.e.	$\beta$	t
dresistance	.489	.163	.344	3.006**	.436	.148	.307	2.942**	.442	.148	.311	2.991**
moderator	-.020	.024	-.099	-.863	.003	.021	.013	.129	.012	.021	.060	.589
trust					-.521	.106	-.686	-4.917**	-.519	.109	-.682	-4.755**
info					-.246	.112	-.313	-2.198*	-.206	.113	-.263	-1.831
influence					-.023	.053	-.045	-.437	.013	.054	.025	.237
gender									.261	.148	.148	1.770
age									.166	.093	.252	1.797
tenure									-.037	.086	-.062	-.429
officechange									.237	.239	.095	.989
<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup>	.090				.327				.388			
$\Delta R^2$	.072				.293				.329			
F	4.995**				9.534**				6.622**			

Note. n=125; Bold values indicates hypothesized relationships  
 dresistance= dispositional resistance; modertor= dresistance X perceived perspective taking  
 \* p < .05  
 \*\* p < .01

*Regression Analysis Predicting Cognitive Resistance*

Variables	Step 1				Step 2				Step 3			
	b	s.e.	$\beta$	t	b	s.e.	$\beta$	t	b	s.e.	$\beta$	t
dresistance	1.079	.217	.534	4.974**	.978	.204	.484	4.788**	1.007	.202	.498	4.975**
moderator	-.074	.031	-.253	-2.357*	-.047	.029	-.160	-1.624	-.035	.029	-.120	-1.232
trust					-.544	.146	-.504	-3.727**	-.557	.149	-.515	-3.729**
Info					.187	.154	.168	1.212	.140	.154	.126	.911
Influence					-.051	.073	-.070	-.696	-.001	.073	-.001	-.009
gender									.538	.202	.215	2.666**
age									.177	.127	.190	1.401
tenure									-.061	.117	-.072	-.519
officechange									.211	.328	-.060	.643
<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup>	.198				.368				.432			
$\Delta R^2$	.182				.335				.378			
F	12.494**				11.397**				7.955**			

Note. n=125; Bold values indicates hypothesized relationships  
 dresistance= dispositional resistance; modertor= dresistance X perceived perspective taking  
 \* p < .05  
 \*\* p < .01

In step one of the hierarchical regression analyses, a significant positive, direct relationship was found between dispositional resistance and affective ( $\beta = .434, p < 0.1$ ), behavioral ( $\beta = .344, p < 0.1$ ) and cognitive resistance ( $\beta = .534, p < 0.1$ ). These effects were sustained in step two and three ( $\beta = .447, p < 0.1$ ;  $\beta = .311, p < 0.1$ ;  $\beta = .498, p < 0.1$ ), thus hypothesis 1a, 1b and 1c were fully supported.

The regression analysis showed no significant moderation effect of perceived perspective taking on the relationship between dispositional resistance on affective and behavioral resistance. We did find a moderating effect in the first

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step when testing the relationship between dispositional resistance and cognitive resistance ( $\beta = -.253, p < 0.5$ ), however, this effect was not sustained when adding the control variables in step two and three. When doing this, trust and gender were the only ones to show significant results. In sum, hypothesis 2a, 2b or 2c were not supported.

### **General Discussion**

The analysis provides support for hypothesis 1a, 1b and 1c, confirming the relationship between dispositional resistance to change and affective, behavioral and cognitive resistance respectively. When testing the moderating effect of perceived perspective taking on these particular relationships, we did not find any moderation when predicting affective or behavioral resistance. We did find a moderating effect of perceived perspective taking when predicting cognitive resistance, but this effect did not remain when the control variables were included. Thus, hypothesis 2a, 2b and 2c are rejected.

### **Theoretical Contribution**

First and foremost, our study confirms that dispositional resistance does not only predict your intention to resist change, but also the manner in which you resist. Research by Oreg (2006) tested the effect of dispositional resistance on affective and behavioral resistance, but not on cognitive resistance. Our study investigated this relationship further and we found statistical evidence that dispositional resistance is also related to cognitive resistance to change. This finding adds to the theory of organizational change, by supporting the view of resistance to change as threefold (García-Cabrera & Hernández 2014; Oreg; 2006; Piderit, 2000; Szabla, 2007).

Our results indicated that the strongest effect of dispositional resistance was on cognitive resistance, followed by affective and then behavioral resistance. These findings can be seen in the light of the A-B-C model of personality (Bovey & Hede, 2001; Corey, 1996; Ellis & Harper, 1975), meaning that what we think, affect what we feel, which again determine how we act. This is further in line with the view of resistance as a process (Schlesinger, 1982).

It may be that the strongest link was found between dispositional resistance and cognitive resistance due to the nature of the change. The move of a main office is a comprehensive organizational change, especially when considering the number of employees working at the main office, but it does still not violate norms or institutionalized practices of the organization. Indeed, the



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mean level of the resistance variable did indicate a rather moderate level of resistance. An office move is probably not the most traumatic change an employee can go through. In other words, if one dealt with a more divergent change, such as downsizing, it could be that people's hearts would be affected to a higher degree.

Further, perceived perspective taking did not show any moderation effect on affective, behavioral or cognitive resistance. This, to some extent contradicts Battilana and Casciaro's (2013a) findings. They found that when the change was non-divergent, the strong ties between change agents and organizational members that resist a change can reduce resistance, however only if the change diverge little from institutional practices (Battilana & Casciaro, 2013b). As the investigated change did not seem to be remarkably divergent, we found it surprising that a moderating effect was not present. A reason for this can also be that the employees were supportive of the change. According to Battilana and Casciaro (2013b), the effect of interpersonal relationship then does not play that much of a role (Battilana & Casciaro, 2013b).

The effects of good interpersonal relationship between leaders and subordinates have gained much attention in research. It has been found to have several positive benefits (Kuvaas et al, 2012; Thomas & Lankau, 2009) and to be characterized by reciprocity (Michel and Tews, 2016; Montoya & Insko, 2008; Walumbwa et al., 2011). Our initial claim was that perceived perspective taking would reduce all types of resistance as subordinates would want to pay back their leader by not resisting against the change initiative. Although, this effect was not established in our study it should not be totally omitted from future studies.

There has been limited research conducted on the effect of perceived perspective taking. In light of this, any result, either confirming or disapproving hypothetical relationships, will be considered a contribution. Thus, even though we did not manage to fully prove the hypothesized moderating effect, our results provide some contributions to the existing literature on perceived perspective taking. A more concrete contribution is the reframing of Davis' (1983) Perspective Taking Scale, which showed good reliability, which indicates a possible future use of the reversed scale as a quantitative measure for perceived perspective taking.

How different personalities affect resistance to change has earlier been investigated (Saksvik & Hetland, 2009). Oreg (2003) set out to establish a measure for resistance to change, which is conceptualized as a stable personality

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trait and can predict individuals' reactions to change across different contexts.

This has further been tested in relation to affective and behavioral resistance. Our study confirms and adds to this, by establishing dispositional resistance as a good indicator for all three aspects of resistance to change. Further, our findings did not shake the view of dispositional resistance as a stable predictor of all three types of resistance, as we did not find a moderating effect of interpersonal relations.

### **Limitations and Future Research**

This study has some limitations that should be considered. First, the sample size is a limitation. Pedhazur and Schmelkin (2013) state that in order to predict a relationship through quantitative research, the subject to predictor ratio should be 30 to 1, whereas Miller and Kuncze (1973) suggest that a ratio of 10 to 1 is sufficient. As we had 47 items and a sample size of 136 we did not meet these suggestions, which may have affected the results.

A second limitation is the measures used for collecting the data. The dispositional resistance to change scale has previously been translated to Norwegian and been tested in the Norwegian context with reliable results (Oreg et al., 2008). However, we were not able to get our hands on this particular translated questionnaire. Our questionnaire was translated using recommended methods and reported a satisfactory Cronbach's alpha value, but as we did experience some trouble with the subcategory, cognitive resistance, we were not able to calculate true AVE and CRI values. Our findings supported those of earlier research, however the results might have yielded more accurate result if we had been using the already validated scale.

When assessing perceived perspective taking we asked subordinates to assess their leaders general perspective taking ability, and not if they believed their leader were taking their perspective explicitly. We asked questions such as "*When a disagreement occurs, my leader/manager tries to see things from everyone's perspective before he/she makes a decision*". To make it more personal the questions could be framed "*When me and my leader disagree he or she tries to see it from my perspective before making a decision*". If the questions were more personally framed it could have affected the results.

Another limitation in terms of measurement is how the control variable "experience with previous office change" was measured. Our intention was to measure whether the employees had been through an office move before. 80 % answered yes to this question, indicating an unrealistically high percentage. The

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measure of this variable did not distinguishing between whether the change was within the same building, to a new building or in relation to a new job. If these distinctions were taken into consideration, we might have gotten a more accurate and nuanced picture.

A third limitation is the use of self-report data. The subordinates were asked to assess their closest leader's perspective taking abilities. In this company the leaders have responsibility for between three and twenty employees, making the working relations fairly close. This could increase the leniency bias, meaning that people rate people they know higher than they should when they are filling out self-report questionnaires (Guilford, 1954). Further, as they were reporting on events from the past their answers can be influenced by selective memory bias, meaning that they do not remember or remember events differently than how they actually occurred (Simpson, 2015).

A fourth limitation is the high numbers of missing responses to the items measuring perceived perspective taking. It could be that in the cases where the leader sent out the questionnaire, the employees felt reluctant to give honest and straight forwards answers. This may also be one of the reasons why we did not find stronger effects of perceived perspective taking.

A fifth limitation may be the topic of our study. The aim of the study was to investigate the fairly new concept of perceived perspective taking, but investigating a new concept can be a limitation in itself. In former research it has only been studied through qualitative analysis. As the topic has recently been investigated for the first time, we do not have much solid research to build our hypothesis on, and therefore have to rely on assumed relationships. Further, we knew that adapting Davis' (1983) perspective taking scale was a risk to take, however we still found investigating the term and continuing filling the large gap in literature as a valuable intended contribution.

A last limitation is the inclusion of control variables. We included a wide range of control variables that previously had affected the variables in our hypotheses. This was done in order to make sure that our findings were not due to other factors. Although, perceived perspective taking predicted resistance to change regardless of the control variables included, this may not be the case if other control variables were included or if the context was different.

When it comes to future research, we see it as valuable to continue the investigation of affective, behavioral and cognitive resistance. Future studies

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should aim at exploring what situations induces what kinds of resistance, for example whether the level of affective, behavioral and cognitive resistance will vary in regards to the level of divergence in the change, and the quality of interpersonal relationships. Trust was the only variable that significantly affected all three dimension of resistance. It would further be interesting to investigate whether trust could function as a moderator in the aforementioned relationship. This could contribute to the discussion of whether personal relationships can affect the predictive power of dispositional resistance to change for affective, behavioral and resistance to change.

Future research should also look into how dispositional resistance to change is best measured in Norway. When testing this in Norway, Oreg and colleagues (2009) found all subscales to load on the same construct while in our study cognitive rigidity was suppressed. As this was also the case when the resistance to change scale was tested in United Kingdom, Slovakia and Greece (Oreg et al., 2008), it will be interesting to further assess this in a Norwegian context.

Future research should continue the investigation of perceived perspective taking. To explore the effect of perceiving that someone is taking your perspective regardless of this being the case or not, is in our opinion an interesting phenomenon that deserve more attention. So far, there has been limited amount of research on this topic, and to our knowledge, our study is the first to explore perceived perspective taking quantitatively. We therefore suggest that others continue to explore how to test perceived perspective taking quantitatively. Our reversed perspective taking scale may serve as a good starting point for this. We also recommend further studies to explore perceived perspective taking in other contexts and relationships, and to further investigate whether it can foster reciprocity under diverse conditions.

As we studied perceived perspective taking we were not interested in how the leaders rated their own perspective taking ability. However, future research should incorporate leaders own assessment in order to see if there is any overlap between their assessment and the ability perceived by the subordinates. Such research could yield a fruitful discussion of which scale gives the most “correct” assessment of an individual’s perspective taking ability. In other words, if it is the leader's own assessment or the employee's subjective perceptions that best reflect perspective taking abilities.

### **Practical Implications**

Our research offers some practical implications for organizations, subordinates and leaders. Support for the tridimensional view of resistance, indicates that leaders need to be aware that not all resistance is acted out. Thus, it is not certain that “the one who stays silent agrees” or that just because no one is actively resisting, the change initiatives are supported.

Further, building on the assumption of resistance to change as a process one should take resistant behavior seriously. Actions against the change is by many researchers seen as the last phase, which may imply that both resistant thoughts and feelings are present before a person actually reveals this in actions. Thus, active resistance behaviors should not be swept under the rug, as it is the most complex form of resistance. Moreover, organizations’ should invest in initiatives that reveal resistance at an early stage, meaning when it lies in employees’ thoughts and feelings. This may save both organizations and leaders from severe issues dealing with unsuccessfully implemented changes later on.

Lastly, it is important to note that resistance to change is not necessarily negative. It is argued that the presence of resistance can lead to engagement, facilitate discussion and new points of views (Ford et al 2008). It may also give leaders feedback on underlying issues or concerns regarding the change that he or she would otherwise not receive. Thus, when leaders and employees see resistance at not solely negative, but also see it as a valuable source of information, they may recognize that status quo can be more dangerous than the unknown future (Sonenshein, 2014), which again can facilitate more openness and readiness towards the change itself.

### **Conclusion**

Even though change is an unavoidable aspect of organizational life, one out of four employees think there is too many changes in the workplace (Ennova A/S, 2016). Employees that show resistance to organizational change initiatives, have been blamed for sabotaging the process and such resistance have often been considered as one of the main reasons for why change processes fail (Sonenshein, 2014). Thus, by understanding the underlying psychological mechanisms of employees facing organizational change, may represent the difference between making it or breaking it.

Our study confirms that dispositional resistance does not only predict your intention to resist change, but also the manner in which you resist. It supports that

dispositional resistance is an indicator for affective, behavioral and cognitive resistance to change. Thus, supporting the notion that resistance to change is not merely behaviors towards a change, but a multidimensional concept that also can express itself in thoughts and emotions (Oreg, 2003; Piderit, 2000; Szabla, 2007).

Although this study did not produce any findings for the moderating effect of perceived perspective taking, it contributes to the exploration of a new phenomenon within organizational change theory. To understand how subordinates perceive a leader's perspective taking abilities and not only how a leader rates him- or herself open the doors to a broader understanding of the concept of perspective taking and its effects. By assessing this concept in the light of other change processes, a relation to individual's heart, mind and action might be found.

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## Appendix

### Appendix A. Information sheet

#### Bakgrunn og formål med undersøkelsen

##### Hvorfor gjennomfører vi undersøkelsen?

Spørreundersøkelsen samler inn data til en statistisk analyse i forbindelse med vår masteroppgave ved linjen Ledelse og Organisasjonspsykologi på Handelshøyskolen BI. Målet i den sammenheng er å skape et teoretisk bidrag til litteraturen om organisatorisk endring. Fra et praktisk perspektiv vil eventuelle funn forhåpentligvis kunne komme til nytte i fremtidige endringsprosesser i selskapet.

##### Hvilke sammenhenger er vi interesserte i?

Undersøkelsen tar sikte på å si noe om hvordan ansatte stiller seg til endring generelt, hvordan de ansatte oppfatter forholdet til sin leder, og i hvilken grad disse to variablene påvirker hvordan de ansatte tenker, føler og handler når de står ovenfor en spesifikk endringsprosess. Den spesifikke endringsprosessen i denne sammenheng er flyttingen av hovedkontoret. Dataen vi samler inn vil se på disse sammenhengene på et overordnet nivå, og vil ikke kunne identifisere resultater fra ulike avdelinger, ledere eller ansatte.

##### Hvordan er spørsmålene utviklet?

Spørsmålene vi benytter i undersøkelsen er utelukkende hentet fra tidligere internasjonal forskning på feltet. De er utviklet av forskere og er innenfor de vitenskapelige kravene for reliabilitet og validitet. Med andre ord har de tidligere vist seg å være gode indikatorer på variablene som testes.

##### Er undersøkelsen anonym?

Prosjektet er godkjent av Personvernombudet for Forskning, Norsk Senter for Forskningsdata (NSD). Selve undersøkelsen er frivillig og anonym. Svarene kan på ingen måte spores tilbake til enkeltpersoner, ledere eller avdelinger. Heller ikke vi som bearbeider datamaterialet har mulighet til å skille mellom respondentene. Hvis noen spørsmål oppfattes som nærgående kan man velge alternativet "ønsker ikke å svare". Når karakter på masteroppgaven foreligger i desember 2016, vil datamaterialet slettes.

##### Ønsker du å delta i undersøkelsen?

Du kan besvare undersøkelsen uavhengig av når og fra hvor du flyttet. Hvis du ønsker å delta kan du benytte linken under. Undersøkelsen tar ca. 5 minutter å besvare, og vi setter stor pris på din deltakelse.

##### Klikk her for å starte undersøkelsen

Dersom du skulle ha noen ytterligere spørsmål, kontakt oss gjerne:

**Student:** Cecilie Staubo Boasson / tlf: 98 07 81 67 / mail: ceciliestaubo@gmail.com

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**Appendix B. Items in the questionnaire****Trust in management**

1. It seemed like the leadership behind the change knew what they were doing.
2. In general, it felt like you could trust the leaders of the organization
3. As the management implemented the change, they were probably well-informed and had good reasons for making the change.

**Information about the change**

4. I received the information at the right time.
5. The information I received about the change has been useful.
6. The information I received about the change has answered my questions in satisfactory way
7. I received enough information about the change.

**Participation**

8. I had the opportunity to participate in the implementation of the change.
9. I had somewhat control over the change.
10. If I would, I could of influenced the decisions that were made during the change.

**Perceived Perspective Taking**

11. My leader thinks that there are two sides of a story and always tries to see both sides.
12. When my leader is upset because of other people, he/she tries to put themselves in the other person`s situation.
13. When a disagreement occurs, my leader/manager tries to see things from everyone`s perspective before he/she makes a decision.
14. At times, it seems as if my leader/manager finds it difficult to view things from another person`s perspective.
15. Before my leader/manager criticizes anyone, it seems as if he/she can imagine how it must feel for the person being criticized.
16. My leader does not waste much time listening to other peoples arguments if he/she is sure that he/she is right.

**Dispositional Resistance to Change**

17. In general, I look at change as something negative.
18. I prefer a day based on routines rather than a day full of unpredictable events.
19. I like doing the same old things instead of trying new and different things.
20. When stable routines define my life, I look for new ways to change this.
21. I would rather be bored than surprised.
22. If I would be informed about upcoming changes in how things are done at work, I would most likely feel stressed.
23. When I am informed about a change of plans, I feel a little tense.
24. When things do not go as planned, I feel very stressed.
25. (I think) it would be uncomfortable if my leader/manager changed the criteria for evaluating employees, even though I would not feel like I would have to work harder.
26. I think that a change of plans seems like a hassle.
27. I often feel uncomfortable with change, even if it potentially can improve my life.

- 28. When someone pressures me into changing something, I tend to show resistance even if I think that the change can benefit me.
- 29. Sometimes I try to avoid changes I know can benefit me.
- 30. I often change my mind.
- 31. When I have made a decision, it is unlikely that I will change my mind.
- 32. I do not change my mind easily.
- 33. My opinions are very consistent over time.

**Resistance to Change (Affective, Behavioral and Cognitive)**

- 34. I was concerned about the change.
- 35. I had a bad feeling in regards to the change.
- 36. I was excited about the change.
- 37. The change upset me.
- 38. The change got me stressed.
- 39. I tried to find ways to prevent the implementation of the change.
- 40. I protested against the change.
- 41. I complained about the change to my colleagues.
- 42. I presented my objections on the change to my leaders.
- 43. I talked highly of the change to others.
- 44. I thought the change would have a negative impact on the way things are done in the organization.
- 45. I thought it was a negative thing that we were to implement change.
- 46. I thought the change would make my job harder to do.
- 47. I thought the change would be in favor of the organization/benefit the organization.
- 48. I thought the change would benefit me personally.

**Liking (excluded from the analyses)**

- 49. I think my leader would be a good friend
- 50. I get along well with my leader
- 51. I like my leader very much

## Appendix C. Exploratory Factor Analysis

*Exploratory Factor Analysis with Oblim Rotation*

	1	2	3	4
rutine5			.639	
rutine3			.588	
rutine2			.548	
rutine1				
rutine4				
emotion1			.695	
emotion2			.646	
emotion3			.571	
emotion4			.531	
stthinking2			.743	
stthinking1			.610	
stthinking3			.575	
stthinking4			.547	
crigidity1				
crigidity2				
crigidity3				
crigidity4				
ppt2				.863
ppt3				.805
ppt5				.794
ppt1				.784
ppt6				.604
ppt4				.428
affective2	.619		.402	
affective1	.616			
affective5	.568			
affective3	.538			
affective4	.511			
behavior3	.770			
behavior2	.764			
behavior4	.759			
behavior1	.578			
behavior5	.437			
cognitive2	.889			
cognitive1	.848			
cognitive3	.698			
cognitive4	.587			
cognitive5	.415			
trust2		.805		
trust3		.802		
trust1		.756		
info2		.926		
info4		.898		
info3		.893		
info1		.832		
influence1		.573		
influence2		.565		
influence3		.468		

*Notes.* Factorloadings under 0.40 are not shown

Appendix D. AVE & CRI Calculations

<i>AVE and CRI: Construct, Composite Reliability</i>		Lambda	1 - Lambda	Squared	Sum (Lambda Squared)	Sum (1 - Lambda Squared)	AVE	Squared Sum	Sum (1 - Lambda)	CRI
Dispositional Resistance	rutine1	0,0000	1,0000	1,0000					1,000	
	rutine2	0,548	0,3003	0,6997					0,452	
	rutine3	0,588	0,3457	0,6543					0,412	
	rutine4	0,0000	1,0000	1,0000					1,000	
	rutine5	0,639	0,4083	0,5917					0,361	
	emotion1	0,695	0,4830	0,5170					0,305	
	emotion2	0,646	0,4173	0,5827					0,354	
	emotion3	0,571	0,3260	0,6740					0,429	
	emotion4	0,531	0,2820	0,7180					0,469	
	sthaning1	0,610	0,3721	0,6279					0,390	
sthaning2	0,743	0,5520	0,4480					0,257		
sthaning3	0,575	0,3306	0,6694					0,425		
sthaning4	0,547	0,2992	0,7008					0,453		
crigidity1	0,0000	1,0000	1,0000					1,000		
crigidity2	0,0000	1,0000	1,0000					1,000		
crigidity3	0,0000	1,0000	1,0000					1,000		
crigidity4	0,0000	1,0000	1,0000					1,000		
Perceived Perspective Taking				4,1167	12,8833	0,6861	44,7962	9,31	0,8280	
ppt1	0,784	0,6147	0,3853					0,216		
ppt2	0,863	0,7448	0,2552					0,137		
ppt3	0,805	0,6480	0,3520					0,195		
ppt4	0,438	0,1832	0,8168					0,572		
ppt5	0,794	0,6304	0,3696					0,206		
ppt6	0,604	0,3648	0,6352					0,396		
Affective Resistance				3,1859	2,8141	0,5310	18,3013	1,72	0,9140	
affactive1	0,616	0,3795	0,6205					0,384		
affactive2	0,619	0,3832	0,6168					0,381		
affactive3	0,538	0,2894	0,7106					0,462		
affactive4	0,511	0,2611	0,7389					0,489		
affactive5	0,568	0,3226	0,6774					0,432		
Behavioral Resistance				1,6358	3,3642	0,3272	8,1339	2,15	0,7911	
behavior1	0,578	0,3341	0,6659					0,422		
behavior2	0,764	0,5837	0,4163					0,236		
behavior3	0,770	0,5929	0,4071					0,230		
behavior4	0,759	0,5761	0,4239					0,241		
behavior5	0,437	0,1910	0,8090					0,563		
Cognitive Resistance				2,0868	2,7223	0,4555	10,9429	1,69	0,8661	
cognitive1	0,848	0,7191	0,2809					0,152		
cognitive2	0,889	0,7903	0,2097					0,111		
cognitive3	0,698	0,4872	0,5128					0,302		
cognitive4	0,587	0,3446	0,6554					0,413		
cognitive5	0,415	0,1722	0,8278					0,585		
Trust in Management				2,5134	2,4866	0,5027	11,8130	1,56	0,8831	
trust1	0,756	0,5715	0,4285					0,244		
trust2	0,805	0,6480	0,3520					0,195		
trust3	0,802	0,6432	0,3568					0,198		
Information				1,8628	1,1372	0,6209	5,5838	0,64	0,8976	
info1	0,832	0,6922	0,3078					0,168		
info2	0,926	0,8575	0,1425					0,074		
info3	0,893	0,7974	0,2026					0,107		
info4	0,898	0,8064	0,1936					0,102		
Opportunity to Influence				3,1536	0,8464	0,7884	12,5954	0,45	0,9654	
influence1	0,573	0,3283	0,6717					0,427		
influence2	0,565	0,3192	0,6808					0,435		
influence3	0,468	0,2190	0,7810					0,532		
				0,8666	2,1334	0,2889	2,5792	1,39	0,6492	



Preliminary Thesis GRA 19003

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**Preliminary Thesis Report**

**- Resistance to change: The Impact of  
Dispositional Resistance, Perceived Perspective  
Taking and Perceived Empathic Concern -**

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## **1.0 Introduction**

Organizations are continually confronted with the need to implement changes (Armenakis, Harris & Mossholder, 1993). A change can be understood as a situation that interrupts normal patterns of organizations and requires participants to enact in new patterns (Mintzberg & Waters, 1985). From an organizational perspective, it involves the difference “in how an organization functions, who its members and leaders are, what form it takes, or how it allocates its resources” (Huber, Sutcliffe, Miller & Glick, 1993, p. 216). There are two main motivations for the study of organizational change. First, organizational change is important because it directly affects the work environment and social relationships. Second, organizational change is a subject that is not well understood as a whole, at least in a sense that there is a general model for understanding and predicting the phenomenon (Huber et. al., 1993).

Organizations need to implement changes in order to keep pace with competitors (Caruth, Middlebrook & Rachel, 2001). Therefore, understanding what contributes to the effectiveness of the implementation is important, hereunder what makes employees support or oppose a change. It was once accepted that everyone will resist change (Kirkpatrick, 1985, as cited in Folger & Skarlicki, 1999). However, it is now known that how change is implemented and conducted can have considerable influence on employee resistance (e.g. Armenakis & Bedeian, 1999; Cobb, Folger & Wooten, 1995). Building on this, implementing a planned organizational change involves overcoming possible employee resistance and encourage the adoption of new practices (Van de Ven & Poole, 1995). The research question is therefore as follows:

*“How can dispositional resistance to change, perceived perspective taking and perceived empathic concern affect the level of resistance in a change process?”*

## **2.0 Theoretical background**

### **2.1 Resistance to change**

Resistance to change has mostly been defined as negative behaviors towards the change (e.g. Armenakis & Harris 1995; Brower & Abolafia, 1995; Coch & French 1948). Over the years, researchers have called for a more complex definition to better capture the phenomena. Two lines of arguments have been



prevalent here.

First, resistance to change may not be purely negative. Giangreco and Peccei (2005) emphasised the importance of adopting a broader concept of resistance to change, which includes both positive and negative change behaviors. In line with this, change recipients reactions are not necessary obstacles. Reactions can serve as an asset and resources in implementing change and making it successful (Knowles & Linn, 2004). It is argued that resistance can help to keep the conversations active and give agents an opportunity to clarify and legitimize the change. Thereby, change recipients can get an opportunity to create understandings that contribute to their acceptance of the change (Barret, Thomas & Hocevar, 1995; Coghlan, D., 1993). Secondly, resistance may not only be behavioral. Piderit (2000) highlighted that people could differ in what they feel, think and do regarding change. She was one of the first to investigate whether cognitive, affective and behavioral resistance could be different facets that are influenced by and react differently to the same antecedents. In the same vein, Oreg (2006) argued that a tridimensional approach would better capture the full picture of resistance to change, hereunder its antecedents and its consequences. This tridimensional approach has been used and confirmed in several studies the last years, it has also been shown that the facets are both separated and linked (e.g. Chung, Su & Su, 2012; García-Cabrera & Hernández 2014; Szabla, 2007). Chung and colleagues (2012) found evidence that the three forms of resistance are linked such that what you feel about the change, influence what you think about it, and thereby how you behave towards it. They established the importance of paying “attention to employee’s feelings and communicate with them to reduce their intentions to resist change” (p. 743).

It becomes clear that resistance is not a direct response to a particular change, but rather a function of the quality of the relationship between the change agents and recipients (Powell & Posner, 1978). Much research has been conducted on this particular interpersonal relationship. Kouzes & Posner (1993) argue that strong working relationships between change agents and recipients can reduce resistance. Others have argued that actions of the change agent may contribute to the inclination of resistance in employees (Ford, Ford & D’Amelio, 2006).

Another variable that has shown to affect the level of resistance to change is trust, which in Oreg's (2006) study was negatively correlated with behavioral and affective resistance, yet even more strongly with cognitive resistance. This exemplifies the importance of restoring trust and repairing damaged relationships before and during the change in order to reduce the likelihood of resistance (Ford et. al., 2006; Stanley, Meyer, and Topolnytski, 2005).

The inclusion of individuals in the change process is also heavily documented to have an effect. Coch and French (1948) found that management might reduce resistance by effectively communicating the need for change and include employees in the planning. By gaining acceptance for the change, one can reduce resistance towards it (García-Cabrera & Hernández, 2014; Lawrence, 1954; Kotter, 1995; Kotter & Schlesinger, 1979; Watson, 1971). Surprisingly, Oreg (2006) found that less information about the change was associated with less behavioral and cognitive resistance, but not with affective.

How change affects the individual, can also affect how the individual views the change. Cobb, Folger and Wooten (1995) argue that the redistribution of resources is fundamental to change. The importance of the outcome has been found to vary among the three dimensions of resistance. Threats to power and prestige have been associated with cognitive resistance, while threats to job security have been associated with affective resistance (Oreg, 2006).

As seen from the theoretical review above, extensive literature has investigated the concept of resistance to change and what variables are likely to reduce or increase resistance. Much theory supports the use of the tridimensional approach to resistance as reactions to change have shown to manifest themselves differently along the three dimensions. We therefore see it as valuable to include the three dimensions as dependent variables in our research model.

Further, the vast majority of empirical studies on resistance have focused on contextual variables, but very few studies have considered the combined role of context and personality in predicting employees' reactions to organizational changes (for exceptions see Oreg, 2006; Wanberg & Banas, 2000). We therefore see it as interesting to investigate this further in our study.

## 2.2 Personality

### 2.2.1 Dispositional Resistance to Change

Oreg (2003) suggests that there are individual differences in the internal inclination to resist or adopt changes. The differences can predict individuals' attitudes towards both voluntary and imposed changes. Being high on dispositional resistance, which is conceptualized as a personality trait, makes the person less likely to incorporate changes in their lives and more likely to experience negative emotions when facing a change (Oreg 2003). When it comes to emotions, strong links have earlier been found between personality and affect (e.g. Larsen & Ketelaar, 1991). Others have also found links between predispositions for resistance and specific change related behaviors (e.g. Zuckerman & Link, 1968). Following from this, Oreg (2006) found a correlation between dispositional resistance to change and behavioral resistance to change. Yet, a stronger relationship was found between personality and affective resistance. The higher a person was on dispositional resistance to change, the stronger was the person's affective and behavioral resistance.

In the present study we see it as necessary to control for the impact of dispositional resistance to change when examining the role of perceived perspective taking and perceived empathic concern on resistance to change. In the same vein as Oreg (2006), we expect that employees dispositional resistance to change will have significant positive correlations with employees' behavioral, and in particular with their affective resistance to the change at hand. Therefore our first hypothesis is as follows:

***H1:** Employees' dispositional resistance to change will have significant positive correlations with employees' behavioral, and in particular with their affective resistance to the change at hand.*

## 2.3. Contextual variables

### 2.3.1 Perspective Taking

Perspective taking can be defined as "the cognitive process of putting of oneself in the place of another and understanding how the other thinks about a problem" (Falk & Johnson, 1977, p. 64). Davis (1983) argued that perspective taking facilitates more rewarding and smoother interpersonal relationships. Indeed, a

wide range of later studies have emphasized that considering another person's perspective has a variety of beneficial effects in social interaction. For instance, taking the perspective of another can increase the liking of, help provided and compassion towards the target of the perspective taking (e.g. Batson, 1994; Chartrand & Bargh, 1999). It has shown to decrease stereotyping and in-group favoritism (Galinsky, Ku, Wang, 2005; Galinsky & Moskowitz, 2000) and it can have beneficial effects in negotiations (Galinsky, Maddux, Gilin & White, 2008). Further, taking the perspective of others can foster enhanced closeness with that person in the form of self–other merging (Davis, Conklin, Smith & Luce, 1996). In line with this, Galinsky and colleagues (2005) found that the perspective taking facilitates social coordination and fosters social bonds through a self-other overlap.

### **2.3.1.1 Perceived Perspective Taking**

Goldstein, Vezich and Shapiro (2014) argue that perspective taking and perceived perspective taking share the same psychological commonalities as “both phenomena involve the temporary but psychologically powerful merging of two minds” (p. 944). Perspective taking in literature has mainly been investigating the psychology of the perspective taker. To our knowledge, Goldstein and colleagues (2014) were one of the first to begin to fill the surprisingly large gap in literature by examining the consequences of believing that another person is taking one’s perspective, a phenomenon they refer to as perceived perspective taking. The construct was revealed to have many of the same interpersonal benefits as perspective taking. One’s self-other overlap with the perspective taker and the amount of empathy one perceives the perspective taker to feel, operate in tandem to mediate the link between perceived perspective taking and liking for the perspective taker. Further, they found a mediational path from perceived perspective taking to helping behaviour through liking.

Good interpersonal relationships have shown to be one of the factors likely to decrease resistance to change and perspective taking has shown to enforce interpersonal relationships. Therefore we assume that perceived perspective taking may have the same effect on resistance to change. In other words, it could be that the resistance to change is affected by whether employees believe that their immediate leaders are taking their perspective.

As perspective taking and perceived perspective taking shares fundamental psychological similarities, we believe that it will definitely affect the cognitive resistance. Previous research has found perspective taking to influence behavior e.g. helping behavior; we therefore believe that perceived perspective taking will influence behavioral resistance. Based on this our second hypothesis is as follow:

***H2:** Employees' perceived level of perspective taking from their immediate leader will be negatively related to behavioral and cognitive resistance towards the change at hand.*

### **2.3.2 Empathy**

Empathy has been broadly defined as “reactions of one individual to the observed experiences of another” (Davis, 1980, p. 13), whereas others have considered it as “the ability to connect emotionally with another individual” (Galinsky et. al., 2008, p. 378). Empathy and perspective taking are often used interchangeably in literature, however there is clear evidence of their differences. Galinsky and colleagues (2008) demonstrated that perspective taking has more beneficial effects in negotiations than empathy. Yet, they argue that empathy may avoid escalation of conflict and can serve as an essential tool in many aspects of human life.

Davis (1980) developed a multidimensional concept of empathy, measured by the Interpersonal Reactivity Index (IRI), where both cognitive and affective empathy are considered. The index consists of four scales measuring different aspects of empathy, namely perspective taking, empathic concern, personal distress and fantasy. That being said, results from Davis (1980; 1983) studies determined that the four are separate constructs, which can be measured independently. For instance, the Perspective Taking Scale (Davis, 1983) revealed links to better interpersonal functioning, yet relatively little emotionality. The Empathic Concern Scale (Davis, 1983) on the other hand, exhibited a very different pattern, namely no association with social competence, but a clear relationship with emotional reactivity.

### 2.3.2.1 Perceived Empathic Concern

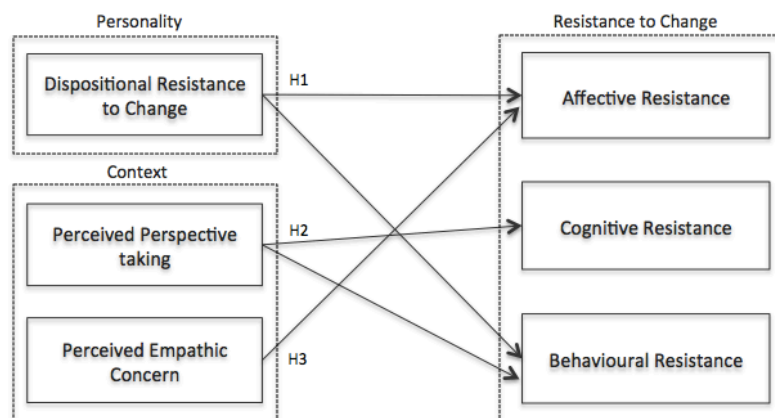
The concept of perceived empathy has shown to have positive effects in certain interpersonal relationships. For instance, perceived empathy from health staff has shown to affect patient’s satisfaction, compliance and distress (Kim, Kaplowitz & Johnston, 2004; Olson, 1995). The concept of perceived empathy was also slightly touched up on by Goldstein and colleagues (2014) who, as mentioned, found a relationship between perceived empathy, perspective taking and liking.

Davis’ (1980) viewed one construct of empathy, empathic concern, as the “tendency for the respondent to experience feelings of warmth, compassion and concern for others undergoing negative experiences” (p. 6). As the different constructs of empathy can be used alone (Davis 1980), we will use the empathic concern construct going forward.

Since perceived empathy and empathy seem to have some of the same effects in several areas, it is reasonable to believe they can have similar effects on resistance towards change. Further, perceived empathy is closely associated with emotional processes, which leads us to expect that those who feel that their leader have empathic concern towards them, will be less likely to affectively resist change. Hence, our third hypothesis is as follows:

***Hypothesis 3: Employees perceived level of empathic concern from their immediate leader will be negatively related to affective resistance.***

### 3. Research Model



Figur 1. The theoretical model with study hypotheses

## **4. Method**

### **4.1 Procedure**

During spring 2016, we will administer two separate surveys (to avoid common method bias) to employees in a company that is currently going through, or has recently been through an imposed change process, using a web based questionnaire tool. The study will be conducted at the individual level and will investigate how employees personality (predispositions to resistance to change) and contextual variables (how they perceive that their immediate leader takes their perspective or have empathy for them) affect the level of resistance towards the change process.

We know that at least one large company in Oslo has gone through a comprehensive and imposed change recently, therefore we have some pointers on what companies to contact. It should be mentioned however, that if we are declined, our study can be conducted in other companies.

### **4.2 Measurement**

#### **4.2.1 Dispositional Resistance to Change**

To measure subordinates dispositional resistance to change we will use the Resistance to Change Scale by Oreg (2003), which is built up by the following four factors: routine seeking, emotional reaction, short-term thinking and cognitive rigidity. Together they make up 17 items, which is measured on a 7-point scale ranging from “strongly disagree” (1) to “strongly agree” (7). The scale was not tailored to correspond to any specific type of change and can be a useful tool across diverse contexts and types of changes. Further, research has established its construct and criterion related validity, together with satisfactory reliability (Oreg, 2003).

#### **4.2.2 Perceived Perspective Taking**

To our knowledge, only one study has investigated perceived perspective taking directly (Goldstein et. al., 2014). This study assessed perceived perspective taking through experiments, however we see it as valuable to conduct a quantitative analysis. We will use the previously mentioned 7 items Perspective Taking Scale by Oreg (2003). The questions will be adapted so that they assess the employees’ perceived perspective taking from their immediate leader, rather than the employee’s perspective taking ability. The respondents will indicate

how well the items describe their leader on a five-point scale anchored by 0 (does not describe my leader well) and 4 (describes my leader very well).

### 4.2.3 Perceived Empathic Concern

Goldstein and colleagues (2014) used only one question to measure perceived empathy. To reach a more comprehensive understanding of the term, we will use the 7-item Empathic Concern Scale (Davis, 1983). As with perceived perspective taking, we will adapt the questions, so that they assess the employees' perceived empathic concern from their immediate leader, rather than the employee's empathic concern. The respondents will indicate how well the items describe their leader on a five-point scale anchored by 0 (does not describe my leader well) and 4 (describes my leader very well).

### 4.2.4 Resistance to Change

Cognitive, affective and behavioral resistance to change will be assessed using Oreg's Change Attitude Scale (2006), which consists of a total of 15 items measuring the three types of resistance. All questions are negatively framed and are measured by a 7-point scale ranging from "strongly disagree" (1) to "strongly agree" (7), with the exception of four items who is reversed and positively angled.

To make sure that potential relationships are indeed explained by the independent variables, we will control for age, trust in management, gender, tenure and previous experience with change.

## 5. Progression Plan

The following table shows our tentative progression plan.

Progress plan master thesis																			
Activities	January		February			March		April			May		June		July		August		
	11.01-17.01	01.02-07.02	14.02-20.02	27.02-06.03	13.03-20.03	27.03-03.04	04.04-10.04	17.04-24.04	01.05-08.05	15.05-22.05	30.05-06.06	13.06-20.06	27.06-04.07	10.07-17.07	24.07-31.07	07.08-14.08	21.08-28.08	04.09-11.09	18.09-25.09
Hand in preliminary thesis	█																		
Apply to NDS	█	█																	
Get feedback on preliminary		█																	
Adjust to feedback		█	█																
Contact company			█	█	█														
Make questionnaire			█	█	█	█													
Response form NDS				█	█	█	█												
Collect data						█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█
Data analysis									█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█
Write thesis																			
Proofread thesis																			
Hand in thesis																			



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