

**Achieving inclusive education: Historical legacies, informational- and financial  
resources as critical factors**

A qualitative research on the practical implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons  
with Disabilities in Dutch higher education

by

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## **Summary**

The number of international human rights treaties highly increased during the last decades. The effectiveness of those treaties on a local policy level is an understudied subject even though the implementation is often decentralized in European countries. Therefore, this study aimed to explain the influence of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities on inclusivity policies and practices for studying with a disability in Dutch higher education. By building on a conceptual framework that is until now solely applied to the local implementation of EU policies, this research contributes to the theoretical progress of policy implementation research. Since the ratification of the UN CRPD in the Netherlands in 2016, seventeen higher education institutions signed a declaration of intent with which they formally promised to implement the convention. Seventeen in-depth interviews with policy officers and students with disabilities and a document analysis allowed to compare the policy process of four Dutch higher education institutions. The results show that the UN convention brings extra attention to the topic of inclusive education. However, a law forbidding discrimination on the basis of disability, an institution's audit in which the accessibility for students with a disability is one of the assessment criteria and low scores on student evaluations from students with a disability are recognized as more fundamental drivers of the policy process. The UN CRPD functions for Dutch higher education as (1) a framework, (2) a base to increase support among employees, (3) a base for commitment from the top of the organization, (4) a base for knowledge sharing between institutions. The comparative case study reveals differences in the practical implementation of the UN convention. Those differences can be explained by multiple interrelated factors. The history of the institution with inclusive education has a positive impact on the implementation. Furthermore, indirectly the type of study programmes offered at the institution influences the implementation by affecting the commitment and expertise of the staff. Dutch higher education institutions are willing to implement the UN CRPD, yet they often lack informational and financial resources. Therefore, more guidance and support from the national government is necessary for the UN convention to be more effective on a local level.

**Key words:** International human rights treaties; local policy; policy implementation; inclusive education

## **Preface**

This master thesis marks the end of five educational years at Erasmus University. With this thesis, I was able to combine my interest in public policy, education and human rights. Inclusive education is a matter close to my heart as I have seen from nearby how a student with a disability can experience many barriers in Dutch higher education. Therefore, I was motivated to research what explains the influence of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities on inclusivity policies and practices for studying with a disability in Dutch higher education institutions.

I want to thank my supervisor, Freek de Haan, for guiding me through this thesis writing process. His feedback helped me structure my, sometimes, chaotic mind. Furthermore, I am grateful for my internship at ECIO during this period. Besides that it was a great learning experience, it gave me the opportunity to reach the right respondents and sources for my research. I want to thank all my colleagues at ECIO, especially Marjolein Büscher-Touwen, Elke van Doorn and Judith Jansen, for helping me out with their expertise and positivity. I would also like to express my gratitude towards all the participants for their willingness and openness in answering my questions. It was a pleasure to speak with people with a passion for inclusive education. Finally, I want to thank my family and friends for their support. Their motivating and kind words kept me going during stressful times.

I hope this research contributes to our quest for an inclusive education system and that my work in the future will continue to do so.

Ellen van Veen

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## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 The effectiveness of international human rights treaties: national and local

In the last decades, research on the effectiveness of international human rights treaties showed divergent results. Some studies found that treaties do not positively affect state behaviour and in some cases even negatively affect national human rights (Hathaway 2002; Neumayer 2005; Hill 2010). Others did find some improvements (Simmons 2009; Hafner-Burton 2013).

The literature on the effectiveness of international human rights treaties has primarily focused on the effects on national human rights indicators. As a result, there is not much knowledge about the process of translating a human rights treaty into policies and practices. According to Peruzzotti (2018), international human rights treaties often contain abstract ideals which makes it difficult to translate them into specific policies in the first place. Furthermore, the norms of the treaties should not only be transposed by the national government. Different administrative levels and actors can be involved with the implementation of an international human rights treaty as many state parties have a federal or decentralized system where local policy makers have much autonomy. This practical implementation of international agreements can be problematic as the local implementers are not the ones who ratified the agreement. This is done by the national government (Hoffman et al., 2016). Some local implementers may prioritize the implementation of the treaty more than others which leads to differences in, for example, the objectives set and budget reserved for the implementation. Therefore, the implementation of a particular policy or agreement is context specific as it depends on political, social, economic, organisational and attitudinal factors that influence how well or how poorly a policy is implemented (Khan, 2016). A study of Meier et al. (2014) analyses the role of the human rights for water and sanitation in international, national and local policy. The results show that the new human rights lead to more attention at the top but not at the local level. Therefore, the process of translating international human rights treaties at a local level deserves more scholarly attention.

## **1.2 UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities**

On December 13, 2006, the first legally binding international treaty on the rights of people with disabilities was adopted. The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) has the aim to “promote, protect and ensure the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms by all persons with disabilities, and to promote respect for their inherent dignity” (Article 1.1). States who signed the convention have to take the rights of persons with disabilities into account in all policies and programmes and shall involve persons with disabilities in the developing and implementation process. This means that the UN convention urges states parties to apply an integrated approach for the implementation of the convention as well as a form of citizen participation. Moreover, the convention’s focus on an inclusive society asks commitment of all actors in the society (De Jong, Den Exter and Hulst, 2013). Equal rights and inclusion is not realised by solely introducing anti-discrimination or other disability-specific laws. Those laws often already existed in the majority of the countries that ratified the UN CRPD (Tomlinson, 2013). Therefore, the implementation of the UN CRPD is the task of not solely the central government. Municipalities, public organizations and entrepreneurs all have a responsibility in the creation of an inclusive society. Lang et al. (2011) emphasize as a practical challenge for the convention the gap between national policy and local community practice. Studying the local practices of the convention may help narrow this gap.

One focal point in the CRPD is the right to education as this enables persons with a disability to develop their sense of dignity and talents and to participate effectively in the society (Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 2006). Article 24 states that “States Parties shall ensure an inclusive education system at all levels”. According to Powell et al. (2014), the UN CRPD has a high awareness-raising power. Yet, the impact is limited as principles in education are translated locally. Factors influencing the implementation of the UN CRPD in education systems are historical legacies and the presence of change agents. The study of Powell et al. (2014) focused on the effects of the UN CRPD on Germany’s segregated primary education. The scholars proclaim that more context-sensitive, region-specific analyses are necessary, especially when the implementation is decentralized. A context that is more decentralized than primary education is higher education as government steering is less

strong and many autonomous actors are present (Cerych and Sabatier, 1986). Therefore, the implementation of the UN CRPD in higher education is mostly the task of the institutions and these can vary in their approach. Higher education has not been studied as of yet. This has led to the focus of this research being on the effects on the UN CRPD on Dutch higher education.

The Netherlands ratified the UN CRPD in July 2016. Since the ratification, the Dutch government and Dutch higher education institutions together have to work towards inclusive higher education. Inclusive education is not achieved in one day and therefore the UN convention aims for a progressive realization (Article 4, Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 2006). However, this still means that institutions should take immediate actions. Since 2018, seventeen Dutch higher education institutions have signed a declaration of intent in which a shared ambition, process agreements and objectives about the implementation of the UN convention are stated (ECIO, n.d.-a). This means that those seventeen institutions formally promised to implement the CRPD. Still, this does not guarantee that they practically implement the convention as well and actually did take actions to achieve inclusivity in their education. Therefore, research is needed to explain the influence of the UN convention on the level of higher education institutions. This thesis addresses this issue in order to increase the knowledge about the effectiveness of international human rights treaties on a local policy level.

### **1.3 Research aim and research question**

The aim of this research is to explain what factors impact the practical implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in Dutch higher education. This will be done by comparing the policy process of four Dutch higher institutions on the basis of desk research and semi-structured interviews with policy officers and students with disabilities. To reach the aim of this research, the following central research question is formulated:

*“What explains the influence of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities on inclusivity policies and practices for studying with a disability in Dutch higher education institutions?”*



This research question is answered by the following theoretical and empirical sub-questions:

**1. How effective are international human rights treaties according to previous research?**

By gaining insights on the effectiveness of international human rights treaties on a national and local level, it can be determined what the impact of the treaties is and which critical factors influence this impact.

**2. What factors influence the practical implementation of international human right treaties according to the literature on policy implementation?**

As this research focuses on the effects of the convention on policies and practices, the next step is to understand what critical factors play a role in the implementation of policies. Literature on policy implementation in international context, in the context of higher education as well as inclusivity policies are discussed. The critical factors found in answering sub-question 1 and 2 form the basis for the conceptual framework of this study.

**3. How can inclusive higher education be defined according to the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities?**

To be able to assess how the UN CRPD is implemented, it is necessary to understand what obligations are included in the convention for higher education.

**4. How does the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities affect inclusivity policies and practices for studying with a disability at Dutch higher education institutions?**

The first step in the data analysis is to establish the influence of the UN CRPD on inclusivity policies and practices as the theory shows that there is no unconditional effect of conventions on a local level.

**5. What are building blocks and bottlenecks for the practical implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities at Dutch higher education institutions?**

The last step in answering the central research question is to analyse by which factors the influence of the UN CRPD in Dutch higher education is determined.

#### **1.4 Scientific relevance**

The effectiveness of human rights treaties is primarily assessed on a national level. However, the trend of decentralization in policy making makes the implementation of such a treaty dependent on local agencies. This makes it necessary to study the differences in the practical implementation of international human rights treaties. Furthermore, despite scholars' attempts to be more scientific, there is still a lack of theory-driven studies in the current implementation research (Saetren, 2014). By building on a conceptual framework that is until now solely applied to the local implementation of EU policies (Bondarouk and Liefferink, 2016), this research will contribute to the theoretical progress of policy implementation research (Smith and Larimer, 2009).

#### **1.5 Societal relevance**

Dutch higher education students with a disability often fall behind during their studies. This happens twice as often to students with a disability in comparison to students without a disability which shows that changes in higher education are necessary to remove the barriers for those students (Van den Broek et al., 2020). This research gives insights on the building blocks and bottlenecks for organizing inclusive education. An education system that is inclusive is crucial for the realization of an inclusive society in general (Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 2006). Therefore, this research is relevant for governments and organizations aiming to improve the circumstances for persons with disabilities. Furthermore, this research can show whether an UN convention is the right policy instrument for improving the circumstances of certain minority groups and whether a convention can be more effective when it is organized differently. Finally, as this study may contribute to general policy implementation literature, it can help policy implementers in improving the implementation process.

**1.6 Roadmap**

This thesis consists of a theoretical and empirical part. In the second chapter, an overview of the existing literature on the effectiveness of international human rights treaties and influencing factors for the practical implementation will be provided as well as an explanation of the right to inclusive education according to the UN CRPD. Next, in the third chapter, the research design and methods will be discussed. In the fourth chapter, the empirical findings are presented followed by a qualitative analysis. Finally, in the fifth chapter, the research question will be answered, the limitations of the research will be discussed and recommendations will be presented.

## **2. Theoretical and institutional framework**

This chapter presents the theory and previous research and reports that this study is building upon as well as an overview of the obligations imposed by the UN CRPD for higher education. It is divided into three parts. The first part focuses on the existing literature about the effectiveness of international human rights treaties. The second part presents what implementation research states about factors influencing the implementation of international human rights treaties and inclusive policies. The third part discusses what inclusive education is according to the UN Convention and what is expected from higher education institutions.

### **2.1 How effective are international human rights treaties according to previous research?**

In order to answer the first sub-question, a brief overview will be given of the development of international human rights treaties and how their effectiveness is measured. Next, the outcomes of previous studies on the effectiveness of international human rights treaties will be discussed.

#### **2.1.1 Means to protect human rights**

After the Second World War, human rights became a general issue of international concern (Reiding, 2007). Over the years, the human rights instruments have increased dramatically to over a hundred declarations, conventions and recommendations (Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, n.d.). This is because more rights are categorized as human rights and procedures are kept being renewed to translate those human rights into reality. Some instruments only have politically binding principles. Legally binding conventions impose stronger obligations on states and are often more detailed (Reiding, 2017). The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with a Disability is a legally binding convention. Recently, new international agreements are designed to be relevant for all state parties and not only function as a means to dictate poor countries' policies (Hoffman et al., 2016).

International treaties are not the only means to protect and guarantee human rights. Figure 1 below shows that international treaties together with constitutions and domestic laws are political guarantees. Semi-political mechanisms arise from checks and balances. Moreover, the proceedings in

independent courts can protect human rights. Another means is human rights bodies such as commissions and ombudsmen. Finally, extra-institutional guarantees can be understood as a set of collective actions done to demand rights such as protests (Vazquez and Delaplace, 2011).

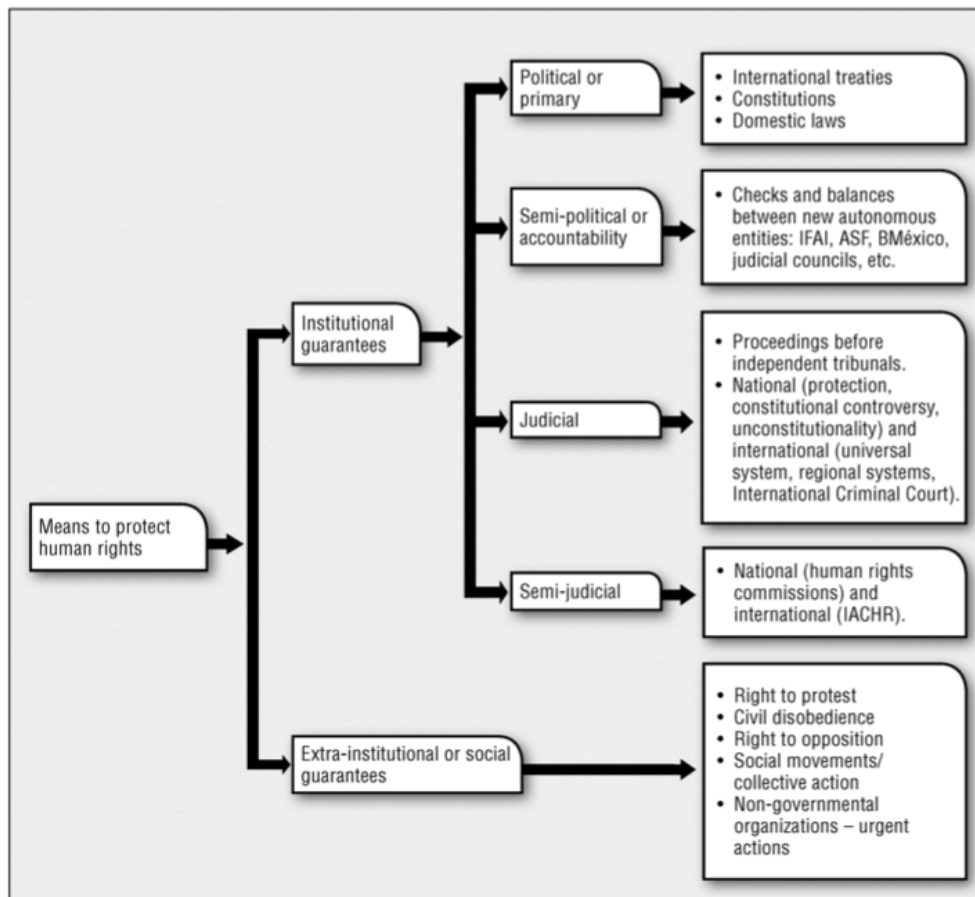


Figure 1: Categorization of means to protect human rights (Vazquez and Delaplace, 2011)

### 2.1.2 Human rights indicators

The implementation of human rights treaties can be measured with certain indicators. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (2012) distinguishes three types of indicators. Structural indicators reflect a state's commitment to protecting human rights by showing whether a state has ratified a convention. Process indicators measure the efforts to transform the commitment into the desired outcome. It is about, for instance, the policies and plans introduced and the budget reserved to implement them. Lastly, outcome indicators reflect the state of enjoyment of human rights such as educational attainment of the target population group. The indicators should be used in combination to

be useful (De Beco, 2008). The studies presented in the next section primarily focused on outcome indicators. In this sense, they rather look at the compliance of states instead of the effectiveness of the treaties. Compliance may occur without there being any actions taken to implement the treaty norms. Effectiveness means that the treaty leads to behaviour that would not have occurred otherwise (Krommendijk, 2015). For this reason, this thesis mainly focuses on the process of implementing the UN CRPD at Dutch higher education institutions rather than the outcome in order to conclude something about the effectiveness.

### **2.1.3 Studies on the effectiveness of international human rights treaties**

As the number of international human rights treaties has increased, so has the research on the impact of those treaties on state behaviour. Hafner-Burton (2013) found positive results. She argues for the theory of transnational human rights advocacy networks. Those networks consist of international human rights NGOs, domestic NGOs, other civil society groups and the media. When those networks are strong, they can pressure administrative actors to improve human rights. Risse and Sikkink (1999) call this process norms socialization. Neumayer (2005) finds evidence in favour of this theory as his quantitative study shows that a strong civil society leads to more compliance with human rights treaties. According to his study, compliance is also dependent on the extent of democracy and income per capita of a country. A study on the role of human rights in public policy in the context of water and sanitation shows that the human rights efforts lead to more political attention at the top. However, it did not change much on the local level. The researchers state that in order to have effect on the local level, national governments have to provide more information to local implementers and should facilitate consultations with local implementers (Meier et al., 2014).

A study on the implementation of the UN CRPD in primary education in Germany shows that within a country there is a variation in the effectiveness of the convention (Powell et al., 2014). The authors use the reasoning of historical institutionalism which assumes that institutional rules and historical events shape policy-making processes (Lowndes and Roberts, 2013). Historical institutionalism relies on the concept of path dependence which emphasizes that once policy makers

have started down a particular path, they are unlikely to depart from the path as the costs of changing direction are high. The lack of change in inclusive primary education is the result of those historical paths. In contrast, change agents with deep understanding of the reform and ideas for feasible solutions positively influence implementation. In higher education, there is in general no segregated system with special and regular education as is the case for primary and secondary education. Still, reforms should be made in tertiary education as well because education should be designed according to the principles of Universal Design for Learning (see 2.3.3). This asks for more flexibility in the curriculum, forms of teaching and assessments which asks for certain reforms. In addition, higher education policy making is in many countries more decentralized than primary education policy making (Cerych and Sabatier, 1986). Therefore, variations in implementation structures can be expected and an institution's history and familiarity with flexible and inclusive education can influence the implementation of UN CRPD.

#### **2.1.4 Conclusion**

Research has found that international human rights treaties can have a positive impact on human rights. Yet, this impact is dependent on certain factors such as the strength of the civil society. Less research has been done on the effectiveness on a local level. Powell et al. (2014) found that the impact of the UN CRPD on local primary education is influenced by historical legacies and the presence of change agents. Furthermore, the information provision to and consultation with local implementers is needed for the implementation to be effective. In order to understand what can influence the effect of international human rights treaties on specifically policies and practices, the next part of this chapter discusses more critical factors influencing the practical implementation as proposed by policy implementation research.

### **2.2 What factors influence the practical implementation of international human rights treaties according to the literature on policy implementation?**

This sub-question is answered by, firstly, explaining what is meant with policy implementation and how researchers approached the topic over time. Secondly, various theories and conceptual models are

discussed. This includes insights on the implementation of international policies by local implementers as well as inclusivity policies in higher education.

### **2.2.1 Policy process**

A policy is a description of future goals and actions and expresses the ways and means of attaining them (Khan, 2016). Since the 1950s, a policy process has been viewed as going through different stages, namely agenda setting, policy formulation, decision-making, policy implementation and evaluation. Over time, the perspective of separate stages changed into a cyclical model in which multiple feedback processes take place between inputs and outputs of the policy process (Jann and Wegrich, 2007).

Policy implementation is the phase in the policy process where a policy is executed or enforced by the responsible institutions and organizations that are usually part of the public sector (Jann and Wegrich, 2007). O'Toole (2000) describes policy implementation as that “what happens between the establishment of an apparent intention on the part of the government to do something, or to stop doing something, and the ultimate impact in the world of action” (p. 266). Policies do not always have the expected effects. Therefore, the implementation phase is increasingly studied in order to explain what led to those defects (Jann and Wegrich, 2007).

### **2.2.2 Three generation of implementation research**

According to Goggin et al. (1990) implementation research can be divided into three generations. The first generation in the 1970s was mostly about awareness raising under scholars and the public (Jann and Wegrich, 2007). Most studies focused on the factors leading to outcomes that are different from the objectives. The aspects stated most often as reasons for implementation failure were intra- and inter-organizational coordination problems and the relationship between the field agencies and the target group (Jann and Wegrich, 2007). According to Van Meter and Van Horn (1975), critical variables in implementation processes are: (1) policy standards and objectives: e.g. the clarity of the goals and guidelines, (2) policy resources. Other variables of influence are (3) inter-organisational communication and enforcement activities; e.g. technical assistance and a principal's ability to sanction; (4) characteristics of the implementing agencies; e.g. the competence and size of the staff (informal



attributes) and the degree of hierarchical control of subunit decisions (structural features), (5) economic, social and political conditions, (6) disposition of implementers; the motivation and attitude of those responsible for implementing the reform.

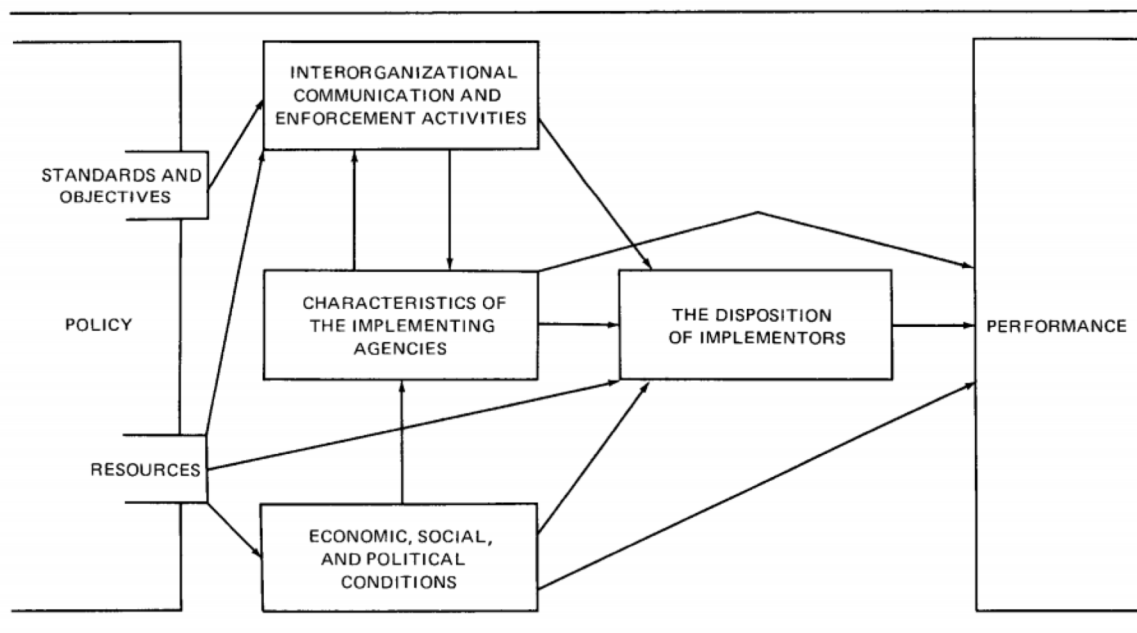


Figure 2: A model of the policy implementation process (Van Meter and Van Horn, 1975)

The implementation studies in the first generation were dominated by the top-down perspective that starts the analysis from the perspective of decision-makers and assumes that there is a direct causal link between policies and observed outcomes. This way, the impact of implementers on policy effectiveness is almost neglected.

In the second generation of implementation research during the 1980s, scholars started to criticize this approach as policy outcomes and policy objectives did not actually coincide. This led to the introduction of the bottom-up perspective. Scholars such as Elmore (1980) and Hjern and Porter (1981) started to study what was happening at the level of administrators. They interpreted implementation as a negotiation process within networks of implementers. Elmore (1980) introduced the concept “backward mapping” which proposed to start the analysis at the last possible stage when local actors decide how to solve a policy problem instead of starting at the stage where the policy decision is made at the “top” of the political system. According to Hjern and Porter (1981),

implementation structures should be the unit of analysis in implementation research. Implementation structures are networks of actors from all relevant agencies cooperating in the implementation of a policy or programme. Policy implementation, thus, has a multi-actor and inter-organizational character. To analyse implementation, one should identify the network of actors and subsequently analyse how this network is trying to solve their problems. In short, the second generation of implementation research is dominated by the debate between the top-down and bottom-up perspective.

As a result of the debate, the third generation of implementation research focused on bringing the two approaches together with so-called hybrid theories. Scharpf (1978) brought the two perspectives together by introducing implementation research to the concept of policy networks. He proposed to give more attention to the processes of interaction and collaboration within a network of interdependent actors. The concept of policy network is well known today as it has been the subject of many studies and is used to analyse policy making and implementation at the local, national and international level (Raab and Kenis, 2007).

Elmore (1985) combined his concept of “backward mapping” with “forward mapping”, stating that policy delivery is dependent on both elements. Policy makers should start with deciding on policy objectives and instruments (forward mapping) and subsequently identify the incentive structure of implementers (backward mapping). Also, Sabatier (1986) pointed out that policy formulation and policy implementation coincide. Therefore, policy processes should not be viewed in isolation. Other policy fields as well as economic developments may influence the policy delivery. All in all, the third generation of implementation research seems successful in combining both perspectives. Furthermore, this generation aims to be more scientific by stating clear hypotheses and empirical arguments. However, according to Saetren (2014) there is still a lack of theory-driven studies in the current implementation research. Studies should build on previous work by testing their insights in other contexts.

To sum up, implementation research has developed since the 1970s from a top-down perspective to hybrid theories. By looking at both the national context and the process within the education institutions, this thesis applies a combination of top-down and bottom-up as well. In the next

section, insights of implementation research focusing on international policies and agreements will be presented.

### **2.2.3 Implementation research in international context**

Policy implementation studies were traditionally concerned with national policies. Yet, the growth of international policies led to literature on the domestic implementation of international policies and agreements. Some comparative studies explained the effectiveness of supranational policies on the basis of the degree of “misfit”, meaning the extent to which the international policy demands states to deviate from their traditional way of doing things. If international policies do not match existing traditions, implementation will be disputed which leads to delays or even policy failures (Duina and Blithe, 1999; Knill and Lenschow, 1998). This points again to the ideas of historical institutionalism. Critics argued that taking the degree of misfit as an explanatory variable disregards the influence of domestic actor networks. Factors such as the decision-making culture and the support of domestic interest groups also influence the domestic implementation processes (Cowles et al., 2001; Héritier et al., 2001). Still, those studies solely focused on the implementation on the national level.

Bondarouk and Mastenbroek (2018) recognized this problem in relation to the EU implementation research. They claim that the primary focus of research is on the first stage in implementation which is the legal or formal implementation at national level. There is also a second stage that is about the practical implementation at different administrative levels. Local efforts to implement the international policy can vary and therefore deserve more scholarly attention in order to prevent shallow conclusions about the effectiveness of supranational policies. This holds for international treaties as well. Bondarouk and Mastenbroek (2018) created a conceptual framework based on existing literature to study the differences in implementation within one administrative layer using the same policy instrument, such as municipalities. Bondarouk and Mastenbroek (2018) understand policy performance in terms of policy outputs, the actions that are taken in response to the policy or programme.

Although this conceptual framework is mostly build on EU policy implementation literature, it may be a useful framework to analyse the practical implementation of international human rights

treaties as well. Applying theories derived and tested for one particular context to another context will contribute to the theoretical progress of the policy implementation research (Smith and Larimer, 2009). As discussed before, this theoretical basis is still lacking in the policy implementation literature.

According to the conceptual framework, implementation performance can be divided into three dimensions, namely substance, scope and effort (Bondarouk and Mastenbroek, 2018). Substance refers to the essence of the central issue that is being addressed with the policy instrument. This dimension has two aspects; definitional details and objectives of the policy instrument. The more definitional details are given, the more consistent the implementation process will be. Objectives make the purpose of the policy transparent. Local administrators could for instance enforce norms and standards that are stricter than the policy instrument prescribes and therefore local implementers can vary in this aspect. The second dimension is the scope of implementation. The local implementation can differ in three aspects, namely territory, duration and addressees. Territory refers to the region to which the policy instrument applies. Duration can vary as some may apply the standards earlier than others. Addressees is about the specific group that is targeted with the policy. This may also be reduced or broadened by the implementers. The final dimension is the effort that implementers put into reaching the objectives. Effort is related to the resources that are invested. One aspect is the organisational resources, the staff that is assigned to implement the task can be small or large. Informational resources also matter. This is expressed in the types of expertise that is consulted for the implementation. Another aspect is the budget, i.e. financial resources. The fourth aspect is the prioritization of goals. There are multiple goals and measures within one policy and the implementers should decide on which ones they implement first. The last aspect of effort is monitoring which can create enforcement mechanisms and therefore contribute to implementation performance. Some implementation agencies may monitor more often than others.

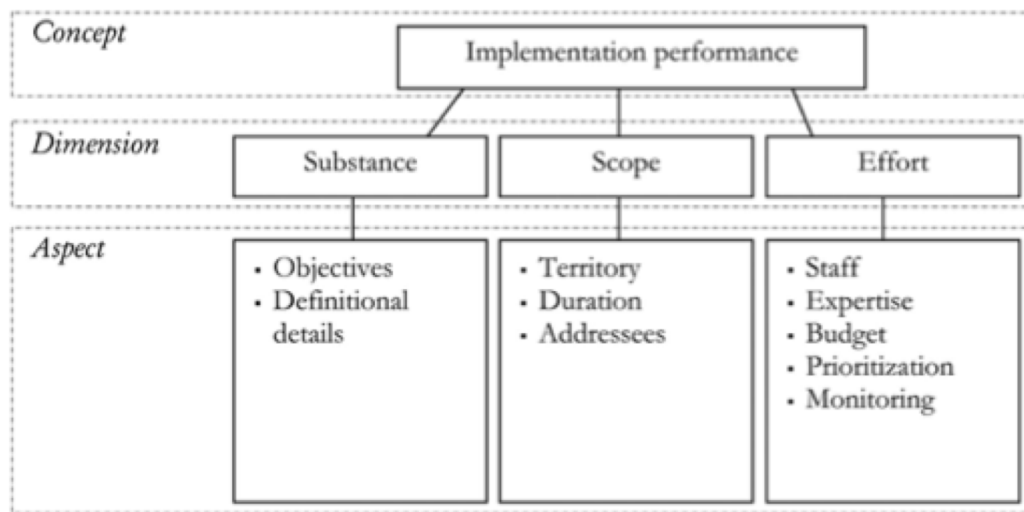


Figure 3: Conceptual model for implementation performance (Bondarouk and Mastenbroek, 2018)

Bondarouk and Liefserink (2016) applied this conceptual framework to the implementation of the EU ambient air quality directive in Dutch municipalities. The study shows that smaller municipalities score lower on implementation performance. They conclude that resources influence the implementation process. In short, this framework shows that local implementation agencies can vary in many aspects and brings together both the top-down and bottom-up perspective. Until now, the effort, in terms of resources, that implementers put into realising the policy goals is shown to have an impact on the implementation process.

#### 2.2.4 Implementation research in higher education

In the last decades, European higher education has experienced multiple changes. The relationship between higher education and the state has changed which have led to more self-regulated institutions. This is the result of the neo-liberal tradition within European governments (Goedegebuure and Hayden, 2007). An introduction of the principles of New Public Management (NPM) made the state approach the public sector as a business. At the same time, higher education increased its public responsibility as human capital started to be viewed as a driver of economic growth (Kennedy, 2003). Furthermore, higher education as a sector has become more competitive which led to students being viewed as

consumers. All these developments influenced the policy process within higher education. Therefore, there is a need to analyse policy implementation in higher education.

Policy making in higher education can be linked to the term ‘governance’. Huther and Shah (1998) define governance as “a multifaceted concept that encompasses all aspects of the exercise of authority through formal and informal institutions in the management of the resource endowments of the state” (as cited in Kennedy, 2003, p. 57). In the context of higher education this is a “conceptual shorthand for the way higher education systems and institutions are organized and managed” (Harman and Treadgold, 2007 as cited in Goedegebuure and Hayden, 2007, p. 2). Governance processes involve different stakeholders, such as students as well as teachers and administrators. Higher education is, therefore, bottom-heavy which makes it important to identify the interactions at the front line as scholars such as Hjern and Porter (1981) and Scharpf (1978) suggested. Also, the many actors that are involved lead to the policies in higher education still being shaped during the implementation process.

A major contribution to implementation research in higher education is the work of Cerych and Sabatier (1986). They analysed nine higher education reforms during the 1960s. They mentioned the following factors as affecting policy implementation: (1) objectives, its clarity as well as degree of misfit; (2) adequacy of the causal theory underlying the reform, meaning that the actions are based on appropriate theories that state that those will have the desired results; (3) sufficiency of financial resources; (4) the degree of commitment to the objectives by implementers at the education ministry and institutions; (5) degree of commitment to the objectives by executive officials and affected groups outside the implementing agencies; (6) changes in social and economic conditions affecting goal priorities. These factors have similarities with the factors proposed by Van Meter and Van Horn (1975) and recently by Bondarouk and Mastenbroek (2018).

According to Gonitzka et al. (2005), not many theory-based studies have been added to the literature on policy implementation in higher education since the contribution of Cerych and Sabatier (1986). Therefore, this deserves more scholarly attention.

### **2.2.5 Literature on implementing inclusivity policies**

The implementation of inclusivity policies is still an understudied subject. May and Bridger (2010) assessed how ten higher education institutions in the UK developed and embedded inclusive policy and practice. It showed that inclusive policy and practice requires changes on the institutional-level as well as individual-level. It is about changing strategies and environmental factors as well as changing individuals' attitudes' and perceptions. Widening participation can be driven by both internal and external factors. Internal factors are e.g. funding, the institutional stated mission and the quality of teaching and assessment. External drivers are national policies, national student surveys and demographics.

According to the Flemish Support Centre Inclusive Higher Education (SIHO), the implementation of inclusivity policies and practices within higher education institution is dependent on the inclusivity before the ratification of the UN CRPD, the expertise within the institutions and the specificity of the study programme (2020). These factors correspond with the factors mentioned in the policy implementation literature.

### **2.2.6 Conclusion**

Concluding from the findings discussed above, many factors can influence implementation performance. A crucial factor that is presented by different scholars is objectives. Those should be clear and detailed (Van Meter and Van Horn, 1975; Cerych and Sabatier, 1986; Bondarouk and Mastenbroek, 2018). It also matters whether the objectives require implementation agencies to stray from their normal path of doing things (Duina and Blithe, 1999; Cerych and Sabatier, 1986; Powell et al. 2014; SIHO, 2020). Furthermore, the characteristics of the implementation agencies and its resources matter. A characteristic is the size of the agency and the amount of people the policy addresses. Furthermore, the competence, commitment and size of the staff assigned to the implementation task can influence implementation performance (Van Meter and Van Horn, 1975; Cerych and Sabatier, 1986; Bondarouk and Mastenbroek, 2018; SIHO, 2020). Also, financial resources are presented as a crucial factor.

Finally, monitoring and sanctions leading to enforcement mechanisms play a role in the effectiveness of local implementation (Van Meter and Van Horn, 1975; Bondarouk and Mastenbroek, 2018).

Based on the theory and conceptual models discussed in answering the first two sub-questions, a conceptual model for this study is presented in figure 4 below.

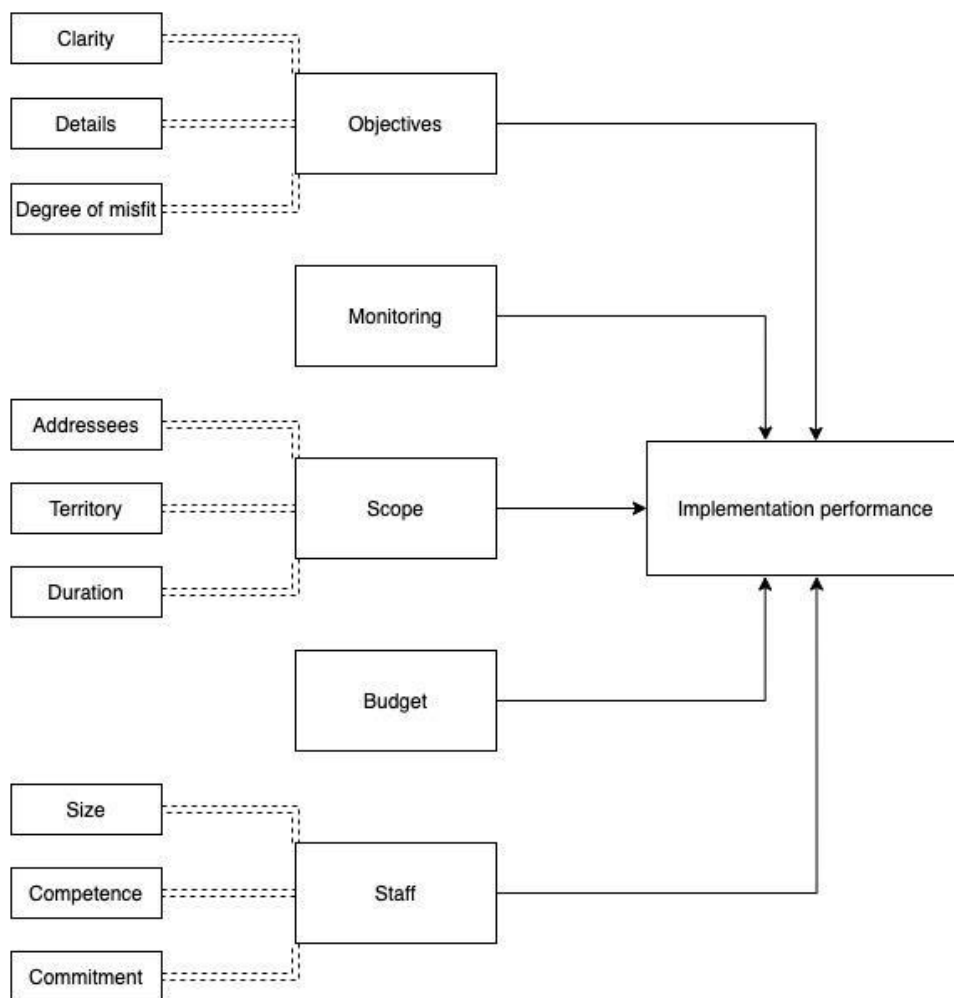


Figure 4: Conceptual framework

The conceptual framework is mostly based on the framework presented by Bondarouk and Mastenbroek (2018). Some concepts are added such as “degree of misfit” which is also related to the historical legacies mentioned by Powell et al. (2014). “Duration” and “degree of misfit” are interrelated as having the objectives of the treaty set in the organization for a longer period means that the organization is not



forced to depart much from its traditional way of doing things. Also, commitment of the staff is added as this was mentioned by other studies. Expertise is left out as this is similar to the competence of the staff.

### **2.3 How can inclusive higher education be defined according to the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities?**

In the last part of this chapter, the third sub-question will be answered. The UN CRPD gives states parties different obligations. In order to examine how the convention is implemented in higher education, it is necessary to understand what is expected from higher education institutions. As Perruzzotti (2018) stated, translating international human rights treaties into policies can be difficult as they often contain abstract ideals. This section shows that inclusive education is an ambiguous concept and demands systematic and cultural reforms which can influence the implementation process.

#### **2.3.1 UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities**

On December 13, 2006, the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities was adopted with the aim to “promote, protect and ensure the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms by all persons with disabilities, and to promote respect for their inherent dignity” (Article 1.1, UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 2006). Principles of the convention are e.g. non-discrimination, full and effective participation and inclusion in society, respect for difference and acceptance of persons with disabilities as part of human diversity and humanity.

Today, 160 governments signed the convention. According to the convention, persons with disabilities are those who have “long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others” (Article 1.1). This definition shows the connection of the CRPD with the social model of disability. Since the 1970s, the human rights of disabled people have received more attention as a consequence of the shift from the medical to the social approach to disability (Winance, 2016). Disabilities are no longer viewed as an issue that belongs to the disabled individual. The disability is

not the individual's biological characteristic but the social reality of exclusion. Disability actually depends on the situation and is about the relation between the individual and the society (Hiskes, 2019). The society is disabling the persons by designing the society in a way that only meets the needs of the majority of the people who are not disabled. To end this disabling process, the society, thus, must be adjusted to the needs of the people with disabilities.

### **2.3.2 Involving persons with disabilities and reasonable accommodation**

The UN CRPD gives states parties the general obligation to take the rights of persons with disabilities into account in all policies and programmes. Furthermore, states parties should consult with and actively involve persons with disabilities in the development and implementation of policies and other decision-making processes as a consequence of the convention (Article 4). This will positively impact the implementation of the Convention. Regarding the right to education, states parties should ensure an inclusive education system at all levels (Article 24.1). For higher education this has several implications. Persons with disabilities should be able to access higher education without discrimination and on an equal basis with others. To fulfil this, states parties should ensure that students with disabilities are offered reasonable accommodation (Article 24.5). This means that necessary and appropriate adjustments should be provided when students experience disabilities. Those adjustments should not have a disproportionate burden on the organization or society (Article 2). This concept is rather vague as it does not say exactly when an adjustment leads to disproportionate burden. This is decided on per individual case as the capacity of organizations varies. However, a higher education institution should always at least examine whether an adjustment is possible. An institution is not allowed to immediately state that it cannot adapt its education to the needs of a student with a disability (College voor de Rechten van de Mens, 2019). Furthermore, the adjustments should be determined based on the barriers experienced by the student and not the medical label the individual has. Striving for inclusive education means that in the long run those individual adjustments are not necessary anymore.

### **2.3.3 Inclusive education**

The UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities published in 2016 a general comment to explain inclusive education in more detail. Inclusive education is not solely placing students with disabilities in mainstream education. This is integration, yet no inclusion as students may still be disabled to use the education services. Inclusion involves systematic reforms to overcome those barriers (CRPD/GC/4, §11).

Higher education should be available, accessible, acceptable and adaptable. Accessibility holds for the entire education system, for example the buildings, the educational materials, assessments, information and communication tools and school trips (§22). Acceptability stands in relation to the quality of the education. This cannot diminish with the adjustments for students with disabilities. With adaptability, the UN Committee encourages states parties to adopt the Universal Design for Learning approach. This approach tries to design education in a way that meets the needs of everyone, taking diversity as a starting point. This means that flexible ways of learning are introduced. For example, the examination of a course can be a presentation but the teachers give the students the space to give this presentation in a way that works for them. “Curricula must be conceived, designed and implemented in such a way as to meet and adjust to the requirements of every student, and provide appropriate educational responses” (§26). According to SIHO (2020), inclusive higher education involves a two-track policy. It is about the application of universal design that offers a broad scale of options for every student. In addition, reasonable adjustments offer extra services for students with disabilities.

To summarize, the UN CRPD gives states parties several obligations. The most important obligations for higher education institutions are (1) to adopt the universal design for learning approach and offer reasonable adjustments when students still experience barriers (2) to actively involve students with disabilities in the policies and practices implemented in order to realise the goal of inclusive higher education. Both are considered during the assessment of the higher education institutions’ policies and practices.

### **3. Methodology**

In this chapter, the methodology of the research will be discussed. Firstly, the setting and research design will be described. Secondly, the case selection will be explained. Thirdly, the data collection and data analysis will be presented including the operationalization of the concepts. Finally, the reliability and validity as well as the ethical aspects of the research will be discussed.

#### **3.1 Setting and research design**

This study was designed to examine which factors influence the implementation performance of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in higher education institutions in the Netherlands. With higher education, this study chose a context which is bottom-heavy and therefore administrators at the ‘frontline’ have relatively high autonomy in policy making and implementation. In the Netherlands specifically, higher education institutions became more self-governing in the 1980s when the Dutch government started to solely ‘supervise’ the sector instead of controlling it (Maassen and Van Vught, 1994).

Furthermore, this case is interesting because seventeen Dutch higher education institutions signed a declaration of intent in which a shared ambition, process agreements and objectives about the implementation of the UN convention are stated (ECIO, n.d.-a). The institutions who signed the declaration of intent are welcomed to the Workgroup UN Convention which gathers three times a year to share knowledge and good practices about inclusive education. The Workgroup is facilitated by the Dutch Expert centre on inclusive education (ECIO). This way, institutions may learn from each other and implement the CRPD more effectively.

As higher education institutions in the Netherlands have much autonomy in their policy making and implementation, their approaches can vary in many aspects. Furthermore, in the implementation of inclusivity policies, many agents play a role; administrators, student councillors, teachers, students. This makes it a complex context to examine. Moreover, the inclusivity of education is hardly quantitatively measurable as it is dependent on the needs of the students which differs per individual. Therefore, a qualitative research design seems most appropriate for this study.

The strategy chosen for this study is a comparative case study which allows for an in-depth analysis of four higher education institutions. The in-depth analysis will be performed by conducting desk research as well as semi-structured interviews. As stated in Barriball and While (1994), semi-structured interviews are an appropriate method for research that aims to explore respondents' perceptions and opinions regarding complex and sensitive issues. The topic of this research is not only complex but can also be sensitive for students with a disability.

By comparing four different higher education institutions a deeper understanding will be reached about what led to successful outcomes in one case, but less successful outcomes in another (Yin, 2009). This way, the existing theory can be improved (Babbie, 2013).

As mentioned before, the conceptual model of Bondarouk and Mastenbroek (2018), which is used as a framework for this research, focuses on policy performance in terms of policy outputs, i.e. the actions taken in response to the policy or agreement, instead of policy outcomes. This is in line with the focus of this thesis on the process of implementing the UN convention and not human rights outcome indicators.

### **3.1.1 Case selection**

The aim for the selection of the cases was to have a diverse collection with variety in the time that the institutions are part of the Workgroup UN Convention and how satisfied students with a disability are about their institution. The National Student Enquête (NSE) asks students to value their study program and institution. Based on how solely the students with disabilities scored their institution, a first selection of the cases was made. However, due to the corona pandemic many institutions stated to be too busy to participate in the research. This was a limitation in creating a diverse selection. Furthermore, the institutions do not differ much in size which makes it difficult to examine whether size matters. The reason for this is that no smaller institutions have signed the declaration of intent. Nevertheless, the selection was made as diverse as possible. Hogeschool Rotterdam was selected because the institution scores relatively high on studying with a disability on the NSE but did not sign the declaration of intent and is therefore not a member of the workgroup. A description of the cases can be found in table 1.

Table 1: Case descriptions

<b>Institution</b>	<b>Type of institution</b>	<b>Number of students</b>	<b>Year of signing declaration</b>	<b>Score in NSE 2018</b>
Tilburg University	Research university	19,000	2019	3,34 (place 8)
Universiteit van Amsterdam	Research university	40,000	2018	3,17 (place 14)
Hogeschool Utrecht	University of applied science	34,000	2018	3,25 (place 11)
Hogeschool Rotterdam	University of applied sciences	40,000	-	3,35 (place 4)

### 3.1.2 Respondent selection

Respondents were selected based on their position within the education institution. Of every institution at least two students were interviewed in order to include the student voice as the UN CRPD prescribes. Also, at least two staff members of the institutions were interviewed who are involved with the policy process for studying with a disability. Some respondents were approached based on their involvement with the Workgroup UN Convention. Others were approached via the snowball method using the connections of other respondents. Table 2 in Appendix A shows the position of each respondent within an education institution.

### 3.3 Data collection

In this research, seventeen in-depth interviews were conducted to gain detailed information on the influence of the UN CRPD on inclusivity policies and the administrative, organisational and attitudinal factors related to implementing the UN CRPD within an institution. The interviews were conducted in the period March until June 2021 and had a time range between 25 and 70 minutes. Of the seventeen interviews, two were duo interviews with two staff members at once. The language used during the interviews was Dutch. The interviews were conducted online through Microsoft Teams and were recorded on the researcher's phone. Afterwards, the interviews were transcribed. One respondent

wished the conversation not to be recorded which left the researcher with only the notes she made during the interview. An interview manual was composed to structure the interviews. The topic lists for staff members and students differed to some extent. The interview manual can be found in Appendix B.

In addition, an analysis of primary and secondary sources was performed for triangulation of the data (Bryman, 2016). Policy documents, institution's websites and reports of research institutions concerning studying with a disability were analysed both to prepare the interviews and confirm the information given by the respondents. In Appendix C, an overview of the policy documents is presented.

Not all the variables of the conceptual framework were easily measurable. The size of the staff was difficult to determine as all staff members have a role to play in the implementation of the UN CRPD. Yet, every institution has a core group of implementers and those could be assessed. Furthermore, the budget for the implementation was not determinable as, again, the obligations in relation to the UN convention are spread over the institution and therefore there is not one specific budget. The researcher could receive information on whether there was a structural and increasing budget. Lastly, the clarity of the objectives was not measured. Yet, the objectives of the four institutions with regard to inclusive education were very similar. The semi-structured interviews did indirectly show the role that clear objectives play in the implementation process. The definitional details were not examinable for each institution as not every institution openly published their policy documents about studying with a disability. Nevertheless, most concepts of the framework were examined in this research which left enough room for analysis.

### **3.4 Data analysis**

The collected data consists of seventeen transcribed interviews and nine policy documents. The data analysis is based on the concepts discussed in the theoretical framework. In order to measure the concepts empirically, the concepts were translated into measurable indicators. In table 3 in Appendix D the operationalization of the concepts is presented. The topic lists of the interviews is also based on the operationalization. These lists are also used to analyse the data.

For this study, a case-oriented analysis is performed in order to understand the cases in depth (Babbie, 2013). To realize this, the transcripts and the documents were first thoroughly read. Next, the technique of memoing was used to structure the process (Mortelmans, 2013). The next step was the coding of the data. Coding can be described as the continuous process of sticking labels to pieces of data until the data is fully organized (Mortelmans, 2013). The coding of the data was executed with the research software of Atlas.ti and done in Dutch as the data was in Dutch and it is the native language of the researcher.

The coding process was in correspondence with the method ‘thematic analysis’ (TA). TA provides a way to identify patterns, i.e. themes, within the data (Braun and Clarke, 2006). Within TA there are two types of approaches, namely inductive and deductive. An inductive approach is data-driven as the codes develop from the data itself instead of existing concepts and theories. On the other hand, a deductive approach works with pre-existing codes emerged from existing concepts and theories. This can be viewed as a theoretical analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006). In this research, a combination of both approaches was performed for the coding of the data. Namely, first the pieces of data were given a code through open coding. This led to a list of 171 codes. The open coding was partly deductive as concepts from the theory were often suitable to describe passages of the data. However, the researcher also went beyond the predetermined codes when relevant passages did not relate to any of them. Therefore, an inductive approach enabled to code all remaining relevant passages of the data. Next, the codes were reanalysed and regrouped into fewer categories, again based on the theoretical framework. This led to 14 main categories. Finally, selective coding has led to the identification of central mechanisms (Babbie, 2013). This last step was done by drawing out the relationships on paper.

### **3.5 Validity and reliability**

In this multiple case study research, four higher education institutions were analysed in depth. Data triangulation was applied to narrow problems of construct and internal validity, as multiple sources of data provide multiple measures of the same phenomenon (Van Thiel, 2009). Interviewing staff members of the education institutions leads to the risk of receiving socially accepted answers. By emphasizing



that they stay anonymous, this risk was reduced. Furthermore, for every case, multiple students and employees were interviewed which prevents the risk of a one-sided perspective. The external validity of a multiple case study is often low. Yet, the Dutch higher education sector is to some extent similar in terms of autonomy to other European countries. Therefore, the findings may apply to those as well.

The reliability was aimed to be guaranteed by making use of a topic list and coding scheme that is based on the existing literature. Moreover, the interviews were structured by the same topic list. The interviews were recorded, transcribed and encoded to minimize measurement errors.

An ethical issue in this research is the protection of the respondent's privacy (Babbie 2013). The respondents were informed about the aim of the study before and at the start of the interview. Furthermore, the respondents were asked for permission to record the interview. The respondents were allowed to withdraw from participation at any moment. In addition, the respondents signed a consent form. This consent form can be found in Appendix E.

## 4. Empirical findings and analysis

In this chapter, the findings of the empirical research will be presented. First, the Dutch context with respect to the UN CRPD and higher education will be explained. Next, the four cases will be presented with a focus on the timeframe of the policy process as well as the internal organization of the process. Moreover, the two empirical sub-questions will be answered, firstly, by focusing on the effects that the UN CRPD have had on policies and practices at the institutions and, secondly, by presenting critical factors that influence the effects of the UN CRPD on policies and practices in higher education.

### 4.1 The Dutch policy context for higher education

In preparation of the ratification of the UN CRPD, the Dutch government made certain adjustments to legislation. Most of them were not relevant for higher education. Yet, already in 2003, the law *Wet gelijke behandeling op grond van handicap en chronische ziekte* (Wgbh/cz) was introduced that forbids discrimination on the basis of disability or chronic disease (Rijksoverheid, n.d.-a). This law applies to higher education institutions and obliges them to offer reasonable adjustments. However, the UN CRPD asks for a more proactive attitude of the institutions in which institutions systematically adjust their education to overcome barriers (ECIO, n.d.-b). Therefore, since January 2017, there is a ‘norm for general accessibility’ included in the law Wgbh/cz which states that organizations should become accessible in order for individual adjustments to be less necessary. Furthermore, since 2011, which is before the ratification of the UN CRPD, the accessibility and educational feasibility for students with a disability is one of the assessment criteria for the accreditation of study programmes (Article 5.12 and 5.23, *Wet op hoger onderwijs en wetenschappelijk onderzoek*). This means that the government already, to some extent, encouraged higher education institutions to work on their inclusivity but added new aspects to this since the ratification.

Education is one of the pillars of the implementation plan of the Dutch government (2017). Until the year 2021, the objectives for the educational sector are set to explore with educational institutions how inclusive education should be shaped and to explore which barriers are experienced by students with disabilities. Furthermore, the aim is to improve the information provision and guidance

for students (Ministry of VWS, 2018). This means that the first years are mostly explorative and about sharing knowledge with each other.

The Ministry of Education, Culture and Science (OCW) has a legislative and monitoring role in the implementation process. By adjusting legislation and regularly discussing points of improvement with the higher education institutions, the ministry encourages the institutions to implement the UN convention (ECIO, 2021). The ministry does this indirectly as well through the declaration of intent that was initiated by ECIO in 2017 as part of their program that is subsidized by the ministry. The ministry having more of a second-hand role in the implementation process in higher education shows the influence of neo-liberalism in the Netherlands. By putting the responsibility mostly at the institutions' level, the implementation process may be more efficient as the institutions have more knowledge of what the students need. However, in general comment 4 of the UN CRPD it is stated that states parties should introduce a clear and adequate time frame for the implementation of inclusive education and adequate sanctions for violations (CRPD/GC/4, §63). In their report, the Netherlands Institute for Human Rights (*College voor de Rechten van de Mens*), who monitors and reports to the UN Committee about the implementation in the Netherlands, emphasized that the government should give more guidance (2020).

## 4.2 Overview of cases

Each case will be introduced by explaining the scope of the institution and the policy objectives as well as how the policy process is organized in terms of staff, budget and evaluation.

### 4.2.1 Tilburg University

- Scope

Tilburg University is a university in the Southern part of the Netherlands. It has over 19,000 students. This makes it a medium size university in the Netherlands. More than 1200 of the students have stated to have a disability (Tilburg University, n.d.-a). The students with a disability gave their university a 3.34 (bachelor) and 3.40 (master) out of 5 on the NSE of 2018 (C.H.O.I., 2019). This was a median

score. The university consists of five faculties which together offer together more than 20 bachelor programmes and 80 master programmes (Tilburg University, n.d.-b). Before the corona pandemic, classes were offered on the university campus consisting of around 18 buildings (Tilburg University, n.d.-c).

- Objectives

In September 2019, a board member of Tilburg University signed the declaration of intent regarding the UN CRPD. Before this moment, the university was already paying attention to studying with a disability. In their strategy of 2018-2021, the university mentions studying with a disability once: “We aim to be a good university for students with limitations and actively assist students with mental health issues” (Tilburg University, 2018, p. 16). Inclusiveness is also stated to be one of the core values of the university (p. 9).

- Workgroup Inclusive Education

A policy officer of the university explains that until a decade ago there was no policy on this topic. “I figured, when I started working here, that there was actually no policy. There was only a summary of what we did and not where we actually wanted to go” (Interview A). Therefore, the Workgroup Studying without Limitations was created in which representatives of the faculties and services gathered. This led to a policy document. “So then (10 years ago) there were already things happening when it comes to disabilities and that was for students and employees but now you have a clear vision and that is inclusive education” (Policy officer, interview A).

After 2019, the workgroup was changed to Workgroup Inclusive Education which focuses not only on students with a disability but also e.g. international students and students with a migration background. This also led to a change in the composition of the workgroup. Besides student deans, study advisors and a policy officer responsible for physical accessibility, also e.g. a representative of marketing and communication, the exam committee and teacher development are members of the workgroup. This means that Tilburg University applies an integral approach. However, there are no

student members. The university council noticed this problem and asked for a student voice on this matter. Therefore, at the same time of the establishment of the Workgroup Inclusive Education, a focus group (*Klankbordgroep*) with students with a disability was created (Interview A and E). The members are volunteers and do not receive financial compensation. The focus group, consisting of three students with a disability, one student member of the university council and a policy officer who functions as the coordinator of studying with a disability, gathers before the workgroup in order for the student voice to be included by the policy officer in the workgroup as well. The workgroup aims to gather at least twice a year to discuss the signals all parties received in their work about the topic.

The workgroup created a vision regarding inclusive education which created more clarity about the topic and the objectives. The next step is to embed this vision into the strategic plan and vision on education of the university in order to create more commitment in the whole organisation. However, the corona crisis led to a delay in this process as the crisis asked for a lot of adjustments and therefore time. The university is still working on the strategic plan for 2022-2025. It is not sure whether the inclusive education vision will be included. The workgroup is committed to arrange this as it gives them the opportunity to take the next step in implementation and work in smaller groups on certain themes related to inclusive education. It may also lead to more financial support as now inclusive education is only one part of the budget Student Wellbeing (Interview A). “So we already do a lot but that is really because of the effort of the people and you would indeed want some more structural support in this.” (Student Dean, Interview A). Another student dean explains that people at the university are willing to implement the UN CRPD. Yet, there is a lack of resources. More financial support and central guidance from the ministry is important to realize the implementation, especially because the UN convention is rather abstract and inclusive education and related concepts are broad (Interview B).

To conclude, Tilburg University started policy making about studying with a disability around ten years ago because an employee took the lead in this. Before, students with a disability were facilitated by the university, yet there were no objectives and vision for the future. A workgroup, consisting of different representatives of the faculties and services, created a policy document in order to have more clarity

and commitment. The next step is to embed this vision of inclusive education in the strategy of the university in order to work more intensively and structured on the topic. This process was slowed down due to the pandemic. This case shows that indeed the bottom of the organization is important in the policy process and that there are networks of implementers which confirms that the field is bottom-heavy. It also shows that having clear objectives written down is important in the process to work towards inclusive education.

#### **4.2.2 University of Amsterdam**

- Scope

The University of Amsterdam has 40,000 students which makes it one of the biggest universities of the Netherlands. Around 5-9 percent of the students have a disability (UvA, n.d.-a). The university scored 3.17 for bachelor programmes and 2.97 for master programmes in the 2018 NSE which made it the lowest scoring university (C.H.O.I., 2019). The university consists of seven faculties. In total, the university offers 20 bachelor studies and nearly 200 master programmes (UvA, n.d.-b). The university has multiple buildings in the city of Amsterdam. In the last few years, the individual buildings have been brought together in 4 different campuses (UvA, n.d.-c).

- Objectives

The UvA did not have a policy on studying with a disability until 2016. The topic was also not mentioned in the institution's plans of 2015-2020. The reason for creating a policy in 2016 was the low NSE scores of the university on this topic. Another external driver was an audit that was planned at the university in which the accessibility and educational feasibility for students with a disability is one of the assessment criteria (Interview F). The necessity increased also with a complaint from employees about the accessibility of the institution (Interview G).

The policy objective is stated to be “everyone with a disability or chronic disease will be actively facilitated by the institution to enjoy education or execute work activities in the way a person without disability or chronic disease can with respect for their autonomy and recognition of their talents” (De

Graaf and Zevenboom, 2016). The policy is not only focused on students with a disability but also employees with a disability. In the policy document further definitions are stated as well as the parties responsible for certain actions. One of the aims stated in the policy document is that the policy will be included in the vision on education. This aim is reached as the vision on education states: “The education is inclusive ... The UvA aims to attract students with the potential to succeed in their academic surroundings, regardless of their cultural background, socioeconomic status, religion, gender or disability” (p. 15, University of Amsterdam, 2017a).

- Policy process

“We had to go over an entire route, because there are different phases. So we needed some time to write down the main points of the policy. We then temporarily brought a steering group into life in order to bring integrality in the policy and to make sure that the implementation is speeded-up” (Policy officer, interview F). This steering group consisted of, among others, the head of Students Services, Facility Services and Academic Affairs. Furthermore, a committee was founded with an advisory role. The committee monitored the implementation process and supports the faculties who have the primary responsibility to facilitate studying with a disability. The committee consisted of a student dean, representatives of the faculties, two students with a disability, two employees with a disability and a representative of human resources. At the start, the commission gathered three times a year and monitored the process mainly on the basis of the NSE results (University of Amsterdam, 2017b). During this time, the UvA also committed itself to the UN CRPD by signing the declaration of intent in November 2018.

Now, the next phase in the policy process has started and a workgroup is created with, again, representatives of different departments of the university and which will probably be extended soon with representatives of the faculties (Interview F and G). So the former committee created a framework that is broad enough to still offer space for the specific context per study programme and the faculties are responsible to implement it. The faculties still have to take steps in this (Interview F). According to two students of the Faculty of Humanities, there is attention for inclusion at their faculty (Interview H

and I). This may have to do with the fact that their faculty is relatively small which gives more room for personal attention (Interview I). “So things, you know, are well organized, but that is mostly arranged outside of the institutions instead that it is in the blood. It is in the blood of the faculty, but not in the blood of the UvA, I think” (Interview I).

The student voice is included by the UvA as well. Together with the establishment of the committee, a Student Disability Platform was founded consisting of three students. The purpose of the platform is “to create awareness and visibility for students with a disability. ... The platform aims for an accessible UvA!” (UvA, n.d.-d). The students first received financial compensation for their work. In April 2021, a new generation of students was recruited and is now hired as student assistant. There is regular consultation with the students. It is difficult to assess how much budget is reserved for the implementation as it consists of different aspects. Yet, for the accessibility of the buildings, for example, a large budget was reserved (Interview F).

In short, the UvA started the policy process for studying with a disability in 2016 as a consequence of low scores on the NSE as well as an institution’s audit. The university applied an integral approach by involving many different departments, as well as student representatives, in both the formulation and the implementation process. The faculties are now at the start of shaping the policy to their academic context. The policy process is a long process as the many actors involved first had to agree on the objectives and responsibilities and also had to decide how to implement the policy. The pandemic also slowed the process down (Interview F).

#### **4.2.3 Hogeschool Utrecht**

- Scope

Hogeschool Utrecht is a University of Applied Sciences in the centre of the Netherlands with over 34,000 students. Around ten percent have a disability (Hogeschool Utrecht, n.d.-a). In 2018, the students scored the HU relatively low on the NSE with a 3.25 (C.H.O.I., 2019). HU is divided into 22 institutes (Faculties for an hogeschool. For clarity, from now on called faculties) with 62 bachelor studies



(Hogeschool Utrecht, n.d.-b). There are eight HU buildings and some of them are located next to each other (Hogeschool Utrecht, n.d.-c).

- Objectives

The Hogeschool Utrecht states in their vision on education that “every student that is motivated to study is welcome, regardless of age, cultural, ethical or religious background or disability” (p. 14, Annual report 2018). In their Ambition Plan 2020-2026 is stated: “We wish to be an inclusive and accessible university of applied sciences. We want to make sure that every student and staff member feels at home, is acknowledged and receives the same opportunities. Our door is open to anyone who can and is motivated to study in higher education. Each and every kind of talent counts!” (p. 14).

- Policy process

In November 2018, a board member of the HU signed the declaration of intent. Before this, the HU was already active when it comes to studying with a disability. When the law Wgbh/cz started to apply to education in 2003, the institution formulated a policy ‘Unhindered studying’ which corresponds with the ideas of the law. Since 2016, different factors have led to more focus on inclusive education. The institution had to do an audit in which the policy regarding studying with a disability would be monitored. The HU decided to ask then called Handicap+studie (now ECIO) to examine the inclusivity of the institution through their ‘policy scan’ (see ECIO, n.d.-c). This led to a shared vision on this topic and an action plan. Soon after this, the declaration of intent was initiated and the HU signed this in January 2018. A factor of influence in this process may be that the head of Handicap+studie had regular contact with the president of the Board of Directors of the HU (Interview J).

A policy officer explains that the HU has realized that working with policy documents is not always efficient as it does not always change the way students and teachers interact. Furthermore, having a separate policy for students with disabilities actually separates those students from the ‘normal’. “By having separate web pages and policy you confirm that you have regular students and

students that are different and you want to get rid of that in the context of the UN convention” (Interview J).

- Studeren+

Part of the action plan is the project Studeren+ which focuses on making students with a disability (students+) feel welcome, raising awareness on studying with a disability and increasing the knowledge and information provision on this topic (HU-gemeenschap, n.d.). There is a budget for the project until at least 2024. One policy officer and one student assistant together make the team of Studeren+ and have the role of ‘driving force’ (*aanjager*). Furthermore, each of the 22 faculties has an ‘attention officer’ (*aandachtsfunctionaris*) who signals bottlenecks and advises the faculty about studeren+. This is an extra role next to their other position in the institution (Interview K). Also, there are networks or workgroups revolving around one theme such as digital accessibility. Lastly, the action plan involved the setting up of a student platform, Powerplatform. The team of Studeren+ has close contact with the Powerplatform. Also, the Board of Directors speaks with the platform twice a year. Thus, it is a source for the monitoring of the policy. Around 15 till 20 students are actively involved with the platform and three students make up the board. The board members are hired as student assistants by the HU. Involving students with a disability is very important according to the policy officer of Studeren+. “When a student+ explains how it is, those things stick more to people and people understand it better. The problem gets a face. ... The involvement of students to highlight problems and solutions is a much more powerful instrument than the formulation of policy” (Interview J).

There is a budget for this project until at least 2024. The idea is that the ‘aanjagers’, at some point, are no longer necessary and the topic is integrated in the entire organization (Interview J).

In conclusion, Hogeschool Utrecht started the policy process regarding studying with a disability relatively early in 2004/2005. In 2016/2017, the topic received more attention due to an audit and the UN CRPD. A policy scan on inclusivity led to the project Studeren+ which keeps studying with a disability under the attention of the institution with the idea that in the future the topic is fully embedded

in the daily practice of the HU. To reach this goal, an integral approach is used with networks of implementers.

#### 4.2.4 Hogeschool Rotterdam

- Scope

Hogeschool Rotterdam is a University of Applied Sciences in the Southwest of the Netherlands. With 40.000 students, Hogeschool Rotterdam is a large institution (Hogeschool Rotterdam, n.d.-a). According to the website, 30 percent of the students have a disability (Hogeschool Rotterdam, n.d.-b). With a 3.35 on the 2018 NSE, HR was one of the highest scoring large *hogescholen* (C.H.O.I., 2019). There are 83 full time bachelor programmes offered at 13 faculties and 15 buildings (Hogeschool Rotterdam, n.d.-c).

- Policy process and objectives

In 2004, the core group Studying with a disability was asked by the Board of Directors to formulate a policy for studying with a disability as a consequence of the Wgbh/cz (Van Os, 2020). This led to a covenant with Handicap+studie. Part of Hogeschool Rotterdam's policy was the establishment of a student platform. The Powerplatform was at that time a pioneer. According to a policy officer, the attention for studying with a disability started early at Hogeschool Rotterdam because one student dean was very dedicated to improving the circumstances for students with a disability. "So how something starts, is often from just love and attention and of course quality but figuring out that we do not do enough" (Interview N).

Subsequently, the policy was implemented and in 2008 an integral policy was introduced. In the vision on education is stated that "Hogeschool Rotterdam stands for education that is qualitatively high and inclusive and prepares students for the changing work field and changing society" (p. 1, Hogeschool Rotterdam, 2016). In a policy document of 2020 is written that the UN CRPD gives an extra dimension and urgency to review the current policy (Van Os, 2020).

- Department Student wellbeing

The core group Studying with a disability still exists and aims to get together every month. The core group consists of people from the department Student wellbeing. The student deans belong to this department as well as so-called student wellbeing advisors. Each student wellbeing advisor has a specific theme it focuses on, such as students who are parents or caregivers and students with a disability. The student deans, the wellbeing advisor with expertise in studying with a disability and a coordinator of the department together form the core group. The department also hired 15 peer coaches, students who support other students. Four of them are experienced in studying with a disability. Those form the current Powerplatform which is today more integrated into the department of Student wellbeing (Interview N).

For the monitoring of the policy implementation, the core group gets information from the peer coaches as well as the NSE or other research conducted by the institution. Hogeschool Rotterdam has a lectureship Disability studies. Therefore, there is much interaction between research and practice (Interview N). With regard to the budget, the policy officer explains that because the policy process for studying with a disability already started a long time ago there is a structural budget for the implementation. “You notice that there is more possible. It is possible to hire extra student deans and extra student wellbeing advisors. That shows, and that is not only studying with a disability but the department student wellbeing in general, that there is enough budget” (Interview N).

Hogeschool Rotterdam did not sign the declaration of intent and therefore does not take part in the workgroup. It seems as if this is not a conscious choice as the policy officer believed the institution did sign it. They do take part in other workgroups facilitated by ECIO but did not seem to know about this specific workgroup (Interview N).

In conclusion, the Hogeschool Rotterdam started the policy process already in 2004 as a consequence of the law Wgbh/cz and a dedicated staff member. It was a pioneer because of the covenant with Handicap+studie and the establishment of a student platform. Therefore, the policy is now much

integrated into the entire institution. Not signing the declaration of intent seems to be the result of a lack of information about it and not because the UN convention is not on the agenda.

#### **4.2.5 Conclusion**

The four cases show that the Dutch higher education institutions started policy making and implementation about studying with a disability at different times and for different reasons. The institutions who started earlier with the policy process have the topic of studying with a disability already more integrated in the institution's plans and budget. This shows some evidence for the degree of misfit as an explanatory factor of the implementation performance. In the next part of this chapter, this will be further analysed. The two universities who started the policy process later are more hindered by COVID-19 as it makes the embedding and taking action more difficult. In certain aspects, the four cases did not differ much as for instance in the objectives set and the evaluation approach. Furthermore, the interviews with policy officers showed that the focus areas within inclusive education are similar. In the beginning, all institutions focus much on awareness raising and knowledge spreading among the employees and the accessibility of the buildings. This year, digital accessibility is high on the agenda. This shows that the institutions do also not differ on what Bondarouk and Mastenbroek (2018) call prioritization. Finally, at all institutions a form of policy networks is found with staff members from different departments and with different functions working together towards inclusivity. Students are also involved in the process at all institutions, yet to different degrees.

The UN convention does not seem the reason for the start of the policy cycle. In the next part of this chapter, an analysis will be presented about the effects of the UN CRPD on the policies and practices and the building blocks and bottlenecks for this effect.

### 4.3 How does the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities affect inclusivity policies and practices for studying with a disability at Dutch higher education institutions?

As discussed in the first part of this chapter, different internal and external drivers started the policy process for studying with a disability. The UN CRPD is not found to be a fundamental driver of the process. The document analysis and interviews reveal that the UN convention brings extra attention and an extra dimension to the topic of inclusive education (Interview A, B, G, J and Q) (Van Os, 2020). Overall, four different ways in which the convention affects the policies and practices have become clear. The UN CRPD functions as (1) a framework, (2) a base to increase support among employees, (3) a base for commitment from the top, (4) a base for knowledge sharing between institutions. The four functions are illustrated in figure 5 and will be further explained below.

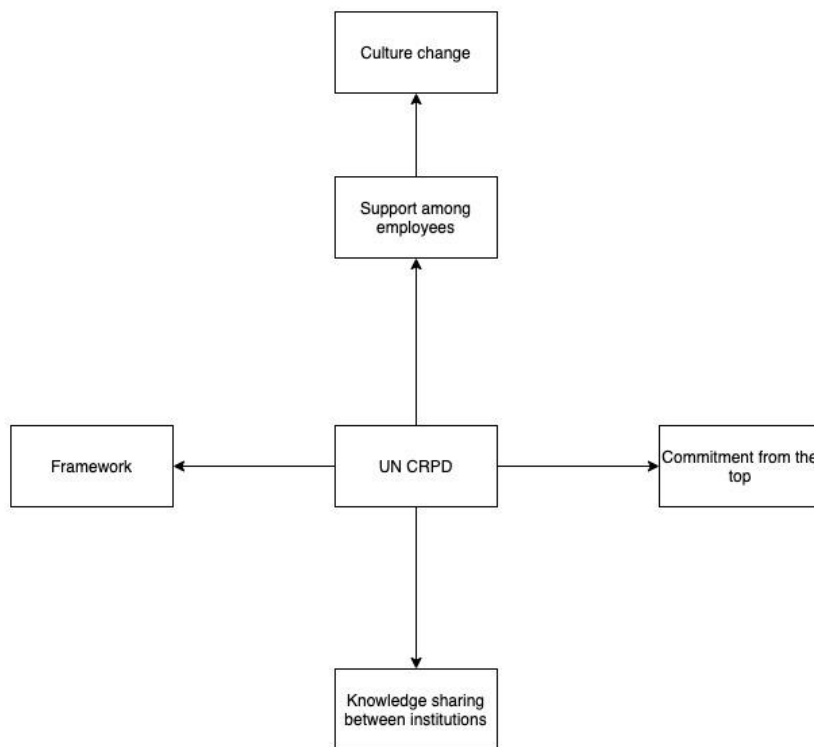


Figure 5: Influence of UN CRPD on Dutch higher education

#### **4.3.1 Framework**

Although all four institutions already formulated their policy about studying with a disability before the ratification of the UN convention, it does bring more clarity about what is expected from the institutions. “I think it does provide more clarity, like ‘what is expected from you’ and it is good to examine where you stand. What do we do as an institution and what is expected from us nationally?” (Policy officer Hogeschool Rotterdam, Interview N). Often the objectives and definitions set by the institutions are similar to those in the UN CRPD. “Now you take into account the objectives of the UN convention and that has of course much overlap with your ideas before. It fits with the ideas. Only now you look specifically like, what is stated in the UN convention and what do we do with it?” (Policy officer Tilburg University, Interview A). “You can formulate all kinds of objectives yourself and this offers a common framework for all institutions” (Policy officer UvA, Interview F). This contradicts with the view of Peruzzotti (2018) that human rights treaties are difficult to translate into policies as they contain mostly abstract ideals. This may be due to the fact that all four institutions already formulated policies before the ratification of the convention and therefore already went through the difficult process of formulating a policy on this topic. Still, some respondents did perceive the convention to be abstract (Interview B and K).

In short, the UN CRPD offers a common framework which gives insight about whether you are on the right track already and what can still be improved. In this sense, the UN CRPD helps to formulate the policy objectives and is useful for the evaluation of the policy.

#### **4.3.2 A base to increase support among employees**

The UN convention is based on the social model of disability. According to this model, disability should be viewed as a problem of the society and not solely the individual. Many people, also in higher education, still have ideas about persons with a disability corresponding with the medical model (Interview C, H, I, J and K). The UN convention reasons from the perspective of human rights. Everyone has the right to develop their talents. The UN CRPD shows people working at the institution

that this way of viewing disabilities is widely accepted around the world as many countries ratified the convention. Therefore, it helps to convince the people about the importance of the policy or why certain actions have to be taken (Interview F and K). “It is not that the people on the work floor all of a sudden are like, ‘oh that UN convention, now we have to really be serious about it’. It is not like that but it does help to sell it internally to the people and make the policy more powerful” (Policy officer UvA, Interview F). In the long run, this can create a culture change about thinking about disability. “For me, the UN convention is, in the ideal world, a means for culture change” (Student UvA, Interview I). This culture change is in a sense the same as the term norms socialization, the ideas of some individuals are becoming norms (Risse and Sikkink, 1999). In this reasoning, the UN convention actually helps in this norms socialization process.

By creating support among staff members, who all fulfil a role in implementing the policy, the UN convention can be helpful in the implementation of policy regarding studying with a disability.

#### **4.3.3 A base for commitment from the top**

The UN convention does not only lead to more attention and engagement at the bottom of the organization. It also makes sure that the topic of studying with a disability is under the attention at the top of the organization. The declaration of intent for the UN CRPD is signed by a board member. This shows the commitment of the board (Interview A, B and N). If the board does not pay enough attention, employees and students have a good argument for why they should (Interview H and K). A student of the Student Disability Platform at UvA explains that he and the other members were present at the ceremony and realized that the signing could be useful in upcoming discussions (Interview H). By creating commitment from the top, the UN convention makes sure that studying with a disability stays on the agenda.

#### **4.3.4 A base for knowledge sharing between institutions**

Lastly, the UN convention has led to more collaboration between institutions. The UN CRPD acknowledges that cooperation between different ministries and organizations is important to reach



inclusion (CRPD/GC/4, §61). The institutions that signed the declaration of intent form together the Workgroup UN Convention Higher Education. The workgroup gathers three times a year to share good practices and questions with each other. This way, the UN convention gives the institutions the opportunity to cooperate and spread knowledge more easily among institutions (Interview A and N). This is beneficial for the implementation of the policy.

#### **4.3.5 Conclusion about role UN CRPD**

In conclusion, the UN CRPD was not a direct reason for making policy on studying with a disability. However, it did give an extra urgency and boost to the policy (Interview B) (Van Os, 2020). In different ways, the UN convention affected policies and practices at the institutions. It gave institutions an extra overview of what they need to do to become inclusive. Furthermore, it brought extra attention to the topic and showed that inclusive education is an internationally accepted concept which increases to some extent the acceptance and support from the bottom of the organization. Also, the declaration of intent shows the support at the top of the organization and can be used as an argument in discussions to keep the topic under the attention. Finally, the UN CRPD led to more cooperation between institutions which helps to speed up the process of implementation as knowledge can be easily shared. This means that the UN convention affects the policy process by keeping the topic of inclusive education on the agenda, offering a framework for policy formulation and evaluation and contributes to the implementation of the existing policy by increasing support on the work floor and spreading knowledge among institutions.

These findings are in line with Powell et al.'s (2016) conclusion that the UN CRPD has primarily an awareness-raising power in education. However, it partly contradicts with Meier et al.'s findings on the role of human rights in public policy. The scholars also found that human rights efforts lead to more political attention at the top, yet no impact was found on the local level. The explanation for this was a lack of information and consultation with local implementers. In this research, a small impact is found on the local level, both on the level of the board and lower in the organization. This can be due to the focus of the UN CRPD on knowledge sharing within the society and between organizations

and countries to reach inclusion. This increases the information for local implementers. The Workgroup UN Convention is a product of this and shows to be beneficial for the effectiveness of the UN CRPD.

#### **4.4 What are building blocks and bottlenecks for the practical implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in Dutch higher education institutions?**

In the last part of this chapter, the building blocks and bottlenecks for the implementation of the UN CRPD in higher education institutions will be discussed. The empirical research showed that different interrelated factors influence the practical implementation of the UN CRPD in Dutch higher education institutions. Four internal critical factors are the duration of the objectives, the organisational structure, commitment of staff members and in-house expertise. Also the number of addressees seems to have an influence. Finally, the implementation is affected by the guidance and support from the national government. Each building block and bottleneck will be discussed individually which will show that the factors are interrelated as well.

##### **4.4.1 Duration**

The theory showed that the scope of the implementation agency can be divided into territory, addressees and duration. The four institutions do not differ much in number of study programmes and buildings (territory) and only Tilburg University deviates in number of students (addressees). Duration refers to how long the objectives or standards are already set in the organization. The empirical findings show that the two institutions who started the policy process relatively early have the policy more integrated into the organization than the other two institutions who are sometimes still seeking for the right way to implement the policy. This shows that the duration matters. In the same way it shows that the degree of misfit can be an explanatory factor for how successful an international human rights treaty can be implemented. The UN CRPD requires HU and HR, who already focused much on studying with a disability in their policy making, to depart not as much from their traditional way of doing things, in comparison to UvA, who only started policy making in the year of the ratification of the UN CRPD.

This would mean that the explanatory factor discussed in research in a national context is also applicable in a local context.

#### **4.4.2 Organisational structure**

The four institutions differ in their organisational structure. The UvA is a relatively decentralized organization (Interview F and I). The primary responsibility for the implementation of the policy lies with the faculties. Also at the HU the faculties have much autonomy (Interview K). A student dean at Tilburg University explains that a strength of the university is that it is relatively centralized. However, a student of the university experienced the organization as decentralized and the larger faculties as having more power (Interview C). Nevertheless, the services such as exam facilities and the guidance of student deans are centrally organized which leads to less differences between the study programmes and faculties (Interview A). In the Quality agreements 2020-2024 of Hogeschool Rotterdam is written that in order to reach the goal of inclusive and qualitatively high education, the institution has started a process of becoming more decentralized (p. 4). The student deans are linked to a certain faculty while the five student deans of Tilburg University assist the students of the entire university (Interview A). Tilburg University does have the smallest student number of the four which may make it easier to organize the services centrally. The scope of the institution may have an influence on the implementation performance. Yet, in this comparative case study the cases did not differ much in student number and number of study programmes which makes it difficult to conclude something about this. This section confirms that the degree of hierarchical control as a structural feature of the implementing agencies is a critical variable in the implementation process. This is in line with the model of Van Meter and Van Horn (1975).

#### **4.4.3 Commitment of staff members**

A policy officer and student of the HU admit that there are differences between faculties (Interview J and L). The people of Studeren+ are trying to minimize this difference. The differences within institutions can be due to the type of curriculum and study programme (Interview L). A student of the

UvA also believes that the type of study programme is influencing the inclusivity of the faculty. At his faculty, the one of Humanities, topics such as inequality and human rights are often discussed in courses which makes the mentality of the people working at the faculty often similar to what is expected by the UN CRPD (Interview I). This shows that the commitment of the implementers, that is influenced by the type of study programme, is an important building block in the implementation. This is in line with Cerych and Sabatier's (1986) findings. Moreover, the Faculty of Humanities may not only be more inclusive because of the type of study programmes but also because it is relatively small in terms of student numbers. This gives the staff the opportunity to have more personal attention for their students. This is again an indication that the scope, in terms of number of students, of the organization matters for the implementation performance.

#### **4.4.4 In-house expertise**

A policy officer of Hogeschool Rotterdam explains that most services are centrally organized. However, there are differences between faculties as at some faculties there is less knowledge about the topic. "That is not a disaster as long as they find their way to the people who do have the experience with it. If I am not mistaken, most people do know their way" (Interview N). At the UvA, they try to solve this issue with the creation of a 'knowledge platform' through which staff members can find each other for questions (Interview F and G).

The case of Hogeschool Utrecht shows that the expertise at one institute can positively affect the inclusivity of the entire institution. The Institute for Sign Language at the HU can lead to more expertise about this topic and more supply of sign language interpreters who can work at certain events of the institution. Therefore, at the HU, more often than at other institutions, sign language interpretation is present at information sessions (Interview L). On the other hand, the in-house expertise of Hogeschool Rotterdam is relatively high due to the research conducted by the lectureship Disability studies at the institution.

At Tilburg University, there is a lack of knowledge about certain topics which influences the implementation process. "You also miss some expertise because, for example, that you want to make

the information provision on the website digitally accessible. Then you want to do that based on the WCAG criteria. That is very complex. We do not have that expertise in house” (Policy officer, Interview A).

In short, all the cases show that expertise about this topic is important for the implementation. The in-house expertise can be influenced by the study programmes offered and research conducted at the institution. The path towards inclusive education is complex and the entire world is still discovering the best path. Therefore, the next section will discuss that the education institutions need more guidance from the government.

#### **4.4.5 Guidance and support from the national government**

As discussed at the beginning of this chapter, the Dutch government made the implementation of the UN CRPD in higher education mostly the task of the institutions. However, within the institutions, there is not always enough expertise about inclusive education. A policy officer at the UvA explains that the expertise is not only often lacking in the organization but also in the entire country. In order to make the university buildings accessible for all people, the university follows certain national standards. “But then you find nationally already very little standards in that area. So how you shape an office in a way that it is inclusive, that does not exist. When it comes to knowledge, we still lack behind” (Interview G).

The study of Meier et al. (2014) about the implementation of human rights in public policy showed that more information provision from the government to local implementers and consultations with local implementers is necessary in order for the human rights to be implemented locally. The latter is to some extent realized in the Netherlands with the workgroup for higher education institutions. However, this research shows that the information provision can still be improved.

A student dean of Tilburg University also expresses that she is missing central guidance from the ministry. Furthermore, a bottleneck for the implementation is a lack of resources. The institutions did not receive a separate budget for the implementation of the UN convention. Most people are willing to work towards inclusivity, yet there is a lack of time and budget (Interview B). The education sector

is known for the high workload and staff shortage. In order to implement the UN convention, the institutions should receive more resources from the government. A separate budget for the implementation of inclusive education would also keep the attention on the topic.

In short, the complexity of inclusive education makes it necessary for higher education institutions to receive more guidance in terms of practical guidelines for e.g. the accessibility of buildings. Moreover, for the UN convention to be and stay a priority, the institutions should receive more financial resources.

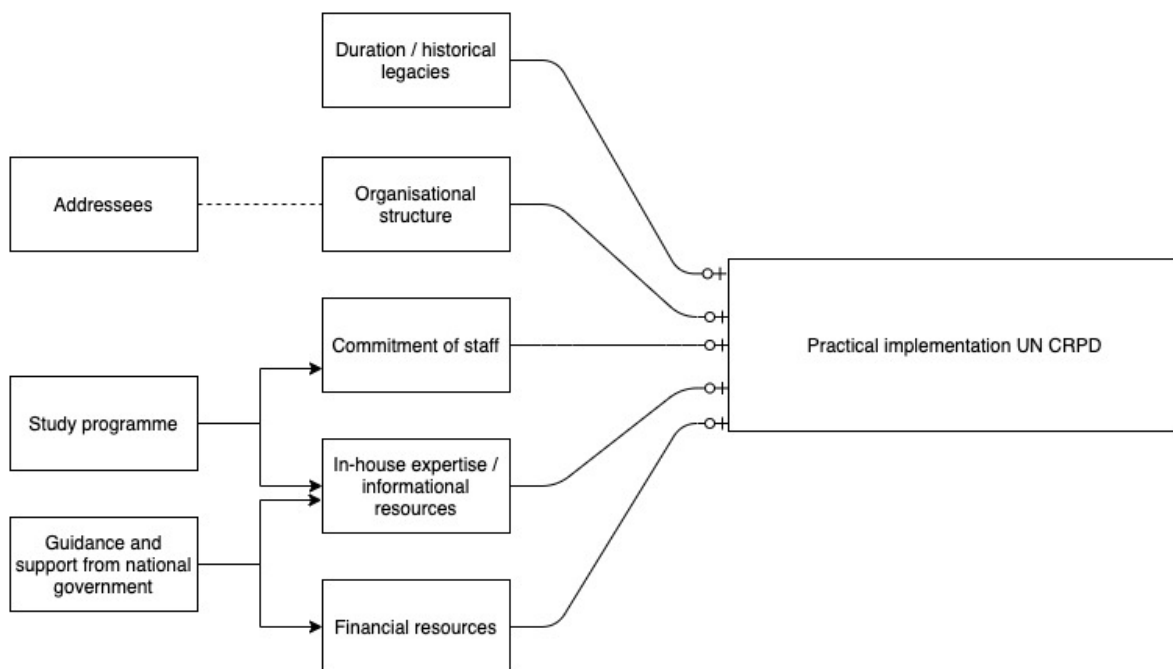


Figure 6: Overview of most important critical factors

#### 4.4.6 Conclusion

In this chapter, multiple building blocks and bottlenecks are discussed. A building block for the implementation of the UN convention in higher education is the duration of the objectives or history with the topic of inclusive education, i.e. historical legacies. This is in line with scholars who argued for the degree of misfit as an explanatory factor for the effectiveness of international human rights treaties (Duina and Blithe, 1999; Knill and Lenschow, 1998; Powell et al. 2014). Another building block is the centralization of the services which seems to have a relationship with the scale of the institution.

A more small-scaled institution or subunit within the institution is more easily inclusive. This means that characteristics of the implementing agencies influence the effectiveness which was already proposed in the conceptual models of Van Meter and Van Horn (1975) and Bondarouk and Mastenbroek (2018). However, Bondarouk and Liefferink (2016) found that smaller municipalities score lower on implementation performance. The contradicting outcomes of this study can be explained by the difference in policy topic. Inclusive education partly asks for individual adjustments when this is necessary for a student and this may be better facilitated when the faculty is smaller and there is more personal contact between student and staff members. According to Bondarouk and Liefferink (2016), the higher scores for larger municipalities showed the importance of resources. This research still confirms that informational and financial resources matter for the practical implementation of international agreements.

Furthermore, the commitment of the staff has a positive effect on the implementation. The type of study programmes that are offered can influence this commitment. Study programmes also influence the in-house expertise which is necessary to efficiently implement the UN convention. However, often the institutions lack expertise and therefore more guidance from the national government is necessary. A lack of financial resources is also a bottleneck. Finally, two factors that were not individually discussed in part 4.4 yet still worth mentioning as having influence on the effectiveness of the UN CRPD are (1) clarity of objectives and (2) a crisis such as the COVID-19 pandemic. The clarity of objectives seems important in the practical implementation as some institutions spent much time on formulating clear objectives and visions. COVID-19 has shown to be a bottleneck as it slowed down many plans and programmes of the institutions.

## 5. Conclusions and discussion

In this last chapter, the research question “*What explains the influence of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities on inclusivity policies and practices for studying with a disability in Dutch higher education institutions?*” will be answered. This will be followed by a discussion about the limitations of the research. Lastly, recommendations for future research will be made as well as practical recommendations for governments and higher education institutions who are obliged to implement the UN CRPD.

### 5.1 Conclusion

The aim of this research was to explain what factors impact the practical implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in Dutch higher education. By conducting seventeen semi-structured interviews and desk research, the implementation of the UN CRPD within four different higher education institutions could be compared.

This comparative case study showed that the ratification of the UN convention by the Dutch government has not been the primary reason for the attention for studying with a disability in Dutch higher education institutions. It is important to mention that the institutions facilitate students with a disability in their studying for a long period of time. However, formulating policy and implementing this policy is a more recent development. For all four institutions, inclusivity is mentioned as a core value or objective in strategies and plans.

Hogeschool Utrecht and Hogeschool Rotterdam were relatively early and started formulating policy on this topic as a consequence of the law Wgbh/cz. For Hogeschool Utrecht, an institution's audit and the UN CRPD were reasons to review the inclusivity of the institution after some years and compose an action plan. In a policy document of Hogeschool Rotterdam the UN CRPD was also mentioned as an extra reason to review their policy. An audit was also one of the reasons for the policy formulation at the University of Amsterdam. Yet, the main reason was the low scores the UvA received of students with a disability on the National Student Enquête for a couple of years in a row. Lastly, a



reason that was visible in multiple cases was a motivated staff member who put a lot of effort in starting the policy process. The staff members can be categorized as change agents.

In short, multiple reasons have led to a focus on inclusive education, particularly the law Wgbh/cz, an institution's audit, the NSE results and change actors. The ratification of the UN CRPD did not lead to a sudden change in policies and practices even though the UN convention, with its focus on human rights and inclusivity, expects a more proactive attitude of institutions than the Wgbh/cz. Yet, in the Dutch context, the declaration of intent for higher education institutions did bring extra attention and increased the cooperation and knowledge sharing between institutions. Therefore, the UN CRPD affects the policy process at the institutions in multiple ways. Firstly, it serves as a framework which helps in the formulation and evaluation of the policy. Secondly, it is a base to increase support among employees as it shows that the objectives set related to studying with a disability are accepted worldwide. This leads to norms socialization which is helpful for the implementation of the policy. Thirdly, the UN CRPD functions as a base for commitment from the top as a result of a board member signing the declaration of intent. This offers students and staff members a good argument for why the topic should stay on the agenda. Lastly, the UN CRPD serves as a base for knowledge sharing between institutions. This sharing of good practices and lessons learned helps in the implementation of the policy. In conclusion, this research shows that the UN CRPD does affect local policy making in Dutch higher education. Furthermore, multiple critical factors are found for this impact of the UN CRPD to be present at the local education level.

The Dutch higher education institutions are implementing the UN convention. Yet, most of the objectives of the convention were already set by the institutions for other reasons. The four cases differ in policy outputs. This means that there are differences in the practical implementation of higher education institutions. The analysis has shown multiple building blocks and bottlenecks for the practical implementation of the UN CRPD. Building blocks are the history and experience with the topic of inclusive education. The less the UN CRPD requires institutions to depart from traditional ways of doing things in terms of policy legacies and organizational arrangements, the easier it is to implement

the convention. Thus, the degree of misfit plays a role on a local level as well. Experience is related to the study programmes that are offered at the institution that have a relation with inclusivity. This also holds for the commitment of the staff as teachers and other staff members who pay attention to the topic of inclusivity and equal rights may be more committed to implement the UN convention. A more committed staff positively affects the implementation. These factors were all included in the conceptual framework of Bondarouk and Mastenbroek (2018), on which the conceptual framework of this research was mostly based on. A factor that was not included in this framework but was mentioned as a critical variable by Van Meter and Van Horn (1975) was the organisational structure in terms of centralisation of the governance. A more central organization seems beneficial for the implementation of inclusive education. However, the degree of centralisation may be dependent on the size of the institution, an institution with a lower student number can be more easily centrally governed. The scope of the implementing agency is included in the framework of Bondarouk and Mastenbroek (2018) and thus may be confirmed as influencing the practical implementation. However, the cases within this study did not differ much in scope which makes it difficult to state that this is of real influence. Zooming in on the differences within institutions also shows that smaller-scaled faculties often have more attention for inclusion.

A bottleneck for the practical implementation of the UN CRPD is a lack of expertise. Inclusive education is a complex topic and often there is not enough in-house expertise. Another bottleneck is the lack of central guidance from the national government. Information provision is necessary to make implementation successful. This confirms the findings of Meier et al. (2014) who stated that information to local implementers is necessary in order for human rights to have an impact on a local level. Another bottleneck is the lack of financial resources. Working towards inclusive education demands time and money from higher education institutions, which is exceptionally scarce in the sector. As this research was conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic, the crisis also showed to have a negative influence on the implementation of the UN CRPD, especially at the institutions that were still in the stage of embedding the policy in the overall strategy and plans.

In short, the UN CRPD did affect inclusivity policies and practices at Dutch higher education institutions which means that the UN convention can influence local policies and practices. Yet, other factors such as an audit and a law had a larger influence. This research showed that multiple factors influence the practical implementation of the UN CRPD in Dutch higher education. Those factors are similar to those mentioned by general implementation research or European practical implementation literature. This shows that implementing an international human rights treaty at a local level has similarities with implementing other policies. However, this research does confirm that translating a human rights treaty into policies and practices can be difficult. Inclusive education is a complex concept and every agency who is obliged and committed to work towards this goal, has difficulties with knowing what is the best way. Thus, there should be more knowledge developed about this topic. Moreover, this study proves that implementation takes place in networks. This indicates that researchers should continue to apply both top-down and bottom-up approaches in implementation research. Lastly, the theoretical part of this research showed that there are different means to protect human rights. The empirical results showed that other mechanisms such as domestic laws and assessment criteria in audits more directly influence policies and practices than international human rights treaties. In section 5.3.2, more will be said about this.

## **5.2 Limitations of the study**

Although this research shows some significant results, one should also consider some possible limitations. These are best read as opportunities for future research.

One limitation that was already mentioned before is that the cases compared in this research do not differ much in size. This study gives some indication that size matters, yet the homogeneity of the cases in this respect makes it difficult to conclude this. Furthermore, this research was conducted in a turbulent time for education institutions because of the pandemic which made it difficult to find respondents and therefore delayed the process. It was not possible to include the institution who scores best on the NSE for years. If this case was included, the research may have had more interesting results.

Another limitation is that this research mostly focused on the process of implementing the UN CRPD and not so much on the outcomes. The results of the NSE were included but those were not available for many years which made it impossible to indicate whether the ratification not only led to extra actions on a local level but also improved circumstances for students with a disability. This is also because this study researched the effects five years after the ratification. It would be better if this research combined the three types of human rights indicators. Yet, this did not fit into the scope of this research.

Lastly, this research also aimed to conclude something about the impact of having a declaration of intent for local implementers as this removes the issue of local implementers having to implement a treaty that was not ratified by themselves but the national government. Therefore, Hogeschool Rotterdam was included in the case selection as an institution who did not sign the declaration. However, the results showed that Hogeschool Rotterdam did not consciously decide not to sign the declaration. The respondents were under the assumption that they did sign as the institution does have a good relationship with ECIO and is connected to other workgroups facilitated by ECIO. Another institution with less interaction with ECIO and therefore not having the benefit of the knowledge sharing among institutions, may have shown a bigger contrast and more insight about the impact of the declaration.

## **5.3 Recommendations**

### **5.3.1 Future research**

The limitations of this research imply interesting directions for future research. Firstly, future research can examine the influence of the size of the implementing agency on implementation performance by performing a comparative case study with implementation agencies who differ much in size.

Secondly, this research added value to the existing literature by not focusing on the outcomes but the process. Future research can combine this. It is also interesting to do this research in the same Dutch context to see whether the effects of the UN CRPD change as the implementation furthers. The

results showed that implementing inclusive education is a long process. Therefore, research on this topic should continue to take place.

The Dutch context was chosen for this research because of the declaration of intent that brings an extra dimension to the implementation of the UN CRPD. This makes it, however, difficult to state whether an international human rights treaty has effects on a local level in general. Future research can examine the effects, for example in the same higher education context, yet without institutions having signed a declaration of intent and forming a workgroup together.

Finally, the Netherlands is a country with a liberal tradition in education, with the national government staying somewhat in the background. This research showed that the implementation of the UN CRPD in higher education is mostly the task of the institutions itself. Yet, a less decentralized governance in other countries could influence the effectiveness of the UN convention differently. Future research can examine whether the effects of the UN CRPD is different in countries where the implementation is more centrally regulated.

### **5.3.2 Practical recommendations**

The insights of this research offer multiple recommendations to improve the implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. To start, one bottleneck for the implementation was a lack of guidance from the government. Achieving inclusive education is very difficult and therefore more knowledge is necessary about this topic. This leads to two recommendations for the national government. First, the government should increase the research on inclusive education in order to expand the knowledge about this topic. Second, knowledge, in the form of good practices and lessons learned, is already shared among institutions in the workgroup. However, the local implementers state that more guidance is necessary. The increased knowledge as a result of more research should be converted into concrete guidelines and standards for the institutions.

The institutions also miss financial support from the government. The ratification of the UN convention has led to new obligations for the education institutions. Yet, they did not receive a budget to accomplish this. In 2021, the Dutch government created a large budget for the education sector to

invest more in student wellbeing (Rijksoverheid, n.d.-b). Inclusivity and studying with a disability is often seen as part of student wellbeing, which means that part of this budget can go to the implementation of the UN CRPD. Yet, it would be more efficient if institutions would receive a separate budget for the implementation. This would show the institutions the importance of the UN convention and keep the implementation on the agenda. Having structural budget would take away the issue, that is often present within institutions, that the process is slowed down because for each plan there should first be assessed whether a budget can be reserved for it.

This research showed that the declaration of intent brought an extra dimension to the implementation of the UN CRPD. The case of Hogeschool Rotterdam showed that not signing this declaration does not have to be the result of unwillingness. Sometimes, the institutions are not informed about the declaration and workgroup or they are not aware that they are not part of the movement yet. The declaration and workgroup, therefore, need to receive more publicity. A way to accomplish this is to approach umbrella organizations of higher education institutions and let them sign the declaration of intent. The institutions can still separately sign the declaration in order for it still to be a voluntary action. Yet, by seeing that the umbrella organizations sign the declaration may improve the attention at the institutions who did not sign and would make it easier for them to join the workgroup.

Lastly, this research gives insights about whether an international human rights treaty is the right means to improve the rights of persons with a disability. The empirical results showed that national laws and criteria for institution's audit are more powerful means as those were the primary reason for the start of the policy process. Furthermore, low results on student evaluations that are visible for everyone and, thus, can decrease an institution's image, lead to action. This demonstrates that visibility and direct consequences, for example with the audit that can have certain consequences for an institution if they score low, have impact on the behaviour of higher education institutions. This means that the UN CRPD can be more impactful if those elements are present. For instance, institutions can be asked to report about what and how much they did in relation to the implementation of the UN CRPD and those reports would be published. This would give institutions an extra urgency to implement the convention. When, in addition, the government improves the knowledge about inclusive education and

supplies a budget for implementing inclusive education, the UN convention would be more effective on a local level than it is today.

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**Appendix A - Overview of respondents**

Table 2: Overview respondents

<b>Institution</b>	<b>Position within institution</b>	<b>Interview code</b>
Tilburg University	Student dean	Interview A
Tilburg University	Policy officer Physical accessibility	Interview A
Tilburg University	Student dean	Interview B
Tilburg University	Student	Interview C
Tilburg University	Former student and now PhD candidate	Interview D
Tilburg University	Student and member of Focus group Inclusive Education	Interview E
University of Amsterdam	Policy officer Academic Affairs	Interview F
University of Amsterdam	Policy officer Facility services	Interview G
University of Amsterdam	Policy officer Facility services	Interview G
University of Amsterdam	Student and former member of student platform	Interview H
University of Amsterdam	Student and current member of student platform	Interview I
Hogeschool Utrecht	Policy officer Studeren+	Interview J
Hogeschool Utrecht	Student coach and 'aandachtsfunctionaris'	Interview K
Hogeschool Utrecht	Student and member of student platform	Interview L
Hogeschool Utrecht	Student and member of Hogeschoolraad	Interview M
Hogeschool Rotterdam	Coordinator department Student wellbeing	Interview N
Hogeschool Rotterdam	Study advisor	Interview O
Hogeschool Rotterdam	Student	Interview P
Hogeschool Rotterdam	Student and peercoach	Interview Q

## **Appendix B - Interview manual**

### **B.1 Interview manual for staff members**

- Introduction of interview
  - Introducing yourself
  - Explain purpose of the interview
  - Ask permission for recording
  - Ask whether everything is clear
- Introduction of respondent
  - What is your role within the institution?
  - How long do you have this role?
  - What does inclusive education mean according to you?
- Policy and objectives
  - What objectives are set by the institution regarding studying with a disability/inclusive education?
  - When started the policy process? Was this before the ratification of the UN convention?
  - Why started the policy process?
  - What was the role of the UN convention in the process?
- UN CRPD
  - What is the purpose of the UN convention according to you?
  - What is the effect of the UN convention on Dutch higher education?
- Staff
  - How many staff members are involved in the core group / workgroup?
  - What role does everyone have?
  - Do the members have experience with studying with a disability?
  - Is there enough expertise about the topic within the institution according to you?
- Budget
  - Is there a structural budget for the implementation of the UN convention?
  - Has the budget increased over the years?
- Evaluation
  - How often is the implementation evaluated?
  - On the basis of what is this evaluation performed?
  - How is the student voice included?
- Closing
  - Check whether all questions are asked
  - Explain that the recording will be transcribed
  - Ask whether respondent want to receive the transcript
  - Ask for the consent form in case respondent did not return it yet

*The policy objectives and scope of the institution were mostly examined through desk research.*

### **B.2 Interview manual for students**

- Introduction of interview
  - Introducing yourself
  - Explain purpose of the interview
  - Ask permission for recording
  - Ask whether everything is clear
- Introduction of respondent
  - What are you studying and what study year are you in?



- What does inclusive education mean according to you?
- Barriers
  - Have you experienced any barriers during your studies?
  - In what way did the institution help you?
    - Did they offer reasonable adjustments according to you?
  - What can still be improved according to you?
  - What can be a reason for the education not being inclusive yet?
  - Are there differences in inclusivity within the institution?
- Participation
  - Do you participate in a way?
  - Can you explain how the participation works?
  - How is student participation facilitated?
  - How often are you able to give feedback or input?
  - Are there other ways to participate as a student?
  - Does the institution respond well to your input as a student?
- UN CRPD
  - What is the purpose of the UN convention according to you?
  - What is the effect of the UN convention on Dutch higher education?
- Closing
  - Check whether all questions are asked
  - Explain that the recording will be transcribed
  - Ask whether respondent want to receive the transcript
  - Ask for the consent form in case respondent did not return it yet

**Appendix C – Overview policy documents used for analysis**

Document
De Graaf, M. and Zevenboom, L. [HvA en UvA] (2016) Beleid voor Personen met een functiebeperking, een chronische ziekte of een arbeidsbeperking. HvA en UvA.
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Hogeschool Rotterdam (2016). Onderwijsvisie.
Hogeschool Utrecht. Annual report 2018.
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Tilburg University (2018) Strategy 2018-2021. Connecting to Advance Society.
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**Appendix D - Operationalization tables**

Table 3: Operationalization concept ‘Objectives’

<b>Key concept</b>	<b>Dimension</b>	<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Method</b>
Objectives = “the purpose of the policy” (Schaffrin et al., 2015 in Bondarouk and Mastenbroek, 2018)	Clarity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Perceived clarity of objectives by employees</li> </ul>	<i>Not measured</i>
	Definitional details = “how restrictively and comprehensively ambiguous elements are defined during practical implementation relative to other implementing peers”	Inclusivity is defined and different aspects of accessibility are specified in policy documents.	Document analysis
	Degree of misfit = “the extent to which a particular supranational policy required member states to depart from their traditional way of doing things in terms of policy legacies and organizational arrangements” (Duina and	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Inclusivity included in institution’s strategy/policy before 2016</li> <li>Policy process started before ratification of UN CRPD</li> </ul>	Document analysis + interviews

	Blithe, 1999; Knill and Lenschow, 1998)		
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Table 4: Operationalization of concept 'Scope'

Key concept	Dimension	Indicator	Method
Scope = “when, when and to whom does the policy task apply” (Bondarouk and Mastenbroek, 2018)	Addressees = “the size and composition of the group the policy is applicable to”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of students</li> <li>• Number of students with disabilities</li> </ul>	Document analysis
	Territory = “the region to which the policy applies” (Bondarouk and Mastenbroek, 2018)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of study programmes</li> <li>• Number of buildings</li> </ul>	Document analysis
	Duration = “the temporal scope” (Bondarouk and Mastenbroek, 2018)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Time the declaration of intent signed</li> <li>• Time the policy process for studying with a disability started</li> </ul>	Document analysis

Table 5: Operationalization of concept 'Staff'

Key concept	Dimension	Indicator	Method
Staff = “group of employees assigned to implement the task” (Bondarouk and Mastenbroek, 2018)	Size = number of employees within the group	Number of staff members involved in ‘core group’ or workgroup	Document analysis + interviews
	Competence = related knowledge, skills and abilities that form a person’s job	Experience of employees in working with students with disabilities and the term inclusivity	Interviews
	Commitment = the enthusiasm and motivation to increase inclusivity	Perceived commitment by students and other respondents	Interviews

Table 6: Operationalization of concept 'Budget'

Key concept	Dimension	Indicator	Method
Budget = “financial resources allocated to the implementation of policy goals” (Bondarouk and Mastenbroek, 2018)	Structural	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sum of budget reserved for studying with a disability and accessibility education</li> <li>Structural budget</li> </ul>	Document analysis + interviews  <i>Size of budget was not measurable</i>

		available	
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Table 7: Operationalization of concept 'Monitoring'

Key concept	Dimension	Indicator	Method
Monitoring = “the assessment of policy delivery” (Bondarouk and Mastenbroek, 2018)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of evaluations per year</li> <li>• Involvement of students with disabilities in monitoring process</li> </ul>	Document analysis + interviews

## **Appendix E - Consent form**

Onder begeleiding van Freek de Haan (Erasmus School of Social and Behavioural Sciences) onderzoekt Ellen van Veen de praktische implementatie van het VN-verdrag Handicap op hoger onderwijsinstellingen. Met de verzamelde data wordt gekeken naar de beleidskeuzes van hoger onderwijsinstellingen rondom inclusief onderwijs. Met behulp van uw deelname kan dit onderzoek worden gerealiseerd. Hartelijk dank daarvoor. Het invullen van dit toestemmingsformulier is noodzakelijk voor het interview.

Voor meer informatie of vragen over het onderzoek kunt u mailen naar: x of bellen naar: xxx.

### **Dataverzameling**

Het doel van het onderzoek is om inzicht te krijgen in welke factoren een rol spelen bij de implementatie van het VN-verdrag Handicap. In dit onderzoek zullen semigestructureerde interviews worden afgenomen met bestuurders, beleidsmedewerkers en studenten van vier verschillende onderwijsinstellingen. De interviews met bestuurders en beleidsmedewerkers zullen gaan over hoe de onderwijsinstelling de implementatie van het VN-verdrag heeft georganiseerd op het gebied van de doelstellingen die zijn opgesteld en de acties die er zijn genomen. De interviews met de studenten zullen vooral gaan over hoe betrokken zij zich voelen bij de implementatie van het beleid en in hoeverre ze tevreden zijn over de aanpassingen die er zijn gedaan. De interviews zullen worden opgenomen en vervolgens getranscribeerd.

### **Potentiële ongemakken en risico's**

Er zijn geen fysieke, rechtelijke of economische risico's verbonden aan uw deelname in dit onderzoek. U bent niet verplicht om alle vragen te beantwoorden. Uw deelname is vrijwillig en kan op ieder moment beëindigd worden.

### **Vertrouwelijkheid en databescherming**

De verzamelde data zal worden gebruikt voor een geaggregeerde data-analyse en vertrouwelijke informatie of persoonlijke gegevens zullen niet worden gebruikt in de uitkomsten van het onderzoek. De data zal worden opgeslagen op een beveiligde locatie voor een periode van twee jaar.

### **Het delen van data**

Ik deel de data met de Erasmus Universiteit met als reden het onderzoeken en schrijven van mijn masterscriptie, wat verplicht is voor het voltooien van mijn studie aan de Erasmus School of Social and Behavioural Sciences, Erasmus Universiteit.

Daarnaast zal ik een artikel schrijven over de uitkomsten van mijn onderzoek voor de website van ECIO.

### **Vrijwillige deelname en individuele rechten**

Uw deelname is vrijwillig en het is mogelijk om op ieder moment te stoppen. Tijdens uw deelname aan het onderzoek heeft u het recht om meer informatie over de dataverzameling en analyse te vragen. Daarnaast heeft u het recht om uw toestemming in te trekken en te vragen naar verwijdering van uw data voordat de dataset is geanonimiseerd of het manuscript is ingeleverd om gepubliceerd te worden. U kunt dit bewerkstelligen door contact op te nemen met Ellen van Veen via email of telefoon.

Mocht u klachten hebben aangaande het verwerken van persoonlijke gegevens in dit onderzoek, neem dan gerust contact op met Ellen van Veen.

Door het tekenen van dit toestemmingsformulier bevestig ik dat:

- Ik geïnformeerd ben over het doel van het onderzoek, de dataverzameling en het opslaan van data zoals beschreven in het informatieformulier;

- Ik het informatieformulier heb gelezen, of dat het aan me is voorgelezen;
- Ik mogelijkheden heb gehad om vragen te stellen over het onderzoek; de vragen zijn voldoende beantwoord;
- Ik vrijwillig toestemming geef tot deelname aan dit onderzoek;
- Ik begrijp dat er vertrouwelijk wordt omgegaan met de informatie;
- Ik begrijp dat ik de deelname op ieder moment kan beëindigen of het beantwoorden van vragen kan weigeren zonder enige consequenties;
- Ik begrijp dat ik mijn toestemming kan intrekken voor de dataset is ingeleverd voor goedkeuring.

Bovendien geef ik toestemming om:

	<b>Ja</b>	<b>Nee</b>
Ik geef toestemming om audio van het interview op te nemen		
Ik geef toestemming om video van het interview op te nemen		
Ik geef toestemming om citaten van mijn interview te gebruiken		
Ik geef toestemming om mijn naam te gebruiken bij de citaten		