

Between Policy and Reality:
An interpretive policy analysis of the Inclusive
Education Policy of Namibia

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Abstract

In this research, Interpretive Policy Analysis (IPA) is applied to the Inclusive Education Policy (IEP) of Namibia. Following Yanow's steps, first, three interpretive communities are identified: the government as creators of the policy (data = IEP document), experts as practitioners (data = three interviews), and people with disabilities (PwD) as recipients of the policy (data = four interviews). Next, for each group, different frames are identified. From there, different frame conflicts were uncovered. The two main conflicts are about: what exactly the problems are that the policy should solve, and what the role of the government is in solving these. Other frame conflicts on the policy and solutions arose from these. Additionally, this research shows that within IPA, more focus should be placed on how having a disability and having similar experiences plays a role in the formation of interpretive communities. Furthermore, recommendations are presented for future research and policy-makers inside and outside of Namibia.

Keywords: Interpretive Policy Analysis, Disability, Inclusive Education Policy, Interpretive Communities, Frame Conflicts

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List of abbreviations

IEP – Inclusive Education Policy

IPA – Interpretive Policy Analysis

PwD – People with disabilities

UNCRPD – United Nations Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities

1. Introduction

People with disabilities (PwD) experience more barriers to participate in society than able-bodied people. While other groups can also experience discrimination and inequality, PwD experience tangible barriers from participation next to discrimination, stigma and inequality. It is for this reason that PwD would have an additional need for human rights to ensure that they are on equal footing with able-bodied people. The most common definition of disability in Africa is based on the human rights model which “considers disability to be a human rights issue, based on the notion that all human beings are equal and have rights that must be respected” (Chichaya et al., 2018). This is different from seeing disability as solely a medical issue and also includes their struggles from a social perspective instead of only from a medical point of view. This social perspective allows for stigma, discrimination, and other social and financial barriers to be recognised as something that disables people. The main difference between the medical and the human rights model is that for the medical definition, the imperfection of the body makes someone disabled. In contrast, in the human rights model, the surroundings make someone disabled if they cannot make up for bodily imperfection. If human rights were correctly implemented, nobody would be disabled anymore, because the surroundings would have been changed to be as accommodating to them as possible. Besides, this model includes moral principles to base policies on. This model is growing on the African continent, which is in line with the heightened interest in human rights that many African countries seem to have (Chichaya et al., 2018). Governments should thus try to eliminate any barriers so that PwD can fully participate in society. This has been documented in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD).

The UNCRPD was drafted in 2007. The idea behind this convention is that, as PwD need different and other circumstances than able-bodied people, these circumstances need to be

protected in human rights as well. So, the convention lists the rights PwD have in order to participate in society on an equal footing as able-bodied people. One hundred eighty-one countries have ratified this convention, and 100 of them have also ratified its additional protocol. One of these countries is Namibia who ratified it in 2007. Even though Namibia is vocal in its support for human rights and disability rights, recent reports from other academics indicate that such human rights are still being violated. This brought me to the duality of disability policies in Namibia which created my empirical puzzle: it seems good in theory, but it is ineffective in practice. One of the disability policies in Namibia is the Inclusive Education Policy (IEP), which strives for education to be inclusive for all, and is the focus of this research.

This research focusses on how different groups of people interpret the IEP. For this, Interpretive Policy Analysis (IPA) as theorised by Yanow (2000) is used, which rests on the presupposition that the societal issues that are addressed in policy-making have different meanings for different groups of people. The focus of this research is on three different groups. Those are: government level (data = Sector Policy on Inclusive Education document), practitioner level (data = three interviews), recipient level (data = four interviews). This combined will answer the question:

How does Interpretive Policy Analysis help to understand the perceptions of different interpretive communities of the Inclusive Education Policy in Namibia in the 21st century?

Additionally, these sub-questions:

- 1. What different interpretive communities can be identified?*
- 2. How do these interpretive communities frame the problem, the policy and the solutions?*
- 3. What frame conflicts can be identified?*

Answering these questions is important as this helps uncover possible bottlenecks in policy-making and also adds to the theory of interpretive communities. This research is helpful to Namibia where it can be used to re-evaluate disability policies to fit the needs of the recipients better and to similar countries struggling with the multi-faceted nature of the barriers PwD experience. Besides, this research adds to the theory of interpretive communities as described by Yanow (2000) by adding the importance of shared experiences in the formation of these and ‘disability’ as a possible common denominator.

This thesis is divided into multiple chapters. First, a context chapter explains the overall situation of PwD in the world and specifically in Namibia. The second chapter states an overview of my methodology. Third, a theory chapter outlines the used analytical framework of IPA, as explained by Yanow (2000), interpretive communities, and framing. Fourth, my findings are presented in three different chapters, one for each of the different groups: government, experts, and recipients of the policy (PwD). Fifth, I reflect on my findings and present my analysis using the IPA framework. Lastly, I give my concluding thoughts, reflections and recommendation for future research.

2. Context

People with disabilities (PwD) are often overlooked within conflict studies, while they form the biggest minority in the world (Meekosha & Soldatic, 2011). Reason for this, I argue, is partially, because they do not gather in big groups, protest on the street, and fight for their rights, as the external circumstances that disable them also prevent them from partaking in these activities. If we look at other social issues within the field of conflict studies, we see the worker strikes in Chile (Cuffe, 2019, November 12), or the Black Lives Matter movement in the United States (Cheung, 2020, June 8). In both instances, you see examples of mobilisation to fight social injustices in their societies. PwD around the world face social injustices, too, often in the form of barriers that prevent them from participating in society. These are the same barriers that prevent them from mobilizing in the capacity that we see above.

The World Health Organization reports that around fifteen per cent of the world population lives with a disability of some sort (WHO, n.d.). Many of them depend on or need assistive devices such as wheelchairs, canes, or hearing aids. The World Report on Disability (2011) states that "people with disabilities have poorer health outcomes, lower education achievements, less economic participation and higher rates of poverty than people without disabilities" (preface). It continues that these differences can be accounted for by the many barriers PwD face in accessing services and information. These barriers are amplified in less advantaged communities. As this report shows, PwD face many social injustices and rights violations.

Among the 2.1 million people living in Namibia, 98.417 live with different types of disabilities. However, the exact number may differ, given that many people are not registered as such. (WHO, 2011). It is also reported that in 2017, around 27.000 children under the age of 18 had a disability in Namibia, 5.529 of them received the social grant of 250 Namibian

dollars (Kangootui, 2018). The report of the World Health Organization shows that many PwD do not get the help and care they need (2011), while Namibian decision-makers think that the government provides plenty (Chichaya, Joubert, & McColl, 2018). This is the empirical puzzle I mentioned in the introduction that got me thinking about the situation in Namibia.

The Namibian constitution was drafted in 1990. In it, the term ‘disability’ is never mentioned. However, multiple human rights and freedoms are discussed, including rights to, for example, education and being free from discrimination. Namibia established a National Disability Council in 2004 and, as mentioned before, Namibia signed and ratified the UNCRPD in 2007. A few years later, a deputy-minister of disability affairs has been installed as part of the vice-presidency office. She entirely depends on the vice-presidency office for funds. For the year 2018-2019, her funds were cut with forty per cent, leaving her with a budget of nineteen million N\$, or roughly 1 million euros (The Namibian, 2018, March 26). From this budget, nine million goes to the National Disability Council of Namibia. The rest is used to pay salaries of personnel, leaving very little for any sort of programme. The National Disability Council was established to monitor the implementation of the National Policy on Disability. Additionally, they advise the government on any reformulation of policy, but the government is not bound to act accordingly. Furthermore, they act as an intermediary between PwD and the government. All in all, their responsibilities are to monitor, advise, and mediate, and they have no real power to effect change (National Disability Council Act, 2004).

The main support given by the government to PwD takes the form of a social grant. Each person with a disability is entitled to a monthly allowance. For adults, this allowance is around 1300 N\$ per month; for children, it is a fraction of that amount. To apply for the grant, a doctor must verify that the person applying has a disability indeed. Reportedly, most people that apply do get it assigned.

Besides to bodies established by the government, multiple NGOs are committed to attending to the needs of PwD. They offer help locally, share resources, offer legal support, etc. These NGOs can be local, national or international, and are often sponsored by international donors. For example, the people I spoke to explained that there was an on-going project supported by Sweden revolving around the human rights of PwD, and I heard that Chinese companies donated assistive devices. Besides, UNICEF is also active in the country researching the living conditions of marginalised children, including children with disabilities (Brouwers, Victor, & Fortin, 2019, July 8).

3. Methodology

For this research, I gathered data by using semi-structured qualitative interviews, participant observations and document analysis; the first two I executed in Windhoek, Namibia during the two weeks that I was there in addition to one interview performed from home. After I returned home, document analysis was conducted of the Interpretive Education Policy (IEP).

3.1 Preparation

To prepare for my trip to Namibia, I read a combination of academic articles on disability in Namibia and non-academic literature on the country itself. Academic literature included the works of Chichaya, Joubert, & McColl (2018, 2018 (2) & 2019), Shumba & Moodley (2018), Tobias & Mukhopadhyay (2017). The non-academic literature mostly consisted of reading the Insight Guides on Namibia. Besides, to prepare myself for doing fieldwork and conducting interviews, I read parts of *Qualitative Researching* from Mason (2002). For my analytical frame, I read *Conducting Interpretive Policy Analysis* from Yanow (2000). I used the university's online library using keywords such as Interpretive Policy Analysis (IPA), interpretive communities, frames, framing, policy analysis, etc.

3.2 Interviews

First, I chose to do qualitative interviews, as this research method adheres most closely to my ontological stance of meaning-making and the analytical frame of IPA. Through interviews, I could gather the meaning people give to specific topics, and discover different perceptions. I chose to do semi-structured interviews to let participants direct the conversation to other relevant topics. For this, I created a list of questions on perceptions on disability, perceptions of human rights, personal experiences of living with a disability in Namibia, and experiences with human rights violations in different forms (see Appendix I). Preparing

questions beforehand ensured that I would include specific topics that were important to my research.

All interviews were recorded with a voice-recorder on my phone, which was placed between my participant and me. I recorded their verbal consent. All my participants were aware that their participation was voluntary, that they could pause the interview at any moment for any duration, and that they could discontinue the interview if they wished to do so.

During the interviews, I made notes, for example, on non-verbal communication. Subsequently, I included these notes in the transcriptions. I gave all my participants a chance to come up with a nickname to use as a pseudonym when saving files and referring to them in my research. All interviews took place during the day. I had four interviews with people with disabilities (PwD) and three with experts who work in the disability field.

The experts were interviewed in their respective offices and one via a skype call. The offices gave us a quiet room where we could talk freely. The experts I interviewed in Windhoek are visually impaired. I interviewed the third expert, who has polio, via Skype while we were both in our respective homes during the lockdown. Besides that, this interview was similar to the others in terms of conversation style and length. The experts gave insights regarding the nature of their work, on having a disability in Namibia, and their perceptions on relevant government policies. The other group of interviewees were PwD who are not employed in the disability field. Two of them are wheelchair-users, while the other two are visually impaired. These participants are all from different ages, with the youngest being mid-twenties and the oldest late forties. All of them grew up in villages and moved to Windhoek as adults. Only one of them was born with a disability; the other three gained their disability during their lifetime. They gave insights regarding how they experience being disabled in Namibian society.

To find participants, I used the snowball-sampling technique. I approached people who work in the disability field in Namibia and asked them to either be a participant or to refer me to other people. This allowed me to reach quite a significant sample for the short time that I was in the country.

Lastly, after each interview, I took notes about my thoughts, things that stood out to me, and questions I would like to include in further interviews. I reflected on my interviewing skills, my non-verbal communication, and my biases to see what I could improve during upcoming interviews.

3.3 Participant observation

Participant observations are used to determine: context, scope and frames. It also reduces the chances of “reactivity”, the change in a person’s behaviour because they are aware that they are being observed, which makes this a suitable method for studying participants in their natural environment (Bernard, 2003). For my participant observations, I used a notebook to write down fieldnotes and my phone to take pictures. This combination provided me with detailed observational data. I mostly wrote in Dutch to limit the chance that someone could read my notes without my consent. This was to ensure anonymity for my participants. I included events of that day that were not necessarily related to my research but might have affected my mood, perception or bias, to provide context during later analysis. My notebook was always with me, for security reasons, but also to write something down immediately when something popped inside my head.

During my research, I stayed in a house owned by the founder of a local NGO which offered vocational training and day-time activities for PwD. I met with members of the National Disability Council, Resource Centre for Disabilities, and the Namibian Federation of the Impaired. I also attended and spoke with the wheelchair basketball team in Windhoek.

3.4 Document analysis

As mentioned in the chapter Theory, document analysis is a vital part of IPA and can be the only data source for interpretive analysis (Bowen, 2009). Therefore, I wanted to analyse a policy document that was directed at PwD to examine the Namibian government's perspective on disability and disability issues. I selected the IEP (2013), which is not only directed at PwD, but at all 'educationally marginalized children'. This document was often mentioned by the experts I interviewed.

The document analysis was executed using an interview technique described by O'Leary (2014) which includes 'asking' the document questions as if it is a participant and close-reading the document to see what answers it provides. Additionally, I did a thematic analysis (Bowen, 2009) to see which themes emerged that I could code into categories. The combination of these two techniques allowed me to compare the analysis of the document with the analysis of the interviews.

3.5 Organising the data

To analyse the data I collected, I used NVivo. This programme allowed me to code the transcripts of my interviews and the document. Coding brought common themes to the forefront. Since I wrote my fieldnotes on paper, I analysed these by reading through them and attaching notes in NVivo to the corresponding interview, theme, picture or document. In this thesis, I focus on the following themes that emerged from the analysis: (lack) of education, barriers, and "good in theory, but not in practise" (policy).

3.6 Covid-19

The Covid-19 pandemic has heavily influenced my research. My stay in Namibia was cut short, and my data collection was therefore limited. It would have been beneficial if I had been able to talk to more people, e.g. from more rural areas, experts, or representatives of the government. Taking these limitations into account, I regard this thesis as a preliminary study

on disability and disability policies in Namibia. My conclusion chapter offers recommendations for further research.

4. Theory

4.1 Literature review: Disability policy in Namibia

As mentioned in the chapter Context, at first glance, everything looks well organised in Namibia when it comes to disability issues, but there is more beneath the surface. These academic articles showcased thy by focusing on the experiences of people with disabilities (PwD) in Namibia and discussing the National Policy on Disability:

Chichaya et al. (2018; 2018 (2); 2019) write about the National policy of the Namibian government regarding PwD, the effects of these policies and how they could be improved. For their analysis, they used the human rights model on disability. This states that "disability [is] a human rights issue, based on the notion that all human beings are equal and have rights that must be respected" (Chichaya et al., 2018, p. 2). As this model focusses on moral principles and values, this would also be the basis of disability policy which would then focus on levelling the playing field (Chichaya et al., 2018). As discussed in the introduction, the human rights model of disability is gaining traction in Africa as it includes external barriers as disabling factors. I argue that it is crucial to acknowledge the barriers PwD face and to find out how they are experienced. Therefore, I use this definition of disability for my research.

For their research, Chichaya et al. (2018; 2018 (2)) interviewed decision-makers, occupational therapists and PwD on topics regarding the current disability policy in Namibia. Their results point to a few interesting differences in perspectives: PwD and decision-makers often did not agree on certain matters. For instance, on the matter of social barriers, decision-makers deny their existence, while PwD confirm them. Also, decision-makers report that PwD are self-limiting, while PwD do not agree with this. These differences highlight the conclusion Chichaya et al. make: PwD are not included nor represented enough in decision-making, resulting in a perspective or knowledge gap. This is in line with the findings of

Shumba & Moodley (2018) who conclude that the current policy in Namibia has many flaws and that PwD should be included in drafting the new policy. In my research, I focus on the perceptions of one particular policy: the Inclusive Education Policy (IEP). This will add to the existing research by discovering how PwD perceive disability policy and where frame conflicts arise between the government and the other policy-relevant actors.

4.2 Interpretive Policy Analysis

Interpretive Policy Analysis (IPA) originated as a way of doing research that was contrary to the positivist approach that dominated academia for centuries (Hendriks, 2007). The positivist approach considers research as objective measuring and reporting; the researcher has no part in it and is merely observing. Instead, IPA is built on the philosophical origins of phenomenology and hermeneutics. The former argues that "[people's] lived experiences bring different people to perceive the same event, or the same policy, in different ways" (Yanow, 2007, p. 113). Phenomenology puts meaning at the centre of human action and stresses that it is derived from lived experiences and is, therefore, situation-specific. Besides, the researcher's lived experiences also shape and filter the research and cannot be separated or avoided (Yanow, 2007). Instead, the researcher needs to be aware of their own experiences and how these influence the research. Along with phenomenology, IPA is also based on hermeneutics. This school of thought combines the interpretation of texts with human sense-making (Yanow, 2007), which means that within IPA policy-relevant texts are included. These include policy documents, annual reports, pamphlets, newspapers, and notes of participant observations and interviews.

IPA theory is thus based on the combination of phenomenology and hermeneutics: human sense-making and the interpretation of texts. The theory presumes that:

"[W]e live in a social world characterised by the possibilities of multiple interpretations. In this world there are not 'brute data' whose meaning is beyond dispute. [...] As living requires

sense-making, and sense-making entails interpretation, so too does policy analysis" (Yanow, 2000, p. 5).

IPA thus focuses on the meaning different groups give to a social problem or a policy, and on the feelings, values and beliefs associated with it. Relevant groups can be legislators, implementors, or receivers of the policy. Policy analysts try to grasp the different meanings groups attach to a policy, the problem for which the policy was needed, the implementation of the policy, and the current situation (Yanow, 1995). This is always a local analysis, not in a geographical sense, but contextual; the subject is always contextual as it changes when circumstances change. IPA often concerns a puzzle or a complication where there is a mismatch between experiences surrounding the policy, or a difference in expected versus actual outcome. The analyst or researcher can then discover the roots of this complication: "[t]he central question is then [...], how is the policy issue being framed by the various parties to the debate?" (Yanow, 2000, p. 11). To answer this question, IPA follows three steps: communities relevant to the policy need to be identified; language and discourse of these communities need to be analysed; points of conflict and contradicting interpretations by the different groups need to be identified and researched.

4.3 Interpretive communities

Within IPA, a focus is placed on different groups who experience and perceive a policy differently and that they might attach contrasting meanings to the policy. These different groups are identified as interpretive communities. Yanow explains these as follows:

"Through a process of interaction, members of a community [...] come to use the same or similar cognitive mechanisms, engage in the same or similar acts, and use the same or similar language to talk about thought and action. Group processes reinforce these, often promoting internal cohesion as an identity marker with respect to other communities: the familiar 'us-them' phenomenon." (2000, p. 10, emphasis added)

In other words, communities are formed when individuals have something in common and interact with others like them and amplify their perceptions and thoughts. This then results in similar speech and actions, making it possible to recognise different members as part of the community. She explains that interpretive communities can also be formed by having similar training, being in a similar place in an organisational structure, or based on a shared gender. Additionally, linguistic, cognitive, and cultural practices strengthen each other, which leads to shared thoughts, practices, and speech. This is what makes policy-relevant groups 'interpretive communities' (Yanow, 2000). In her work, Yanow (2000) implies that to be an interpretive community, the members need to interact and by doing that they reinforce their perceptions, form similar meanings, and use comparable language. She does mention that interpretive communities can be formed by any common points which might entail: race, religion, class, age, professional experience, political ideology and hobbies. To identify such group, she explains that a researcher should observe people on what they do and especially how they do it. Everything that is remotely relatable to the policy-issue at hand is valuable for the researcher to gain a familiarity which enables them to identify commonalities that can define borders between different interpretive communities (Yanow, 2000). These communities are relevant to the policy on different levels: policymaking organizations (in this case the government), field-based operations (in this case the experts) and the clients or receivers of policy (in this case the PwD) (Yanow, 1997). There is a hierarchy in the way that the product (the policy) is implemented and the different layers provide different perspectives (Arrona & Zabala-iturriagoitia, 2019).

4.4 Framing

Framing is the process where someone or a group creates a frame to make sense of or to understand the world (Patel Stevens, 2008; Van Bommel, Van Hulst, & Yanow, 2014; Yanow, 2000). This frame is organically created and recreated through interactions amongst

the community. Within IPA, framing "is a process in and through which policy-relevant actors intersubjectively construct the meanings of the policy-relevant situations with which they are involved, whether directly or as onlookers and stakeholders" (Van Hulst & Yanow, 2016, p. 97). Due to different experiences and perceptions that different actors have, different frames get created in the process of framing which includes: sense-making; naming, selecting and categorizing; story-telling. These three are briefly highlighted here.

First of all, it is important to stress that framing is an unconscious process; it is not planned or strategized. This is especially true for the sense-making component of framing, which happens when someone is faced with something that does not make sense at first. (Schön, 1983). Sense-making is also not final. It is a process that forms and reforms with each interaction; slowly, meanings will emerge (Van Hulst & Yanow, 2016). Therefore, sense-making depends on verbal and non-verbal communication and the observation of it, as these make it interactive.

Second, framing includes naming, which in turn includes selecting and categorising. This is the part of the process where a selection is made of certain aspects that are considered important or relevant, while others are ignored and discarded; these are then categorised and named (Van Hulst & Yanow, 2016). Selecting, naming and categorising serve the purpose of identifying something as 'this' not 'that'. An example of this is when someone is introduced to you as 'Peter, an expert in quantum physics' or 'Peter, completely blind and father of five children'. In the first example, his expertise in quantum physics is selected and named, and categorised to be more important than other aspects of his life. Often this process of selecting, naming and categorising happens unconsciously, and metaphors are used that are common in their community (Van Hulst, 2008). In short, these aspects of framing are ways of highlighting some aspects while occluding or silencing others.

The last component of framing is story-telling (Van Hulst, 2012). Where sense-making is about the instant mechanism that occurs when faced with a certain situation, selecting, naming and categorising are about ordering and prioritising, story-telling is about "binding together the salient features of the situation [...] into a pattern that is coherent and graspable" (Rein & Shön, 1977). It is this binding together of all components discussed, and presenting it in a narrative, that can be recognised as a frame. Van Hulst and Yanow (2016) state that: "[w]here the naming and categorising aspects of framing might be expressed in one word (e.g., 'communist', 'creationist'), stories elaborate on the perceived policy problem (and perhaps its envisioned solution)" (p. 100). Story-telling is done through narratives wherein certain aspects can be recognised: blame or praise, success or failure, harm or help. Here, the researcher can pick up on how certain actors frame the policy or policy-problem, and where these frames might differ and cause conflicts. Yanow states the following on conflicting frames:

"Frame conflict occurs not only because different interpretive communities focus cognitively and rationally on different elements of a policy issue, but because they value different elements differently. The different frames reflect groups' values contending for public recognition and validation." (2000, p. 11)

In my findings section, I present the frames that I have found, ending with an analysis of my findings in the discussion.

Findings

In the following chapters, I present my findings. These are divided into three chapters; one for every group of relevant actors that I have identified: government (data = Inclusive Education Policy (IEP) document), experts (data = three interviews), recipients/people with disabilities (PwD) (data = four interviews). The division into these three groups emerged from my data. The policy document represents the government, the creator of the policy. Additionally, there is a clear distinction between the experts and the PwD in their knowledge on rights and disability policies in Namibia. Besides, the experts also (partially) fulfil the role of implementing or working with the policy, while PwD are solely on the receiving end. Therefore, these three groups need to be analysed separately. In each of these chapters, I present the findings and answer the following policy-related questions: what is identified as the problem preceding the policy? What caused the problem? How is the policy itself perceived? Which solutions are presented? These questions are chosen based on the second and third steps of Interpretive Policy Analysis (IPA) approach, as these are policy-related and can uncover frames and points of conflict. In the discussion chapter, I analyse these findings and identify any conflicts.

5. Findings: Government (creators of the policy)

To understand the perspective of the government, I have analysed the Inclusive Education Policy (IEP) (2013). The IEP was drafted by the Ministry of Education in 2013 with support of the European Union and UNICEF. The policy has two objectives:

"Policy Objective 1: To expand access to and provision of quality education, especially for educationally marginalised learners.

Policy Objective 2: To support learners with a wide range of individual abilities and needs in compulsory education at Early Childhood Development (ECD), pre-primary, primary and secondary levels." (2013, p. 27)

5.1 What do they identify as the problem?

In the document, the government highlights two main themes as issues regarding education: access to education and the segregation of education. The first theme is based on statistics showing that many children do not continue with their education after primary level, even though there is a rise in primary education enrolment rate. The numbers indicate that: *"proportionally more children drop out or do not gain access to secondary education at all."* (p. 13). Therefore, it shows a decrease in students between primary and secondary levels. Based on the first objective presented above, that is *"to expand access to and provision of quality education, especially for educationally marginalised learners"* (p. 27), it becomes clear that the government primarily wants to increase the enrolment rate for secondary education.

The second theme the policy considers a problem, is the segregation of education. The government sees the existence of special needs schools as something that prevents inclusion in society and wants to include all children into mainstream education, therefore. Throughout

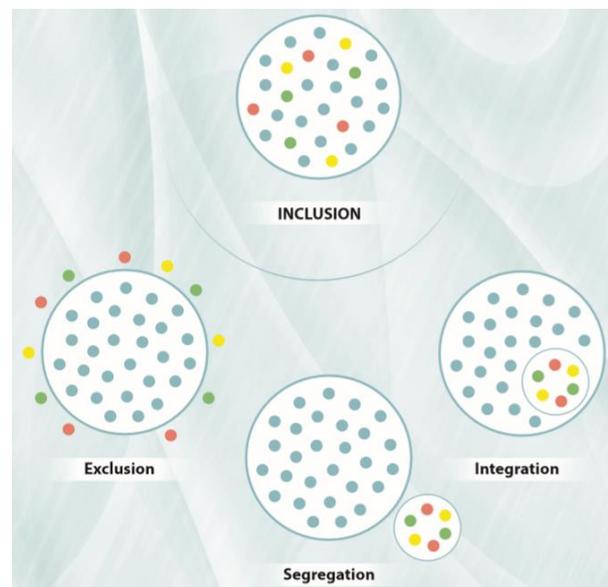
the document, this line of thinking can be seen. For example, in their glossary, where they explain segregation as the following:

"This refers to learners with different educational needs [...] being placed in a segregated educational setting (e.g. a 'special school' or a school only for learners with disabilities). This tends to force children with disabilities to lead a separate life." (p. 11)

Besides, under their Justification of Inclusion (p. 18), they state that:

"Inclusive Education means ending segregation or the deliberate exclusion of individuals or groups on the grounds of academic performance, gender, race, culture, religion, lifestyle, health conditions or disability." (original text shows this in bold, edited for consistency)

Furthermore, they added a graph to highlight the difference between inclusion, segregation, exclusion, and integration:



(p. 12)

5.2 What do they identify as the cause of the problem?

The roots of the problems described above are not mentioned directly. However, by reading the entire document, a certain theme does arise. In the foreword, the Minister of Education, Dr Namwandi, mentions that educationally marginalised children face many barriers: *"we acknowledge that there are presently multiple barriers to learning in Namibia: systemic, organisational, pedagogical, curriculum-related, environmental, financial, societal,*

cultural and attitudinal barriers" (p. 7). Although numerous barriers are mentioned, the primary focus is on cultural barriers; the other barriers are not further discussed in the document. Most of the solutions are related to cultural barriers. The government speaks about raising awareness and changing negative attitudes. An example of cultural barriers that are mentioned, can be deduced from the following: "*[w]hat is important about Inclusive Education is that it shifts the focus from blaming the child for difficulties to the interaction between the learner and his/her environment*" (p.18). This is also mentioned in the foreword where it is explained that blaming the child for learning difficulties is a "traditional belief" (p. 8) which should be rejected.

5.3 How do they perceive the policy?

To discover government perceptions from the document, I examined the way the policy was presented. Four themes stand out: the policy as internationally supported, following guidelines of UNICEF, UNESCO, and other international actors; the policy as an essential step towards an inclusive society; the policy as the way forward, but without commitment to any active steps and instead as a shift of responsibility onto others; the policy as a shift in thinking.

For the first theme, UNICEF and UNESCO are quoted multiple times throughout the document. For example, the definition of inclusive education was the one UNESCO uses:

"[a] process of addressing and responding to diversity of needs of all learners through increasing participation in learning, cultures and communities, and reducing exclusion within and from education. It involves changes and modifications in content, approaches, structures and strategies, with a common vision which covers all children of appropriate age range and a conviction that it is the responsibility of the regular system to educate all children."

(UNESCO, 2008, as mentioned in IEP, 2013, p. 18)

Additionally, UNICEF is thanked in the acknowledgements for their "provided technical support" (p. 6) and two entire pages at the end of the document are dedicated to "messages of UNICEF" (p. 48) and their fact sheet on children with disabilities (p. 49). UNICEF published on their website that it "strongly advocates" for inclusive education in Namibia and that they work together with the Namibian government to strengthen this (UNICEF, n.d.). By adding the pages of UNICEF and the quote by UNESCO, they present international justification for inclusive education. Furthermore, there are other mentions of international actors: the European Union in their acknowledgements for their sponsored consultancy (p. 6); and a quote of Kathleen Sullivan, a United States' teacher of the year, on the power of education (p. 50). This increases the feeling of a big international support base for this policy.

The second theme shows that the government presents inclusive education as a vital step towards an inclusive society. This can be seen in their explanation of what the social justification is of this policy: "*[i]nclusive schools are able to change negative attitudes to diversity by educating all children together, thus **inclusive schools form the foundation of a just and non-discriminatory society***" (p. 18, emphasis added). Additionally, this point is raised multiple times when explaining why special needs schools should be discontinued.

The third theme is that with this policy, the government wants to show the way forward, but does not commit to any active steps themselves and instead shifts responsibility onto others. Throughout the document, they use abstract terms when talking about the policy, such as aims, recognises, recommends, proposes, supports, encourages, etc. Although there are different strategy steps presented at the end of the document, most of them are not concrete, e.g. "*[e]ncourage Resource Schools (Resource Centres) and Special Classes (Learning Support Classes) **to initiate partnerships and collaborations** with mainstream schools*" (p. 35, emphasis added). Besides, the fact that schools and teachers are the ones who should take responsibility when it comes to carrying out the policy is emphasized: "*[i]t is crucial that*

every school (including its management and every teacher) takes responsibility for educating every learner and ensures that learning is indeed taking place” (p. 19).

The fourth theme shows that the purpose of this policy entails a shift in thinking, rather than technical support:

"Inclusive Education implies a major shift in thinking: providing education for various marginalised groups is not about technical intervention, but rather it is about a change in one's attitudes to differences, and in one's practices and actions at all levels of education." (p. 19)

This quote also clearly showcases the government's avoidance of focussing on technical or material barriers that hinder educational attendance. Instead, social barriers are focussed on, as discussed under question 2. The lack of concrete measures, the abstract nature of the recommendations and the shifting of responsibility is further discussed under the next question.

5.4 Which solutions are presented?

The government identifies two problems: the enrolment rate in education and segregation of education due to special needs schools. This policy is meant to solve these problems through eight strategies, these are: 1) to integrate inclusive education in legal frameworks, 2) to raise awareness and foster change, 3) to support institutional development, 4) review national curriculum, 5) widen and develop educational support services, 6) develop teacher education, 7) strengthen and widen training, and 8) develop a mechanism for monitoring and evaluating (p. 19). To implement these, the government identifies in total twenty-three outcomes divided into activities, many of which have not had any funds allocated to them. Here, two of those are highlighted to showcase the implementation strategy. Outcome 2.2 is about creating awareness of the right to education, by using existing programmes to spread information on this policy (no costs are allocated for this) and by publishing this IEP

document (20.000 N\$ or 1.050 €) (p. 33). Outcome 3.1 states that “all schools become inclusive”, activities to reach this include: “identify 3-5 schools [per] region to become inclusive schools” (10.000.000 N\$ or 525.000 €), “develop a plan for supporting all schools” (100.000 N\$ or 5.250 €), and clarify responsibilities of teaching staff (no costs are allocated for this) (p. 34).

As shown at the end of question 3, the government focuses on having a supportive role by recommending and endorsing particular strategies. They do not seem to enforce this policy in any way, but rather encourage others to follow it. The responsibility is put on individual schools and teachers. Consequently, non-government actors and civilians have to step up to make this policy work. The government states that the problems can only be solved by relying “on all stakeholders’ substantive understanding of the Policy Strategies as set down in this document” (p. 8). Stakeholders are identified as: teachers, parents and school management (p. 22).

Additionally, to solve the problem of educational segregation, the government plans to close many special needs schools and only keep a few to transform them into "Resource Schools" (p. 11). Resource Schools are never defined in the document, but from analysing the strategies and outcomes, it seems that they would be used as centres of expertise to assist the inclusive schools. When asked for clarification, an expert said they replace special needs schools. The number of resource schools would be determined to be proportional to the need in a certain area (p. 21). On page 36, it is mentioned that there are now too many children attending resource schools and that most of them should be introduced to inclusive schools.

5.5 Summary

In this chapter, the four questions are answered from the perspective of the government. They identify access to education and the segregation of education as the problems, and they focus on cultural barriers as the cause of these. They present the policy as internationally

supported, as a foundation of an inclusive society, as a shift in thinking, and they show the way forward but put the responsibility onto others. Lastly, the presented solutions are not entirely financially supported, heavily relies on stakeholders, and focuses on shutting down special needs schools and replacing some of them with Resource Schools.

6. Findings: Experts (practitioners in the field)

I interviewed three experts with a disability who work in the disability field. Because of their profession, they have expert knowledge on how the Inclusive Education Policy (IEP) is implemented. The fact that they have a disability themselves was not a criterion for me. However, it turned out that many people who work at institutions for people with disabilities (PwD) have a disability themselves, which I argue is a big difference compared to the government. Two of the three experts work (in)directly with the IEP, the third works with other disability policies. The experts were able to give an insight into what their organisation does, what challenges they encounter, what their perception is of government policies and how they cooperate with the government.

Furthermore, some themes that are identified in this chapter overlap with themes discussed in the chapter on the PwD' perspectives. Whichever group discussed it in more detail, their chapter is the chapter in which it is included. When the other group adds new insight to the same theme, it is discussed separately. The similarities of these two groups come from the fact that all three of the experts I spoke with have a disability and therefore have similar personal experiences as the four participants in this group. However, the difference between these two groups is that the experts also have professional experience on disability topics, while the PwD do not. Therefore, the experts can give their professional view on the IEP and the government, while PwD were able to give a clearer view of what is known on the recipients' side.

Similar to the previous chapter, I answer the four questions to present the views of the experts. In my interviews with the experts, problem and cause were often switched around or shown to influence each other. Therefore, I have combined questions 1 and 2, because there was no point in separating aspects the experts viewed as intertwined.

6.1 and 6.2 What do they identify as (the cause of) the problem?

"First of all, discrimination is still taking place, and the support is still lacking, the funding is still lacking, and the understanding of the general citizens is still lacking" (Mo)

When it comes to education, experts identified two main problems which go hand in hand. These are also the two main themes I identified, though each theme has multiple sub-themes. The first theme is that many children with disabilities are unable to go to school. For example, because of the consequences of cultural beliefs, either because parents do not think children with disabilities can be educated or because the children are bullied. The second theme is that schools are often not equipped to help children with disabilities, which makes it impossible for them to follow the curriculum. Here, two sub-themes are identified: teachers are not knowledgeable enough about disability issues, or there is a lack of study materials.

The first theme is the (in)accessibility of education. Experts and PwD both mentioned different problems that children with disabilities face when accessing education. The two sub-themes mentioned most by the experts are discussed here and the next chapter the sub-themes discussed by PwD. All three experts mentioned cultural barriers. The example that was given the most was that of parents not believing that their child with a disability can be educated due to traditional beliefs: *"they [the parents] have the mentality that you are nobody, you are just someone who needs to be helped" (Mo).*

All experts mentioned that it is often challenging to convince parents that the child with disability benefits from going to school. As a result of cultural beliefs, children with disabilities are often seen as a burden to keep hidden away at home. Therefore, as it is already challenging to find these children, raising awareness of their educational possibilities is even more difficult, according to two experts. Cultural beliefs also form a barrier to education as peers bully children: *"[s]ometimes they make fun of your disability if you cannot see, some they may start bullying you, or you just drop out and are no more going there" (Mo).*

Another expert mentioned that because there is so much ignorance among the general public on the topic of disabilities, many people stare or make mean comments. This is further highlighted in the chapter of PwD. Lastly, physical barriers when accessing education, such as distance, were also mentioned by experts. However, as the group of PwD discussed these barriers in more detail, these barriers are discussed in the next chapter.

The second theme is that of schools being unequipped to cater to children with disabilities. Experts mentioned two main ways in which schools cannot properly educate children with disabilities. First, teachers are unable to speak sign language or read braille. This makes it incredibly difficult for children with disabilities to communicate with their teacher and to keep up with the lessons. Additionally, teachers are often ignorant on disability issues: *“[s]tudents they need materials in accessible format and still teachers or instructors they do not have the experience or the skills on how to work with the people of disabilities”* (Mo).

Another main barrier is the lack of study materials for children with disabilities, such as books in braille. This barrier was also mentioned frequently by the group of PwD. Experts explained that in the entire country, there is a shortage of proper study materials for children with disabilities. Books in braille and computer software were mentioned most often. *“Let's say that I am visually impaired, and I want to enrol at the school in my village, will that work? It won't work, because you don't have anything there”* (Mir).

6.3 How do they perceive the policy?

“If improvement comes because of policies we are improving., But if improvement comes because of actions we are somehow improving, but we also need to do more” (Mir)

The overall view that the experts have on the policy is a nuanced one. Three themes could be identified on how the experts perceive the policy: as taking steps in the right direction, as lack of funding, and as lack of incentives to follow the policy. Besides, some of the themes

that were mentioned in the last question also got included in the context of the policy, such as lack of materials. First, the experts are happy that disability issues are put on the political agenda. They believe that the government is taking steps in the right direction. *"It is speaking actually about inclusivity, that people must be feel included and that no one should feel left out"* (Mo). They explained that for a relatively young country, it is admirable that Namibia is including such issues. However, the way it is done can still be massively improved. They have many critiques on the IEP and other disability policies.

One of the main critiques on the IEP is that it is not properly financially supported and that there is an overall lack of funding for disability issues.

"The money they get is not enough in order for them to really implement the activities which they want to implement. That's really unfortunate. I think that the reason they get so little money is because the parliamentarians are responsible for the budget. They don't see the value or the necessity of disability." (Beth)

The experts explained that due to lack of funding, the policy cannot be implemented and is, therefore, in practice, useless. Two of the experts explained in detail that there is no money for training of teachers or for getting more materials, which makes the goal of having all children follow inclusive education unreachable. This ties back to one of the problems experts identified, which is the lack of training and materials.

Additionally, another theme was identified by the experts, namely: the lack of positive and negative incentives to follow the policy. Experts explained that they are unaware of any rewards or punishments for policy-relevant actors to implement the policy.

"There is no strategy in place to make these things work. [...] There is a difference between what you have on paper and the environment in what you live. Because if the paper is saying all the buildings must be accessible, for instance, that is right, it is written there, but

then the reality comes: a difference in what is written on paper and what you see in practice.

[...] There are no punishments." (Mir)

This, together with the theme of cultural barriers as discussed under questions one and two, makes it incredibly difficult for schools and other actors to be inclined and motivated to implement this policy for children with disabilities.

6.4 Which solutions are presented?

Through the quotes under questions 1, 2, and 3, it becomes clear that the experts already have an idea of what has to change: more funding needs to be allocated to the implementation of the IEP, and more incentives need to be added to motivate actors to implement the policy. As these are logical results from the themes discussed above, they are not discussed again here in much detail. The experts all agree that these are needed to implement the policy effectively.

In addition to these two themes, two other solutions are presented: more support or learning from international actors such as other countries and (I)NGOs, and more inclusion of PwD in decision making. First, one expert stated that they believe that disability policies in Namibia would profit from cooperating with other countries and (I)NGOs. They suggest that the government needs to look at what others are doing to find out what needs to be changed.

"Does the government do research before coming up with an idea? Because we might come up with an idea or with a policy, but is it really going to work? Are there means? Otherwise, the policy is just going to be there. And the research is needed, not only in what you can do, but also research in what other countries are doing, what is South Africa doing? What is Germany doing? Those are some of the things you have to look at, not to beautify the things outside." (Mo)

Additionally, all experts agreed that disability policies would profit significantly from including PwD into decision-making. The PwD also stated this. The experts noted that many

decisions are made without consulting people who actually live the disability experience. Because of this, many problems are either not addressed or even created, because an able-bodied person could not put themselves fully into the position of PwD.

"I want people with disabilities to be part of bodies that are making decisions [...]. [W]e want to be part of the process of the change. That is what I want to see in the future, because if we can be part of the development, then that one is an indication that we are inclusive"

(Mo)

6.5 Summary

In this chapter, the four questions are answered from the perspective of experts working in the disability field. Answers to the questions about the problem and causes of the problem could be divided into two overall themes: inaccessibility of schools, and schools being unequipped to cater to children with disabilities. In these themes, multiple sub-themes were identified. For the theme of inaccessibility of schools, these were two forms of cultural barriers, and the theme for schools being unequipped was divided into teachers who are not knowledgeable on disability issues, and into a lack of study materials. The perceptions experts had of the IEP could be divided into three themes: taking steps in the right direction, a lack of funding, and a lack of incentives for policy-actors to implement the policy. Lastly, the experts identified four possible solutions: more funding, more incentives, more cooperation with international actors, and more inclusion of PwD into decision-making.

7. Findings: People with disabilities (recipients of the policy)

I have interviewed four people with a disability. I talked to them about the barriers they encounter in their daily lives, their perception of the government and policies, and what they think should change to make society more inclusive for people with disabilities (PwD). It is important to note that all my participants are adults and had therefore finished most of their education before the Inclusive Education Policy (IEP) was drafted. However, some still went to a special disability school, vocational training or university. Besides, I focussed on their perception of the challenges they encountered when they went to school. This is thus not a policy review of how children with disabilities who are (not) going to school right now experience the policy. Instead, it is an analysis of how different PwD perceive disability, education, and the disability policy. Additionally, to the four questions I discussed in the chapters on the government and the experts, I discuss the question: how do PwD perceive ‘disability’? Furthermore, as mentioned in the experts' chapter, some themes overlap between the PwD and experts. Here, I discussed the new insights that the PwD were able to give me.

7.1 How do they perceive disability?

The PwD discussed at length what having a disability means to them. Although the answers varied to some degree, they agreed on several matters. First, all view disability as something multi-faceted. It does not only concern their physical abilities but also their opportunities in school and work, having relationships, travelling, etc. Besides, disability itself is multi-faceted as there are many different types which affect the person differently. Therefore, solutions or improvements should be multi-faceted as well.

To Jean, disability means limitation “*limiting in participation, in accessing whatever the person needs to access, it could be access to buildings access to education access, to having family.*” (Jean, wheelchair-user)

The second theme is that disability does not define them as a person. All of them made very clear what they can do and what their dreams are despite having a disability. One of my participants explained:

“I don't like it to call myself disabled [...] because what I'm doing is not maybe what able-bodied people are doing [...]but I can do whatever I want to do [...]. There are things that I can do which other people are not able to do, and the other way around.” (MJ, wheelchair-user)

Another participant highlighted that PwD are still first and foremost human like anyone else and that disability only describes a (small) part of them.

The last theme is that their surroundings disable them. One of my participants talked about being disabled due to external circumstances and that human rights could solve all problems related to disabilities. She explained that when human rights are implemented perfectly, she would not consider herself disabled anymore: *“not at all because the barriers would have been removed”* (Jean, wheelchair-user).

7.2 What do they identify as the problem?

As explained above, PwD view disability as something multi-faceted. Therefore, the problems (related to education) are as well. Overall, three themes could be identified: inaccessibility of areas, dependency on others, and stigma. These three themes all cover different forms of barriers, respectively: physical, relational and cultural barriers.

As mentioned in the chapter on the experts' perspective, physical barriers were mentioned by both groups, but PwD went into more detail, and therefore it is discussed here. All participants explained that at a certain point in their lives, it was challenging to physically access their education. This was often because the roads were very poor, and it was a long way to school. Both the visually impaired and the wheelchair-users explained that the

distance, combined with the quality of the road made it especially difficult for them to get to school.

“Like when you go to the north [of the country]. People with disabilities are not able to go to school because the villages are very far from the farm. Some people are using a wheelchair, but you cannot push for 10 kilometres as it is too sandy for this person to arrive at school on its own.” (MJ, wheelchair-user)

MJ explained that she could not go to school by herself because of the distance. There are also other accessibility issues. The participants who use a wheelchair explained that often either there are no elevators at schools or they do not work and that they were then dependent on others to reach their classroom.

This brings us to the next theme of being dependent on others. All participants explained that they felt limited in their abilities to follow education because they are dependent on others. For example, they were dependent on their parents to get them to school: *“someone else had to push the wheelchair while my mom was carrying me every day”* (MJ, wheelchair-user). At school, they were also dependent on peers to get to class or even to the lunch hall. None of their caregivers were professionals meaning that they helped them voluntarily next to their occupation. It being voluntary also meant that there were many times that they did not receive help even though they needed it: *“now they have to ask some person to come and help, but what if that person is busy? What then? It is a challenge”* (Muke, visually impaired).

Lastly, the theme of stigma (or cultural barriers) also arose within the group of PwD, similarly to the group of experts. Here, it was discussed as personal experiences they had with being bullied or stared at. Three participants had experiences with being bullied at school.

“There are some [peers] who do not even want to be next to a person with a disability. If you would ask them to help you with the wheelchair, they're even afraid to touch the wheelchair. They think if they touch your wheelchair, they will become disabled. Some people would not pick up my pen

if I dropped my pen. They are either really afraid, or they try to make people feel like they're not people." (MJ, wheelchair-user)

As this quote shows, traditional beliefs of disabilities, such as getting disabled by merely touching a chair, existed among MJ's peers. Others tried to dehumanize her by bullying her. These kinds of experiences make it exceptionally difficult for children with disabilities to enjoy their education.

7.3 What do they identify as the cause of the problem?

Causes of the problems described above were often not mentioned in detail by my participants. The notes I made while doing participant observations indicate that the multi-faceted nature of having a disability makes it difficult to determine where problems originate. Many of the participants were unable to pinpoint a source of most of their problems. However, one theme came up during each interview: lack of support from the government and their ignorance. All participants identified the performance of the government as a reason why their situation is what it currently is. For example, one participant explained that she applied for assistive devices while she attended school:

"I wrote letters to the government, asking for help. [...] When I was going to school, I didn't like the way that I could not do things around school because it is not accessible. I asked for a wheelchair. I asked for accessibility. I never got these things until I finished."
(MJ, wheelchair-user)

In this case, the government was very late with handling her request as she had already finished school before getting a reply. Other participants said that they never got a reply or that there is nothing to apply for.

As a reason for why the government is lacking in their support, participants mentioned the government's ignorance on the topic of disability. Participants said they think that the government cannot put themselves in the shoes of a person with a disability.

"Simple things like I as a person with a disability struggle to get on a public bus and if I go to go talk to someone at the municipality. They would be like: 'but there is a bus it's

already cheap enough compared to taxis. So what are you complaining about?' But unless there's a person with a disability or with knowledge of these things, they remain ignorant."

(Jean, wheelchair-user)

7.4 How do they perceive the policy?

Some of my participants made direct comments on the IEP. Additionally, some made comments on the removal of special needs schools. For this, the theme 'need for special needs schools' was identified. However, most of them made more general comments on how they perceive the performance of the government when it comes to disability issues. Most of my participants did not know about the existence of different disability policies, which is further discussed later.

First, one of my participants was aware of the IEP, while two others made comments on the closing of special needs schools without knowing about the policy. All three of them agreed that special needs schools serve a purpose and that they should not be closed because there is already a shortage of places within these schools. Jean, who knew about the IEP, had the following to say about mainstreaming all education:

"[B]ut then for some cases of disabilities it's not as practical. That's my perspective. I don't think it's practical to have a child that's with Down Syndrome receiving the basic education that usual normal person attends.[...] Marrying mainstream and special education won't work." (Jean, wheelchair-user)

Here, an example is given that it is not always beneficiary for the child with a disability nor its peers to be in the same class. The two other participants raised the point that in order for PwD to be independent and to participate in society, they need a school that teaches them about their disability.

“So this type of school [for visually impaired] is very good and very helpful. Because it teaches a person to be independent. With the cane we are taught how to move, we are taught how to write on the computer.” (Muke, visually impaired)

When talking about the overall performance of the government on tackling issues related to disability, a theme emerged that it is a good thing that disability issues are on the agenda, but likewise to the experts, many improvements need to be made. It came up that many participants were not aware of the IEP or another disability policy. One participant said the following on this: *“I think there is no other service [than the social grand] that the government provides what I can think of”* (Muke, visually impaired). This is telling, as this means that if there are other services, then there is a gap between the government putting it out and a person with a disability receiving it. There seems to be some sort of miscommunication as information about policies meant for this group does not reach them, making any programme already less successful than it could be.

7.5 Which solutions are presented?

Three overall themes emerge regarding solutions from the perception of PwD: remove physical barriers by making things accessible and by providing needed materials and assistive devices; involve PwD in decision-making; facilitate community-building for PwD. Some of the themes are already discussed in the experts' chapter (providing more materials and involvement of PwD in decision-making) and as the interviews with PwD did not bring forth new information they are not further discussed here.

When asked about solutions, all participants first mentioned that buildings should be more accessible. This ties in with the fact that they identified accessibility as a big issue when it comes to following education. It is thus logical that they also mentioned this as an area where significant improvements need to be made.

“Whenever they are trying to develop something or they planning to come up with something, they must always check is this building accessible? Is it accessible for those who need assistance or use a wheelchair? [...] What I realised so far is that whenever they come up with something they don't think of disabled people.” (MJ, wheelchair-user)

As mentioned, the need for more materials was already discussed in the expert chapter. However, PwD added that there is also a need for assistive devices. Having access to a wheelchair or a cane is also of importance when children want to have access to education.

“I would like assistive devices like I already said they are ridiculously expensive and that the government gives wheelchairs and crutches is the basics, but it takes a long time, and it's a long queue to have access to one. For example, I've been waiting for a new chair for three years now.” (Jean, wheelchair-user)

The last big theme that was exclusively mentioned by PwD is the need for a community and the wish that the government would help facilitate community-building. All participants mentioned that for a long time, they thought they were the only ones with that disability and felt very lonely and unsure of themselves. Once they moved to the capital, either short or long term, they realised they were not alone and found strength in having a community of people with similar conditions to them.

“When you come here find 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 or 8 people with around the same condition, you realise, oh I am not alone. So, I still have got a space in life. I can say where somebody can hear[understand] me.” (Induna, visually impaired)

Having a community also means being able to learn from one another on different aspects (in)directly related to their disability and therefore making life easier. One of my participants, who has been part of the disability community in Windhoek for quite some years, explained that having this community solved or prevented problems, which she would have struggled with on her own.

"And my strength actually comes from the community of people with disabilities that are built around myself. I have friends in that community, and I have people that are that have gone through similar or other challenges that are comrades in this fight." (Jean, wheelchair-user)

These quotes show the importance of a community for PwD. My participants wished that the government would include community-building more in their disability policies.

7.6 Summary

In this chapter, the four questions are answered from the perspective of PwD. Besides, an additional question was discussed on the meaning of disability to them. Three themes were discussed: disability as being multi-faceted, disability does not define them, and disability caused by their surroundings. PwD identified three main problems when accessing education: areas being inaccessible, dependency on others, and stigma (similar to the experts). Causes of these problems were more difficult to identify, but overall a theme arose that it was partially due to the lack of support from the government. Many of the participants were unaware of the IEP, but most of them did make statements on the need for special needs schools and the problems that arise when trying to mainstream all education. Lastly, different solutions were identified: areas need to be more accessible, and more assistive devices are needed.

Additionally, all participants felt that having a disability-community was essential to avoid and solve problems faster.

8. Discussion

Here I present my analysis of the findings, which I conducted by applying Yanow's framework of Interpretive Policy Analysis (IPA) to the data. I follow the steps which Yanow outlines: 1) identify interpretive communities, 2) analyse the language used in documents and interviews to identify how they frame specific issues surrounding the policy, and 3) analyse the different frames to see where frame conflict occurs. First, I start with a discussion on interpretive communities: are all the groups I identified interpretive communities according to Yanow? Second, I explore how the different groups interpret and frame, 'the problem', 'the policy' and 'the solution', how these differ, and where conflict arises.

8.1 Interpretive communities:

The first step in Yanow's theory is to identify interpretive communities. As discussed in the chapter on theory, interpretive communities are formed through a process of interaction, which results in members using similar cognitive mechanisms. By sharing, cultural, linguistic and cognitive practices, interpretive communities are made sharing speech, though, practice and their meanings. As I mentioned, Yanow (2000) implies that some form of interaction is required, even if it is via a shared newspaper, or following similar programmes.

Based on this premise, the government and the experts each form their own interpretive communities. First, the government is a group of people working together, interacting frequently, and working towards the same goal. Of course, as they have created the policy, they are also a policy-relevant group. They have interaction, shared profession, shared goals, and as a result, they share speech and meanings. Therefore, they form an interpretive community. The same can be said about the group of experts. During my time in Namibia, I noticed that many of the experts know each other. Even people I met in entirely different circumstances knew people I had previously talked to. Besides, in their profession, they have

similar relationships to the Inclusive Education Policy (IEP) or other disability policies, which differs from the relationship people with disabilities (PwD) have to these. Experts also share interaction, thought, goals, and thus speech and meanings. This was also very clear from the interviews, as the experts, I spoke with used similar metaphors, had similar ways of expressing ideas, and perceived topics in similar ways.

However, the same cannot be said about the PwD. They all came from more remote villages where it seemed that they were the only one with a disability. This becomes clear in their stories from home where they mention feeling lonely and hidden away, and that others are still hidden away. My participants had moved from a rural area to the capital and only got [some initial] contact with PwD there. Two out of the four participants only moved to the capital to restart their education a month before I interviewed them. Besides, only one of my participants, who lived in the capital the longest (almost a decade), stated that they are actively involved in the disability community. Taking this into account, combined with the fact that most of Namibia is rural, we can see the trend that most PwD grow up without access to the disability community. As disability is multi-faceted with great diversity, we can assume that they also do not share a common newspaper, programme, religion, etc. So, at face value, according to Yanow (2000), they would not form an interpretive community, as they had no way of interacting whatsoever, no way of reinforcing each other's linguistic, cognitive and cultural practices.

However, while analysing their speech and language used in the interviews, I did encounter similar perspectives on various matters such as their disability, the government, and the barriers they encounter. This implies that even though they do not share anything that Yanow identifies as essential for an interpretive community, nor do they have many interactions, they are such a community because they do have similar perceptions on matters and make meaning in similar ways. Naturally, I do not suggest that Yanow consciously

excluded 'disability' of being a common denominator in order to be an interpretive community, or that she believes that shared experiences cannot lead to "*sharing thought, speech, practice, and their meanings*" (Yanow, 2000, p. 10). Instead, I want to argue that this is an example of 'disability' being overlooked in academia and quite possibly also in policy-making.

Yanow presents a list of characteristics that can lead to a shared perception of the policy, including race, religion, gender, sexuality, profession, hobby. This list does not include disability but also does not explicitly exclude it. Disability would naturally fit in this list, as it has a profound effect on how a person experiences the world around them. Especially when there are certain cultural beliefs (of others) that group them together or lead them to have similar experiences; in the context of Namibia, having a disability (no matter what kind) results in facing the barriers that I discussed earlier (and many more). Facing these barriers every single day heavily influences their way of seeing the world, even if they have not been able to discuss this with other PwD. This shaped their perception in similar ways to others with a disability, which results in them saying similar things. When they do enter a community, these perspectives become more amplified. Therefore, I add to Yanow's theory and argue that PwD in the context of Namibia and its disability policies are an interpretive community. However, more research needs to be done to gain more insights on these matters, such as research on how disability can be a common denominator for an interpretive community outside of the Namibian context.

8.2 How do the interpretive communities frame problem, policy & solution

Now onto step two and three of Yanow's framework: identifying frames and frame-conflict. Here I show my analysis of the different interpretations of each group on the topics: the identified problems, the policy, and the solution. I point out where frame conflicts occur and the consequences these have.

8.2.1 The problem

All interpretive communities agree that the problem is that many children with disabilities do not go to school. They agree that traditional beliefs can be a cause of this. However, there are multiple explanations as to why this is and what should be done about it. Some communities highlight other problems as well: the government mentions that segregation of education, and indirectly society, is a concern and therefore with their policy they actively try to mainstream all education into inclusive education because this will combat traditional beliefs. However, experts and PwD do not see special needs schools as a problem. Yes, they mention that PwD should be included in society, but that special needs schools are not the cause of their exclusion. Special needs schools exist to offer education specifically adapted to the needs of specific disabilities. The government does mention that they will keep certain schools as "resource schools", but PwD already state that there are not enough special needs schools. The experts and the PwD do not perceive special needs schools as the cause of segregation in society, while the government does perceive it that way. Here is the first conflict of frames:

The government frames special needs schools as: the cause of segregation in education, which leads to segregation in society. In order to have an inclusive society, education needs to be inclusive as well.

The experts and the PwD frame special needs schools as: essential providers of resources and knowledge which PwD need to participate equally in society.

While one group views it as a cause of exclusion from society, the other groups view it as a solution. Being able to learn unique skills needed by PwD allows this group to be independent and to participate in society, which enables them to be included more in society.

This difference can be explained through IPA by looking at the background of each group. The ministry of education (the government) consists mostly of able-bodied people, who, given Namibian society, often do not have much contact with PwD. Considering the

goal of an inclusive society and wanting to adhere to international standards of inclusive schools, and knowing the stigma of having a disability, the government wants to normalise disability. One way of doing this is to increase people's experiences and interactions with PwD through establishing inclusive education. However, this perception completely disregards other needs of PwD and the reason why special needs schools exist. These other needs are not forgotten by the experts and PwD, who point out that education, any education, first needs to be made accessible.

This brings us to the main component of the problem as perceived by experts and PwD; they consider inaccessibility of education, either in the physical sense or in the sense of the inability to gain knowledge, to be the biggest reason for children not going to school. The expert group mostly focussed on lacking materials and the lack of skilled teachers for children to actually follow education. PwD focus on physical access and assistive devices in addition to the missing materials and teachers. While the government mentions these as well, they do not discuss these any further apart from saying that these barriers exist. What they do mention is that teachers should get more training, but it is not disclosed what kind. Additionally, each school should have support staff for the teachers, but it is mentioned explicitly that they should not take any responsibility away from the teacher. I argue, therefore, that the government perceives these barriers as described by the experts and PwD as less important, or less pressing. This creates the second conflict of frames because two groups express that mainstream education is far from accessible to children with disabilities, while the last group neglects the issue.

The government frames inaccessibility of education as: barriers that exist (but in their policy fail to adequately address it in a practical manner and overall neglects the issue)

The experts frame inaccessibility of education as: a shortage of accessible materials and trained teachers.

The PwD frame inaccessibility of education as: physical inaccessible and a shortage of assistive devices, while agreeing with the experts on the shortage of materials and trained teachers.

As you can see, the frames of the PwD and experts complement each other, while there is a conflict between these two frames and that of the government. This can be explained by the same reason discussed above, namely that the government consists of able-bodied people with close to no interaction with PwD. However, I argue that this also shows the lack of involvement of PwD in the drafting of this policy, something that will come back later.

8.2.2 The policy

The policy is regarded very differently by the different interpretive communities. The government perceives the fact that there is a policy, as a development towards an inclusive society, a big step to solve many of the problems the education sector encounters, and the solution against de-enrolment of education. Whereas the experts view it as a first step, a start of increasing accessibility for children with disabilities to enjoy education. However, they stress that much more needs to be done. This brings us to the next frame conflict:

The government frames the policy as: a major step towards an inclusive society and the leading solution to the de-enrolment in secondary education.

The experts frame the policy as: good on paper but missing the point in practice. Many issues regarding the inaccessibility of education for children with disabilities are not addressed.

PwD frame the policy as: minimal action, a lot of important issues are left unaddressed, such as physical accessibility, provision of materials, access to assistive devices, the active building of a community, and availability of more resources in general.

While PwD agree with the experts, they do not frame the policy in the same way. PwD have mixed experiences and thus, mixed perceptions of the IEP. It may be that they do not

specifically have knowledge about the policy. However, since they perceive that the government makes policies, their framing of the government could be extended to their framing of policy.

Three of my participants did not know about this specific policy at all, which is very telling. Because if a policy is directed towards (part of) a community, yet, is unknown within this community, then there is something at play. Either the government fails to inform the community adequately, or the ways of communicating lack accessibility (e.g. sign language), or the community is so loose-knit that news does not spread easily amongst its members. From my research, I argue that all three are at play, but to discover to which extent and how to find a solution, more research is needed on this topic. However, clearly, there is a gap between the information published by the government and the information that the recipients receive, which is especially telling as the government added 'raising awareness' to their outcomes on the implementation of this policy.

When placing these different frames next to each other, multiple contradictions can be identified, and it becomes clear that there is a conflict between the frames. The perception of the success of the policy is entirely different for each group, especially caused by their different perceptions of the role of the government. The government wants to show the way forward with this policy while encouraging schools and teachers to step up and take responsibility for the implementation. Contrarily, experts and PwD urge the government to take a more active role, to take responsibility, or at least allocate proper funds to carry out the policy and to ensure proper materials for everyone to enjoy education. This leads back to how the role of the government is framed:

The government frames its role as: providing recommendations to schools, teachers and other relevant actors, giving advice, setting out guidelines, and raising awareness.

The experts frame the role of the government as: being financially responsible for proper training and materials, putting incentives in place so that other actors actually implement the policy, and being responsible for the implementation of the policy.

The PwD frame the role of the government as: actively removing barriers for PwD, providing necessary assistive devices, allocating more funds to disability issues, and raising awareness.

The biggest conflict arises from the different perspectives on who is responsible for the implementation of the policy. The government puts this responsibility onto schools, teachers, and other relevant actors, while PwD and experts place the responsibility onto the government. Special attention needs to be given to the allocation of funds. Experts and PwD all stated that they perceive that there are no adequate funds allocated to this policy and disability issues in general. There seems to be, at least, a gap between the expectation of these groups and what the government has allocated for funds. However, as I noted in the findings chapters on the government, multiple activities in the implementation plan do not have any funds allocated to them, which raises the question: who is going to pay for it? Why did the government draft an implementation plan they do not financially support? The obvious answer could be: because they do not have the funds to do so, but then why bother creating this policy in the first place? It might be because of the international support such policies have. UNICEF stated that they strongly advocated for inclusive education in Namibia. This leaves the door open to an interpretation that disability rights are mainly rhetoric, and aimed to please international actors like UNICEF because they do not have sufficient funds to make it work properly. The idea that the policy could be mainly rhetoric is also supported by the fact that the government sees the policy as a 'shift in thinking' instead of more practical changes and the lack of incentives to motivate relevant actors to implement the policy. Further research is needed to get a full picture on the financial side of this policy, which creates this

gap between expectations and reality, and how funds could be used more effectively. Further research is also needed on the role of international actors such as UNICEF in policy-making.

8.2.3 The solution

So far, with the help of IPA, I have identified conflicting frames of the problem and the performance of the government. These also affect the perception the different groups have of a solution. Some direct effects are quite obvious; if the experts perceive missing materials as part of the problem, they will believe that providing these materials are part of the solution; similarly to the government perceiving the policy as the solution. Here, I focus more on the less obvious possible solutions presented by the groups.

Three main solutions were proposed: 1) more (inter)national cooperation and research (proposed by the experts); 2) more inclusion of PwD in decision-making (proposed by both the experts and PwD); 3) more focus on community-building (proposed by PwD). As mentioned in the part above, there is already some form of cooperation with UNICEF. However, the experts mostly meant it in a way of learning from one another and not having to reinvent the wheel. Based on the government's relation with UNICEF and the mention of a few other international actors (e.g. the EU), I argue that the government would not be opposed to this idea.

This is different for the second proposed solution: including PwD in decision-making. Both the experts and PwD support this proposal. It would solve multiple problems and causes they identified, especially as the ignorance of the government is mentioned as a cause of certain barriers. Including PwD in decision-making of issues related to disability would positively impact such policies and their effectiveness. PwD stated that they want more representation and involvement in policy-making. However, judging the fact that involving actual PwD in this process was never mentioned in the document, the government seems to

overlook this option entirely, resulting in policies not reaching and supporting their target audience.

Besides, PwD stressed the importance of having a community with others who have similar experiences. Community-building is not addressed at all in the IEP, while all four of my participants stated in what way they (would) benefit from having a disability-community: being more independent, learning from one another, strength in numbers, etc. These two solutions are not discussed in the policy document, while they could provide effective solutions to many of the barriers experienced by PwD. Future research could focus on the reasons why the government seems to overlook these solutions proposed by PwD.

9. Conclusion

In this thesis, I have looked at how different interpretive communities frame the Inclusive Education Policy (IEP) in Namibia in order to answer my research questions, as stated in the introduction. Here, I present my answers and make recommendations for future research and policy-making.

The first sub-question focuses on identifying different interpretive communities. From the document analysis and the seven semi-structured interviews, three different interpretive communities could be identified: the government (creators of the policy), experts (practitioners or implementers of the policy) and people with disabilities (PwD) (recipients of the policy). These three groups differ due to their distinct relation to the policy, which could be identified through their speech and meaning-making. However, it must be noted that experts and PwD often agreed or had complementary frames. This is (partially) because all experts that were interviewed also had a disability themselves and therefore have similar personal experiences. They are separate interpretive communities, though, because of their distinct relation to the policy (practitioners vs recipients) and based on their knowledge of the policy (experts being very knowledgeable, and PwD having little knowledge).

The second sub-question covers how these interpretive communities frame the problem, the policy and the solutions. As discussed in the findings and discussion chapters, distinct frames could be identified. The government framed the problem as the de-enrolment of secondary education, and the segregation of education and different cultural barriers and special needs schools were identified as the cause. They presented the policy as internationally supported, a foundation of an inclusive society, a shift in thinking, and as the way forward. Responsibility to implement this policy is placed on other policy-relevant actors and thus heavily relies on stakeholders. The policy also does not seem to be adequately

financially supported. The main solution presented in the document is the disbanding of special needs schools and to only transform a handful into Resource Schools. In contrast, the experts and people with disabilities frame problem as the inaccessibility of schools, either because of physical or cultural barriers or due to schools being unequipped. People with disabilities focused on physical barriers, while experts mostly mentioned cultural barriers. Similarly, on the matter of schools being unequipped, people with disabilities focused on the lack of materials and assistive devices. In contrast, experts focused on teachers not being knowledgeable on disability issues and sign language/braille. Additionally, a heavy focus was placed by both groups on the lack of funds which would be needed to solve these problems. The policy was framed differently by the experts and PwD groups. Experts view the policy as taking steps in the right direction, lacking funding, and lacking incentives. PwD view it as follows: they perceive a lack of support from the government; they view special needs schools as highly important, and many were unaware of the existence of this specific policy. Lastly, the solutions identified by PwD include: involving PwD in decision-making, making assistive devices more available, making areas more accessible and stimulating community-building. While experts also stated the first, they further highlighted the need of (inter)national cooperation to learn from others, in addition to more funding and incentives.

For the last sub-question, this research concludes that there are multiple frame conflicts. First, on the matter of special needs schools, the government frames them as a cause of segregation in education and therefore in society. While experts and PwD frame them as essential providers of resources and knowledge which help PwD to become more independent and participate in society. These frames differ drastically on what is viewed as the main problem and therefore already initially create a big divide between the two groups. The implications of this divide can be noticed in the views on solutions as well. Another frame conflict can be identified within the frames on the problem. Namely, the government neglects

inaccessibility of education as a problem, while PwD and experts identify it as the main problem. The exact frames of the experts and PwD do complement each other but are in direct conflict with the neglecting frame of the government. Logically, as the groups are in conflict on what precisely the problem is, they also have conflicting views on the policy and the solutions. Naturally, the government is positive about its policy and sees it as a major step towards an inclusive society. The other two groups frame it as a good start, but that it does not address the major issues they experience and perceive when it comes to education for children with disabilities. As the groups do not agree on what the problem is and what causes it, they do not agree on the solutions either. However, different solutions could complement one another. They only lead to conflict when another group opposes them (e.g. the abolishment of special needs schools). Finally, the frame conflict on the role of the government can be seen as the root cause of other frame conflicts. The government frames itself as merely an advisor providing guidelines and recommendations while others should implement these. The other two groups placed the responsibility on the government in varying degrees. The divide between these different frames is so wide that any resolution is difficult to establish as long as it exists. This is also the case with the frame conflict on what exactly the problem is and what the policy should cover. Without the views on these major issues lining up, there is no chance of successfully implementing any policy on the issue of education for children with disabilities, and quite possibly on any disability issue.

In conclusion, the answer to the main research questions is that by following Yanow's steps of interpretive policy analysis (IPA), multiple frames are identified, and frame conflicts are uncovered. These frame conflicts showcase different bottlenecks that can occur during (disability) policy-making.

Additionally, there are multiple recommendations for future (academic) research. First on Yanow's framework, in the discussion, I stated that in Yanow's theory (indirect) interaction is

highlighted as the main component of creating an interpretive community. This would mean that PwD in the context of Namibia would not be considered such a community, as most of them live a sheltered life away from others. I argued that although there is no interaction, the fact that they have common experiences (due to the cultural beliefs in Namibia) influences them in such similar ways that the effect is comparable to communities who interact with one another. This is because I recognised similar speech, meanings and mannerisms in the group of PwD. I discussed that this is an example of academia overlooking disability and disability issues, which could be a shortcoming of Yanow's framework. However, more research needs to be done on how shared experiences can create an interpretive community. Besides, more research needs to be done on PwD specifically as an interpretive community as I hypothesise that this is highly dependent on cultural context. For example, in the culture of the Netherlands, a distinction is made between people with a physical disability and people with an intellectual disability which probably has effects on how people experience their disability, while in Namibia such a distinction does not seem to exist. In order to make concluding arguments on this, more research needs to be executed.

Furthermore, on policy-making, future research is needed on the positive and negative effects that international actors have on policy formation. If it is indeed the case that their involvement mostly leads to rhetoric policies to please them, the role of international actors in such policy-making might (need to) change. Additionally, in the context of Namibia, more research needs to be done on possible frame conflicts on different solutions as this research has not been able to uncover a clear frame from the government on these. Besides, further research is needed to discover the cause of the gap between what information the creators send out and what the recipients of the policy receive.

Lastly, based on this thesis, I would recommend policy-makers to involve representatives of all policy-relevant groups in the process of creating a policy. At the very least at the

beginning stages to identify possible frame conflicts on what the actual problem is, what the expectations are and their view on certain solutions. This way, other frame conflicts are likely to be avoided and gives the policy a higher chance of effectively being implemented.

All in all, this thesis has shown how IPA is useful to uncover frame conflicts in policy issues and gives recommendations to future research and policy-making. Additionally, this thesis is helpful to Namibia where it can be used to re-evaluate disability policies to fit the needs of the recipients better and to similar countries struggling with the multi-faceted nature of the barriers PwD experience.

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Appendix I: Topic list

Disability:

- What is your perception of (the term) 'disability'?
- How do you perceive your own disability?
- How would you describe others perceive your disability?

Human rights:

- What do you know of human rights?
- What is your opinion on human rights?
- How do you perceive human rights?
- If you could change something about human rights, what would you change?

Policy:

- What is your opinion on the government?
- How do you think the government does on disability matters?
- What is your perception of policies for people with disabilities?
- How do you perceive the government when thinking of human rights?

Human rights violations:

- How have your rights been violated?
- What did you do when your rights were violated?
- What would you do now if it would happen again?

Barriers:

- What kind of barriers do you experience when participating in society?
- How do you perceive stigma?

Appendix II: Plagiarism Declaration

I hereby declare:

- that the content of this submission is entirely my own work, except for quotations from published and unpublished sources. These are clearly indicated and acknowledged as such, with a reference to their sources provided in the thesis text, and a full reference provided in the bibliography;
- that the sources of all paraphrased texts, pictures, maps, or other illustrations not resulting from my own experimentation, observation, or data collection have been correctly referenced in the thesis, and in the bibliography;
- that this Master of Arts thesis in Conflict Studies & Human Rights does not contain material from unreferenced external sources (including the work of other students, academic personnel, or professional agencies);
- that this thesis, in whole or in part, has never been submitted elsewhere for academic credit;
- that I have read and understood Utrecht University's definition of plagiarism, as stated on the University's information website on "Fraud and Plagiarism":

"Plagiarism is the appropriation of another author's works, thoughts, or ideas and the representation of such as one's own work." (Emphasis added.)¹

Similarly, the University of Cambridge defines "plagiarism" as "... submitting as one's own work, irrespective of intent to deceive, that which derives in part or in its entirety from the work of others without due acknowledgement. It is both poor scholarship and a breach of academic integrity." (Emphasis added.)²

- that I am aware of the sanction applied by the Examination Committee when instances of plagiarism have been detected;
- that I am aware that every effort will be made to detect plagiarism in my thesis, including the standard use of plagiarism detection software such as Turnitin.

Name and Surname of Student:
Inge Volleberg

Title of MA thesis in Conflict Studies & Human Rights:
Between Policy and Reality: An interpretive policy analysis of the Inclusive Education
Policy of Namibia

Signature 	Date of Submission 30-07-2020
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¹ <https://students.uu.nl/en/practical-information/policies-and-procedures/fraud-and-plagiarism>

² <http://www.plagiarism.admin.cam.ac.uk/what-plagiarism/universitys-definition-plagiarism>