

# Enhancing Employability:

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A career literature lens on talent and diversity management

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## **Foreword**

### **Thank You – Danki – Gracias - Dankjewel**

Looking back at this thesis writing process, there are some many things to be grateful for.

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## **Abstract**

**Relevance:** Traditional organisational career is no longer relevant in the public sector due to several development. Scholars argue for a shift to employability-based careers, being employable is essential in the current labour market, the investment in employee's development is no longer considered a retention initiatives and ethical background might affects career-related attitudes and behaviours.

**Research Objective:** The investigation aims to explore how organizational support for development effects careers and employability of Western and non-Western individuals as well as how it supports employability-based careers in the public sector.

**Methods:** The traineeship of the Municipality of The Hague is operationalised as the organisational support for development in this study. Therefore, interviews were conducted with the former Western and non-Western participants of this programme to explore the effects of the development programme on their careers and employability.

**Findings:** There is a lot of similarities between Western and non-Western individuals concerning organisational support for development, careers and employability. However, the two groups differ on organisational loyalty. In addition, to some extent, career-related attitudes, behaviours and experiences associated employability-based careers in the public sector.

**Conclusion/Discussion:** Careers literature on employability-based careers can learn from talent management literature about psychological contracts and organisational loyalty from diversity management literature. On the other hand, talent management and diversity management literature can get some insights from careers literature, which states that careers are based on flexibility, adaptability, mobility and self-management.

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## 1. Introduction

Much has been written about the decline of the traditional organisational career and the rise of more contemporary formats (Hall, 1996; Briscoe et al., 2006; Sullivan & Arthur, 2006; Clarke, 2013). The decrease started with Hall's (1996) declaration, 'The career is dead, long live the career.' This statement can be confusing, but what he means is that the traditional organisational career characterised by job security, long-term tenure, organisational loyalty and a bounded employment relationship has been replaced with new career formats (Hall, 1996; Baruch, 2004; Clarke, 2013). These new career formats are ones in which the individual continuously learns and develops new skills to be flexible and adaptable as internal and external environments change (Hall, 1996; Hillage & Pollard, 1998; Capelli, 1999). Lack of certainty within an organisation and its environment means that individuals must possess the right competencies to gain sustainable employment in order to move across the internal and external labour market (Capelli, 1999; Hillage & Pollard, 1998).

One of these new concepts is the 'new organisational career' (Clarke, 2013). In this research, this new format is referred to as *employability-based careers*. Due to scientific (Hall, 1996; Baruch, 2004; Clarke, 2013), political (Massey, 2018) and demographic developments (Du Plessis et al., 2015; Cassel, 2017), employability-based careers acknowledge that organisations may no longer be able to offer lifetime employment. Simultaneously, organisations are in need of employees and therefore must change the nature of their relationship with them (Clarke, 2013). As a result, employees must be able to move across the internal and external market when necessary and thus be employable. Therefore, sustainable employability is essential to both organisations and individuals (De Cuyper & de Witte, 2011; Veld et al., 2015).

Within the public sector, similar to traditional organisational careers, the relationship between employee and employer has been categorised in terms of job security, income, loyalty and commitment (Conway et al., 2014). This relationship has resulted in lifetime careers within one organisation (Boselie & Thunnissen, 2017). However, given the change to a less structured and more flexible and adaptable public sector workforce (Alonso et al., 2015; Boselie & Thunnissen, 2017), it is questionable whether the traditional organisational career is still relevant in this sector. In addition, younger generations have work-related values other than organisational loyalty and commitment (Festing & Schäfer, 2014). Therefore, organisations must adjust the nature of their talent management (TM) policies to attract the best talent among Generation Y and millennial employees (Du Plessis et al., 2015; Cassel, 2017).

However, putting employability-based careers alongside talent management (TM) literature, some conflicting assumptions can be identified (Clarke, 2013; De Vos & Dries, 2013). From a TM perspective, those who organisations identify as having potential and those whose development organisations formally invest in are most often found to have traditional organisational careers, both in terms of attitude and behaviour (De Vos & Dries, 2013; De Boeck et al., 2018). However, the employability-based career stresses a shift to a new configuration of career management without the

limitations of organisational boundaries (Clarke, 2013). The employability-based career encourages short-term transactional relationships based on career adaptability, flexibility, development and investment rather than retention and succession planning. Thus, the emergence of employability-based careers provides an interesting perspective for TM literature, given that it is a counterintuitive approach to the relationship between the employee and the employer.

Therefore, according to the employability-based career, formally investing in employees through the provision of organisational support for development is considered an employability-building initiative rather than a retention practice. The provision of development programmes is a useful HR strategy in the public sector for recruiting and developing recent graduates (Poocharoen & Lee, 2013). These programmes are designed to attract talented graduates who have the potential to meet current organisational needs. For starters, the attractiveness to apply to such a programme lies in the promise of development activities at the beginning of one's career (Poocharoen & Lee, 2013).

In addition, diversity management literature suggests a traditional organisational career in terms of organisational commitment (Ashikali & Groeneveld, 2015) and less turnover intention (Çelik et al., 2016) for groups targeted through diversity policies. Therefore, similar to the TM literature, the provision of organisational support for development through diversity management is important to retain minority individuals for the long term (Çelik & Çelik, 2017). Yet, these assumptions concerning the nature of organisational support for development are in conflict with those of employability-based employment contracts.

### **1.1 Research Objective, Central Question and Sub-questions**

Therefore, comparing the effects of organisational support for development on the careers and employability of Western and non-Western individuals provides an interesting perspective to both the diversity management and TM literature regarding the nature of organisational support for development. In addition, with respect to scientific, economic and demographic developments, it is not clear whether individuals' career paths shifted from traditional organisational careers to employability-based careers after being granted a development opportunity in the public sector. Therefore, this study aims to explore how organisational support for development affects the employability and career-related attitudes and behaviours of different individuals in the public sector.

In this respect, the traineeship of the Municipality of The Hague is operationalised as the organisational support for development in this study. Therefore, this research was conducted at this organisation by exploring the effects of their development programme on the careers and the employability of participants who have finished the programme. Furthermore, given their diversity policy, this investigation also explores the differences and similarities between Western and non-Western participants in regard to the effects of this programme. Moreover, in this study, the unit of analysis lies at the individual level because it focuses on former participants' perspectives, attitudes and

behaviours before, during and after the development programme. The reason for this is that careers and employability are based on individual perspectives, attitudes and behaviours (Hall, 2002; Vanhercke et al., 2014). Thus, the research question for this master's thesis is:

*How does the provision of organisational support for development affect the careers and employability of Western and non-Western individuals? And, is it perceived to support employability-based careers within the public sector?*

To answer this research question, several sub-questions have been formulated:

Theoretical sub-questions:

1. What are careers? What is the difference between traditional organisational careers and employability-based careers?
2. What is employability? Why is enhancing employability essential to both the individual and organisation in the context of employability-based careers?
3. What is organisational support for development? How does it affect careers and employability?
4. What are the conflicting assumptions between employability-based careers and TM literature?
5. What are the contradictory assumptions between employability-based careers and the diversity management literature?

Empirical sub-questions:

6. How does the provision of organisational support for development affect the careers of individuals in the public sector?
7. How does the provision of organisational support for development affect the employability of individuals in the public sector?
8. To what extent does organisational support for development support employability-based careers in the public sector?
9. What are the differences and similarities between Western and non-Western individuals in regard to how the provision of organisational support for development affects their careers and employability in the public sector?

## **1.2 Scientific Relevance**

This investigation makes four scientific contributions and is therefore scientifically relevant. First, by conducting a study concerning employability-based careers in the public sector rather than the private sector, this paper acknowledges the changing nature of public organisations. Since 1980, public organisations have undergone significant reforms due to new public management (NPM) (Rones, 2017; Massey, 2018). These reforms, in terms of structural changes and strategic planning, have had a significant impact on public sector careers (Alonso et al., 2015; Rones, 2017; Schmidt & Groeneveld,



2017; Massey, 2018). According to several authors, these changes had an effect on the relationship between the employee and organisation (Alonso et al., 2015; Boselie & Thunnissen, 2017). In that respect, the public sector might also be confronted with the shift from traditional organisational careers to employability-based careers. Therefore, by examining the careers of former programme participants, this study can offer insights into the shift in career models within the public sector.

Second, much has been written about the importance of individual employability. However, enhancing employability is as beneficial for the organisation as it is for the individual (De Cuyper & De Witte, 2011; Guilbert et al., 2016). The literature on employability used to reason that the individual is primarily responsible for building employability. However, scholars reason that employability should be a shared responsibility between the employer and employee (Clarke & Patrickson, 2008; Wittekind et al., 2010; Veld et al., 2015). Nevertheless, limited research has been done on the role organisations play in employability enhancement and how individuals experience the combined effects of individual and organisational efforts to build employability (De Vos et al., 2011; Veld et al., 2015). Therefore, by exploring how the traineeship programme of the Municipality of The Hague assists in the enhancement of employability, this research adds to and expands the employability literature.

Third, as mentioned in the section above, putting employability-based careers alongside TM literature results in conflicting assumptions (De Vos & Dries, 2013; Clarke, 2013). According to TM, organisation's main focus is to systematically attract, develop and retain talented individuals for the long term (De Boeck et al., 2018). However, employability-based careers attach less importance to retention, succession and the paternalistic employment relationship. Instead, it concentrates on career self-management and on careers not being limited to organisational boundaries (De Vos & Dries, 2013; Clarke, 2013). Given this conflicting assumption, this research provides an interesting perspective on the employee-organisation relationship.

Fourth, comparable to TM literature, the central assumptions of diversity management contradict those of employability-based careers. Diversity management is based on organisations' systematic commitment to recruit and retain employees with diverse backgrounds (Çelik & Çelik, 2017), which challenges Clarke's (2013) arguments regarding employability-based careers and retention initiatives. Thus, this research provides an interesting perspective for diversity management literature.

### **1.3 Societal Relevance**

This study is socially relevant due to the current societal and demographic developments in the labour market (Du Plessis et al., 2015; Cassel, 2017) and the changes to the relationship between the employee and employer (Clarke, 2013). These developments are increasing the challenges in the labour market. Organisations are confronted with challenges in finding younger, employable individuals (Du Plessis et al., 2015). In addition, the relationship between the employee and employer is becoming

weaker in the public sector (Boselie & Thunnissen, 2017). Employees' changing values weaken this bond as well (Baruch, 2006; Festing & Schäfer, 2014). Employees are adopting new attitudes and see organisations more as resources for development than places where they can form their career paths (Festing & Schäfer, 2014). Due to these developments, from an individual perspective, young professionals seek organisations that provide development opportunities that enhance their opportunities in the labour market. Furthermore, organisations are faced with increasing competition for new talent and are subject to shortages of young, talented employees (Cassel, 2017). This social phenomenon is referred to as the 'war for talent' (Chambers et al., 1998). Thus, organisations must find innovative solutions to attract young talent among Generation Y and millennial employees (Du Plessis et al., 2015; Cassel, 2017); otherwise, they are confronted by significant challenges. Therefore, the traineeship of the Municipality of The Hague, characterised by its competitive selection processes, is a perfect example of an innovative HR practice designed to attract recent graduates that meet both the organisational and individual needs of this changing environment.

#### **1.4 Practical Relevance**

This investigation is practically relevant because it provides public organisations—in this case, the Municipality of The Hague—with insights on the added value of participating in their development programme. In other words, how does the programme influence the career paths and employment possibilities of its former participants? In addition, the thesis also provides the organisation with information on how former participants perceived the traineeship. As a result, the municipal organisation can acquire information about the intended, actual and perceived HR practice, as described by Wright and Nishii (2013), and determine whether the objective of their HR policy was achieved. With the findings of this research, the Municipality of The Hague can improve their HR policies and traineeship programme in the future and enhance their employer branding. In addition, the publicly funded nature of this municipality, along with its responsibility for the well-being of society, highlights the importance of gaining insights into their investment. Therefore, by investigating the effect of a municipal organisation's development programme on the careers and employability of its participants, the Municipality of The Hague can better understand the return on their investment.

#### **1.5 Readers' Guide**

The explanation of how the provision of organisational support for development affects the careers and employability of Western and non-Western individuals as well as how it supports employability-based careers in the public sector is approached as follows. In the second chapter, the context in which the research took place is described. This study was conducted at the Municipality of The Hague. The third chapter presents the theoretical background, in which the concept and theoretical assumptions relevant to this investigation are described. In addition, the expectations for this research

are presented in this chapter. The fourth chapter tackles the methodological choices for this study. The fifth chapter presents the results of the data analysis, which are discussed using various subjects and are substantiated with anonymous quotes from the respondent interviews. The sixth chapter concludes this investigation and answers both the sub-questions and the central research question using the study's results. This chapter also determines whether the expectations formulated in the theoretical background have been met. In the final chapter, the study is concluded with a discussion paying particular attention to the scientific insights and limitations of this investigation along with future research and practical recommendations.

## 2. Context

This chapter describes the research context. In section 2.1, the Municipality of The Hague as an organisation and employer is described. Section 2.2 explains the traineeship (organisational support for development) programme of this local organisation.

### 2.1 The Municipality of The Hague

The Municipality of The Hague is the municipal organisation in the international city of peace and justice. This city is one of the most diverse in the Netherlands (CBS, 2017). Its population consists of 52.7% of individuals with migration backgrounds along with 50.5% of them being female. This local organisation is divided into nine departments that brings together various services, fund different public values and are responsible for the well-being of 500,000 citizens from over 180 different nations (Gemeente Den Haag, 2018j). Due to the public nature of this organisation, these departments are subject to the municipal executive (*het college van burgemeester en wethouders*), who is accountable to the municipal council (*gemeenteraad*), which is chosen by the citizens of The Hague (Gemeente Den Haag, 2018g; 2018h). To execute its services, the municipality employs a total of 7,557 individuals, divided into 51% women and 49% men, with average age of 47.2 years (Gemeente Den Haag, 2017c).

As a public employer in a multicultural city, the Municipality of The Hague has various reasons to have diverse human capital (Gemeente Den Haag, 2018c). First, according to the municipality (Gemeente Den Haag, 2018c), public service must represent all aspects of the community it represents. In other words, the citizens of The Hague must be able to see themselves in this local governmental organisation. Thus, the workforce of the municipally must equally represent the population to reduce the gap between the citizenry and the organisation. Second, according to the local governmental body, it is a public responsibility to not exclude specific groups from public activities; therefore, the organisation implements a diversity management policy to include everyone in its personnel (Gemeente Den Haag, 2018c). Third, teams with various abilities, personalities, insights and backgrounds can look at problems from different perspectives (Gemeente Den Haag, 2018c). As a result, diverse human capital can lead to great ideas and solutions. Therefore, the Municipality of The Hague wants to grow and become an inclusive organisation where people feel at home, regardless of age, cultural background, gender, sexuality or belief (Gemeente Den Haag, 2018c).

In addition, being a public organisation confronted by different external factors, such as demographic developments and globalisation (having 160 international organisations established in the city), the organisation admits the importance of being flexible, adaptable and efficient and therefore acknowledges the importance of having a sustainable, employable workforce (Gemeente Den Haag, 2018e; 2018f).

As a result, the municipality actively encourages its employees to think about their (future) career-related experiences and activities. Employees consequently can sign up for different career

development activities, such as mobility coaching sessions or competency development activities. As a result, the development of various competencies increases the employees' chances of future employment both within and outside the organisation (Gemeente Den Haag, 2018a). Therefore, when necessary, the organisation can deploy its employees to address current and future organisational needs (Gemeente Den Haag, 2018d). Thus, the municipality acknowledges the importance of investing in employability. In addition, the organisation recognises that it cannot provide its employees with long-term employment contracts; therefore, its employees must have the right attributes to find a job in the external market (Gemeente Den Haag, 2018b).

## **2.2 Traineeship Programme in The Hague**

This organisation supports aspects of both traditional organisational careers and employability-based careers. Some employees experience a relatively high level of job security, guaranteed career paths, benefits and facilities (Gemeente Den Haag, 2017a). However, the traineeship does not guarantee employment after finishing the programme (Gemeente Den Haag, 2017d). Yet, participants are offered a remarkable number of development activities throughout the two-year programme, which incorporates activities to increase specific and generic skills. In addition, the organisation also attracts younger employees who do not consider the Municipality of The Hague as their future employer (Gemeente Den Haag, 2017c). These young individuals consider the substantial investment the municipality makes in their development as an incentive to apply for a trainee position (Gemeente Den Haag, 2017c). In other words, the municipality takes responsibility for the personal, professional and competency development of its employees both in and outside of the organisation's boundaries.

In addition, according to the municipality (2017b), the programme reflects the image of the 'public servant of the future' (*ambtenaar van de toekomst*). In a broad sense, a public servant of the future is a public employee who is no longer a professional specialist. However, they are employees of the future and are entrepreneurial, flexible and adaptable. In other words, a public servant of the future is someone who is constantly employable and versatile.

The objective of the traineeship is to give recent graduates the opportunity to develop themselves and gain relevant work experience (Gemeente Den Haag, 2018i). Therefore, the municipality provides different traineeships at different educational levels. Their programmes are seen as instruments to ensure the continuous growth of the organisation by using talented, young people in different departments. These young people bring fresh knowledge and new perspectives to the organisation. In a study done by the municipality (Gemeente Den Haag, 2017b), the majority of the trainees' department managers characterise their 'outside the box' thinking and present-day knowledge as the value they add to the organisation. In addition, one of the secondary objectives of the traineeship is to ensure a structural boost to the municipality's diversity policy. The aim is to select at least 50% female or non-Western trainees (Gemeente Den Haag, 2017b).

The traineeship programme began in 1998 as a new HR practice to attract high-potential employees and to improve the municipality's branding as an attractive employer for recent graduates. Entry to this two-year programme is very competitive, as is apparent from the hundreds of applications received each year, from which the organisation only selects 12 participants per programme annually (Gemeente Den Haag, 2017b). To apply for the programme, regardless of their educational background, applicants must have obtained a higher education degree. In addition, the applicants must earn their degree within two years before the programme starts, have fewer than three years of relevant work experience and not have a criminal record (Gemeente Den Haag, 2017d). For applicants who are selected, the programme promises personal development, on-the-job training, a personal budget for competency development courses and the opportunity to create a professional network (Gemeente Den Haag, 2018i). During the programme, trainees have the opportunity to work in different roles within two different municipal departments of their choosing.

After finishing the programme successfully, the former trainees have developed political-administrative and organisational sensitivity, have gained professional competencies and have undergone a personal development trajectory (Gemeente Den Haag, 2017b). Thus, after completing the programme, participants possess different competencies. However, as mentioned, completing the programme does not guarantee employment (Gemeente Den Haag, 2017d). According to the municipality, the programme is not designed for retention purposes or succession planning. If former trainees decided to stay at the municipality, it is their responsibility to apply for a job within the organisation. Yet, since 1998, of all trainees who successfully finished the programme, 58% decided to continue working within the organisation (reference date: 1 April 2016) (Gemeente Den Haag, 2017b).

To conduct this study, the researcher contacted the municipal organisation through his personal network. This initial contact led to a meeting with two trainee coordinators, where an agreement was made to conduct this research.

### **3. Theoretical Background**

This chapter serves as the theoretical background of this investigation. Before answering the research question, it is crucial to review the existing body of scientific literature. This review is done by discussing various scientific theories, concepts and arguments that together form the base of this research. In addition, the theoretical sub-questions are answered in this chapter. Each sub-question is answered in one of the first five sections.

The chapter is divided into six sections. In section 3.1, the notion of a career is explained along with the theoretical arguments for the shift from traditional organisational careers to employability-based careers. In section 3.2, the concept of employability is discussed along with the importance of employability enhancement. Section 3.3 describes organisational support for development as well as how it is used in the public sector. Subsequently in section 3.4, the conflicting assumptions between employability-based careers and TM are presented, followed by section 3.5, in which the contradictory assumptions between employability-based careers and diversity management are described. The final section concludes the chapter with the expectations for this selected case.

#### **3.1 Career**

Hall (2002: 12) broadly defines the career as ‘the individually perceived sequence of attitudes and behaviours associated with work-related experiences and activities over the span of a person’s life.’ This definition does not imply success or failure nor downward or upward advancement. It merely indicates the career as a wide-range of work-related experiences and activities based on an individual’s attitudes and behaviours that transpire throughout a person’s life. In this research, the concept of the career is discussed using scientific arguments for the shift from traditional organisational careers to the new, employability-based careers in the public sector.

##### **3.1.1 The Shift from Traditional Organisational Careers to Employability-Based Careers**

The shift from the traditional organisational career to more contemporary formats is a dominant topic in the career literature (Hall, 2004; Briscoe et al., 2006; Sullivan & Arthur, 2006; Clarke, 2013; Dries et al., 2012; De Vos & Dries, 2013). The notion of the traditional organisational career was first introduced by Weber’s (1922) conceptualisation of the ‘bureaucracy’, which is characterised by the hierarchy of authority and the climb of the hierarchical ladder according to one’s technical knowledge and competence. Similarly, William Whyte’s concept of the ‘organisation man’ is in accordance with the traditional organisational career in which the individuals not only work for organisations but are also their ‘property’ (Whyte, 2002). Therefore, before the 1990s, careers often transpired in a single organisation (Arthur, 1994; Hall & Moss, 1998). In addition, along with lifetime tenure and employment security, this conservative approach is associated with Kanter’s (1989) concept of the logic of advancement. This concept suggests that career-related experiences and activities include a linear

progression into positions that are higher on the hierarchical ladder in an organisation. Meanwhile, these individuals are also supported by the organisation through training and development to meet organisational needs. Thus, this career model was primarily characterised by a paternalistic or bounded employment relationship and the importance of continuity (De Vos & Dries, 2013). It also involves well-defined career paths and the promise of stability (Clarke, 2013).

However, by the late 1990s, there was a rise of new perspectives on careers that entail less hierarchical and more self-managed approaches (Arthur, 1994; Hall, & Moss, 1998; Baruch, 2006; De Vos et al., 2011). Consequently, new models have appeared to support this contemporary viewpoint. According to these new models, individuals shape their careers to achieve personal objectives while taking advantage of opportunities for progress (the protean career) without the limitations of organisational boundaries (the boundaryless career). In other words, the protean career is a career format in which ‘individuals are intent upon using their own values (versus organisational values for example) to guide their career (“values-driven”) and take an independent role in managing their vocational behaviour (“self-directed”)’ (Briscoe et al., 2006: 31). Similarly, the boundaryless career can be defined ‘as one that involves physical and/or psychological career mobility’ (Sullivan & Arthur, 2006: 22).

In addition, during this period, the employment contract became more transactional (Clarke, 2013). As mentioned in the introduction, traditional organisational careers are based on lifetime employment security, loyalty and career progression within one organisation (Hall, 1996; Baruch, 2004; Clarke, 2013). This model is primarily defined as a relational contract that emphasises a two-way exchange between the organisation and the employee. Yet, Baruch (2004) has argued that the traditional organisational career is not an exchange agreement. Rather, it represents an exceedingly paternalistic employment relationship in which the employer dictates the career path of the individual. Such a model is not suitable when the current values of younger employees are based on freedom, which is not equivalent with organisational commitment or loyalty and traditional career hierarchies (Festing & Schäfer, 2014).

Moreover, this new viewpoint has unavoidable effects on vocational paths. Contemporary career models emphasise a shift towards new individual career paths, which transpire both in and outside the organisation. These new career formats encourage short-term transactional relationships based on career resilience rather than career dependence (Clarke, 2013). The traditional employment relationship, with its benefits of tenure and job security, has been replaced by a new employability doctrine in which the majority of the responsibility for career management has been transferred to the individual (Capelli, 1999; Clarke, 2013). In other words, individuals are becoming more responsible for managing their careers, rather than relying on organisations providing them with the opportunities to develop their career paths and enhance their competencies. However, although individuals are accountable for their careers, they still matter to organisations (Clarke, 2013). This new transactional nature of employment even recognises that employee development is still beneficial for both employees



and employers (Baruch, 2004; Clarke, 2013). Therefore, Clarke (2013) argues that the organisational career is not necessarily dead but is in need of redefinition.

According to Clarke (2013), instead of dismissing the traditional organisational career, there is need for an integrated 'new organisational career' model that recognises the need for greater flexibility, adaptability, mobility and individual accountability. Such a model acknowledges that organisations may not be able to offer lifetime employment contracts due to the scientific (Hall, 1996; Baruch, 2004; Clarke, 2013), political (Massey, 2018) and demographic developments (Du Plessis et al., 2015; Cassel, 2017) as mentioned in the introduction. However, it recognises that organisations still need employees and therefore must change the nature of their relationship with them. She argues for a shift from traditional organisational careers to employability-based careers by recognising that employees must be willing and able to change employment, in or outside the organisation, as the need arises (Clarke, 2013). In other words, due to the changing nature of internal and external environments, organisations cannot guarantee job security. Therefore, individuals must have the right qualifications and abilities to endure internal or external transitions to conform to these changes in the labour market (Clarke, 2013). Thus, employees must be versatile to adapt to different functions or activities. This reasoning is in accordance with one of the main assumption of the employability-based career that careers should be based on employees being resilient, rather than dependent on organisational guidance. In this sense, some argue that employment security depends on an individual's employability (Baruch, 2006; Vanhercke et al., 2014). As a result, sustainable employability has become essential for both organisations and individuals, and for this reason, organisations must invest in the development of an employable workforce (De Cuyper & de Witte, 2011; Veld et al., 2015).

Within the public sector, identical to traditional organisational careers, the relationship between employee and employer has been characterised by 'job security, a high income, [and] opportunities for advancement' (Conway et al., 2014: 16). This relationship results in a lifetime career in one organisation (Boselie & Thunnissen, 2017). However, given the changing nature of the public sector into a less structured and more flexible, adaptable workforce (Diefenbach, 2009), it is questionable whether the traditional organisational career is still relevant. Since the rise of NPM in the 1980s, public organisations across the world have undergone significant reforms (Roness, 2017; Massey, 2018). Diefenbach (2009: 893) defined NPM as 'a set of assumptions and value statements about how public sector organisations should be designed, organised, managed.' The objective of NPM is to improve the efficiency of public organisations by using private management models (Diefenbach, 2009). These reforms had a significant impact on public sector careers due to downsizing, decentralisation and outsourcing (Alonso et al., 2015). In addition, due to the global financial and economic crisis, cutback management and organisational decline became essential strategies in the public sector (Schmidt & Groeneveld, 2017; Roness, 2017; Massey, 2018). This resulted in the creation of state-owned companies and semi-autonomous regulatory agencies (Roness, 2017). These changes in the environmental and organisational context affected public sector employment by weakening job

security, reducing guaranteed career paths, decreasing the number of employees with permanent contracts and increasing the number of flexible contracts (Alonso et al., 2015; Boselie & Thunnissen, 2017). In this respect, the public sector might be confronted with Clarke's (2013) reasoning concerning the shift from traditional organisational careers to new employability-based careers.

To conclude, due to demographic, economic, regulatory and organisational developments in the professional environment, organisations must acquire employable human capital to meet organisational needs in the public sector (Williams et al., 2016; Guilbert et al., 2016; Boselie & Thunnissen, 2017). As a result, the traditional employment relationship has been replaced by an employability doctrine in which careers are based on flexibility, adaptability, mobility and self-management. These theoretical arguments might explain the emergence of employability-based careers in the public sector and therefore make this new career format an interesting concept to investigate. In addition, employability is an essential factor for employability-based careers in the public sector. Therefore, the next section discusses the concept of employability.

## **3.2 Employability**

Hillage and Pollard (1998: 12) broadly define employability as 'the capability to move self-sufficiently within the labour market to realise potential through sustainable employment'. According to this definition, employability concerns the subjective evaluation of one's own abilities, competencies and attributes (Vanhercke et al., 2014); the ability to gain employment (Bernston & Marklund, 2007) in the internal and external labour market (De Cuyper & De Witte, 2011); and the ability to function in various roles (Guilbert et al., 2016). In addition, this definition can be interpreted from both an individual and organisational perspective on the importance of employability enhancement during these developments in the vocational environment of the public sector. Therefore, subsection 3.2.1 tackles the importance of employability enhancement from an organisational and individual perspective.

### **3.2.1 The Importance of Employability Enhancement**

From an individual perspective, employability is defined 'as the individual's perception of his or her possibilities of obtaining and maintaining employment' (Vanhercke et al., 2014: 594). In other words, employability concerns a subjective self-evaluation of one's abilities, competencies and attributes (Vanhercke et al., 2014). Various employability factors enhance this subjective evaluation. These factors include knowledge, skills, access to networks and work experiences (Bernston & Marklund 2007; Guilbert et al., 2016). In addition, other factors such as health, age and education can influence employability both negatively and positively (Guilbert et al., 2016). Furthermore, employability is also influenced by one's knowledge concerning the internal and external labour market in terms of the quantity and quality of available employment (De Cuyper & De Witte, 2011). In other words, these employability factors can increase or decrease internal and external employment

possibilities in the labour market (Veld et al., 2015). Therefore, it is essential for an individual to invest in the enhancement of their employability factors, which subsequently increases their chances of employment. Thus, employability depends on individual's decision to engage in employability-building activities and respond to organisational support for development (Wittekind et al., 2010; Veld et al., 2015). In this respect, along with the new outlook on careers, in order to attain a job an individual must be flexible, adaptable and versatile, thus making an individual partly responsible for his or her career (Clarke, 2013; Veld et al., 2015).

However, at the same time, employability depends on the number of practices organisations provide to build an employable workforce (Clarke, 2008). This is acknowledged in various studies that imply the importance for organisations to provide organisational support to enhance the employability of their employees (Van Dam, 2004; Van der Heijden, 2009; Wittekind et al., 2010; Veld et al., 2015). Some of these organisational supports include training courses, supervisor support or on-the-job training (Wittekind et al., 2010; Veld et al., 2015). From an organisational perspective, in a continuously changing environment, organisations must be able to be competitive, flexible and adaptable (Guilbert et al., 2016). In other words, organisations must have the right knowledge, skills and attitudes in house to cope with these developments. Thus, it is crucial for organisations to have a workforce that is able to change jobs, in or outside the organisation, as the need arises (Clarke, 2013). By having an employable workforce, employees are capable of meeting dynamic job requirements quickly, move between roles and effortlessly adjust to new situations (Forrier & Sels, 2003). Therefore, to establish these benefits, employers must stimulate employee participation in development activities to enhance employability (Veld et al., 2015). In addition, research has shown that both participation in competency development programmes and organisational support for development are positively related to employees' perceived employability (Veld et al., 2015). Thus, these investments to increase employability have expected benefits for all stakeholders (Wittekind et al., 2010).

According to this section, it is crucial to invest in employability. In this respect, based on the developments in the public sector in regard to employment relationships, employability-building is crucial for public organizations and public servants. It also suggests that both the organisation and individual must invest in employability because of the added benefits it provides (Wittekind et al., 2010; De Cuyper & De Witte, 2011; Veld et al., 2015). Therefore, due to several developments, individuals must be able to find new employment when necessary and therefore must always be employable. In addition, from an organisational perspective, having an employable workforce is crucial to adjusting to an ever-changing environment. Therefore, due to the expected benefits for all stakeholders (Wittekind et al., 2010), the literature suggests a shared responsibility in career management and the development of employability. Veld and colleagues (2015) described this shared responsibility as an exchange in which employees must be willing to participate in the training and development activities the organisation provides. Thus, the provision of organisational support for development is essential to

developing employees' perceived employability (De Vos et al., 2011; Wittekind et al., 2010; Veld et al., 2015). The next paragraph elaborates on organisational support for development in the public sector.

### **3.3 Organisational Support for Development**

Kraimer and colleagues (2011: 486) define organisational support for development as 'employees' overall perceptions that the organisation provides programmes and opportunities that help employees develop their functional skills and managerial capabilities.' These programmes and opportunities include high potential programmes, training courses, work-related activities, job rotations, on-the-job development, supervisor support and tuition reimbursement programmes (Kraimer et al., 2011). According to several employability authors (Wittekind et al., 2010; Veld et al., 2015), such support increases internal and external employment opportunities and assists in the achievement of career objectives. In addition, besides these positive effects on employability and vocational pathways, research has shown that the provision of development programmes is a useful HR strategy for attracting young talent in the public sector (Poocharoen & Lee, 2013). Equivalent in some respects to internships, these development programmes provide graduates with an entry point for a career in the public sector. In addition, these ambitious, young individuals are granted a special pay scale and different training schemes. Characterised by their competitive selection processes, these programmes aim to attract the best recent graduates to assist organisations in achieving their objectives (Poocharoen & Lee, 2013). For talented individuals, the attractiveness of such programmes lies in the assurance of career development options through relevant experiences and resources that can help define one's career path (Poocharoen & Lee, 2013). According to Poocharoen and Lee (2013), such programmes are considered TM retention practices in the public sector. However, the central assumptions of TM literature are in conflict with those of employability-based careers. Within the new career literature, the nature of organisational support for development contradicts its objectives in the TM literature. Therefore, this research provides an interesting perspective for the TM literature. The next section elaborates on these conflicting assumptions.

### **3.4 Talent Management**

The Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) defines TM as 'the systematic attraction, identification, development, engagement/retention and deployment of those individuals with high potential who are of particular value to an organisation' (CIPD, 2008). Investing in the development of individuals is considered a strategic human resource management (SHRM) practice to retain employees in the long term (Poocharoen & Lee, 2013; Festing & Schäfer, 2014). As a result, and based on social exchange theory, when organisations invest in a talented individual, the individual reacts by becoming loyal and committed and having fewer intentions to leave the organisation (De Boeck et al., 2018). In other words, talented individuals are expected to have a traditional organisational

career in terms of their career-related attitude and behaviours (De Vos & Dries, 2013; De Boeck et al., 2018). Valuable players are expected to have a more paternalistic, bounded and long-term employment relationship with one organisation, with an emphasis on continuity, succession planning and retention (De Vos & Dries, 2013). In addition, TM in the public sector aims to grant high potential employees a lifelong public sector career through the provision of organisational support based on retention strategies (Poocharoen & Lee, 2013).

However, research shows that organisations are finding that younger employees are harder to retain than older employees are (Du Plessis et al., 2015; Cassel, 2017). Younger generations attach greater importance to development opportunities, mobility and work-life balance and adopt a different attitude towards commitment and loyalty to an organisation (Festing & Schäfer, 2014). According to Festing and Schäfer (2014), employees are adopting new attitudes and see organisations more as resources for development than place to establish a career. Therefore, organisations cannot attract younger individuals by offering them employment security and lifetime employment. Thus, these arguments suggest that employers must change the nature of their employment relationships.

In the public sector, the nature of employment contracts is changing due to new management ideologies (Alonso et al., 2015; Boselie & Thunnissen, 2017). This development led to a decrease in permanent contracts and an increase in flexible and temporary contracts (Boselie & Thunnissen, 2017). However, temporary contracts are generally based on substitutability, flexibility and uncertainty for the employee (Krives et al., 2011), thus decreasing their employment security. Yet, in the absence of employment security, the provision of organisational support for development can serve as an incentive to work on a temporary basis, because organisational support enhances employability, which increases employment security (Forrier & Sels, 2003; De Cuyper & De Witte, 2010; Freese et al., 2013). In other words, the investment in employability increases the employee's chances of employment on the internal and external labour market (Veld et al., 2015) and therefore ensures employment security (Silla et al., 2009).

Therefore, based on these theoretical arguments, the provision of organisational support for development is not considered a retention activity, but rather an employability-building practice. It suggests that individuals see organisational support as a transaction between the employee and employer (employability-based careers) rather than a lifetime commitment to one organisation (TM literature). In other words, the career is based on transactional employment relationships rather than relational, long-term relationships. Therefore, new career literature suggests that the provision of organisational support for development is primarily meant to meet individuals' career objectives (Clarke, 2013) rather than organisational objectives, as the TM literature suggests (Poocharoen & Lee, 2013; Festing & Schäfer, 2014). Thus, the TM literature must update its purpose for the provision of organisational support for development.

### 3.5 Diversity Management

This research also aims to investigate the outcomes of diversity management in the public sector. Similar to TM, diversity management also makes assumptions that conflict with employability-based careers regarding the nature of organisational support for development. Diversity management ‘refers to the systematic and planned commitment on the part of organisations to recruit and retain employees with diverse backgrounds and abilities’ (Bassett-Jones, 2005: 170). Similar to TM, diversity management aims to attract, develop and retain minority workers to enhance organisational performance (Ashikali & Groeneveld, 2015). Therefore, the provision of organisational support for development through diversity policies is designed to retain minority individuals in the long term in order to contribute to organisational objectives (Çelik & Çelik, 2017). Diversity management aims to align various talents and backgrounds in a comprehensive approach that creates cooperation and productivity in reaching organisational goals. In other words, developing diverse human capital increases efficiency and efficacy in an organisation. Diversity refers to various personal attributes and characteristics including religion, ethnic background, age, gender, sexual orientation, (dis)ability and language (Bassett-Jones, 2005). However, according to Bassett-Jones (2005), besides demographic and ethnic diversity, diversity also includes differences in culture and intellectual capability, skills and knowledge (Bassett-Jones, 2005). In addition, within the public sector, diversity management is an HR intervention to increase the long-term representation of minority groups in the workforce through retention strategies (Ashikali & Groeneveld, 2015; Çelik & Çelik, 2017).

Individuals targeted by diversity management policies in the public sector may display affective commitment to the organisation (Ashikali & Groeneveld, 2015) and have less turnover intention (Çelik et al., 2016), thus implying traditional organisational careers for minority groups. In other words, these individuals display traditional organisational careers due to the organisation’s investment in their development (Ashikali & Groeneveld, 2015; Çelik & Çelik, 2017). However, these notions contradict the assumptions of employability-based careers. The new career format considers the provision organisational support for development as an employability-enhancement initiative and not a long-term retention practice. In respect to all theoretical arguments regarding the developments in the labour market mentioned earlier, this research argues that diversity management must change the objective behind the provision of development for minority groups targeted by diversity policies.

However, the diversity literature also suggests that differences in cultural norms and values between majority and minority groups can affect how individuals approach their employment relationships (Hur, 2012). Yet, exactly which factors explicitly affect career-related attitudes, behaviours, experiences and activities is not clear. Therefore, in addition to addressing the conflicting assumptions between employability-based careers and diversity management, this research contributes to and expands the diversity literature.

### 3.6 Expectations

As mentioned in the introduction, the aim of this research is to explore how organisational support for development affects the careers and employability of Western and non-Western individuals in the public sector. In addition, it also aims to explore how organisational support for development supports employability-based careers in the public sector. After reviewing the extant literature, several expectations have been formulated.

First, according to the literature, an individual's participation in organisational support for development is done to achieve career goals (Wittekind et al., 2010; Veld et al., 2015). Therefore, it is expected that the organisational support for development supports its participants in reaching their career objectives and thus influences their vocational pathways. This investigation anticipates that the traineeship of the Municipality of The Hague affects its participants' career-related attitudes and behaviours (Hall, 2002). The careers of the former participants were influenced by different training courses, work-related activities, job rotations, on-the-job learning, supervisor support (Kraimer et al., 2011), personal development and organisational awareness development (Gemeente Den Haag, 2018i).

Second, it is also expected that participation in the traineeship programme enhanced the respondents' employability. The subjective evaluation of their abilities, competencies and attributes is enhanced by the different employability factors acquired during the development programme. Based on the literature, these factors include knowledge, skills, access to networks and work experiences (Bernston & Marklund 2007; Guilbert et al., 2016; Gemeente Den Haag, 2018i). In other words, the different trajectories of the development programme enhanced the participants' chances of finding employment in either the internal or the external labour market.

Third, this investigation expects that most respondents experienced a more employability-based career than a traditional organisational career. The former participants have career-related attitudes, behaviours, experiences and activities in terms of roles, job transitions, flexibility, adaptability, mobility and self-management and have different types of employment contracts (Clarke, 2013), such as temporary and flexible employment contracts (Krives et al., 2011; Boselie & Thunnissen, 2017). In addition, their career-related decisions are not based on organisational loyalty, commitment or lifetime employment contracts, nor are they limited by organisational boundaries (Clarke, 2013).

Lastly, all respondents, regardless of their ethnic background, received equal opportunities in terms of learning and development activities during the programme. Therefore, it cannot be expected that non-Western individuals acquired fewer or different employability factors during the programme than Western individuals did. In addition, based on the different developments in the theoretical background, this investigation does not anticipate a difference between Western and non-Western individuals with respect to their career-related attitudes and behaviours. Therefore, it is also expected that both groups have employability-based careers. However, other factors besides organisational support for development might affect the minority group's perception of their career paths, such as differences in cultural norms and values between the majority and minority group (Hur, 2012).

Therefore, it could be expected that the non-Western respondents may not have the same career-related attitudes, behaviours, activities and experiences as the Western respondents.



## **4. Methodology**

The theoretical background was reviewed to describe the relevant concepts that are essential to studying careers and employability in the public sector. The unit of analysis for this study lies at the individual level because careers and employability are based on individual perspectives, attitudes, behaviours, experiences and activities (Hall, 2002; Vanhercke et al., 2014).

In this chapter, the methodological choices for this research are presented. In section 4.1, the research perspective is discussed along with arguments in favour of a qualitative research design. Section 4.2 elaborates on the respondents and the sampling process. Subsequently, in section 4.3, the data collection instrument is presented, followed by section 4.4, which explains the data analysis process. Lastly, section 4.5 and section 4.6 describe the validity and reliability of the study respectively.

### **4.1 Research Perspective and Design**

This investigation adopts an exploratory research perspective to investigate the selected case (Dijkers et al., 2012). The introduction and theoretical background describe the scientific, societal and practical relevance for this research. However, even though this investigation is built on scientific assumptions and theoretical arguments regarding the shift to employability-based careers, this social phenomenon has never been investigated in the public sector (Clarke, 2013). Thus, not much is known about the possible outcomes of this research. Therefore, with an exploratory research perspective, the author seeks to better understand a social phenomenon that has never been investigated in the public sector. Even though a quantitative research design can also be used to investigate unknown social phenomena, this investigation adopts a qualitative research design.

This research sets out to explore factors that affect careers and employability in the public sector. The information provided in the theoretical background only considers the provision of organisational support for development as the potential independent variable. However, with respect to the exploratory nature of this research, this investigation cannot only suggest that organisational support for development is the only factor influencing careers and employability. Therefore, the number of factors influencing these social phenomena in the public sector is not limited, and other possible factors are also explored (Bryman, 2012). Thus, this made it challenging to formulate a limited number of hypotheses and answer the research question using figures, numbers and statistics. In this respect, a qualitative research design more suitable for this investigation (Bryman, 2012; Boeije, 2014).

To study and interpret the concept of careers, a clear outline of the respondents' work-related behaviours, experiences and activities and career-related attitudes is required. This requires the researcher to understand the different perceptions of the respondents' attitudes, behaviours, experiences and activities. Therefore, a qualitative analysis allows the researcher to do so without excluding crucial data that cannot be expressed in a limited amount of possible answers (Bryman, 2012). Thus, a

qualitative research design fits best to answer the research question for this case (Bryman, 2012; Boeije, 2014).

## **4.2 The Respondents and the Sampling Process**

### **4.2.1 The Respondents**

The criteria that the selected respondents had to meet were based on a request from the HR department of the municipality. Therefore, the respondents were chosen through purposive sampling (Boeije, 2014) based on the following substantive criteria: 1) the year they finished the traineeship, 2) the type of programme they completed, 3) their current employer and 4) their ethnic background. These criteria can be further explained using scientific arguments.

The first criterion was the year they finished the programme. This research only included participants who completed the programme within the last eight years. To investigate the respondents' careers, the researcher needed a clear picture of the respondents' career-related attitudes and behaviours associated with their work-related experiences (Hall, 2002) after finishing the programme. Since work-related decisions in terms of job transitions happen approximately every two years (Forrier, Verbruggen & De Cruyter, 2015), a span of eight years was appropriate to investigate the respondents' career-related attitudes and behaviours. In this respect, the former trainees who were invited to participate in this study finished the programme between 2010 and 2017.

The second criterion was the type programme they finished. The Municipality of The Hague provides seven traineeships at various educational levels. To explore the effect of organisational support for development on employability, the researcher wanted to ensure that specific factors were constant. Therefore, this study only selected subjects who participated in a university-level programme (WO) or applied sciences programme (HBO). Similar to Nelissen et al.'s (2017) study on development activities in relation to employability, this investigation ensures that all respondents have the same opportunities during their respective traineeships. The contents of the WO and HBO programmes are the same, but they differ in level of income, education level and the types of functions the participants could apply for during their traineeship.

The third criterion was employment either in or outside the organisation. After finishing the programme, trainees are not guaranteed employment (Gemeente Den Haag, 2017d). Therefore, some trainees left the organisation and found employment elsewhere. In addition, careers transpire both in and outside of the organisation (Hall, 2002), and employability concerns employment in both the internal and external labour markets (Vanhercke et al., 2014). Therefore, this research included respondents outside of the organisation. To have a complete picture of the effects of this programme on careers and employability, every former trainee was included during the sampling process.

The fourth criterion is ethnic background. Besides developing employability, the management of diversity is crucial in the newfound relationship between the employer and employee (Lips-Wiersma

and Hall, 2007). In addition, public sector organisations have a public goal to increase the representation of minority groups in their workforces (Ashikali & Groeneveld, 2015). Furthermore, the traineeship of the Municipality of The Hague has a diversity policy in which at least 50% of the selected trainees must be female or of a non-Western background. Therefore, half of the respondents were part of this diversity selection process. In doing so, the researcher investigated the differences and similarities between non-Western and Western individuals.

The distinction between Western and non-Western individuals was based on the information provided by the Municipal organisation. However, which factors determine whether respondents are a Western or non-Western was not clear. During the selection procedure for the traineeship, the selection committee decides who is Western or non-Western. Yet, there are no specific criteria or documents upon which this distinction is based.

#### **4.2.2 The Sampling Process**

Through the trainee alumni network of the Municipality of The Hague, the researcher received a list of every trainee from 1998 from both the WO and HBO traineeships. Since one of his mentors at the municipal organisation and a colleague are former participants of the traineeship, the researcher purposely did not include them in this sampling process to avoid bias and socially accepted answers. In addition, in order to not select respondents based on personal preferences, the research conducted a simple random sample (Bryman, 2012). Therefore, each respondent was chosen randomly.

Using this method, the respondents were sent invitations each week in groups. Each group included ten Western and ten non-Western former trainees. The past participants who still work for the municipality were invited via their work emails, and the respondents outside the organisation were invited through LinkedIn messenger because the organisation does not keep the personal information of former employees. The invitation email is displayed in Appendix I. In addition, a reminder email (Appendix II) was sent each week to the respondents who did not reply. However, after sending two reminder emails to the external respondents, the researcher ran out of LinkedIn credits to send messages to individuals outside of his network. Therefore, the researcher realised that communicating through LinkedIn was not very efficient. For practical reasons, the researcher decided to only invite former trainees who still worked for the organisation.

In addition, due to time constraints and a low response rate, the researcher decided to switch from simple random sampling to snowball sampling (Bryman, 2012). Instead of inviting the respondents in groups, the researcher emailed every former trainee who had finished the programme between 2010 and 2017 that had not been invited up to that point. By using both sampling methods, the investigation includes six non-Western and twelve Western respondents. Table 1 gives an overview of the Western respondents, while table 2 gives an overview of the non-Western respondents.

Table 1: Overview Western Respondents

Respondent	Year finished	Educational Level	Gender	Employment (inside or outside the organization)
1	2016	WO	Female	Inside
3	2015	WO	Male	Inside
4	2014	WO	Female	Outside
5	2016	WO	Male	Inside
9	2016	HBO	Female	Inside
11	2017	HBO	Male	Inside
12	2017	HBO	Male	Inside
13	2017	HBO	Female	Inside
15	2016	HBO	Female	Inside
16	2017	HBO	Female	Inside
17	2017	WO	Female	Inside
18	2017	HBO	Female	Inside

Table 2: Overview Non-Western Respondents

Respondent	Year finished	Educational Level	Gender	Employment (inside or outside the organization)
2	2017	WO	Male	Inside
6	2015	WO	Male	Inside
7	2015	WO	Male	Inside
8	2016	WO	Male	Inside
10	2010	WO	Male	Inside
14	2014	WO	Male	Inside

### 4.3 Research Instrument for Data Collection

#### 4.3.1 Semi-structured interviews

For the data collection, interviews were used as the research instrument. According to Boeije (2014), interviews are a prominent method to collect data in qualitative research. In this study, each interview was based on a semi-structured approach. For semi-structured interviews, a topic list is used to formulate questions in advance (Boeije, 2014). These questions are based on the information presented in the theoretical background. Therefore, the theoretical background was critically examined, and the relevant themes that are essential to answering the research question became the basis of the topic list. As a result, the topic list was subdivided into three main topics: organisational support for development, careers and employability. In addition, the topic list was supplemented with important questions concerning the context of the research, which ensured that the respondents could relate to the questions. Moreover, each interview began with an introductory section in which permission to record the interview was requested.

#### 4.3.2 Topics

As mentioned, the interview topics are based on the theoretical framework. In the topic list, there are only a few main questions; however, the interviews also consisted of follow-up questions. Therefore, while the topic list gave the respondents some direction by structuring the questions during the interview, it was also essential to provide the respondents with sufficient space to contribute extra or new information in order to determine their opinions and perceptions (Boeije, 2014; Bryman, 2012). Furthermore, the researcher must be flexible with the topic list in order to explore nuances in the

interviews and further investigate specific themes when necessary. After the first few interviews were conducted, the researcher—partly based on tips from respondents and supervisors—examined whether the data collected during the interviews were indeed useful for answering the research question. Therefore, when the researcher realised that specific questions were missing from the topic list, these questions were included in later interviews. The topic list included in Appendix III concerns the final formulation of the topic list after each interview was completed. As mentioned, the most important topics discussed in the interviews are organisational support for development, careers and employability. The next section elaborates on how these topics were operationalised into questions.

### *Organisational support for development*

In this study, the traineeship of the Municipality of The Hague is operationalised as the organisational support for development. At the beginning of the interviews, the different respondents were asked about their intention to join the programme, their experiences during the traineeship as well as what the programme brought them in regard to their careers and employability. With these questions, the researcher was able to identify how the traineeship assisted respondents' in achieving their career-related and employability-associated intentions and how it influenced their careers and employability. As a result, the interviews included the following questions:

- Why did you apply for the traineeship at the Municipality of The Hague?
- Which functions did you have during the programme?
- Which courses and training did you follow during the traineeship? Do you still apply what you learned during the programme? If so, how?
- How did you find the supervisor support and coaching during the programme? Do still apply what you learnt during the programme? If so, how?
- How do you look back at the traineeship?
- What did you take from the traineeship? What did you learn during the process?

### *Career*

The career is operationalised as the vocational pathways and career perspectives of the former participants of the traineeship. In this research, Hall's (2002) definition of career was divided into two categories including career-related attitudes and vocational-related behaviours and experiences. The first category, career-related attitudes, is associated with the trainees' career perspectives and how they think their career should be. The second category, vocational-related behaviours and experiences, corresponds to what the participants have actually done in their careers. In other words, how did the respondents shape their career paths up until the interview.

During the interviews, career and work-related questions were asked in order to identify whether the respondents had career-related attitudes, behaviours, experiences and activities reflecting

employability-based careers. In addition, questions were asked about which factors influenced their career-related attitudes and vocational-related behaviours. Therefore, the researcher was able to distinguish various factors that influenced their perspectives and vocational pathways and whether the traineeship played a role. In order to get a clear outline of the respondents' career-related attitudes, behaviours, experiences as well as which factors influenced their career paths, the interviews included the following questions;

- After the traineeship, did you want to stay at the Municipality of The Hague? Why or why not?
- Which functions did you have after the traineeship?
- What is your career-related perspective?
  - Do you want to stay in your current function? Why or why not?
  - Do want to stay with your current employer? Why or why not?
  - Do you want to work for another organisational department? Why or why not?
  - Do you want to stay in the public sector? Why or why not?
  - If you leave your current organisation, would you eventually come back to your old employer? Why or why not?
  - In 10 years, what do you see yourself doing? Why?
- Which factors influence your career-related perspective? Did the traineeship play a role?

### *Employability*

In this research, employability is operationalised as how the different respondents estimate their possibilities to find employment in the internal and external labour markets. Therefore, at the end of the interviews, the different respondents were asked employability-associated questions. The researcher wanted to investigate how employable the respondents are and which factors contribute to their employability. In addition, the researcher wanted to know whether the traineeship played a role. As a result, the interviews included the following questions:

- How do you estimate your chances to find employment in the internal labour market?
  - Which factors influence your chances?
  - Did the traineeship play a role?
- How do you estimate your chances to find employment in the external labour market?
  - Which factors influence your chances?
  - Did the traineeship play a role?

### **4.3.3 Procedure**

After the supervisors and researcher approved the topic list, the interviews took place in individual sessions between May 8 and June 5, 2018. The interviews took place in various meeting rooms at the town hall of the Municipality of The Hague, except for one interview that took place via

Skype. Every interview was recorded with the researcher's iPhone. The interviews lasted an average of 40 minutes. For privacy reasons, the researcher asked each respondent for permission to record at the beginning of the interview. In all cases, the respondents gave the researcher permission to record. In addition, the respondents were assured that the collected data would be processed anonymously. Subsequently, the researcher conducted the interview. At the conclusion of the interview, the respondents were given the opportunity to give extra remarks or comments regarding the subjects discussed during the interview. In addition, the respondents were thanked for their time and participation and were asked whether they wanted to receive the results of the study. They all agreed to receive the results at the end.

#### **4.4 Data Analysis Process**

Every interview was recorded and transcribed (Bryman, 2012; Boeije, 2014) with a free online app called OTranscribe. In order to see any patterns in the transcript, coding took place, which included assigning keywords to the material (Boeije, 2014). The coding process was carried out using NVivo, which supports qualitative data analysis. Thus, the transcripts were imported into this programme and the coding process took place thereafter. In addition, this programme allowed the researcher to adapt previously selected codes, create subcategories of codes and assign multiple codes to single transcript fragments. Therefore, this programme assisted the researcher in making the data analysis process more structured and clear. Subsequently, the coding process resulted in a codebook (Appendix IV), which includes the various codes along with their fragments that became apparent in the investigation. Furthermore, NVivo has the option to assign different attributes to the transcripts or cases. Therefore, the transcripts were assigned attributes according to the respondents' ethnic backgrounds. This made it easier to compare the fragments between Western and non-Western respondents.

The coding process took place in three phases: open coding, axial coding and selective coding (Boeije, 2014), which provided a clear outline of the subjects that came forth from the interviews. However, in practice, these phases did not transpire in a particular sequence, therefore making the coding process a continuous procedure of switching between the three phases. The first five transcripts were openly coded into fragments, which were then re-coded through axial coding. During the axial coding, similarities and links between the previously assigned fragments were thematically organised and divided into codes. Therefore, the meanings of the codes became more precise and structured. Following this, six other transcripts were openly coded. During this process, the relevant fragments were easier to recognise as a result of the previous open and axial coding processes. Afterwards, these six transcripts were axially coded, as well. During this process, the principal code and sub-codes that are relevant to this research were identified. In the open and axial coding of the last seven transcripts, no new fragments appeared that differed from the original codes. Lastly, selective coding was performed. In this process, the researcher looked at the relationships and patterns between the different

codes to gain insights into the respondents' motives to participate in the programme, their experiences during the programme and the added value of the programme. In addition, it became clear how the traineeship affected the respondents' careers and employability as well as which other factors played a role.

#### **4.5 Reliability**

Reliability refers to the accuracy and consistency of the measurements in a study (Bryman, 2012; Boeije, 2014). In other words, a replication of the study should produce the same results. External factors such as the researcher, the measuring instrument and the respondents should not affect the reliability of the findings. However, in qualitative research, especially in the explorative approach, it is difficult to guarantee complete reliability, and therefore finding 'the truth' is not central. As a result, this research is intersubjective, which means that the researcher's interpretation was shared by others. Nevertheless, a number of aspects in this study were taken into account to limit its subjectivity and coincidence. First, the interviews took place in a closed room; therefore, the interviewer and the respondents were not distracted by factors that could make the data unreliable. Second, the interviews were conducted using a topic list, which made the interview questions known to others. In addition, the topic list was based on concepts found in the literature review and theoretical background, therefore making the interview content more accurate and consistent. Third, all interviews were recorded, transcribed and analysed using NVivo. As a result, the researcher's interpretation in the early stages of the research was excluded as much as possible because he continuously referred back to the recordings, transcripts and analyses. This approach resulted in transparency, accountability and thus the repeatability of the research.

#### **4.6 Validity**

Validity in data collection means that the findings accurately represent the phenomenon the researcher is claiming to measure (Bryman, 2012; Boeije, 2014). Within this quality criterion, a distinction can be made between internal and external validity.

##### **4.6.1 Internal Validity**

Internal validity of qualitative research means that the researcher actually measures what he or she aims to measure (Bryman, 2012; Boeije, 2014). The internal validity of this research was guaranteed by regularly providing respondents with feedback during the interviews. This feedback was provided by asking confirmation questions, paraphrasing the respondents' answers and repeating questions in cases of doubt during the interviews. Such an approach gave the respondents the opportunity to verify the conclusions the researcher had drawn. In addition, the chances of socially desirable answers were reduced as much as possible by emphasising and ensuring the anonymity of the respondents.



#### **4.6.2 External Validity**

External validity refers to the generalizability of the results and conclusions to a larger population (Bryman, 2012; Boeije, 2014). Using participants of this programme made it possible to thoroughly analyse the case concerning the traineeship of the Municipality of The Hague as well as how it affects careers and employability in the public sector. However, by focusing on one organisation, it could have jeopardised the generalizability of this research (Bryman, 2012; Boeije, 2014). Yet, studying the Municipality of The Hague can most definitely generate implications for other public organisations, especially in the Dutch context, and local governmental bodies. Nevertheless, as mentioned in the introduction, the new knowledge gathered with this study adds to and expands the literature on careers, employability, organisational support of development, TM and diversity management. However, this research consists mostly of internal respondents. In addition, the investigation has more Western respondents than non-Western respondents, which calls the generalizability of this research into question. This concern is discussed in a later chapter.

## 5. Results

In this chapter, attention is paid to the findings of the data analysis according to the methods discussed in the previous chapter. This data analysis resulted in a codebook; based on this and the empirical sub-questions, the findings of this investigation are presented here.

To give the best possible overview of the results, this chapter consists of four sections. In section 5.1, the respondents' motives to join the traineeship, their experiences during the programme and the added value of participating in the traineeship for their careers are discussed. In addition, other factors influencing their career-related attitudes and vocational-related behaviours and experiences are presented. Section 5.2 describes how organisational support for development along with other factors affected the respondents' employability. Section 5.3 discusses how organisational support for development supports employability-based careers. In addition, the respondents' vocational behaviours and experiences along with their career-related attitudes after the traineeship are described. In section 5.4, the differences and similarities between the Western and non-Western respondents are discussed. Each of the sections conclude with a summary of the most important results. In addition, quotations from the transcripts are used. These are shown anonymously and serves to clarify and provide evidence of results found. For each quotation, the respondents' number and ethical background is indicated from which the quotation originated.

### 5.1 Organisational Support for Development's Effect on Careers

The majority of respondents expressed different intentions to apply for the traineeship. In addition, the respondents also described their experiences during the development programme and its added value for their careers. Furthermore, after the traineeship, the respondents stated other factors that influenced their career-related attitudes and vocational-related behaviours and experiences. In this section, their motives, experiences, the added value of the traineeship and other factors affecting their careers are described.

#### 5.1.1 Motives to Apply for the Traineeship

The respondents stated several motives to apply for the traineeship, which are elaborated below.

*Learning and Development.* Some respondents cited the learning and development the organisation provides as a reason to apply for the programme. Following their studies, some former applicants expressed interest in continuing to develop themselves after obtaining their degree. Given that the programme focuses on learning and development, some respondents decided to apply for the traineeship at the Municipality of The Hague.

*‘Toen ik ging afstuderen, wist ik het gewoon; ik vind het belangrijk om door te ontwikkelen. Ik wilde doorleren, maar ik dacht; “na twee masters is het wel een beetje klaar met studie en het wordt tijd om iets terug te geven aan de samenleving.” ... Voornamelijk omdat het aspect leren en ontwikkelen zo erg in het traineeshipprogramma zit, heb ik voor de traineeship gesolliciteerd.’ – Western 1*

*Career Change Opportunity.* Some former trainees cited the opportunity to make a career change as a motive to apply for the traineeship. After finishing their studies, some participants realised that their educational background did not fit their interests. In addition, two respondents that were skilled in a specific discipline could not find employment in another sector because of their lack of competencies. Therefore, some respondents applied for the traineeship as an opportunity to discover other types of jobs that are different from what they studied as well as to change their career paths.

*‘Ik denk dat de hoofdreden is dat ik tijdens mijn studie rechten ongeveer in het derde jaar tot de conclusie kwam dat juridische werkverlening of rechtspraak niet echt mijn ding zijn. Advocaat worden of officier of bedrijfsjurist zeg maar, dat is gewoon niet mijn ding... Dus van daar dat ik heb gekozen om iets anders te doen.’ – Non-Western 8*

*‘De pabo is zo’n specifieke opleiding, echt voor leerkracht basisonderwijs. Het was dus best wel lastig om iets anders te vinden... Ik wilde een kans om iets anders te doen... Het was voor mij ook een persoonlijke ontdekkingstocht van wat er allemaal nog meer voor typen banen zijn naast mijn huidige baan in het onderwijs. Daarom een traineeship.’ – Western 15*

*Non-Profit Driven.* Some respondents are driven by activities that add value to communities and societies rather than profit maximisation ventures. Therefore, some respondents considered a traineeship in the public sector as an entry point to a public service career. In addition, some respondents mentioned their bond with the city as a reason to apply for the traineeship.

*‘Mijn vorige baan was te veel gericht op gewoon geld verdienen, dat vond ik gewoon niet zo interessant... Het idee dat ik hier in Den Haag kon werken aan mensen en aan de maatschappij, dat was iets wat ik interessant vond; het was anders.’ – Non-Western 10*

*Gain Relevant Work Experience.* Some participants saw the traineeship as a way to increase their career and employment possibilities. After finishing their studies, some applicants did not have the relevant work experience to find high-level employment. Therefore, being that one’s participation in the traineeship would grant relevant work experience to find employment in high-level functions instead of staff functions, some respondents chose to apply for the programme.

*'Ik denk dat het een hele mooie kans is om ergens te starten in een mooie rol. Toen ik net klaar was met afstuderen bij de ministerie X ging ik daar op een aantal afdelingen werken. Daar heb je meer een ondersteunende rol en met een traineeship krijg je wel meteen een volwaardige functie. Ook dankzij de traineeship kon ik veel stappen maken in mijn carrière.'* – Western 5

### **5.1.2 Participants' Experiences during the Traineeship**

Looking back at their experiences during the traineeship, most respondents agree that even though they had the opportunity to work in different roles within various departments of the municipality, the programme differs from a regular job. Besides their daily functions, the participants received various opportunities that were not automatically evident to regular employees. These extra opportunities are considered the extra value of a traineeship that makes it different from a regular job.

*'Normaal als je een functie hebt dan werk je gewoon binnen een team of afdeling, maar in het traineeprogramma moet je allerlei opdrachten doen voor verschillende directeuren/ verschillende afdelingen. Dan leer je zoveel mensen kennen... Als trainee kom je overal binnen en als werknemer niet meer. Dus dat is wel een grote onderscheiding ... De extra dingen, de mogelijkheden om dingen naast je reguliere functie te doen, die zijn minder vanzelfsprekend als je klaar bent met je traineeprogramma. ... Tijdens het traineeprogramma word je echt op handen gedragen en ook wel begeleid, maar als je eenmaal ergens werkt is het toch lastig om hoger op te komen.'* – Western 4

That being said, according to the respondents, the extra value of the programme lies specifically in the learning and development trajectory they underwent. The respondents divided this trajectory into four categories: 1) personal development, 2) on-the-job learning, 3) organisational awareness development to enhance political and administrative sensitivity and 4) a personal budget for competency development. In addition, within these four categories, the respondents recall receiving supervisor support from a trainee coordinator, a department manager and a personal coach. Yet, while every respondent underwent the first three trajectories, not every participant made use of their personal budget for competency development. According to one respondent, in comparison with the other trajectories the budget was optional. Therefore, participants became more responsible for their development and career growth. The respondents that used their personal budget did so according to their personal development plan and in consultation with their trainee coordinator, department manager and personal coach. As a result, their budget was used for different development purposes.

*'Je wordt er heel erg op gestuurd dat je je eigen verantwoordelijkheid pakt; je bent verantwoordelijk voor je eigen ontwikkeling. Je bent verantwoordelijk voor je eigen loopbaan en je kansen. Als je iets*

*wilt, kan er heel veel. Je krijgt wel een opleidingsbudget, maar je moet wel zelf met een plan komen dat je deze en deze training wilt gaan volgen.’ – Western 1*

### **5.1.3 The Added-Value of Participating in the Traineeship on Career**

Even though their experiences slightly differed, the respondents found the traineeship to be a valuable experience. When asked how they looked back at their traineeships, what they learned and what they took with them from the development trajectories, the respondents cited different elements. These elements not only ensured that the respondents would achieve the objectives for which they applied to the programme, but they also exceeded their expectations. In other words, the programme brought them more than they anticipated. From the data, there are several elements that respondents considered to be of added value to their careers. In this section, these elements are described. In other words, the added value of participating in the organisational support for career development is explained.

*Self-Awareness.* During the personal development trajectory, the respondents had the chance to become self-aware. According to the respondents, as a result of the traineeship, they became aware of their needs, work requirements and who they are. Consequently, they are now able to handle certain work situations, stand up for their needs and choose jobs that fit their interests. As a result, their self-awareness affected their career-related attitudes and vocational-related behaviours and experiences because the respondents chose careers that fit their needs and desires.

*‘Hier ga ik voor staan. Echt voor mijn eigen keuzes en voor mijn eigen behoeften gaan staan. Dat heb ik echt geleerd van mijn traineeprogramma.’ – Western 18*

*Career Change.* The traineeship gave some respondents the opportunity to make a career change. While some found employment in sectors similar to their academic degree, others had the opportunity to change careers and find employment in fields different from their educational backgrounds. The programme gave former trainees the chance to try different functions and roles in various fields to figure out whether they have an affinity with them or not, giving them the opportunity to change careers and thus affecting their attitudes, behaviours and experiences concerning their career.

*‘Wel grappig is dat ik organisatiewetenschappen heb gestudeerd. Dat is echt sociale wetenschap en dankzij de traineeship heb ik opeens een functie/ een vakgebied gevonden wat niet zo 1, 2, 3 direct in mijn blikveld lag, zeg maar. Dankzij de traineeship heb ik nu een plek die ik onwijs leuk vind.’ –*

Western 5

### 5.1.4 Other Factors Influencing Careers

In the section above, the specific elements of the traineeship influencing the respondents' careers were presented. In this section, the factors beyond the traineeship that influence the career-related attitudes, behaviours and experiences of the respondents are discussed. These factors are divided into individual and external factors.

#### 5.1.4.1 Individual Factors Influencing Careers

The data show that individual factors also had an effect on the respondents' careers. These factors are part of the individual and concern their interests, characteristics, priorities or motives.

*Self-Interest.* Most respondents mentioned self-interest as a factor affecting their career-related attitudes, behaviours and experiences. Most respondents cited the expansion of their frame of reference, interests, professional needs and desire to continue to developing themselves as reasons to find employment in other functions, roles, departments or organisations. In other words, some respondents chose specific career paths for their own personal interests, advantages and well-being. Therefore, the data show that self-interest affects the attitudes associated with the work-related behaviours and experiences former trainees.

*‘Mijn enige motivatie om weg te gaan zou zijn... om mijn referentiekader te verbreden. Omdat dit eigenlijk mijn enige echte werkgever is geweest. Dus dan denk ik dat het voor mijn ontwikkeling eigenlijk niet goed is als ik voor de rest van mijn leven hier blijf.’ – Non-Western 14*

*Organisational Loyalty.* The data show that some respondents mentioned organisational loyalty as a factor that influenced their work-related attitudes, behaviours and experiences. These respondents expressed their loyalty in the form of their faithfulness, gratitude and commitment to the organisation because of the organisation's significant investment in their careers.

*‘Het komt voort uit een gevoel van loyaliteit. Als jij twee jaar na je traineeship, waar heel veel in je geïnvesteerd is, zegt van; “ik kies voor een andere gemeente” en jij laat eigenlijk de investering die in jou is gedaan niet uitkeren in de gemeente, dan heeft de gemeente daar in principe niks aan. Dat is niet mijn stijl. Dat vind ik niet chique.’ – Non-Western 2*

*Stage of Life.* The respondents stated that their stage of life also affects their careers. According to the former trainees, when they reach a certain point in their lives, their priorities change and therefore affect their attitudes regarding work-related behaviours and activities. For example, according to some respondents, becoming a parent or wanting more stability in life shaped their vocational pathways.

*‘Op een gegeven moment denk ik, ja... heb je andere prioriteiten in je leven misschien? Ik heb nu sinds zes weken een dochtertje. Ik merk ook bij mijzelf een verschuiving in wat de prioriteiten in je leven zijn. Ga je helemaal uitkomen van; “ja, de vormgeving van mijn werk is niet het meest belangrijke.’ - Non-Western 2*

*‘Het feit dat je vervolgens twee jaar op een tijdelijk contract zit na je traineeship. Op een gegeven moment kom je op zo’n leeftijd dat je een paar jaar hebt gewerkt en dat je denkt; “je wilt meer vastigheid”. Het zou zo maar kunnen dat je op een gegeven moment extern of op een andere afdeling een aanbod krijgt en dat je ervoor zal kiezen meer vanwege de vastigheid en niet zozeer vanwege de werk inhoud.’ – Western 17*

*Personality.* The data also show that personality can influence careers. This factor points out qualities that form the distinct characteristics of the respondents. These distinctive characteristics also have implications for how the respondents shape their vocational pathways. Thus, the data show that personality determines vocational-related behaviours and experiences. Most respondents have a personality-driven career.

*‘Ik ben zo’n specialistische nerd wat dat betreft. Dat zeggen ze ook, van; “je moet je nooit manager maken” en dat wil ik ook niet.’ – Western 3*

*Non-profit Driven.* When asked whether they wanted to stay in the public sector, most respondents mentioned that they would prefer to have a job in the public sector instead of with a for-profit corporation. In other words, most respondents want to work for something that is meaningful and that contributes to society, thereby affecting their career-related attitudes, behaviours and experiences. Their non-profit drive was not only a motive to join the traineeship, but also a reason to continue working in the public sector.

*‘Dat ik maatschappelijk nuttig kan zijn. Ik heb ook gekeken naar werken bij banken en zo, daar hebben ze een heleboel werk in dit vakgebied. Dan ga je processen optimaliseren zodat ze meer hypotheek kunnen verkopen, maar het kan me niks schelen of er hypotheek worden verkocht, snap je? Als ik zou kijken naar waar ik wil werken, is het heel belangrijk van; wat doen die mensen dan? Wat voor bijdrage lever je aan de mensheid als je dat doet.’ – Non-Western 6*

#### **5.1.4.2 External Factors Influencing Careers**

Similar to individual factors, the data show that external factors also influence the former trainees’ careers. These factors are beyond the individual’s control and are explained below.

*Organisational Culture.* During the interviews, some participants said that organisational culture affects their work-related attitudes, behaviours and experiences. Some respondents mentioned that if the organisational culture does not fit with them as a person, it might be a motive for them to exit the organisation. The data show that some respondents consider public sector organisations to be bureaucratic and, as a result, describe the processes within these organisations as slow, vague and unproductive. According to some respondents, this culture within the public sector is a reason to leave the organisation and thus affects their career paths. However, most respondents have not left the organisation for this reason. Thus, it only affects their career-related attitudes, but not their vocational-related behaviours and experiences.

*‘Ik denk de private kant me toch wel meer trekt omdat het zakelijker is en stellig gaat. Ik vind de overheid heel erg traag en vaag. Er wordt gewoon niet heel veel gedaan. Ik heb vrienden die bij de overheid werken of bij een ministerie zitten. Er wordt daar heel veel gepraat en er wordt niet altijd even veel gedaan. Ik werk nu ook samen, bijvoorbeeld bij sociale zaken, met een ministerie. Dat is ook heel erg vaag... Dus ik heb daar wel een beetje een afkeer van.’ – Western 13*

*Internal Organisational Developments.* Most respondents mentioned developments within an organisation as a reason to change employment. At the municipality, the city legislature and executive body change quadrennially. This rotation means that the internal organisational policies change every four years. In addition to affecting internal operations, it also affects the employee-organisation relationship and thus affects the career-related attitudes, behaviours and experiences of the former trainees. The respondents cited internal organisational developments such as reorganisation, cutbacks and hiring freezes as motives to find new employment. Therefore, these developments affect how the respondents shape their vocational pathways.

*‘De interne ontwikkelingen binnen de organisatie waarin je zit zorgen dat je soms intern een drive hebt om iets anders te vinden, maar het kan soms ook extern zijn. Als er ineens een reorganisatie is of een bezuiniging of weet ik wat, en jouw hele afdeling moet bij wijze van spreken weg bezuinigd worden, dan ben je gewoon genoodzaakt om iets anders te vinden... Bezuinigingen, generatie-pact achtige dingen en zo. Die hebben allemaal externe invloeden, wat toch misschien ervoor kan zorgen dat je in beweging komt.’ – Non-Western 7*

*External Organisational Developments.* Contrary to internal organisational developments, this factor refers to the activities and processes outside the organisation that influence its operations and employment relationships. Most respondents cited the economic landscape and institutional powers as factors that affect their career. The data show that the most recent economic crisis had a significant effect on how the different respondents shaped their vocational pathways. Therefore, according to the



former trainees, external organisational developments beyond their control affect their career-related attitudes, behaviours and experiences.

*‘2010; economische crisis, die volgens mij 2008/2009 begon. Toen bleek dus dat Rijksoverheid (volgens mij was er een nieuw kabinet, nieuwe regering, allemaal bezuinigingen) iedereen moest bezuinigen. Ambtenaren moesten ontslagen worden, dus ook de gemeente moest. In 2010 had je een nieuwe gemeente; nieuwe raadsverkiezingen gehad, nieuwe college. Die gingen op basis daarvan dus inderdaad besluiten dat ze gingen bezuinigen, dat taakstelling kwam en dat er mensen ontslagen moesten worden... Omdat er toen crisis was en die vacatures hier in Den Haag die zakte gewoon weg. Sommige mensen hadden wel een vacature, maar die dachten; “die ga ik niet invullen want misschien moet ik een FT inleveren, dus dan doe ik die wel weg.” Dus ik heb hier eerst intern gesolliciteerd maar ik kwam niet aan de bak. Uiteindelijk toen mijn contract afliep was het 1 oktober 2010 klaar; ik was werkloos. Ik mocht weg hier.’ – Non-Western 10*

*Attractive Employer.* The majority of respondents expressed that finding an attractive employer is a crucial factor that shapes their career paths. They prefer to work for an organisation that offers them reasonable terms of employment with respect to development possibilities, working conditions and work-life balance. Therefore, finding an attractive employer affects career-related attitudes, behaviours and experiences.

*‘Als er gewoon iets aan de hand is met onze dochter...dan weet ik dat ik in een omgeving werk waar je persoonlijke leven heel hoog op de agenda staat. Dus een uitstekende werkgever. En dat is voor mij meer waard dan een leaseauto.’ – Non-Western 6*

In sum, the respondents mentioned four central objectives to apply for the traineeship: to learn and develop, to change careers, to satisfy their non-profit drive and to acquire relevant work experience. In addition, while the programme has some elements of a regular job, it also provides participants with various opportunities that are not available to regular employees. In addition, the programme is divided into four development trajectories. Moreover, the respondents expressed that self-awareness and career changes are the added value of the traineeship. Furthermore, the different respondents also stated other factors that influenced their career-related attitudes, behaviours and experiences.

## **5.2 Organisational Support for Development’s Effect on Employability**

The data show that most respondents are very confident in regard in finding new employment; in other words, they consider themselves highly employable. During the interviews, the respondents

expressed their confidence using different terminology, including ‘I do not worry’, ‘I find it easy’ and ‘I never had a problem with finding employment’.

*‘Ik heb tot nu toe nooit echt moeite gehad met solliciteren. Dat is misschien een mazzel ook tot nu toe, maar eigenlijk alles wat ik heb geprobeerd te doen dat ik ook wel gelukt.’ – Western 12*

When asked which factors contribute to their confidence in their employability, the respondents mentioned the added value of the traineeship. Since the respondents’ motives and experience in regard to the traineeship have already been described, this paragraph discusses the added value of the traineeship on employability and other factors influencing employability.

### **5.2.1 The Added-Value of Participating in the Traineeship on Employability**

As mentioned, the development programme brought its former participants more than they expected. Besides the programme’s added value for careers, it gave them additional benefits concerning their employability.

*Work Experience.* During the traineeship, participants had the chance to work in two different roles. As a result, they gained relevant work experience that was suitable to finding different types of employment after the traineeship. Therefore, the experience gained during the traineeship enhanced the respondents’ chances of employment. However, the work experience varied per trainee.

*‘Je doet wel ervaring op. Je krijgt wel een veilige ruimte om dingen uit te proberen. Je krijgt de kans om dingen eigen te maken die je zonder het traineeprogramma de mogelijkheid niet hebt gehad. Maar voornamelijk de ervaring.’ - Western 16*

*Competencies.* Some respondents used their personal budget to attend trainings and courses to enhance their competencies. The data show that competencies refer to a wide range of abilities, knowledge, skills and expertise that some respondents gained during the programme. These competencies can be applied in a variety of functions and professions and therefore increase the respondents’ chances of employment. These abilities, knowledge, skills and expertise differ among the trainees. One respondent even mentioned that the wide range of competencies he gained made him broadly employable.

*‘Door alle opleidingen die ik heb gehad tijdens mijn traineeship heb ik echt geleerd om verschillende brillen op te zetten en daar ook goed duidelijk mee te kunnen kijken, op verschillende manieren, naar hetzelfde vraagstuk... Dus de trainingen die ik heb gevolgd die zorgde ook dat ik bepaalde dingen kon in mijn huidige werk... Dus ik denk tijdens het traineeprogramma, naast mijn netwerk, heb ik ook een hele boel extra vaardigheden opgebouwd waardoor ik multi-inzetbaar ben.’ – Western 11*

*Internal Network.* Every respondent acquired an internal network during the traineeship. One respondent described the network-building process during the programme as gaining ‘tentacles’ that spread all over the organisation. During the different stages of the programme, trainees encountered different colleagues and professional acquaintances from across the organisation. According to the respondents, these people can inform them about vacancies and other work-related activities, thus improving their employment chances.

*‘Maar ook vanuit de traineeship heb je gewoon; je werkt bij twee diensten en daar bouw je al een netwerk op. Je hebt je eigen trainee netwerk nog; die gaat op een gegeven moment overal in de hele gemeente zich vestigen en daar heb je ook eens soort van je tentakels... Je hebt niet alleen met je eigen trainee lichting te maken, maar je werkt ook nog samen met hbo-trainees, met de trainee lichting die voor jou was en die na jou was. Die leer je allemaal kennen. Al die mensen die je kent zitten overal verspreid binnen de hele gemeente, dus ja. Op een gegeven moment heb je overal je tentakels, zeg maar. Overal in het gebouw, waar je ook maar loopt, kom je een bekende tegen. Dan hou je een praatje en dan merk je ineens dat uit iets werk-gerelateerde misschien iets kan bloeien, zeg maar.’ – Non-Western 7*

*Talent Status Acquired.* Annually, a significant number of recent graduates, young professionals or starters apply for the traineeship. According to the respondents, they are perceived as valuable players because they went through a competitive selection process and finished the programme successfully. In other words, participating in the traineeship gave the former participants a certain level of status and therefore helped them stand out to employers. Thus, gaining status through the programme made the former participants attractive employees and increased their chances of employment.

*‘Ik denk dat bij sommige bedrijven, of misschien andere overheden of zo, of semioverheden, dat het wel bekend is en ook zo'n traineeship. Dat daardoor ook een stickertje kwaliteit zeg maar daarbij wordt geplakt.’ -Western 15*

### **5.2.2 Other Factors Influencing Employability**

The respondents also mentioned other factors that influenced their employment opportunities. These factors are discussed here. In addition, the data also reveal nuances with respect to these factors. These are also discussed in this section.

*Age.* According to most respondents, their age matters when it comes to finding employment, especially in the public sector. Being that the average age in the public sector is very high, younger individuals are more appealing to public sector organisations. They bring new perspectives and energy to the organisation. For this reason, due to their age, younger employees in the public sector differ from

the average Dutch public servant. This makes younger employees attractive to public sector organisations and enhances their employability.

*‘Ze zochten iemand die sterk genoeg zou zijn, omdat het een hele oude organisatie is waar ik nu zit. Dus de gemiddelde leeftijd zit daar echt ver boven gemiddelde leeftijd binnen de gemeente. Er zijn bijna alleen generatie-packters en degene die voor mij het kortste hier werkt, werkt er al 10 jaar... dus ik ben echt vernieuwing. Dus ze zochten ook iemand die daar, nou... met flink wat energie, tegenin durfde te gaan.’ – Western 11*

*Being a Generalist.* Some respondents mentioned that being a generalist or being broadly employable increases their employability. According to the respondents, not specialising in one discipline or not having a set of skills specific to one organisation increases their employment chances in comparison to individuals who are more narrowly skilled. Therefore, the respondents’ employment chances increase by being broadly skilled because they can do and understand more.

*‘V: Waarom is je kans zo groot? R: Omdat, ik denk, ik ben breed inzetbaar. Dat is makkelijk, zeg maar. Ik kan veel en dat kan ik ook wel laten zien.’ – Western 13*

However, being a generalist does not always work in the individual’s favour. For certain functions, employers need specialists with extensive knowledge or skills in a particular discipline.

*‘En ik weet ook dat ik bij een andere (daar ben ik het uiteindelijk niet geworden), daar wilde ze toch een meer inhoudelijk persoon..., maar uiteindelijk snapte ik ook dat ik het niet was geworden want dat was bij de afdeling X en ik had totaal nog geen inhoudelijk kennis daarvan.’ -Western 15*

*Being Informed about the Current Labour Market.* The data show that being informed about the labour market can influence employability. The labour market can be broken down into the internal and external markets. The respondents are better informed about the internal labour market because all of them sought and found employment there. Therefore, being informed about the current internal labour market increases one’s employability.

*‘Redelijk groot. Ik heb ook nu een nieuw baan gevonden binnen de interne markt, binnen de gemeente. Dus ja, wel goed.’ – Western 9*

However, not every respondent can estimate his or her chances in the external labour market. Some have some knowledge of how it works and therefore think they might have a chance. Yet, some cannot

predict their chances because they have never applied for a job in the external market. Thus, they find it difficult to estimate their opportunities. It seems that being informed about the external labour market also affects employability.

*'Vind ik lastig in te schatten. Zoals ik net zei: ik ben als gepolst binnen de consultancy. Dus ik weet dat dat wel goed zit, maar heb zelf nooit geprobeerd.'* – Non-Western 14

*Other Competencies.* As mentioned, competencies are considered an added value of the traineeship. However, after the traineeship, the respondents gained other competencies through other trajectories. Therefore, competencies gained outside of the development programme also play a role in enhancing employability. The data show that attaining several competencies increases one's chances of employment both within and outside an organisation. However, a few respondents also mentioned that it is crucial to be aware of one's competencies; otherwise, it cannot influence one's employability.

*'Ik heb natuurlijk ook wel zelfvertrouwen opgebouwd en expertise. Dus ik weet wel wat ik kan en dat maakt het wel veel makkelijker met een baan zoeken.'* – Western 4

*Network.* Similar to competencies, having a network is an added value of the traineeship. According to every respondent, having a network can help one find employment and thus increases their perceived employability. One respondent stated that without a network, it is very difficult to find employment.

*'Ik ben van mening dat je met een netwerk een heel eind kan komen, ongeacht wat je nou echt kan. Dus zonder sociaal netwerk wordt het heel lastig, denk ik. Je moet heel hard werken om ergens binnen te komen, denk ik.'* – Western 5

Due to the programme, the former trainees built significant internal networks that can help them find employment in different departments of the organisation. After the programme, the participants spread throughout the organisation, which made their internal networks even stronger. In addition, depending on their functions, some respondents had the chance to build external networks and build connections outside of the organisation that can influence their employment possibilities.

*'Netwerk speelt zeker een rol, dat heb ik ook wel gemerkt. Ik bedoel netwerk buiten de organisatie maar ook gewoon binnen de organisatie; dat speelt enorm mee.'* – Non-Western 7

*Types of Work Experience.* As mentioned, the work experience gained during the traineeship increased the participants' employment prospects. However, the respondents have gained other relevant work experience after the programme that has continuously increased their employment possibilities in the internal and external labour markets. Therefore, continuously being employed in different jobs influences one's employability.

*'Ja, dan hebben we het over CV natuurlijk. Mijn traineeship en mijn werkervaring kunnen bijdragen dat ik eerder aan een baan kom. Ik denk dat ik wel een sterk profiel heb.'* – Western 1

However, according to some respondents, the experienced gained during the programme becomes less relevant as a person gains more and other relevant experiences. Therefore, finishing a traineeship becomes less of an employability factor once other work experiences that are more admissible are gained.

*'Dat denk ik wel; dat het helpt als je net trainee af bent. Dan is het nog redelijk vers. Weet je, voor mij is het al vier jaar geleden dat ik klaar was met mijn traineeship. Dan is er ook veel gebeurd en dan heb je je op andere fronten laten zien, waardoor je niet meer bekend staat als die trainee die het goed deed maar gewoon als die werknemer die het gewoon goed doet.'* – Non-Western 14

In addition, according to the respondents, having relevant work experience in the public sector increases their chances of finding employment in the public sector. However, the data also show that work experience in the public sector makes public servants less attractive to private organisations. According to most respondents, private organisations view public servants as lazy, pampered, unproductive and bureaucratic. This stigma causes public employees to be less relevant to private organisations. Therefore, being a public servant can increase employment prospects in the public sector, but decreases employment prospects in the private sector.

*'Het is wel echt dat het nadeel van overheden gewoon is dat er gewoon een stigma op zit. Je bent te lui als ambtenaar en ik maak er ook wat grapjes over. Ik zit de hele dag alleen maar uit de raam te kijken en koffie te drinken, en als je dat eenmaal op je hebt dan is het wel lastig om eruit te komen.'* –

Western 4

In summary, the data show that the respondents are very confident in their possibilities for employment. In other words, they have highly perceived employability. Alongside the added value of the traineeship, the respondents mentioned different factors contributing to their employability. However, during the data analysis, several nuances were noted. Therefore, how these factors influence

employability depends on whether someone is searching for employment in the internal or external labour market and whether he or she are looking in the public or private sector.

### **5.3 Employability-Based Careers in the Public Sector**

After the traineeship, all of the respondents chose different career paths. While one left the organisation and moved abroad, the rest still work for the municipal organisation in The Hague in various roles in the organisation. In addition, one respondent even left the organisation and came back a few years later. The respondent who moved abroad joined the traineeship because of its learning and development aspects, while the one who left and came back joined the programme because he is driven by activities that are meaningful and add value to society.

While most respondents still work for the municipal organisation, their vocational-related behaviours and experiences after the traineeship reflect other aspects of employability-based careers. In addition, the traineeship highlights some aspects of employability-based careers. Furthermore, all of the respondents' career-related attitudes are associated with some element of employability-based careers. In this respect, this section is divided into the traineeship's support of employability-based careers (5.3.1), vocational-related behaviours and experiences after the traineeship (5.3.2) and career-related attitudes (5.3.3).

#### **5.3.1 The Traineeship's Support of Employability-Based Careers**

The organisational support for development provided by the Municipality of The Hague supports employability-based careers in the public sector.

*Various Roles and Functions.* During the two-year programme, the respondents were required to serve in two different roles within two different departments. In this respect, the traineeship encourages mobility, which is an aspect of employability-based careers.

*'Wisselen van twee werkplekken binnen twee jaar; verschillende dingen doen heeft me professioneel echt heel goed geholpen. Veel leren proeven, veel gedaan. De vrijheid hebben om zelf ook opdrachten op te pakken.'* – Non-Western 14

*Beyond Organisational Boundaries.* In addition, according to a few respondents, the traineeship encourages their participants to be open-minded. The organisational support for development motivated most of the respondents to think beyond the department or organisation. In other words, the traineeship encourages career-related attitudes beyond organisational boundaries. Careers that transpire outside of one department or organisation reflect one of the central elements of employability-based careers.

*'En als trainee word je sowieso echt aangespoord om breed te denken, eigenlijk dienst en organisatie overstijgend'. – Non-Western 7*

### **5.3.2 Vocational-Related Behaviours and Experiences**

While staying in one organisation does not highlight one of the central aspects of employability-based careers, other vocational-related behaviours and experiences after the traineeship reflect aspects of employability-based careers.

*Internal Employability or Intra-organisational Mobility.* During the traineeship, it is a requirement to change departments and functions every year. However, after finishing the traineeship, most respondents had multiple functions and roles in different departments. The constant switching between roles and functions suggests that the respondents have high internal employability or intra-organisational mobility. This is characteristic of employability-based careers.

*'Ik heb in 2,5 jaar tijd voor vijf afdelingen gewerkt bij drie verschillende diensten in verschillende rollen.'* – Western 3

*Employment Contracts.* In addition, during the interviews, some former trainees revealed that they had received different types of employment contracts after finishing the programme, including temporary contracts and freelance contracts. Different types of employment contracts, except for lifetime tenure, reflect the notion of an employability-based career.

*'Ik heb toen na mijn traineeship voor twee jaar een tijdelijk contract gekregen.'* – Western 17

*'Toen had ik een mail gestuurd naar al mijn oud-collega's, van; "ik sta inschreven als zzp'er en hier en hier kan je me voor inhuren."... Wat ik nu veel doe, is projectleider en procesbegeleider... en daarnaast doe ik ook aan coaching in organisatie begeleiden.'* – Western 18

### **5.3.3 Career-Related Attitudes**

In addition to vocational-related behaviours and experiences after the traineeship, the respondents also have career-related attitudes associated with employability-based careers.

*Broadly Employable Attitude.* When the respondents were asked whether they want to stay in their current roles or switch departments or organisations, all answered by saying no. The reason they said no is because some consider themselves generalists or broadly employable. Not to be compared to being broadly employable as an employability factor, but broad employability came forward as a career-related attitude. Some former trainees do not necessarily regard themselves as specialised in one discipline or subject. In addition, even if they do consider themselves to be specialised in one area of



expertise, they believe that their skills and knowledge can be applied in multiple departments or organisations. Therefore, they have a career-related attitude that is not subject to one organisation or discipline, thus highlighting characteristics of employability-based careers.

*'Ik vind alles leuk... Ik ben wat dat betreft wel echt generalist.'* – Western 12

*'Ik hou niet zo vast aan een organisatiestructuur ook al hoor ik bij één specifiek vakgebied. Het gaat erom dat je kennis en vaardigheden benut die je leuk vindt, maar die je ook overal kan inzetten; ook buiten de gemeente.'* - Western 14

*Self-managed Attitude.* The data also show that the respondents feel responsible for their careers. One mentioned that this responsibility is encouraged because the traineeship does not guarantee employment. In other words, most respondents consider their vocational-related behaviours and experiences to be self-managed. Having a self-managed attitude is one feature of employability-based careers.

*'Ik ben zelfverantwoordelijk voor mijn carrière en ik ben blij dat ik die verantwoordelijkheid voel. Dit gevoel heb ik altijd gehad want toen we nog in het traineesprogramma zaten hadden we geen baangarantie en ik maakte me toen ook geen zorgen. Want volgens mij moet je ook niet afhankelijk van willen zijn.'* –Western 1

*Intra-organisational Attitude.* When asked about their career perspectives, most respondents agreed that they would not want to stay in one function or one department in the municipal organisation. While most already switch between functions and roles (*internal employability or intra-organisational mobility*), they continue to have a mobile attitude within the organisation. Therefore, some have a career-related attitude that supports the mobility element of employability-based careers.

*'Als ik om de twee jaar 'job-hop', dan ben je ook niet na 20 jaar uitgekeken bij de gemeente. Ik ga niet 40 jaar op 1 functie zitten. Dat ga ik niet doen.'* – Non-Western 6

*Inter-organisational Attitude.* Some respondents also have career-related attitudes that allow their careers to transpire outside of the organisation and in various other organisations in the public sector. In other words, some participants have an inter-organisational, mobile mindset, which is in accordance with employability-based careers.

*'Ik denk niet heel lang. Dat is niet omdat ik het niet leuk vind, maar omdat ik ook het liefst even naar een andere publieke organisatie wil gaan. Misschien met net iets ander werk maar wel in dit veld, zeg*

*maar. Dat je toch wel meer voor je ontwikkeling weg gaat en dan ook weer terug kan komen. Ik zie heel veel mensen bij ons dat ook doen; die werken gewoon voor meerdere publieke organisaties in hun carrière, zeg maar. Dat is gewoon best wel leerzaam.*’ – Non-Western 8

*Between Sectors Attitude.* The data also show that some respondents have an attitude that reflects mobility between the public and private sectors. According to one respondent, such mobility is convenient because knowledge and experience in the private sector are useful for careers in the public sector. Therefore, working in the private sector and then returning to the public sector benefits one’s career prospects as a public servant. This attitude reflects a career that is not limited to one sector and thus reflects a key aspect of employability-based careers.

*‘Ik denk dat er heel veel goeie kennis in de private sector zit en dat krijg je niet mee als je alleen maar voor overheden werkt. Daarom wil ik wel graag ook in de private sector kijken. Het is ook zo carrière-technisch; als je bij de overheid wilt werken, werkt het ook veel beter als je kennis of ervaring hebt in de private sector. Daarom zou ik even naar de private sector uitstappen en terugkomen naar de publieke sector.’* – Western 4

*Home-Base Attitude.* Furthermore, a few respondents also have an attitude that considers one organisation as a home base from which the individual switches to different organisations and eventually comes back to the home organisation. According to a few respondents, this mobile attitude benefits the home organisation because of the knowledge and experience the employee gains outside of the organisation that subsequently helps improve the home organisation. The respondents with this attitude mentioned their bond with the city and employer branding as motives for this mindset. Similar to some of the other attitudes, the home-base attitude is equivalent to the mobility element of employability-based careers that supports careers beyond organisational boundaries.

*‘Maar ik sluit niet uit dat ik terug naar gemeente Den Haag zal komen... Je doet de ervaring op bij andere gemeenten of overheden en ik geloof dat dat juist de gemeente weer verder kan helpen... Gemeente Den Haag is gewoon een hele fijne werkgever. Wat ik zeg; ik woon in Den Haag. Ik vind het gewoon leuk om me voor de stad in te zetten.’* – Western 1

In sum, the traineeship supports a few elements of employability-based careers in the public sector. In addition, the vocational-related behaviours and experiences of the respondents after the traineeship reflect some features of employability-based careers. Furthermore, the respondents’ career-related attitudes are in accordance with certain aspects of employability-based careers.

## 5.4 Differences and Similarities between Western and Non-Western Respondents

In general, the data show many similarities between the Western and non-Western respondents regarding their experiences, perspectives, attitudes, behaviours and activities. However, the two groups differ with regard to organisational loyalty.

The data show that every non-Western respondent mentioned loyalty as a factor influencing his or her career-related attitudes and vocational-related behaviours and experiences. The non-Western respondents expressed their loyalty in the form of their faithfulness, gratitude and commitment to the municipal organisation because of its significant investment in their careers. In other words, their loyalty is based on a social exchange between the trainee and the organisation. One respondent stated that his loyalty to the municipality is a cultural component.

*‘Het komt voort uit een gevoel van loyaliteit. Als jij twee jaar na je traineeship, waar heel veel in je geïnvesteerd is, zegt van; “ik kies voor een andere gemeente” en jij laat eigenlijk de investering die in jou is gedaan niet uitkeren in de gemeente, dan heeft de gemeente daar in principe niks aan. Dat is niet mijn stijl. Dat vind ik niet chique.’ – Non-Western 2*

*‘Ik heb het net gehad over loyaliteit; dat heb ik toch wel in me. Ook misschien vanuit een stukje cultuur wat ik gewoon persoonlijk -denk ik- heb vanuit mijn privéleven. Daar staat loyaliteit gewoon hoog in de vandaal.’ – Non-Western 7*

However, even though organisational loyalty plays a role in the decision-making of non-Western respondents regarding their careers, they mentioned that other individual and external factors might also play a role. In certain cases, organisational loyalty is simply not possible due to various factors, and this therefore limits their expression of such loyalty to the organisation.

*‘Ik bedoel we leven in een harde tijd. Je kan het nu leuk hebben, maar voor hetzelfde geld verandert over een half jaar die situatie en word je weggestuurd; dat kan ook de werkelijkheid zijn. Dus loyaliteit tot een bepaald niveau, maar op een gegeven moment gaat het wel om jezelf.’ – Non-Western 7*

In comparison to the non-Western respondents, the Western respondents do not embody organisational loyalty. Only one Western respondent expressed his loyalty to the Municipality of The Hague. However, similar to the one non-Western respondent, the Western individuals also consider their relationship with the organisation to be transactional. During the traineeship, the organisation invests in the respondents, and in return, they work hard for the organisation during the programme. After the programme, they do not necessarily feel committed to or think they should give something back to the organisation in return for the organisation’s investment.

*'Dat gevoel heb ik helemaal niet gehad. Ik weet dat er heel veel geïnvesteerd is, maar ik weet ook dat ik werkzaamheden geleverd heb... Het blijft mijn keuze. Ik bedoel, er zit geen verplichting. Niet van de organisatie kant en niet van onze kant. En daarbij heb ik het gevoel dat ik best goed gepresteerd heb tijdens de traineeship. Dus ik probeerde gewoon mijn werk heel erg goed te doen om op die manier te laten dat ik heel erg waardeer wat ze in mij hebben geïnvesteerd en in onze hele groep.'* –

Western 12

In sum, the Western and non-Western respondents only differ in terms of organisational loyalty. Every non-Western respondent expressed organisational loyalty. However, other factors might limit their expression of this loyalty. On the other hand, the Western respondents consider their relationship with the organisation to be transactional. The organisation provides them support for development and in return receives high-quality labour. At the end of the programme, the Western respondents did not feel obligated to give something back.

## 6. Conclusion

This chapter serves as the conclusion of this research. In this investigation, five theoretical sub-questions and four empirical sub-questions have been formulated to help answer the central research question. The theoretical sub-questions were answered in the theoretical background, and the empirical sub-questions were answered in the results chapter. Based on these answers, the conclusion is drawn. Subsequently, based on this conclusion, the central research question is answered.

This chapter is divided into five sections, each dedicated to one of the central themes in this investigation with the last one presenting the overarching conclusion. In section 6.1, the effect of organisational support for development on careers is discussed. In addition, other factors influencing careers are also presented. Section 6.2 presents the effect of organisational support for development on employability along with other factors of employability. This section is followed by section 6.3, which elaborates on employability-based careers in the public sector. Section 6.4 discusses the differences and similarities between the Western and non-Western respondents. Lastly, the chapter concludes with the overarching conclusion in which the central research question is answered

### 6.1 The Effects of Organisational Support for Development on Careers

According to the theoretical framework, organisational support for development consists of training courses, work-related activities, job rotation, on-the-job learning and supervisor support (Kraimer et al., 2011). The organisational support for development used in this investigation, the traineeship of the Municipality of The Hague, included some of these trajectories. The traineeship was divided into four different categories: personal development, organisational awareness development, on-the-job learning and a personal budget for competency development in different trainings and courses. In addition, during the four trajectories, the participants received supervisor support in form of a trainee coordinator, a department manager and a personal coach.

In addition, the traineeship also assisted its former participants in achieving their career objectives. This achievement was expected because several authors argue that the provision of organisational support for development supports individuals in reaching career goals (Wittekind et al., 2010; Veld et al., 2015). The different respondents cited learning and development, career change, non-profit motivation and the opportunity to gain relevant work experience as reasons to apply for the programme. In addition to achieving their objectives, the programme exceeded the respondents' expectations. The added value of the programme, including self-awareness and the opportunity to change careers, affected their career-related attitudes and vocational-related behaviours and experiences (Hall, 2002).

*Self-Awareness.* Due to the personal development trajectory of the programme, the respondents became self-aware of their career-related attitudes and vocational-related behaviours and experiences

that fit their personal needs and desires. Therefore, the respondents chose career paths that fit them as a person.

*Career Change.* Due to the traineeship, the respondents had the opportunity to change their vocational pathways and work in positions different from their academic degrees, thus affecting their vocational-related behaviours and experiences.

### **Other Factors Influencing Careers**

As mentioned, this investigation explored other factors that influence the careers of the respondents besides the traineeship. After finishing the programme, the respondents also named other factors that affect their career. From the data analysis, individual and external factors have been distinguished.

#### ***Individual factors***

*Self-interest.* According to the respondents, their career-related attitudes, behaviours and experiences are based on their personal interests, advantages and well-being. Therefore, most respondents have a career based on their self-interest.

*Organisational Loyalty.* Some respondents mentioned organisational loyalty as a factor affecting their career. These respondents are loyal to their employer in terms of being faithful, grateful and committed because of the remarkable investment the municipality made in their career.

*Stage of Life.* Changing perspectives and priorities during the respondents' lives have some implications on their attitudes associated with vocational-related behaviours and experiences, such as becoming a parent or the need for stability. Therefore, how career paths are shaped depends on which stage of life the respondents are in.

*Personality.* The distinct character of each respondent also determines his or her career. Their characteristics and qualities depict the respondents' career perspectives. Most of the former trainees have a personality-driven career.

*Non-profit Driven.* Being driven by activities that are meaningful and add value to society is a common reason to seek employment in the public sector and affects career-related attitudes, behaviours and experiences. Most respondents said that they do not want to work for an organisation with a profit objective and therefore, the mission statement of an organisation's values affects the respondents' career decisions.

#### ***External factors***

*Organisational Culture.* According to the respondents, the organisational culture must fit their personality. The respondents consider the organisational culture of the public sector to be bureaucratic and not a good fit with who they are, which might be a motive to exit a public organisation. However,

none of them has actually left the organisation for this reason. Therefore, organisational culture affects career-related attitudes but not vocational-related behaviours and experiences.

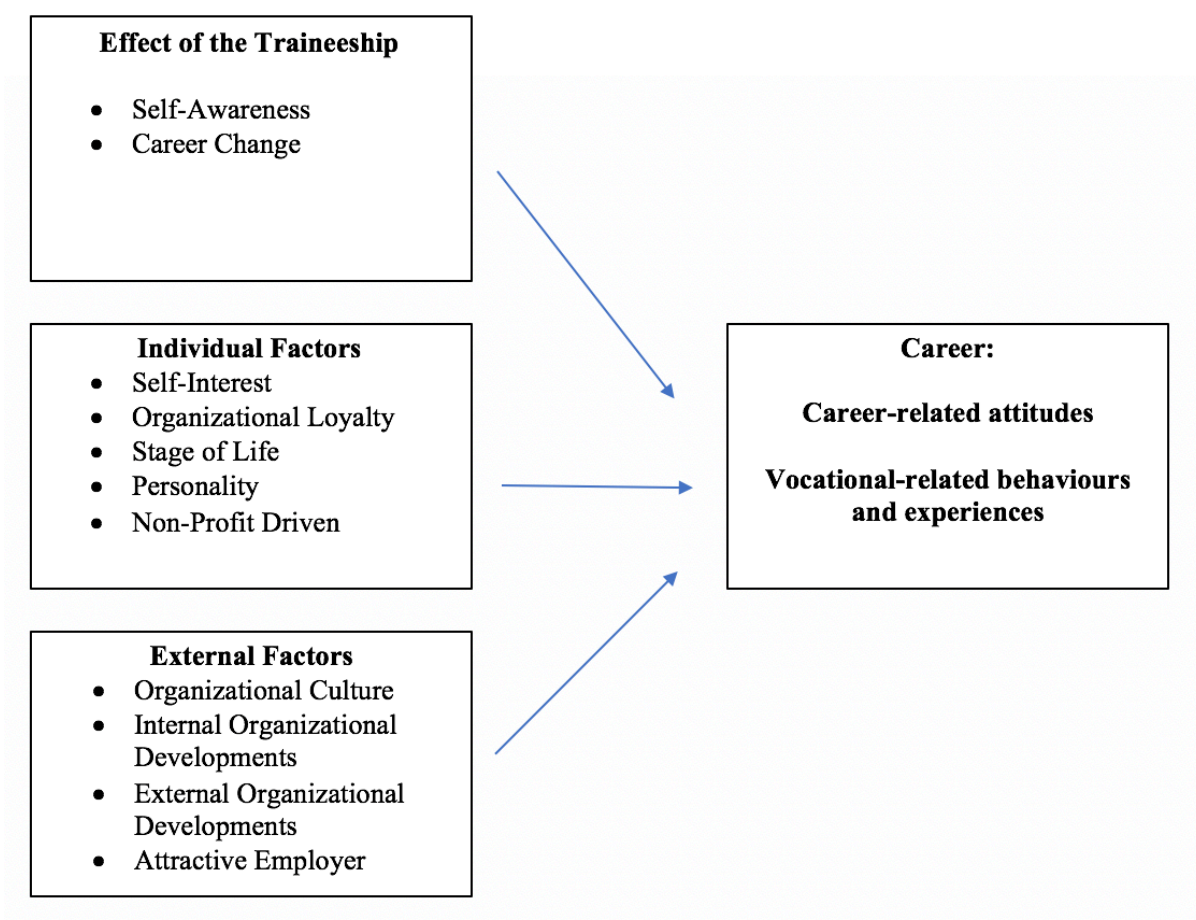
*Internal Organisational Developments.* Structural changes, strategic planning and political-administrative developments within a public organisation can affect the employer-employee relationship. These developments are beyond the respondents' control but still affect their careers.

*External Organisational Developments.* Developments outside the organisation not only influence its activities but also its employment relationships. Therefore, external organisational developments affect respondents' vocational pathways.

*Attractive Employer.* The respondents expressed a preference to work for an employer that offers reasonable terms of employment with respect to development possibilities, working conditions and work-life balance. Therefore, this factor affects where they choose their career, thus affecting their career-related attitudes, behaviours and experiences.

To conclude this section, figure 1 has been made that depicts the relationship between the different factors that came forward in this study and career-related attitudes and vocational-related behaviours and experiences.

Figure 1: Various factors influencing career



## 6.2 The Effects of Organisational Support for Development on Employability

Similar to careers, organisational support for development affects employability (Wittekind et al., 2010; Veld et al., 2015). According to the literature, these employability factors include knowledge, skills, access to a network and work experience (Bernston & Marklund 2007; Guilbert et al., 2016). In other words, the respondents' possibilities in the labour market have increased thanks to these employability factors. According to the findings in this investigation, the traineeship of the Municipality of The Hague increased the respondents' perceived employability.

*Work Experience.* The data show that the respondents obtained a variety of work experience during the traineeship that has increased their employability. Bernston and Marklund (2007) consider work experience an employability factor.

*Competencies.* Competencies refer to a range of abilities, knowledge, skills and expertise. The cluster of competencies respondents gained during the programme could be used in various professional functions and therefore enhance their employability. Competencies as employability factors have been already identified by Guilbert and colleagues (2016).

*Internal Network.* The internal network provides the respondents with information about vacancies and other work-related possibilities. This information can be used to find employment and increases employability in comparison to an individual without this information. Bernston and Marklund (2007) recognise networks as an employability factor.

*Talent Status Acquired.* Finishing the programme gave the respondents a talent status and therefore made them attractive to various organisations, thus increasing their employability.

### Other Factors Influencing Employability

Due to the exploratory nature of this study, other factors that influence employability have been explored. The data suggests six other factors that influence employability.

*Age.* The most respondents cited age as an employability factor. This factor has been discussed by Guilbert and colleagues (2016). According to the trainees, because the average age in the public sector is high, younger individuals are more appealing to public sector organisations. For this reason, younger employees have greater employment opportunities compared to older individuals.

*Being a Generalist.* Respondents that are not specialised in one area and do not have specific skills that belong to one organisation have more employment chances than individuals who are more narrowly skilled. Therefore, according to the respondents, their employment chances are enhanced by being broadly skilled because they are able to do and understand more.

*Being Informed about the Current Labour Market.* The data shows that being informed about the quantity and quality of employment available affects employability. One's knowledge concerning the internal and external labour markets is acknowledged by De Cuyper and De Witte (2011) as an employability factor.



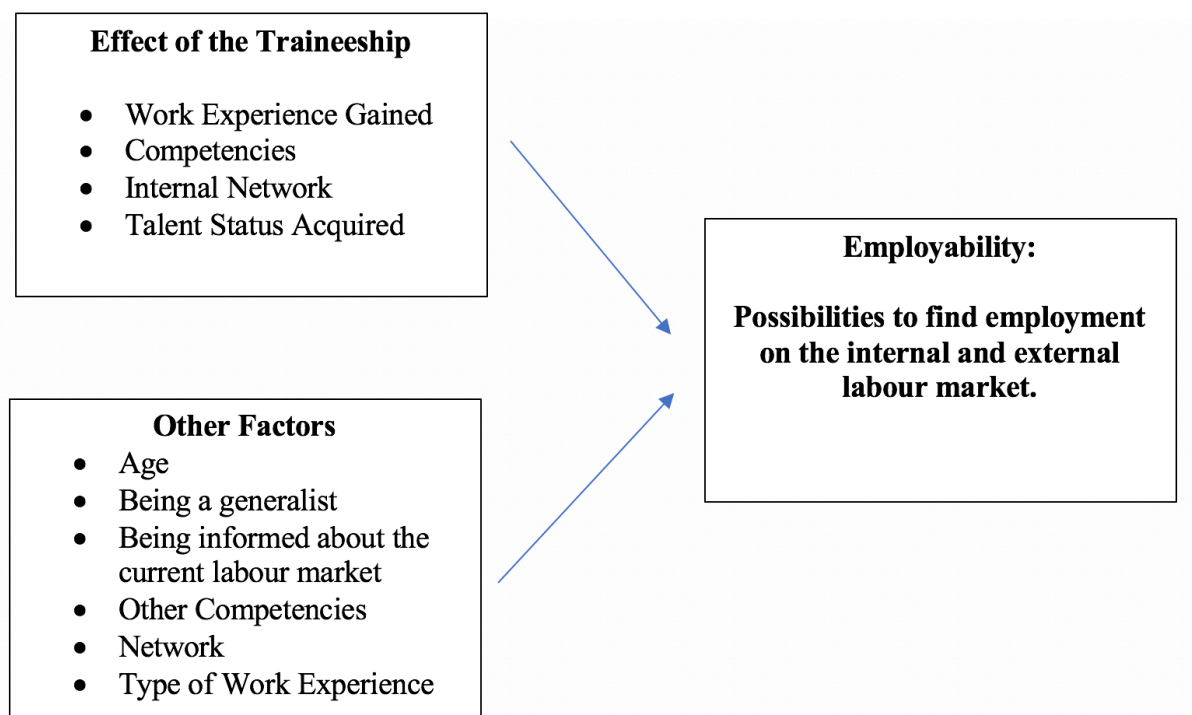
*Other Competencies.* Alongside the competencies gained during the traineeship, the respondents gained competencies outside of the programme. Therefore, similar to those acquired in the traineeship, these competencies can also be used to increase one's employability. As mentioned, Guilbert and colleagues (2016) consider competencies to be an employability factor.

*Network.* Alongside internal networks, the former trainees also gained external networks. The information from internal and external networks can help the respondents find employment. Therefore, networks increase employability. As mentioned before, networks are considered by Bernston and Marklund (2007) to be an employability factor.

*Types of work experience.* In addition to the work experience gained during the traineeship, the respondents acquired other relevant work experiences that have affected their employability. However, the type of work experience determines whether employability increases or decreases. Generally, this attribute is also regarded as an employability factor by Bernston and Marklund (2007).

To conclude this section, figure 2 has been made that depicts the relationship between the different factors that came forward in this study and employability.

Figure 2: Various factors influencing employability



### 6.3 Employability-Based Careers in the Public Sector

Hall (2002:12) defines a career as a 'perceived sequence of attitudes and behaviours associated with their work-related experiences and activities'. In this investigation, a distinction was made between career-related attitudes and vocational-related behaviours and experiences. While most of the respondents still work for the Municipality of The Hague, suggesting a traditional organisational career

(Hall, 1996), their career-related attitudes and vocational-related behaviours and experiences reflect features of employability-based careers. In addition, the organisational support for development provided by the Municipality of The Hague also highlights some aspects of employability-based careers.

The traineeship encourages its participants to have various roles and functions and to develop a mindset beyond departmental and organisational boundaries. Mobility and work that transpires outside of one department or organisation are central elements of employability-based careers (Clarke, 2013). This encouragement influenced the career-related attitudes and vocational-related behaviours and experiences of the respondents, which is associated with employability-based careers. In other words, the organisational support for development supports employability-based careers to some extent.

In addition, the vocational-related behaviours and experiences of the respondents reflect some aspects of employability-based careers in the public sector. After the programme, the respondents had multiple functions and roles in different departments. These switches between roles and functions suggest a high internal employability or intra-organisational mobility. In addition, some respondents received different types of employment contracts that are not associated with lifetime tenure (Hall, 1996). The contracts that came forth were temporary contracts and freelance contracts (Krives et al., 2011; Boselie & Thunnissen, 2017). Therefore, their vocational-related behaviours and experiences (Hall, 2002) imply employability-based careers in the public sector (Clarke, 2013). Furthermore, the respondents have career-related attitudes associated with employability-based careers.

*Broadly Employable Attitude.* Most respondents consider themselves generalists or broadly employable. While some are specialised in one area of enterprise, others have the perspective their competencies can be used in various departments or organisations. Therefore, the respondents have a career-related attitude that is not subject to one organisation or discipline and thus highlight employability-based careers in the public sector (Clarke, 2013).

*Self-Managed Attitude.* The respondents consider their vocational-related behaviours and experiences to be self-managed. This attitude reflects employability-based careers in the public sector (Clarke, 2013). In addition, it also highlights some core elements of the protean career, such as self-direction and values-driven, and therefore reflects protean careers in the public sector (Briscoe et al., 2006).

*Intra-organisational Attitude.* Most respondents switch between various functions and roles. However, the data show that they continue to have a mobile attitude within the organisation. Therefore, some have a career-related attitude that supports (intra-organisational) mobility, an element of employability-based careers.

*Inter-organisational Attitude.* The respondents also expressed the desire for their careers to transpire outside of organisational boundaries. In other words, the respondents have a career-related attitude that supports (inter-organisational) mobility or external employability within the public sector,

and thus their attitudes reflect employability-based careers (Clarke, 2013). In addition, such a mindset is associated with the boundaryless career described by Sullivan and Arthur (2006).

*Between Sectors Attitude.* Besides having an attitude that allows careers to transpire outside of organisational boundaries in the public sector, some respondents also have an attitude that concerns mobility between the public and private sector. Therefore, a between sectors attitude encourages the mobile aspect of employability-based careers (Clarke, 2013).

*Home-base Attitude.* A home-base attitude suggests that the respondents want to switch organisations but always have one organisation as a home base. In other words, these respondents want to be inter-organisationally mobile while returning to the Municipality of The Hague. Therefore, the home-base attitude is equivalent to one aspect of employability-based careers that supports careers beyond organisational boundaries.

#### **6.4 Differences and Similarities between Western and Non-Western Individuals**

The data show that there are many similarities between the Western and non-Western respondents regarding their experiences, perspectives, attitudes, behaviours and activities. However, the groups differ on organisational loyalty. The difference was expected based on the literature. According to Hur (2012), cultural difference between the majority and minority groups influences their career attitudes.

Each of the non-Western respondents expressed their loyalty to the Municipality of The Hague. The non-Western individuals described their loyalty as a continuous social exchange between the employee and the organisation because of the investment the organisation made in their development. However, their organisational loyalty can be limited by factors that influence their career. Yet, the Western respondents described their relationship with the Municipality of The Hague as transactional. During the traineeship, the municipal organisation invests in development and receives high-quality labour in return. At the end of the investment, the Western respondents did not feel a responsibility to give something back. Therefore, at the end of the traineeship, the Western respondents are not loyal to the Municipality of The Hague, while the non-Western respondents are.

#### **6.5 The Overarching Conclusion**

The sub-questions and the main question are answered: How does the provision of organisational support for development affect the careers and employability of Western and non-Western individuals? And, is it perceived to support employability-based careers within the public sector?

To conclude, the provision of organisational support for development affects the careers and employability of its participants. In addition, employability-based careers are somewhat reflected within

the public sector. Furthermore, there is no difference between Western and non-Western individuals in the public sector except in terms of organisational loyalty.

First, while the motives for and experiences during the traineeship may vary, every respondent achieved their objective and added value to their careers. This made the respondents self-aware of their career-related attitudes and gave them the opportunity to switch vocations. In addition, this added value brought the respondents several employability factors that increased their employment opportunities. These employability factors include work experience, competencies, organisational awareness and access to an internal network.

Second, the respondents also mentioned other factors affecting their career paths after the traineeship. In addition, the respondents indicated that factors other than those related to the programme also influenced their employability.

Third, employability-based careers (Clarke, 2013) are somewhat reflected within the public sector. After the traineeship, most respondents only had one employer, suggesting a traditional organisational career (Hall, 1996). However, their career-related attitudes and vocational-related behaviours and experiences (Hall, 2002) reflect aspects of employability-based careers (Clarke, 2013). In addition, the organisational support for development provided by the Municipality of The Hague also highlights some aspects of employability-based careers in the public sector. Furthermore, elements of protean (Briscoe et al., 2006) and boundaryless careers (Sullivan & Arthur, 2006) are seen in this investigation.

Last, according to this study, there is no difference between Western and non-Western respondents. Their motives, experiences and value of the programme were the same. In addition, they do not differ in their careers or employability or the factors influencing them. However, the data did show a difference between Western and non-Western respondents in terms of organisational loyalty that might affect their vocational pathways.

## **7. Discussion**

This last chapter pays attention to the relevant issues discussed in the introduction of this paper. This is done with the findings and conclusion of this research. The first section (7.1) discusses the new scientific insights arising from this research. The second section (7.2) presents the methodological limitations of this investigation along with possibilities for future research. The last section (7.3) finalises this research with recommendations formulated for the practice.

### **7.1 Scientific Insights**

Prior to the empirical data collection of this investigation, the literature study showed that employability-based careers have never been investigated in the public sector (Clarke, 2013). In addition, limited research has been done on the role organisations play in employability enhancement and how individuals experience the combined effects of individual and organisational efforts to build employability (De Vos et al., 2011; Veld et al., 2015). Furthermore, some conflicting theoretical assumptions were found between employability-based careers (Clarke, 2013) and TM (De Vos & Dries, 2013) and diversity literature (Ashikali & Groeneveld, 2015; Çelik et al., 2016). Therefore, the scientific insights on these subjects found in this investigation are addressed in this section. In addition, other unexpected insights are also presented.

#### **7.1.1 Organisational Support for Development**

In this investigation, personal development was seen as an essential feature of the traineeship and was also considered as an added value for the careers of the respondents. This development trajectory was not included in development activities described by Kraimer and her colleagues (2011) as one of the elements of organisational support for development. With respect to that, since personal development was considered an added value of the traineeship, this investigation can expand the literature on organisational support by adding this development activity. In addition, personal development can be a useful HR instrument for other organisations. Due to this personal development trajectory, the respondents became aware of their own needs. In addition, according to (Dierdorff et al. (2018), self-awareness is a crucial individual attribute that contributes to team functioning as well as performance effectiveness and, therefore should be actively managed. The positive consequences for team and performance effectiveness found in the study suggest that investment in self-awareness can lead to sustained organisational improvement.

#### **7.1.2 Careers**

According to several authors (Alonso et al., 2015; Boselie & Thunnissen, 2017), careers in the public sector are changing. This change also became evident through the empirical evidence found in this investigation. The study provides insights, to some extent, into a shift to employability-based

careers (Clarke, 2013) in the public sector. A clear distinction should be made between career-related attitudes and vocational-related behaviours and experiences. In this investigation, all of the respondents have a career-related attitude associated with employability-based careers (Clarke, 2013). In addition, the organisational support for development also encouraged the respondents to have employability-based attitudes. However, their vocational-related behaviours and experiences highlight, to some extent, employability-based careers. Most of the respondents still work for one organisation after the traineeship. In other words, their vocational-related behaviours and experiences reflect one crucial feature of traditional organisational career. Therefore, even though individuals have an employability-based attitude, it does not necessarily mean that their vocational-related behaviours and experiences also reflect their mindset. This difference in career-related subjects can be explained because other factors also influence career. While the respondents do not have a problem to find another employment, other factors influence their vocational pathways and, therefore causes their career-related attitude not to equivalent to their vocational-related behaviours and experiences. In this study, several career factors were identified and divided into individual factors and external factors.

In addition, the different factors influencing career can be linked to person-environment fit theory. According to the person-environment fit theory, a better-fit of individual attributes with their work environment is associated with better outcomes for both the individual and organisation (Su et al., 2015). In this investigation, the individual factors can be seen as individual attributes while the organisational culture can be considered as the work environment. Similar to the career-related attitude of the different respondents, if the organisational culture does not fit with a person, it is considered a motive to exit the organisation. Therefore, from the findings of this research, the person-environment fit theory can be associated with career literature.

Furthermore, the non-profit drive of the respondents can also be associated with public service motivation (PSM). While there is no conformity on the definition of PSM, Horton (2008) described this concept as a driver of public servants to contribute to the general interest. This description is similar to the non-profit drive, as described by the respondents. However, what the respondents describe as a non-profit drive is not always in accordance with the different definitions of PSM. Therefore, from the results of this investigation, career literature can be associated with PSM to a certain degree.

In this respect, this investigation contributes to the career literature on the ever-changing careers in the public sector.

### **7.1.3 Employability**

From the employability factors described in the theoretical background, only health and education (Guilbert et al., 2016) were not identified in this study. In this respect, every recent graduate, regardless of educational background, can apply for the traineeship; this explains why education was not mentioned as an employability factor. In addition, this empirical evidence can be explained because

most of the respondents found employment in various sectors other than the ones pertaining to their academic degrees. Therefore, this evidence can explain why the respondents did not mention education as an employability factor. The data also shows that the respondents' employability perception was based on their experiences with job hunting in the past. Therefore, they also could not estimate their chances in the external labour market because they had never experienced it before. This lack of experience was another limitation of the investigation because most of the respondents had not experienced the external market. The limitations are discussed in a later section of this paper.

In addition, talent status was considered as an employability factor. Talent status is acquired by being identified as a valuable, high-potential employee or talented individual by an organisation (De Boeck et al., 2018). Talented individuals are individuals with exceptional competencies and excellent performance (Thunnissen, 2016). Organisations seek, on the one hand, talented employees (Thunnissen, 2016), but on the other hand, they also want employable individuals (Veld et al., 2015). According to the empirical findings, participation in the development programme gives the participant talent status and also enhances his or her employability. In some respects, there is some overlap between talent and employability (Nilsson, 2012). In general, talented employees are employable individuals. However, employability does not only include talent. The data showed that being talented increases employment chances, but talent alone is not enough. Employability is also increased by other employability factors in addition to talent, therefore making employability a very complex notion. Thus, since employability is complicated, next to investment in talent, public organisations also need to pay more attention to the enhancement of employability of every type of public servant because according to scientific (Hall, 1996; Baruch, 2004; Clarke, 2013), political (Massey, 2018), and demographical developments (Du Plessis et al., 2015; Cassel, 2017), this notion is becoming relevant in the current labour market.

#### **7.1.4 Talent Management**

The findings in this research contradicts the theoretical assumption that high potentials that receive organisational support for development are most often found to have a traditional organisational career (De Vos & Dries, 2013). According to the findings, the career-related attitudes and vocational-related behaviours and experiences of these valuable players are associated with various aspects of employability-based careers. Most respondents experience their participation in the programme as a transactional relationship. They do not consider the employment relationship as a continuous exchange between employer and employee; rather, they consider it as a transaction. This reasoning is in accordance with the definition of psychological contracts by Robinson (1996). She described this notion as follows: 'Psychological contracts refer to employees' perceptions of what they owe to their employers and what their employers owe to them' (Robinson, 1996, 574). Therefore, psychological contracts are, in some respect, similar to transactional employment relationships. Transactional employment contracts

are reflected by employability-based careers (Clarke, 2013). Being that psychological contracts are already recognised by TM literature (De Boeck et al., 2018), employability-based careers literature can take some insights from the TM literature, which recognises transactional employment contracts as psychological contracts (Robinson, 1996; De Boeck et al., 2018). On the other hand, the talent management literature might build on insights from the careers literature, which states that careers are becoming more flexible, adaptable and self-managed.

### **7.1.5 Diversity Management**

Similar in some respect to TM, the results in this investigation also contradict theoretical assumptions that individuals targeted by diversity management are most often found to have traditional organisational careers (Ashikali & Groeneveld, 2015; Çelik et al., 2016). In this investigation, even though the non-Western respondents show signs of organisational loyalty as a cultural aspect (Hur, 2012), they also display career-related attitudes and some vocational-related behaviours and experiences in accordance with various features of employability-based careers. This adds an interesting perspective to both careers and diversity management literature. Therefore, the careers literature might take some lessons from diversity management that minorities can still display organisational loyalty while having employability-based attitudes and behaviours. For example, an individual can still be loyal to one organisation while being intra-organisational-mobile and function in different roles. On the other hand, diversity management might build on some insights from the career literature by acknowledging that individuals targeted by the diversity policy can also have a career that is based on flexibility, adaptability, mobility and self-management.

## **7.2 Limitations and Future Research**

Although the methodological choices in the fourth chapter were made as an attempted to increase the reliability and validity of this investigation, this research has some methodological limitations. These limitations could have influenced the outcome and the reliability and validity of this research. In the remainder of this section, attention is paid to various methodological limitations. In addition, this section also elaborates on how future research can address these limitations.

First, the variety of the respondents in this research are considered to be high-potential, valuable employees or talented individuals. Their selection for the traineeship of the Municipality of The Hague was based on competitive selection procedures, high assessment scores and complex personality tests. They even consider themselves to belong in the one percent of the talent pool of young professionals in the Netherlands. Therefore, they are not considered average public servants. The respondents experience more (employment) opportunities due to their talent status, and thus these findings cannot be generalised to the everyday public employee. Therefore, future research can also investigate the careers of public servants without talent status to make the empirical findings more generalisable to the



entire public sector. By using regular public servants, more insights can be offered on the shift to employability-based careers in the public sector. Moreover, future research should also pay attention to the careers of groups targeted by diversity policies in the public sector. According to the results in this investigation, their careers include aspects of both traditional organisational careers (organisational loyalty) and employability-based careers (transaction employment relationship). These findings offer an interesting perspective to both diversity and careers literature.

Second, due to low response rate, scheduling conflict, and availability, the respondents from outside the organisational boundaries were not enough. In addition, the researcher only had access to the LinkedIn accounts of the former trainees, which is not the most effective communication method. As a result, of the eighteen respondents used in this investigation, only three of them actually exited the organisation. However, one of them still worked for the municipality under a freelance contract while the other one left the organisation after the traineeship and came back a few years later. Being that employability-based careers also encourages external employment (Clarke, 2013), the researcher cannot make a judgement about this feature. Therefore, follow-up research can focus on external employment. Thus, future research can track former participants of organisational support for development that have exited the organisation and compare their career-related attitudes and vocational-related behaviours and experiences with those who have stayed in the organisation.

Third, according to Hall's (2002) definition of career, this concept concerns vocational-related behaviours and activities spread over the span of an individual's life. However, the respondents used in the research were at the beginning of their careers. The average years of experience after the traineeship is 2,3 years. This short amount of vocational-related behaviours and activities makes it difficult to make a judgement about career when the state retirement age in the Netherlands is gradually increasing (SVB, 2018). Therefore, it also makes difficult to generalise these findings to every public servant. In addition, being in that stage of life can change, and it has an effect on career paths; it implies that career-related attitudes and vocational-related behaviours and activities do not always stay the same during someone's life. Therefore, to make a reasonable judgement whether there is a shift to employability-based careers, follow-up research is recommended. For that reason, another research possibility is to follow a particular cohort of a development programme from the entry point to later in their careers through a longitudinal research design. In this respect, researchers can mind Hall's (2002) definition of a career that transpires over the span of an individual's life.

Lastly, only six of the respondents were non-Western. The most apparent reason for this lack of non-Western respondents is because the 50/50 diversity policy has been enacted for only three years. For several years, the Municipality of the Hague has a diversity policy for the traineeship. However, the annual inflow of trainees had the 50/50 requirement and, therefore making the sample of non-Western individuals less than the Western sample. In addition, 50% of the non-Western individuals have left the organisation. Furthermore, there were no specific criteria or documents upon which this distinction Western and non-Western individual was made. The distinction was based on the

information provided by the Municipal organisation. However, which factors determine this distinction were not clear. Therefore, this makes a possible replication of this investigation or a comparison with another study difficult because the selection criteria was not clear. Thus, future research should also pay attention to a clear definition between Western and non-Western that is internationally recognised and, therefore making replication in the future possible.

### **7.3 Practical Recommendations**

The public sector is clearly dealing with several developments (Alonso et al., 2015; Boselie & Thunnissen, 2017; Roness, 2017). Therefore, this investigation recommends that public employers change the nature of their employee-organisation relationships. Individuals, especially the younger ones (Festing & Schäfer, 2014), have a career attitude related to elements of the employability-based career and a limited vocational-behaviour related to a traditional organisational career. Public organisations should find different types of transactional employment contracts that benefit both the individual and the organisation. For example, the provision of development activities can enhance overall performance in a public organisation (Poocharoen & Lee, 2013; Veld et al., 2015) while making employees more employable due to the different employability factors gained through the various development activities (Veld et al., 2015). Since transaction relationships are based on reciprocation, poorly managed development programmes can result in a high cost and, thus poor returns in investments. Successfully managed organisational support for development is evident when a significant investment is made in the development of employees that also assists individuals in finding the right position or role in a public sector career. In exchange, these employees make a significant contribution to the organisation, thus resulting in benefits for both parties. Therefore, while public employers cannot guarantee lifetime employment contracts (Clarker, 2013), their investment in the employability of their employees can be a source of career security because of the continuous employment chances (Forrier & Sels, 2003; Silla et al., 2009; De Cuyper & De Witte, 2010; Freese et al., 2013).

In addition, public organisations must not be concerned when it comes to the provision of organisational support to individuals targeted by the diversity policy. The investment in their development fosters loyalty and commitment to their current employer, thus decreasing their turn-over intention (Çelik & Çelik, 2017; De Boeck et al., 2018). This exchange implies that minorities return their investments by staying in the organisation and making significant contributions to the organisation as public servants. Therefore, public employers are certain that their investment are guaranteed to be returned.

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## 9. Appendix

### Appendix I – Invitation Email to Participate in the Research

Beste oud trainee van de Gemeente Den Haag,

Momenteel ben ik bezig met mijn afstudeeronderzoek voor mijn masteropleiding Strategisch Human Resource Management aan de Universiteit Utrecht. Mijn onderzoek gaat over de effecten van de traineeship van de Gemeente Den Haag op de loopbaan van oud participanten. Om meer inzicht te krijgen in dit thema, heb ik besloten om interviews te houden. Als voormalige trainee bent u in een ideale positie om vanuit uw eigen perspectief relevante informatie te verstrekken omtrent dit onderwerp.

Het interview zal ongeveer 30-45 minuten duren. De vragen zullen gaan over uw ervaring en perspectieven op de arbeidsmarkt na uw traineeship. Er zal vertrouwelijk worden omgegaan met uw antwoorden.

Indien u bereid bent om deel te nemen aan mijn onderzoek hoor ik graag wanneer u beschikbaar bent, zodat we een afspraak kunnen inplannen. Als u nog vragen heeft, aarzel dan niet om die te stellen.

Alvast bedankt.

Met vriendelijke groet,

Daniel Jansen



## **Appendix II – Reminder Email to Participate in the Research**

Beste oud trainee van de Gemeente Den Haag,

Vorige week heb ik u een mail gestuurd omtrent mijn afstudeeronderzoek. Hierbij nogmaals de uitnodiging.

Momenteel ben ik bezig met mijn afstudeeronderzoek voor mijn masteropleiding Strategisch Human Resource Management aan de Universiteit Utrecht. Samen met de gemeente Den Haag doe ik onderzoek naar de effecten van de traineeship van de Gemeente Den Haag op de loopbaan van oud participanten. Om meer inzicht te krijgen in dit thema, heb ik besloten om interviews te houden. Als voormalige trainee bent u in een ideale positie om vanuit uw eigen perspectief relevante informatie te verstrekken omtrent dit onderwerp.

Het interview zal ongeveer 30-45 minuten duren. De vragen zullen gaan over uw ervaring en perspectieven op de arbeidsmarkt na uw traineeship. Er zal vertrouwelijk worden omgegaan met uw antwoorden.

Indien u bereid bent om deel te nemen aan mijn onderzoek hoor ik graag wanneer u beschikbaar bent, zodat we een afspraak kunnen inplannen. Als u nog vragen heeft, aarzel dan niet om die te stellen.

Alvast bedankt.

Met vriendelijke groet,

Daniel Jansen

## Appendix III – Topic List

### Introductie Onderzoeker

- Mezelf voorstellen (opleiding, onderzoek gemeente Den Haag)
- Uitleg onderzoek (doelstelling, samenwerking met de gemeente Den Haag)
- Toestemming vragen voor het opnemen van de interviews
- Waarborging anonimiteit van de respondent
- Duur van de interview (30-45min.)
- Onduidelijkheden?

### Introductie Respondent

- Kunt u uzelf kort voorstellen? (Achtergrondinformatie van de respondent)  
-leeftijd, studieachtergrond, functies voor het traineeship, lichte traineeship

**Het traineesprogramma van gemeente Den Haag** (Organizational Support for Development: *Organisatorische ondersteuning door middel van trainingen en programma's die de ontwikkeling van werknemers bevorderen en die hun interne en externe carrière mogelijkheden en -doelstellingen vergroten*).

- Waarom hebt u gekozen om het traineesprogramma van gemeente Den Haag te volgen?
- Welke functies had u tijdens uw traineeship? Met welke projecten heeft u meegedaan?
- Heeft uw gebruik gemaakt van uw opleidingsbudget? Welke opleidingen of cursussen heeft u gevolgd?
- Hoe vond u de begeleiding tijdens het programma? Denk aan u coach, coördinator of afdelingsmanager.
- Hoe kijk u terug naar uw traineeship? Wat hebt u geleerd tijdens het traject? Was het naar verwachting?
- Wat nam u mee van het traineeship naar uw huidige werk?
- Beschrijf uw relatie met de Gemeente Den Haag als werkgever.
  - Wilde u na uw traineeship bij de Gemeente Den Haag blijven werken?
  - Voelde uw een verantwoordelijkheid om iets terug te geven aan de organisatie? Of een bijdrage te leveren aan de organisatie of stad?
  - Voelde u een bepaalde toezegging of loyaliteit naar de gemeente?

**Loopbaan** (*Career: Sequentie van attitudes en gedragingen die worden geassocieerd met werkgerelateerde ervaringen en activiteiten doorheen de levensloop van een individu*).

- Welke functies heeft u bekleed na uw traineeships? Hoe is dat proces gelopen?

- Hoe kijk uw naar uw loopbaan? (Ik ga ervan uit dat sommige vragen automatische worden beantwoord door een andere vraag)
  - Wilt u bij uw huidige organisatie blijven werken? Waarom en waarom niet?
  - Hoelang ziet u uzelf in uw huidige functie werken? Waarom en waarom niet?
  - Wilt u bij uw huidige organisatie naar een andere afdeling? Waarom en waarom niet?
  - Wilt u buiten uw huidige organisatie werken? Waarom en waarom niet?
  - Waarom hebt u gekozen voor de publieke sector?
  - Wilt u in de publieke sector blijven? Waarom en waarom niet?
  - Wanneer u naar een andere werkgever gaat, zou u dan terug willen komen bij de gemeente Den Haag? Waarom en waarom niet? (Oud trainees die nog werkzaam zijn bij de gemeente Den Haag)
  - Zou u opnieuw bij de gemeente Den Haag willen gaan werken? Waarom en waarom niet? (Oud trainees die niet meer werkzaam zijn bij de gemeente Den Haag)
  - Zeg over een jaar of 10, wat denkt uw dan te doen?
- Spelen er andere factoren die hebben bijgedragen aan uw toekomstperspectief? Welke zijn dat en waarom?
  - Speelt uw traineeship een rol?
  - Spelen andere factoren een rol?

**Inzetbaarheid** (*Employability: Het gepercipieerde vermogen om zelfstandig mobiel te zijn op de arbeidsmarkt. De ervaren mogelijkheid en vaardigheid of om aan een baan te komen).*

- Hoe schat u uw mogelijkheden op de interne arbeidsmarkt om een baan te komen?
- Welke factoren spelen een rol op uw mogelijkheden?
  - Speelt uw traineeship een rol?
  - Spelen andere factoren een rol?
- Hoe schat u uw kansen op de externe arbeidsmarkt om aan een baan te komen?
- Welke factoren spelen een rol op uw kansen?
  - Speelt uw traineeship een rol?
  - Spelen andere factoren een rol?

#### **Vraag vanuit de gemeente Den Haag**

- Wat heeft u gemist tijdens het programma? Waar loopt u nu tegen aan in uw professionele leven?
- Wat vond u heel waardevol tijdens het programma? Waar was u tevreden mee?

#### **Afsluiting**

- Zijn er nog zaken die we niet hebben besproken, maar die volgens u wel belangrijk zijn om te vermelden?
- Bedanken
- Is het mogelijk om contact met u op te nemen voor verdere vragen?
- Wilt u het resultaat ontvangen?
- Kent u een andere oud trainee die mee zou willen doen met mijn onderzoek?

## **Appendix IV – Codebook**

### **Organizational Support for Development on Career**

- Motive to apply for the program.
  - Learning and development
  - Career Switch Opportunity
  - Non-Profit Driven
  - To Gain Relevant Work Experience
- Participants' Experiences During the Traineeship
- The Added-Value of Participating in the Traineeship on Career
  - Self-awareness
  - Career Switch
- Other Factors Influencing Career
  - Individual factors on career
    - Self-interest
    - Organizational Loyalty
    - Personality
    - Stage of life
    - Non-Profit Driven
  - External factors on career
    - Organizational culture
    - Internal organizational developments
    - External organizational developments
    - Attractive employer

### **Organizational Support for Development on Employability**

- The Added-Value of Participating in the Traineeship on Employability
  - Work Experience Gained
  - Competencies
  - Internal Network
  - Talent Status Acquired
- Other Factors Influencing Employability
  - Age
  - Being a Generalist
  - Being Informed About the Current Labour Market

- Other Competencies
- Network
- Type of Work Experience

### **Employability-Based Career in the Public Sector**

- **The Traineeship's Support to Employability-Based Careers**
  - Various Roles and Functions
  - Beyond Organizational Boundaries
- **Vocational-Related Behaviours and Experiences**
  - Internal Employability or Intra-Organizational Mobility.
  - Employment Contracts
- **Career-Related Attitudes**
  - Broadly Employable Attitude
  - Self-Managed Attitude
  - Intra-Organizational Attitude.
  - Inter-Organizational Attitude.
  - Between Sectors Attitude
  - Home-Based Attitude

### **Differences and Similarities Between Western and Non-Western**

- Organizational Loyalty