



Understanding Society

Complying with the Participation Act in times of downsizing: a lost battle?

An exploratory study on how employers in the financial industry create employment opportunities for people with reduced work capacity in times of downsizing

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ABSTRACT

The employment of people with reduced work capacity has become increasingly important in current organizations. In the Netherlands, this resulted in a law, known as the Participation Act, which stimulates employers to get more people employed with reduced work capacity. To ensure employment for these people, employers' organizations, trade unions and the Dutch government committed themselves to create 125,000 suitable jobs for people with reduced work capacity by 2026. A quota can be activated when employers do not create the agreed amount of jobs. It remains a challenge to create employment opportunities for people with reduced work capacity. One major challenge mentioned by many HR professionals is current downsizing issues. HR professionals are exposed to the dilemma of economically having to eliminate jobs versus the institutional demand of creating new ones specifically for people with reduced work capacity. In this study it has been investigated which strategies can be successful for downsizing organizations to create employment opportunities for people with reduced work capacity. Downsizing organizations that have been able to create employment opportunities for people with reduced work capacity (successful) are compared to downsizing organizations that have not (yet) been able to do so (unsuccessful). The inclusive HRM model of Borghouts and Freese (2016) was used to plot successful organizations versus unsuccessful organizations to reveal a set of several factors that facilitates successful employment of people with reduced work capacity. Data has been collected among eleven downsizing organizations in the financial sector, five public downsizing organizations and three experts on this topic. Results showed that all participating organizations wanted to comply with the Participation Act, but the motivation why differs among organizations. Successful organizations execute the Participation Act more from their inclusive climate and identity. The social legitimacy perspective is predominant in these organizations and they integrated the execution of this Act within their vision and organizational policies. Compared to unsuccessful organizations, successful organizations felt less obligated to the strict terms of the Participation Act. These organizations conduct more inclusive HR activities compared to unsuccessful organizations. Following this, a flowchart is proposed that indicates the factors that can be successful in compliance with the Participation Act. These insights have clear theoretical and practical implications for HR professionals that deal with the execution of the Participation Act in times of downsizing.

Keywords: *Participation Act, downsizing, strategic HRM, people with reduced work capacity, inclusive climate.*

SAMENVATTING

Het aannemen van mensen met een arbeidsbeperking wordt tegenwoordig steeds belangrijker in organisaties. In Nederland heeft dit geresulteerd in de Participatiewet, een wet die werkgevers stimuleert om meer mensen met een arbeidsbeperking aan het werk te helpen. Om werkgelegenheid voor deze mensen te realiseren, hebben werkgeversorganisaties, vakbonden en de Nederlandse overheid afgesproken om in 2026 125.000 banen te hebben gecreëerd voor mensen met een arbeidsbeperking. Een quotum kan worden ingesteld wanneer dit aantal banen niet wordt gerealiseerd. Het uitvoeren van de Participatiewet is nog niet vanzelfsprekend. Een grote uitdaging die door veel HR professionals genoemd wordt, zijn huidige reorganisaties. HR professionals hebben te maken met het dilemma dat zij enerzijds banen moeten schrappen en anderzijds nieuwe banen dienen te creëren specifiek voor mensen met een arbeidsbeperking. In deze studie is onderzocht welke strategieën succesvol kunnen zijn om mogelijkheden te creëren voor mensen met een arbeidsbeperking voor organisaties die ook aan het reorganiseren zijn. Organisaties die mogelijkheden hebben gecreëerd voor mensen met een arbeidsbeperking (succesvol) zijn vergeleken met organisaties die (nog) geen arbeidsmogelijkheden hebben gerealiseerd (onsuccesvol). Het inclusieve HRM model van Borghouts en Freese (2016) is gebruikt om kenmerken van zowel succesvolle als onsuccesvolle organisaties in te vullen, om vervolgens een set van verschillende factoren te kunnen identificeren die succesvol zijn. De data is verzameld door middel van het houden van interviews met elf organisaties uit de financiële sector, vijf publieke organisaties en drie experts op dit onderwerp. De resultaten tonen aan dat alle deelnemende organisaties wilden voldoen aan de Participatiewet, maar de motivatie waarom verschilt onderling. Succesvolle organisaties voeren de Participatiewet uit vanuit hun inclusieve klimaat en hun identiteit. Het sociaal legitime perspectief is in deze organisaties hoofdzakelijk aanwezig en de uitvoering van de Participatiewet is volledig geïntegreerd in hun visie en organisatiebeleid. Ten opzichte van de onsuccesvolle organisaties voelen succesvolle organisaties zich minder verplicht te voldoen aan de exacte kaders van de wet. Ook voeren deze organisaties meer inclusieve HR activiteiten uit. Een stroomdiagram wordt voorgesteld die de factoren indiceert die succesvol kunnen zijn voor invulling van de Participatiewet. Deze inzichten hebben duidelijke theoretische en praktische implicaties voor HR professionals die te maken hebben met de invulling van de Participatiewet in tijden van reorganisatie.

Kernwoorden: *Participatiewet, reorganisatie, strategisch HRM, mensen met een arbeidsbeperking, inclusief klimaat.*

INTRODUCTION

Ensuring effective functioning of labor markets by reducing labor market segmentations and building an inclusive society are at the core of current European employment policies (European Commission, 2010). More specifically, the employment of people with reduced work capacity has become increasingly important in current organizations (Nelissen, Hülsheger, van Ruitenbeek, & Zijlstra, 2016). Due to ageing work populations and expected labor shortages, governments strive towards more labor market participation of this underutilized labor pool at regular employers (Borghouts-Van de Pas & Pennings, 2008). In the Netherlands, this resulted in a law which stimulates employers to get more people employed with reduced work capacity (Divosa, n.d.). This legislation is known as the Participation Act and is effectuated since January 2015.

In this setting, HR professionals play a key role in the execution of the Participation Act through their role as strategic business partner and change agent (Ulrich, 1997) and even more directly through their involvement in recruitment, selection and onboarding of people with reduced work capacity (Freese & Borghouts, 2016). However, when HR professionals execute the Participation Act, one of the hindrances many HR professionals face is current downsizing issues (Freese & Borghouts, 2016). Downsizing is referred to as the reduction of positions within an organization (Cascio, 1993) and it has become a continuing practice in organizations nowadays (Datta, Guthrie, Basuil, & Pandey, 2010). Global competition coupled with new technology and fast changing demands have caused organizations to reexamine their cost and process structures (Datta, et al., 2010) in such a way that these become more efficient and can be done by less people (Van Dalen & Henkens, 2013). Once related primarily to the Dutch situation, the incidence of downsizing activities has been aggravated by the economic crisis of 2008 and caused the elimination of 300.000 jobs by 2014 (UWV, 2015).

This reduction of jobs and the focus on efficiency exacerbate the challenges to comply with the Participation Act (Freese & Borghouts, 2016). HR professionals are exposed to the dilemma of economically having to eliminate jobs versus the institutional demand of creating new ones. To ensure successful employment, a strategy has to be developed to create employment opportunities for people with reduced work capacity which is in line with the organization's business and HR strategy (Freese & Borghouts, 2016). However, the execution of the Participation Act contradicts the aim of downsizing practices. Does that mean that organizations dealing with downsizing issues are always unable to comply with the Participation Act? That would be a concerning conclusion since many organizations have to

deal with downsizing in the Netherlands. To date, research on the conditions how employers can successfully employ people with reduced work capacity is lacking (Borghouts & Freese, 2016). More specifically, with regard to the employment of this type of employees in times of downsizing, research is non-existing. The aim of this study is to fill this gap by addressing an employer's perspective on how job opportunities can be created. In this study large downsizing organizations from the financial sector are explored particularly, because the incidence of downsizing is currently high in this sector (Werk.nl, n.d.).

Borghouts and Freese (2016) developed an inclusive model which indicates all factors that are in play when deciding to employ people with reduced work capacity or not. This study builds further on their model by integrating the specific case of downsizing organizations and comparing successful organizations with unsuccessful organizations. Investigating why some downsizing organizations are able to comply with the Participation Act, whereas others are not, can provide valuable information about essential conditions which enable downsizing organizations to be successful in their compliance with the Participation Act. Therefore, the main research question is as follows:

Which strategies can be successful for downsizing organizations to create employment opportunities for people with reduced work capacity, according to HR professionals?

The contribution of this study is twofold. Previous studies from disability literature investigated separate factors why employers are reluctant to employ people with reduced work capacity. No former study related these factors to each other and determined which factors are crucial for successful employment. Furthermore, literature on Strategic Human Resource Management (HRM) showed the importance of alignment between business and HR strategy. However, in literature the employment of people with reduced work capacity is not connected to Strategic HRM. Since research in this area is scarce, investigating how employment for people with reduced work capacity, motivated by institutional regulation, can be strategically executed in times of downsizing thus elaborates on disability literature and strategic HRM literature. Revealing successful strategies is not only interesting from this academic perspective, but also from a more practical perspective. Given the effectuation of the Participation Act and the common prevalence of downsizing activities at the same time, organizations feel stuck between these two external forces that contradict each other in the execution. Many organizations have to deal with downsizing activities and if no successful strategies are found to align the execution of the Participation Act with the HR strategy in

times of downsizing, the Participation Act will not achieve what it aimed for, which would be a concerning message.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The Participation Act

In former years, the Netherlands knew three legislations that had the purpose to get people employed who needed some extra guidance. Since 2015, these three legislations have been combined and are replaced by the Participation Act. This means that the Participation Act is currently the only legislation that helps to get people employed who can work, but need some guidance (Werk.nl, n.d.). A part of the Participation Act is the ‘guaranteed job agreement’ which has the aim to get more people with reduced work capacity employed (Ministerie van Sociale Zaken en Werkgelegenheid, 2016). This includes all people who have some work capacity, but are not able to earn the minimum wage themselves and who cannot find employment at regular employers. This can be due to issues such as mental disabilities, physical disabilities or long-term unemployment. To ensure employment for this target group, employers’ organizations, trade unions and the Dutch government committed themselves to create 125,000 suitable jobs for people with reduced work capacity by 2026 (Ministerie van Sociale Zaken en Werkgelegenheid, 2016). According to the definition of the ‘guaranteed job agreement’, a suitable job refers to a job in which people with reduced work capacity can work 25.5 hours a week (Ministerie Sociale Zaken en Werkgelegenheid, 2016). Coherent with the ‘guaranteed job agreement’ is the quota legislation which can be activated if employers do not create the agreed amount of jobs (Van den Hout, 2013). Every organization with more than 25 people employed needs to create a certain amount of suitable jobs and if the quota legislation will be activated, employers can get a fine of €5,000 for each position they did not fill (Van den Hout, 2013).

Until now the quota legislation has not been activated. However, a national association for social employment and reintegration remarked that the number of people with reduced work capacity increased with only 1,500 since the effectuation of the Participation Act (Cedris, 2016). The percentage of labor market participation of people with reduced work capacity is still significantly below the percentage of employed non-disabled people (CBS, 2016). This indicates that it remains a challenge to get people with reduced work capacity employed at regular employers.

The Participation Act in times of downsizing

Complying with the Participation Act is a challenge for employers, but when it is considered that HR professionals have to create employment opportunities for people with reduced work capacity while at the same time the number of jobs is decreasing, it is even more challenging. In a recent study it has been found that a major challenge for HR professionals to comply with the Participation Act is indeed downsizing (Freese & Borghouts, 2016). The phenomenon of downsizing can be viewed in multiple perspectives and involves different kind of reductions in the organizational context (Datta et al., 2010). A well-researched and common used kind of reduction is employee downsizing. Datta and colleagues (2010) wrote a review and synthesis on this type of downsizing and analyzed prior definitions in order to operationalize it. Therefore, this study follows their definition which states that “employee downsizing is a planned set of organizational policies and practices aimed at reducing the workforce with the goal of improving the performance of a firm” (Datta, et al., 2010, p. 282). As becomes clear from this definition, the primary objective of downsizing is compensating for organizational performance declines by more efficient utilization of human capital (Datta et al., 2010). Organizational performance declines can be defined as the decrease in both workforce performance (e.g. productivity) and financial performance (e.g. profit) (Ployhart, Weekly, & Ramsey, 2009). Although employers are focusing on this efficiency perspective, they are also expected to conform to institutional legislation if they want to remain legitimate (Scheid, 1999).

This idea is congruent with the institutional theory which is a theoretical framework that considers the relationship between organizations and its institutional environment (DiMaggio & Powell, 1991). Institutional regulations such as the Participation Act compel employers to adjust their policies to meet the requirements of these regulations and avoid legal sanction (Scheid, 1999). Thus, employers are attempting to meet the expectations of this institutional regulation, while also maintaining the objectives of the organization (Scheid, 1999). As strategic business partners (Ulrich, 1997), HR professionals play a key role in developing a strategy or adjust policies to ensure that both expectations are met in such a way that they are in line with the organizational and HR strategy (Freese & Borghouts, 2016). The challenge is to create such a strategy in a successful way since the two external demands contradict each other in the execution.

It can be expected that downsizing organizations experience difficulties to comply with the Participation Act, because they redesigned their processes by eliminating jobs and positions which means there are simply no jobs or possibilities available for people of the

target group. Furthermore, the possibilities and jobs that remain after downsizing mostly require high-qualified labor (Borghouts, Dekker, Freese, Oomens, & Wilthagen, 2015). Whereas the target group mostly consists of people with a low educational background who can only perform easy or routine tasks (DeNormaalsteZaak, n.d.), these remaining jobs might not be seen as suitable for the target group. In this sense, the mismatch between the target group and jobs offered is growing due to downsizing. Moreover, in times of downsizing, survivors often hold negative reactions, feel betrayed and are angry and it is the role of the HR professionals to increase their level of trust, motivation and commitment again (Sahdev, Vinnicombe, & Tyson, 1999). It can be imagined that it is difficult to increase these levels if employees have seen colleagues being fired, while at the same time they have to welcome new colleagues with reduced work capacity. This can be perceived as an unfair practice, because the question arises why positions can be made available for the target group, but not for their own employees. This perception may make employers reluctant to compose an exception for employment of people with reduced work capacity. Despite the fact that no former research has addressed possible barriers or facilitators for downsizing organizations in particular, aforementioned factors are likely to play a role as existing evidence on the consequences of downsizing is considered.

Aligning the Participation Act with the HR strategy

From a strategic HRM perspective, little is known about how people with reduced work capacity can be integrated in current business and HR processes (Borghouts & Freese, 2016). It is the job of HR professionals to find ways to strategically align these processes, since they are involved in the recruitment, selection and onboarding of people with reduced work capacity. The way HR professionals execute the Participation Act is determined by the predominant HR perspective the organization adopts (Borghouts & Freese, 2016). The HR perspective supports the organization's core business, strategic objectives and desired results (Scheid, 1999).

The results that are to be achieved according to the HR strategy are predominantly focused on productivity, performance, efficiency and quality (Beer, Boselie, & Brewster, 2015). This is referred to as the economic rationality perspective and this perspective prevails in both scientific studies and in practice (Beer, et al., 2015; Kaufman, 2015). Outcomes on individual well-being and health such as satisfaction, commitment, work-life balance and fairness only gained more attention in HRM literature recently (Van de Voorde, Paauwe, & van Veldhoven, 2012). According to several academics, more attention should be given to a

broader contextual approach which considers all relevant stakeholders (Boselie, Paauwe, & Farndale, 2013; Beer, et al., 2015). The focus on the economic rationality perspective solely narrowed the HRM vision and resulted in the loss of a broader group of stakeholders (Boselie, Paauwe, & Farndale, 2013; Beer, et al., 2015). This means HR should focus more on societal well-being, also known as the social legitimacy perspective, which considers amongst others the impact of the organization on society, sustainability, and its reputation (Beer et al., 2015). HR activities that strive for social legitimacy are part of inclusive HRM which goes beyond the boundaries of the own organization and takes into account other groups in the labor market which are not yet part of the organization but can be of value (Freese & Borghouts, 2016).

This perspective on including all employee groups and feeling societal responsibility seems to fit the purpose of compliance with the Participation Act better than for instance the economic rationality perspective which focuses on high productivity and performance. Literature on inclusive HRM is scarce. What is known from previous studies is that employee's perception of inclusiveness, thus the perception that disabled people are included at the work place, has influence on the employment of disabled people (Bruyère & Nishii, 2014). Organizations that have strong commitment to disabled people and execute organizational goals regarding disability (coherent with social legitimacy perspective) are more likely to employ people with disabilities. Moreover, some organizations already employed disabled people before it was obligated by institutional legislation (Hirst, Thornton, Dearey, & Campbell 2004). They believe that employing these people adds value to their organization and thus can be seen as 'inclusive organizations'. These organizations have a policy on employment for disabled people which is found to be related to more employment of disabled people (Hirst, et al., 2004). When considering the case of downsizing, organizations often focus on increasing their efficiency and reducing performance declines (Datta, et al., 2010) which is more coherent with the economic rationality perspective. To ensure successful employment, a strategic HRM perspective on how the employment of people with reduced work capacity fits the organization's business and HR strategy is essential (Borghouts & Freese, 2016).

Building further on the inclusive HRM model

Although some downsizing organizations have been able to create employment opportunities for people with reduced work capacity, many organizations name downsizing as a reason why they cannot comply with the Participation Act (Freese & Borghouts, 2016).

Besides downsizing, many other factors are given why employers have difficulties in complying with the Participation Act. The recently developed inclusive HRM model by Borghouts and Freese (2016) identified nine overarching factors that are in play regarding the Participation Act when taking the decision to employ people with reduced work capacity.

The first factor considers *the external context* of the organization. This means that contextual factors, such as institutional context, economic context, labor market and social-cultural environment have an influence on the strategic HR decisions that are made in an organization (Borghouts & Freese, 2016). Second, *the organizational mission, strategy and managerial issues* play a role. For instance, downsizing issues fall within this category (Borghouts & Freese, 2016). The third category discusses the *organizational characteristics* such as size, culture and the type of jobs and these are factors that an employer considers when deciding to employ people with reduced work capacity (Borghouts & Freese, 2016). Fourth factor is about the *attitudes of the dominant coalition*, in other words the attitudes of key stakeholders regarding employment of people of the target group (Borghouts & Freese, 2016). A well-studied phenomenon is that the attitudes of employers and employees have a significant influence on the decision whether to hire people with reduced work capacity (Hernandez et al., 2000; Schur, et al., 2005). Furthermore, especially the visibility of commitment from top management can be of influence (Bruyère, 2000; Schur et al., 2005). The fifth factor in their model is the *dominant HR perspective*. As suggested, organizations have different focuses on their organizational and HR strategy. Whether they focus on an economic rationality perspective, employee wellbeing perspective or a social legitimacy perspective matters in the way they execute the Participation Act (Borghouts & Freese, 2016). Sixth, the *business case* an employer is able to make determines whether they are going to employ people from the target group (Borghouts & Freese, 2016).

For the seventh factor all *perceived obstacles* within the organizations are considered. Within organizations it matters whether organization members have certain stereotypes, have concerns about risks or have had certain previous experiences (Borghouts & Freese, 2016). The result that negative stereotypes regarding people with reduced work capacity in terms of amongst others productivity, communication skills, performance and concerns of accommodation costs are revealed as obstacles within the organization is not new (Bruyère, 2000; Martin, 2004; Schur, et al., 2005; Kaye, et al., 2011; Houtenville & Kalargyrou, 2012; Schur, Nishii, Adya, Kruse, Bruyère, & Blanck, 2014). Furthermore, previous positive experiences and contact with disabled people counteracts the effect of negative stereotypes (Stone & Colella, 1996; Schur, et al., 2005; Borghouts & Pennings, 2008) and leads to more

positive attitudes towards disabled people (Makas, 1988). However, if employers have had negative experiences, they are less likely to hire disabled people (Graffam, Shinkfield, Smith, & Polzin, 2002). The eighth factor includes the *use of external resources and policy instruments*. The government offers several instruments to prevent expected obstacles at employers (Borghouts & Freese, 2016). If governments help employers to gain sufficient knowledge about the target group, the presence of this knowledge will increase the likelihood of employing people with reduced work capacity (Chan, Strauser, Maher, Lee, Jones, & Johnson, 2010).

The last factor in the model of Borghouts and Freese (2016) concerns the *availability of inclusive HR activities*. HR activities play a crucial role in shaping opportunities for this employee group (Kulkarni & Valk, 2010). Careful management of recruitment activities such as using specific recruitment channels and only identify essential job requirements instead of fixed job profiles are important for successful employment (Stone & Colella, 1996; Kulkarni & Valk, 2010). Furthermore, several forms of customized employment - the individualization of an employment relationship between employee and employer - are assumed to be more able to create a person-job fit for people with a disability (Gottlieb, Myhill, & Blanck, 2010). This can include the adjustment of the workplace and forms of adjusting the job. For instance, job carving which considers the creation, modification or customization of a job in such a way that “it can be successfully performed by an individual with disabilities, while simultaneously meeting the needs of an employer” (Graff, 2013, p. 1655) and job crafting which involves the physical and cognitive changes individuals make in the task or relational boundaries of their work (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001). Also, the negotiation between employer and employee about individualized agreements of non-standard nature, also known as I-deals (Rousseau, 2005), are another form of customized employment that can generate a better person-job fit. Last, new jobs can be created in order to meet the capabilities of people with reduced work capacity. Job creation considers the creation of new jobs that offer added value to the organization, but have not been performed before (Caliendo, Hujer, & Thomsen, 2005; Ruitenbeek, Mulder, Zijlstra, Nijhuis, & Mulders, 2013). Other HR activities that are included in the model of Borghouts and Freese (2016) that focus on the initial step to get people employed are cooperation with external parties. This indicates that organizations can search for HR activities beyond the borders of their own organization to create employment opportunities.

Despite the fact that many single factors have been identified by previous studies, it is still unknown how these factors are related and which of these factors are crucial in creating

employment opportunities successfully. Thus, instead of focusing on single factors, it is also of interest whether these factors make a difference between organizations in their ability to comply with the Participation Act. In a recent study, Hemphill and Kulik (2015) examined which employers are more likely to hire people with disabilities by investigating employers' hiring decisions. They found that there is a difference in underlying factors between organizations that hire disabled people (loyals) and organizations that not yet hire these people (non-hirers) (Hemphill & Kulik, 2015). For instance, loyals have more knowledge about the target group, possess more extensive attitudes towards them and approach inhibiting factors differently compared to non-hirers (Hemphill & Kulik, 2015). Related to this study, the successful and unsuccessful downsizing organizations will be compared based on the factors integrated in the inclusive model of Borghouts and Freese (2016). By entering the successful and unsuccessful organizations in this model, it is possible to identify the essential conditions under which organizations can be successful in complying with the Participation Act, even in times of downsizing.

METHOD

Research design

Since not much is known about the issues addressed, the current study was designed as an explorative qualitative study, revealing the HR professionals' views on the subject matter. The main goal was to investigate how organizations in the Netherlands can comply with the Participation Act in times of downsizing. To make comparisons possible, the primary focus was on downsizing organizations in the financial sector. This sector has been chosen, because the incidence of downsizing activities in the financial sector is currently high. Since the economic crisis of 2008, already 28,000 jobs have disappeared in this sector (Werk.nl, n.d.). Furthermore, it is expected that this negative development will continue for future years and that by 2019 this sector has shrunken with another 22,000 jobs (Werk.nl, n.d.). Eleven semi-structured interviews have been conducted with HR professionals from eleven different organizations. Only HR professionals have been interviewed, because it is believed that they have been mostly involved in the processes to execute the Participation Act in their organization. These interviews have been conducted at one specific moment in time, for which this study can be viewed as cross-sectional (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003). When all data was collected, the results have been analyzed and interpreted. To strengthen the results found, eight additional interviews have been conducted. Five HR professionals from public organizations have been interviewed and three interviews were done with people who are

considered to be experts on this topic because they are working at organizations that help other employers to comply with the Participation Act.

Sample

This study focused on Dutch organizations operating in the financial sector and these organizations had to meet two criteria before they were included in the study. First, organizations were included in the study if they were involved in the execution of the Participation Act. Second, organizations were included in the study if they currently have to deal with downsizing practices. This implies that the focus was on organizations that were still busy with eliminating the amount of jobs at the time of study, no matter when they started with their downsizing practices. These organizations had to deal with both downsizing and the execution of the Participation Act at the same time, which showed more easily which factors play a role in (un)successful execution of the Participation Act.

The research sample has been determined by use of purposive sampling. By purposive sampling, cases are selected from which one can learn about the issues of central importance to the study's purpose (Patton, 1990). Related to this study, these cases are organizations that met the determined criteria of currently downsizing, involved in the execution of the Participation Act and (not) able to create employment opportunities. Next, for all participating organizations, one HR professional was selected at random for each organization.

With the help of the People Management Center of the HR studies department at Tilburg University, eleven organizations from the financial sector have been addressed. To enlarge the possibilities of the research sample, the researcher also searched for organizations that met the criteria on the Internet. On the internet, it was checked whether organizations on a list of financials were involved in downsizing. They were then contacted via their info e-mail address to ask whether they indeed were currently downsizing and whether they executed the Participation Act. The financial sector encompasses organizations including banks, insurance companies, credit-card companies, asset management companies, intermediaries, brokers, financial consultants and financial authorities. In total 35 organizations that met the criteria have been addressed to contribute to this study. Twenty-one organizations replied to the request, of which eleven organizations wanted to contribute to the study. The other ten organizations did not want to contribute, because they had no interest in the topic, or because they had no time for it due to the downsizing practices they currently conduct. The final sample of this study consisted of four banks, five insurance

companies, one financial consultancy company and one financial authority. All organizations were large (more than 1,000 employees) and profit-organizations. Most organizations operate in an environment of continuously downsizing practices. Five organizations had to deal with gradual reduction of their workforce (starting in 2011 or 2012), while the other six organizations had to deal with large and fast downsizing. Especially one organization had an extraordinary situation whereas it was taken over by a foreign organization. The reason for downsizing was equal for most organizations, namely cost reduction and the digitalization of the current society.

The respondents for the additional interviews were contacted via multiple ways. With the help of a network organization for universities and research institutes, nine public organizations have been contacted that met the same criteria as the organizations in the financial sector. Five organizations replied to the request of which four organizations were willing to contribute to the study. This sample consisted of three universities and one research institute, all non-profit organizations. Furthermore, via Internet another non-profit government agency has been addressed and this organization agreed to contribute to the study. Similar to the financial organizations, all public organizations have mostly high-educated positions available and deliver services instead of products. The main difference between these types of organizations is that public organizations are non-profit organizations. Moreover, to corroborate the findings, five experts have been approached that are employed at organizations which are highly involved in helping employers in the Netherlands with the execution of the Participation Act. Three of these experts replied to the request and were willing to contribute to the study. Two of these experts are employed at organizations that help its partners to comply with the Participation Act and to become a more inclusive employer. The other expert is employed at a trade union. All three experts have many contact with employers across different sectors regarding the Participation Act. Because of their position and roles, they have a broad view of hindrances, facilitators and activities that employers face and conduct in different sectors. These respondents are contacted with the help of the network of researchers on this topic.

To investigate the successful strategies, the organizations from the financial sector have been divided into two groups. The criteria on which the groups were divided were based on the amount of employment opportunities already created for the target group and the extent to which other organizations saw them as precursors. The first group consisted of four organizations that have been able to create multiple employment opportunities for the target group despite their downsizing activities. This means they have achieved at least more than

half of their annual targeted number of jobs. This group has been labeled as ‘successful organizations’. The second group consisted of seven organizations which also dealt with downsizing practices, but had only created little to no employment opportunities for the target group. These organizations were addressed as ‘unsuccessful organizations’. For one of these seven organizations it was questionable whether it should be included in the successful or unsuccessful group. This was because they had created more employment opportunities than the others in the unsuccessful group and far below the lowest number of created amount of jobs in the successful group. Since the created amount of jobs was far below the other successful organizations, it was decided to address this organization as unsuccessful in the end. For the organizations from the public sector the same criteria have been used to divide them into the successful or unsuccessful group as for the organizations from the financial sector. For the public sector, one organization was addressed as successful and the other four were assigned to the unsuccessful group.

Instrument

To answer the main research question, semi-structured interviews have been conducted. The form of semi-structured interviewing has been chosen, because it allows gaining new perspectives and it is more in line with the explorative character of this study in comparison to structured interviewing. During these interviews self-developed guidelines have been used, because no questionnaires exist on the questions that needed to be answered. In order to avoid social desirable answers, mostly open-ended questions and in-depth questions have been asked. Furthermore, confidential handling of the results and anonymity have been promised.

For the different groups (HR professionals employed at successful versus unsuccessful organizations), the structure and length of the interview is similar, but the questions were phrased slightly different. For example, successful organizations were asked what kind of activities they already conducted to enable successful employment opportunities, whereas unsuccessful organizations were asked which activities they saw as a possibility to create employment opportunities. The interviews started with some general questions on professional characteristic (e.g. ‘What is your function?’) and organizational characteristics (e.g. ‘What kind of employer do you think you are?’). Next, some specific questions were asked on downsizing such as ‘Which type of functions disappeared?’ and on the Participation Act, for example ‘What is your opinion on the Participation Act?’. Afterwards, several specific questions were asked about the inhibiting and facilitating factors

(e.g. ‘What do organization members think of the target group in terms of performance and skills?’), and about the HR perspective by asking for instance ‘What are the key pillars of the HR strategy?’. Last, questions were asked about possible HR activities such as ‘What kind of activities do you conduct to attract people of the target group?’. The complete guidelines for the interview questions can be found in Appendix I (English version) and Appendix II (Dutch version).

These guidelines have been used for organizations in both the financial sector and the additional interviews with organizations from public sectors. For the interviews with the experts, other guidelines have been used, because the aim of the interview was different. For example, questions such as ‘What are the most common heard inhibiting factors regarding the execution of the Participation Act?’ and ‘In the financial sector, [...] has been found to be important, do you think this is due to the sector they are operating in, or do you see this phenomenon in other sectors as well?’. The guidelines for these interviews can be found in Appendix III (English version) and Appendix IV (Dutch version).

Procedure

The researcher emailed possible respondents to invite them for an interview. In the invitation a brief description of the researcher’s background has been given, together with a short explanation about the study. Furthermore, the approximate duration of the interview (60 minutes) was mentioned. The invitation e-mail can be found in appendix V. The invitation e-mail for the additional interviews with the experts was slightly different and an example can be found in appendix VI.

The interviews with the organizations in the financial sector have taken place in a timeframe of two months, namely May and June. These interviews were all held face-to-face and in Dutch. For all interviews permission was asked to record the interview. The interview started with a short introduction of both the interviewer and the interviewee. After this introduction, the interviewer explained the current study and assured confidentiality and anonymous for data collection. The duration of most interviews was approximately one hour. Some interviews took a little longer, but always with a maximum duration of 90 minutes. To increase the internal validity of the data, the answers of the interviewee have been summarized during the interview. The interviews were transcribed literally afterwards. For an additional check and to increase credibility, member checking has been carried out after transcription. When conducting a member check, the researcher sends the transcript to the interviewee in order to check whether the transcript is in line with what the interviewee has

said and it provides the opportunity to correct errors or add missing information (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). This check has been done, because in literature it is stated that for establishing credibility, member checking is a crucial technique (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

The interviews that were held additionally took place between June and August. Four of these interviews were held face-to-face, whereas the other interviews have been done by telephone due to practical issues. All these interviews were done in Dutch as well. For the organizations from public sectors the same procedure applied as for the organizations in the financial sector. However, for the interviews with the experts, the procedure was slightly different. This is because this information was used as an additional check and these experts talked about employers in general and not about their own organization specifically. Therefore, the duration of the interviews varied and no transcript has been made. During these interviews the findings from the financial sector were presented and related to other sectors.

Data analysis

After member checking, the data has been analyzed. Data analysis can be done according to different approaches and for the data analysis of the financial organizations, the focus was on content analysis. This has been done by using the coding process of Strauss and Corbin (1990). This coding process consists of three phases, namely open coding, axial coding and selective coding.

First, open coding means that the transcripts will be broken down, examined and categorized (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). During this phase, the interviews have been read and divided into fragments. If the fragment was relevant, it got a suitable code. For example, if a respondent mentioned that they do have the money to adjust workplaces, it will receive the code 'accommodation adjustments'. In this study, open coding was conducted by adding codes to the transcripts after all interviews were completed. All interviews have been coded separately and when new information was obtained, the earlier coded transcripts were checked again. The second phase is axial coding and during this phase the purpose is to make categories of codes that belong together (Strauss & Corbin, 1990; Boeije, 2005). In this phase the data was synthesized and allowed the researcher to create a matrix which is a schedule that arranges data per respondent and per theme (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003). For this study, the categories were downsizing, Participation Act, Participation Act in times of downsizing, HR perspective and HR activities. In the second and third category the inhibiting and facilitating factors were mentioned. Third, selective coding has the aim to structure all categories that

have been identified by relating them to each other. First, the relationships between categories per case will be determined (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). For this study that means that the relationships between categories are determined per organization which can be found in the row of the matrix. Since this study wants to compare two groups, also the relationships between categories per group (successful versus unsuccessful organizations) have been identified. Second, the core categories have been identified by looking for centrality, frequency and logic (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). The frequency of how often a factor is mentioned indicated the importance of the factors and made classification of the most important factors possible. In the end, the results of successful and unsuccessful downsizing organizations were compared on the identified categories.

In order to conduct the coding process in this way, the researcher coded the transcript in Word, and made a matrix with all the codes in Excel. At the same time, all interesting quotations have been collected in a separate file. From the made matrices, a summary has been made with the most important findings. These findings have been used to check the additional interviews. The additional interviews have not been coded separately. After analyzing the data, an answer to the research question was formulated.

RESULTS

As suggested, this study will compare successful and unsuccessful downsizing organizations in the financial sector based on the nine overarching factors identified in the inclusive HRM model of Borghouts and Freese (2016). These results will also be compared to the results from the public sector and to corroborate the findings, the expert opinions are presented. In Appendix VII, the results are illustrated by plotting them into the inclusive HRM model for each group.

External context

Institutional pressures are a part of the external context organizations have to deal with. All organizations in this study wanted to comply with the Participation Act. Most HR professionals recognize the good intention of the Participation Act, but they also have some critical side notes. As one of the HR professionals expressed it: “...*The Participation Act has good intentions to show the urgency of helping people with reduced work capacity to get employed, to draw attention to this, but the target group is limited, the sustainability of these employment opportunities are not taken into account and talent development is forgotten...*” Moreover, several HR professionals wonder whether it will have the desired effect if all

employers are obligated to employ people with reduced work capacity instead of employing these people due to intrinsic motivation. *“...I have to see whether this Act will achieve the desired results...”* The Participation Act itself contains some factors that are perceived as hindering by several organizations. Approximately half of all respondents said that the complexity of the Participation Act hinders them to comply. This is especially the case for downsizing organizations that are seen as unsuccessful (most) compared to the successful group (only one). Factors that were mentioned to be hindering for mostly unsuccessful organizations include difficulties with the preconditions of the Act, labor intensive and complex execution, and the ambiguity of the agreed amount of jobs that have to be created. Furthermore, almost half of the respondents (both successful and unsuccessful organizations) mentioned that the indistinctness of the definition of the target group is hindering. For organizations it is unclear which people are included in the target group and who are not. As some HR professionals said: *“...It is hindering that I have no clear view on who is included in the target group...”* or *“...If you introduce three people with reduced work capacity to your employer, than the employer needs to guess who is included in the target group and who is not...”* For successful organizations these hindrances are more like critical notes on the Participation Act instead of real barriers to comply. They act upon their belief that it is valuable for the organization to employ these people while keeping the institutional obligations at the back. As one successful HR professional explained: *“...That means that unintentionally we may employ someone with reduced work capacity from the target group, but if this person with reduced work capacity is not included in the target group, we do not care and employ them anyway...”* In contrast to successful organizations, most unsuccessful organizations experienced these factors as being impediments to create employment opportunities, because they act more upon fulfilling the requirements of the Act. Despite all criticism on the institutional legislation itself, they also recognize that *“...the effectuation of the Participation Act really helped in getting this topic on the agenda of top management...”* This is especially true for organizations that already wanted to employ more people with reduced work capacity, but were not able to create support and commitment in the organization before legislative pressures.

Downsizing organizations from the public sector showed the same results regarding the external context. Remarkably, some organizations were more skeptical about the Participation Act as they expressed that they perceived it as a bad legislation. Additionally, organizations from public sectors perceived the ongoing changes regarding the preconditions of the Participation Act to be inhibiting to comply. The experts also recognized most of the

aforementioned factors at organizations from other sectors. According to the experts on this topic, the issue of a too narrow definition of the target group is a commonly heard inhibiting factor for organizations from different sectors. Especially public organizations and service delivering sectors experienced this impediment compared to industrial sectors. This is because these organizations mostly search for high-educated people of whom not many are included in the strict definition of the target group of the Participation Act. Furthermore, one expert expressed that they found a relationship between the size of the organization and the need to broaden the definition of the target group. The larger an organization, the more they felt the need to broaden the definition, because larger organizations have to create a larger amount of jobs. The ambiguity on the amount of jobs that need to be created is also a commonly heard hindrance by experts. However, two experts expressed that this is experienced as an impediment by organizations only which want to comply with the Participation Act due to their perceived institutional obligation.

Organizational mission, strategy and managerial issues

Downsizing

Although most organizations experienced downsizing as hindering to comply with the Participation Act, it was remarkable that one organization did not mention this as a barrier at all. This was due to the shared perception that it is normal to employ people with reduced work capacity and all employees understood why their employer valued that. This inclusive climate made that, sometimes after some extra explanation, downsizing was not perceived as a barrier to the execution of the Participation Act. The extent to which downsizing was perceived as hindering varied across organizations. Most organizations recognized the tension of employing people whilst downsizing, but they also tried to see possibilities that still exist. One HR professional really experienced that downsizing at their organization was the only dilemma which made compliance with the Participation Act impossible. “...*We seriously looked at the opportunities and what we could do. However, the next step has not been reached due to the developments within the organization [...]. We created one job and we had a candidate. We also had some more places that offered opportunities, however all investments and projects have been stopped, due to downsizing...*” Downsizing results in several inhibiting factors for organizations. Departments have to fire a certain amount of people and hiring a new person with reduced work capacity simply means firing an extra employee of that department. Employers do not want to conduct such practices. As expressed by one of the HR professionals: “...*We have chosen another approach. That is not the way*

we want to go. [...] It is not our intention to fire extra people to be able to employ people from the target group of the Participation Act...” Furthermore, the existing vacancy policy organizations have can be hindering. Once a position becomes available, employees that just have been laid off have priority to apply for that position. Because many employees are fired in times of downsizing, all these employees will have priority to people with reduced work capacity to fulfill positions. Another aspect which is mentioned to be hindering is the perception of unfairness including both employer’s perspective and employee’s perspective. Approximately half of the respondents mentioned that the execution of the Participation Act at the same time as downsizing is seen as an unfair practice. Remarkable is that this is mentioned by mainly unsuccessful organizations. HR professionals and supervisors find it hard to explain why they are hiring new people with reduced work capacity in times of downsizing in which other people are fired. In times of downsizing, HR professionals considered it as highly important to communicate well to the entire organization why they want to comply with the Participation Act and why these employees with reduced work capacity are employed.

The aforementioned factors and same results have been found for downsizing organizations from the public sector. Remarkably, one unsuccessful organization expressed that downsizing creates some opportunities for them to execute the Participation Act. Many people volunteered to leave their organization, and the organization is changing. Despite these opportunities, they are not able to employ people with reduced work capacity to a sufficient extent. The experts also confirmed the findings regarding downsizing. The biggest hindrance is found to be the tension between employing people and firing people at the same time. This is a commonly mentioned inhibiting factor for different organizations across different sectors. In times of downsizing creating additional positions is seen as useless, except if the organization acts upon an integrated Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) policy.

Lack of resources

An issue which was mentioned by two third of the HR professionals is lack of time and resources. The HR department has limited time to really focus on executing the Participation Act due to other priorities. Especially in times of downsizing, this is found to be a real barrier for HR professionals to execute the Participation Act well. Supervisors already experienced a lot of pressure in times of downsizing. As mentioned by several HR professionals: “...*We have other priorities. We have to run a business that is in very turbulent*

times, in a sector that is changing a lot. In these circumstances, this is not your first priority, as simple as that...” and “*...Currently our HR department that is responsible for recruitment and selection and employment of employees is really busy with downsizing issues, so that they just do not have time for these people...*” This issue is especially hindering for unsuccessful organizations. They explicitly mention that because of time issues the execution of the Participation Act does not get the attention that it needs. This in contrast to successful organizations who acknowledged the time issues, but overcome this barrier by creating project teams which work full-time on executing the Participation Act. Moreover, the available budget is found to be a factor which inhibits organizations to comply with the Participation Act. Three unsuccessful organizations stated that the financial resources are limited in times of downsizing.

Factors such as time issues and limited financial resources are also acknowledged by both downsizing organizations from public sectors and the experts. Regarding the lack of time, one expert found differences between large and small organizations. For large organizations the lack of time was compensated with a dedicated project team. In contrast, small organizations often lack the financial resources and time to appoint a project manager. Moreover, when organizations really focus on CSR and have this integrated in their business strategy and mission, the employment of people with reduced work capacity remains a priority, even in times of downsizing. However, if it is just a ‘CSR matter’ which is only a small part of the business strategy, it is likely that CSR disappears to the back ground when downsizing issues occur.

Organizational characteristics

Organizational characteristics can inhibit or facilitate organizations to create employment opportunities. The most common heard inhibiting factor is the mismatch between the jobs that are commonly performed in the financial sector and the abilities of the target group of the Participation Act. All HR professionals mentioned that it is difficult to create a person-job fit, because they mostly offer high-qualified labor which is in most cases not suitable for people with reduced work capacity. Although this factor is mentioned by all HR professionals, it is found to be especially difficult for unsuccessful organizations. As expressed by one HR professional: “*... We have a knowledge-intensive organization and the target group does not fit in this kind of environment...*” Specifically in times of downsizing, it is more difficult to find jobs that match the abilities of people from the target group. Jobs that

require lower education and thus are seen as suitable are more likely to disappear. Specially created jobs for the target group are the first jobs to be erased since these are not seen as critical positions. In these circumstances it is difficult to create positions that remain out of sight in times of downsizing. One HR professional formulated it as follows: “...*We had some positions suitable for the target group, however they were cut. We wanted to create a pool of employees for a call centre and then they just stopped the expansion of the call centre, and all of these places expired...*” Especially unsuccessful organizations experience difficulties in the functions that disappear in times of downsizing. They do not know how they can employ the target group in regular positions that are sustainable. Successful organizations are focusing on these sustainable positions and because of the usage of a broader definition of the target group, these organizations are better able to find candidates for positions that still remain after downsizing. Unsuccessful organizations are more likely to hold on to the target group as defined by the Participation Act, whereas all successful organizations broadened this definition. They argued it would be impossible to fulfill enough positions that add value to the organization if candidates from the target group can be recruited only. As one HR professional expressed this: “...*We broadened the definition, because otherwise it will not work at our organization. We contribute to the ultimate goal of contributing to the employment of people with reduced work capacity, no matter whether they are included in the target group or not...*” Additionally, it is perceived to be fairer to include all people that have reduced work capacity. In that way, successful organizations are more likely to find high educated people with reduced work capacity which matches better with the requirements of the jobs offered. Another organizational characteristic that is mentioned by one organization is the focus on traditional functions. Because they persist to these functions and the fixed tasks that belong to a function, it is perceived to be more difficult to place people with reduced work capacity in such positions. The same goes for organizations that experience high work pressure environments. These environments are not believed to be suitable for people with reduced work capacity and one organization explicitly mentioned that this was a reason why they had difficulties with complying with the Participation Act. Especially in times of downsizing, work pressures can increase because employees have to perform all tasks with a reduced amount of people. Organizations that are risk avoidant also experience hindrances to comply with the Participation Act due to their organizational characteristics. Because they want to ensure that all risks are overcome before implementing a plan, HR professionals are not able to learn by trial and error. “*What makes it difficult is that all risks have to be covered in this organization before we start doing something. With a*

topic such as executing the Participation Act it requires much time to find all possible risks. [...] It is a way to delay the execution, and not wanting to pioneer is thus really hindering...” This is an interesting finding, since most successful organizations mention trial and error and getting experience with the target group as an important factor to facilitate the execution of the Participation Act.

Most factors mentioned by organizations from the financial sector are found for organizations in the public sector as well. In addition to the finding of traditional functions being hindering, two organizations (successful and unsuccessful) from the public sector expressed that the traditional rules and procedures prevent the organization from changing. Despite the unwillingness to change, the successful organization overcomes this issue by piloting and gaining some experience. Conform statements made by most successful financial organizations, the opportunity to gain experience is explicitly mentioned as a facilitating factor by this successful public organization as well. Another additional finding is the barrier of division within the organization. Due to multiple locations and disciplines, one successful organization acknowledged that execution of the Participation Act is more difficult due to bad communication between parts of the organization. Additionally, one unsuccessful organization remarked that having different parts within the organization can be facilitating as well, because some parts perform more low-educated positions. As for the size of the organizations, one unsuccessful organization said the execution of the Participation Act is more difficult in smaller locations, because these locations have fewer positions to offer.

The experts confirmed that the aforementioned organizational characteristics play a role at organizations in other sectors as well. A great difference in complying with the Participation Act was seen in the size of the organizations. Small organizations execute the Participation Act more from a familial motivation, whereas in large organizations it is more formal and policy-oriented. Besides the size, the governance and types of jobs are found to be even more important in explaining differences in the compliance with the Participation Act. Organizations that deliver services are in a much harder position compared to industrial organizations to create employment opportunities.

Attitudes of the dominant coalition

Commitment and support for the Participation Act within the organizations is essential for compliance with the Participation Act. One of the HR professionals said: “...*We experience that if you do not have the commitment of the board for this topic, and you cannot relate it to your identity, that is a very restrictive factor...*” It becomes clear that the

successful organizations are further in realizing support and commitment. All successful organizations have commitment and support within the organization. As one HR professional expressed it: “...*We employ people with reduced work capacity for a reason, and in the meantime it has become common practice of business lines. Many people, managers and colleagues understand why we do this and support it...*” Almost half of them have great support and commitment throughout the entire organization, whereas the other half has support and commitment of top management and HR, but not entirely among employees. It helps to create commitment when the employment of people with reduced work capacity can be related to the organization’s identity. This was mostly recognized by successful organizations. Few unsuccessful organizations acknowledged that they have some commitment or support, but that it remains an ‘HR matter’. Other unsuccessful organizations have no commitment and support across the organization. One of the organizations said that they have no commitment for the Participation Act at their HR department and therefore it does not get to other parts of the organization. They already executed their own program to employ more people with disabilities before the effectuation of the Participation Act. “...*Management feels that we already do enough, because we execute our own program. And if you talk about the guaranteed job agreement, the conclusion is that those people are not the people we need here. So, I do not experience enthusiasm for the guaranteed job agreement. [...] For our program, people are enthusiastic. It is not limited to people in the target group of the Participation Act only, it is broader and feels fairer...*” Especially in times of downsizing, creating support and commitment has been found to be extremely important and it is recognized to be helpful if commitment exists. But in such insecure times, it is also found to be a more challenging aspect to achieve commitment. Creating commitment at the top is the first step, because otherwise the rest of the organization will not follow. “...*Managers literally say, ‘Is the executive board committed?’, if they are not, neither will I’.*”

Regarding the commitment and support for the Participation Act at public organizations, no differences are found compared to the results from the financial organizations. Also all experts acknowledged that commitment needs to be present across all levels of the organization. This is found to be relevant for many organizations across different sectors. Furthermore, communication is very important in creating commitment according to the experts.

Dominant HR perspective

When respondents were asked whether the Participation Act fit with their current HR strategy and policy, only one HR professional disagreed. This organization focuses exclusively on the economic rationality perspective. They focus primarily on increasing performance, achieving targets and making profit. *“...And everything that does not contribute to these goals, is not on the agenda of the executive board...”* The employment of people with reduced work capacity is not seen as an element that contributes to one of the new purposes which makes the execution of the Participation Act contradict the economic rationality perspective. Although all other organizations focus on an economic rationality perspective as well, they also focus on a social legitimacy perspective to a certain extent. For the successful group, the social legitimacy perspective is prevailing in their strategic decisions. As for the unsuccessful group, the reverse is the case. Only few organizations mentioned one element concerning the individual well-being perspective. Although all organizations think that the execution of the Participation Act fits their current policies and HR strategy, successful organizations show better alignment. These organizations usually do more than required and the Participation Act has been integrated into entire strategic policies. In contrast to unsuccessful organizations, which often find alignment with just one part of their policy or no link at all. As expressed by one of the HR professionals: *“...In our policy the execution of the Participation Act is not mentioned. Within our organization no linkages are made regarding this Act...”* Just one unsuccessful organization showed complete integration of the execution of the Participation Act with their entire strategy.

Interestingly, when asked whether the Participation Act fits with the HR strategy of public organizations, only the successful organization remarked that it fits with their HR strategy completely and it is explicitly linked to one part of their policy. This organization focused predominantly on a social legitimacy perspective. All unsuccessful organizations focused mostly on an economic rationality perspective of which one focused exclusively on this perspective. They acknowledged that the Participation Act did not fit with their HR strategy at all, but because they are public organizations they felt some kind of obligation to execute legislation initiated by the government. Therefore, the misfit did not feel as a barrier, but the missing link with their identity did not make it easier as well. Some tried to link it to their identity but admit that the ultimate drive is the Participation Act itself.

According to one of the experts, the execution of the Participation Act depends on the strategy an organization currently has. When organizations focus on an economic rationality perspective, they are more likely to work with Key Performance Indicators (KPI), which

means it is useful for these organizations to make the creation of positions for the target group a KPI. Otherwise, when the organization focuses more on CSR, they will execute the Participation Act from that perspective. Mostly public organizations are seen as organizations that focus more on CSR. This contradicts with the findings of this study, since the private organizations are found to be more CSR-oriented, whereas the public organizations focus on cost efficiency. Another expert acknowledged that the extent to which inclusive entrepreneurship is integrated in the business strategy and mission matters to comply with the Participation Act in times of downsizing. This expert found that organizations that integrated inclusion in their strategy and policy were precursors in complying with the Participation Act, because they act upon their intrinsic motivation to help people with reduced work capacity to get employed. Organizations that employed people with reduced work capacity before the effectuation of the Participation Act already made the first steps which are seen as the most difficult ones, according to the experts.

Perceived obstacles within the organization

Attitudes of employers and employees play a role in employing people with disabilities. Except for two HR professionals, most HR professionals (both successful and unsuccessful) expressed a positive attitude towards the target group of the Participation Act. Reactions of organization members are predominantly positive when someone with reduced work capacity is hired. HR professionals acknowledged that it needs to be explained and executed with sufficient preparation and guidance in order to get these positive reactions. Even in times of downsizing, most people react positively towards their employment in circumstances that no supplanting effect has occurred. Despite the positive attitude, almost all HR professionals mentioned that negative stereotypes exist towards the target group. Most mentioned stereotypes were that these people have a low productivity level, lower educational level, higher absenteeism level and the need for guidance. Although most organizations experienced these negative stereotypes, successful organizations actively erased these negative stereotypes. They put a lot of effort in showing the added value and focus on their talents or just employed people with reduced work capacity to show these stereotypes were unjustified. As one of the HR professionals said: “...*In our organization negative stereotypes are present. Our strategy to handle this is the belief that this image alters when employees get to know the people with reduced work capacity and this can be achieved by just employing them...*” Therefore, this group did not experience negative stereotypes as a barrier to create employment opportunities for the target group, whereas the

unsuccessful group did experience it as hindering. Indeed, employing the target group helps to counteract negative stereotypes, because employees can have positive experiences with this group. Most organizations acknowledged that having positive experiences helped them in employing more people from the target group. Having these positive experiences and sharing success stories were perceived as facilitating factors by most of the successful organizations. As one HR professional said: “...*What helps enormously is employing someone with reduced work capacity who has success and becomes a part of a team. Telling that story...*” Moreover, negative experiences did not alter the behavior of employers regarding the employment of people with reduced work capacity. Approximately half of the respondents had some kind of negative experience and all of these organizations said that the willingness to employ the target group remained. One of the HR professionals gave an example of a situation in which a supervisor had a real negative experience with someone with reduced work capacity. “...*And that supervisor said to me, ‘No, no, this is too much’. So, unfortunately it was not going to be successful with this person. Then he called me, approximately half a year later, and said, ‘The first time it did not go well, but I would like to try it again’.*” According to the HR professionals, personal affection with the target group can facilitate the willingness to employ people with reduced work capacity.

For public organizations the same results have been found with regard to perceived obstacles within the organization. The only difference with the financial organizations is that unsuccessful public organizations did not perceive negative stereotypes as an inhibiting factor. All public organizations experienced negative or mixed stereotypes and they all actively defeated them. Again, the experts confirmed the results found in the financial sector to be present in other sectors as well. The only difference is that they experienced that negative experience do result in reluctance of employers to employ someone with reduced work capacity again. The size of the organization can play a role in this finding. The larger an organization, the less impact one negative experience has. The experts believe it is a hopeful finding that organizations in the financial sector do not stop employing people from the target group when negative experiences occurred.

Inclusive HR activities

Some downsizing organizations had no policy to execute the Participation Act of which one organization expressed its wish to have one. Whether or not HR professionals created a policy on this topic does not reveal differences between the two groups of downsizing organizations. Most organizations already exerted ways to get this employee

group more employed before the effectuation of the Participation Act, but without a formal policy. It is more important that they are actively creating employment opportunities instead of formalizing it first in some kind of policy. All successful organizations have a dedicated person or team (mostly one or two FTE) that is engaged in the execution of the Participation Act. They cooperate mostly with the HR recruitment department. As one of these HR professionals said: “...*We make sure that policy and the assignments regarding the Participation Act are executed in a team of people with and without disabilities. [...] With such a team, you get things done. And that is what you need, you really need this dedicated team...*” As for the unsuccessful organizations, only one third have dedicated people on this project. The others remarked that having a dedicated team would facilitate the execution and would help to structure and guide the process. At this moment for these unsuccessful organizations this was not the case: “...*It is not an automatic process, you really need sufficient manpower to organize this well. And this is not my function formally, so that is a position we did not fulfill well at this moment...*” It is especially helpful to have such project team in times of downsizing when HR professionals already have a lot of other priorities. Furthermore, most successful organizations make use of a central budget and it is explicitly mentioned by two HR professionals that a central budget facilitates employment of the target group. After a certain time of employment, these positions are going to be financed by the business lines themselves. Only one of the successful organizations has the business line pay everything regarding the employment of people with reduced work capacity. From the unsuccessful group, two organizations mentioned that business lines are responsible for financing employment of people with reduced work capacity at their department, which is an obstacle to placements. One organization has no budget at all to realize employment of the target group. Even though some have their business lines budget, this is less facilitating than using a central budget. An HR professional explains the budgeting dilemma: “...*There is nobody who says, I will just create two extra positions at my department, because there is no budget available for that kind of things. Everybody thinks ‘I also have to achieve my own targets’...*”. Another benefit of recruiting people with reduced work capacity from a central budget is that they are mostly placed on top of formation. This makes these jobs more sustainable, as this secures these specific positions from downsizing. Related, but still another discussion that is going on is whether setting targets to business lines would be helpful to create sufficient employment opportunities. Three organizations (both successful and unsuccessful) set targets for each business line on how many people with reduced work capacity they should hire. These organizations claim that setting targets to the business line is

helpful. As said by one of the HR professionals: “...*What we arranged is that each business line has its own targets. [...] The funny thing is that you create some kind of exchange between business lines. Some business lines are correcting other business lines by asking why they do not have their targets achieved on this topic. The bank has a culture of winning. I think it is funny that on a non-economical, non-financial topic some healthy competition exists to provide people with reduced work capacity an opportunity. And it works...*”

Compliance with the Participation Act is not a target for line management in most unsuccessful organizations, and it does not get the attention that it needs. Three organizations experienced that the absence of targets is a hindrance to comply with the Participation Act. Additionally, a first way to look for placement opportunities in the organization is to search for ambassadors. All successful organizations have searched for people within the organization that have personal affection with this topic. These ambassadors facilitate employment by creating more support throughout the entire organization. As one HR professional formulated it: “...*And that is how you create precursors within a large company, of which others also think, we should do that as well, we should do it together, we are also going to take a step...*” With regard to the unsuccessful group, most organizations did not find any ambassadors, or did not pay attention to searching for them yet.

As for specific HR activities, most organizations make use of recruitment partners. Approximately half of all organizations acknowledged that this helps to find the right candidates to fulfill (created) positions. Furthermore, most of all organizations make use of organized meet and greets, which are events that help to generate contact between employers and candidates from the target group. Two organizations also arrange and organize these events for other employers and these meet and greets are mentioned to be helpful. A difference can be seen in the extent to which organizations invest in their recruitment activities. Successful organizations have undertaken more activities to get in contact with people with reduced work capacity than did unsuccessful organizations. For instance, one of the HR professionals expressed their activities regarding recruitment and selection of people with reduced work capacity as follows: “...*We make use of several recruitment agencies, visit meet and greets, we have our referral channel, [...] which means we ask our employees if they know suitable candidates with reduced work capacity from their own environment that may fit our organization. Furthermore, we have our own vacancy site with both regular vacancies and ear-marked vacancies [...] that are specifically for people with reduced work capacity...*” Another successful organization also cooperated with recruitment agencies, created a specific vacancy site, and made use of their own Participation desk: “...*We created*

an intern 'employment agency', the Participation Desk. Here we recruit people with reduced work capacity which will be employed partly within business support [...] and partly within business lines on several projects...” Besides the cooperation with recruitment agencies and the visits to meet and greet, unsuccessful organizations undertake no more activities regarding the recruitment of candidates. Furthermore, HR professionals think differently about the way they approach realization of successful placements. Some HR professionals thought it would be better to start with finding a candidate, and once you have that, they were going to see what kind of position would be suitable. Other HR professionals mentioned that the reverse would be a better way to go. It appears that organizations which have been successful in employing people with reduced work capacity initially searched for an available position and afterwards looked for a candidate which has the capabilities to fulfill that position. This might also explain why some organizations that do cooperate with specific recruitment agencies are not able to create employment opportunities in the end.

As for customized employment, all successful organizations make use of job carving. They look for possibilities within the organization, for instance by searching for tasks that are not performed due to time issues or existing vacancies which are partly suitable, and if they have such position, they are going to search for a candidate. Based on the abilities of the found candidate, it is possible to alter the vacancy in such a way that it is suitable for this person with reduced work capacity. As one of the HR professionals explained: “... *You need to search for the tasks that are not performed due to time issues, non-interest, or high work pressure. These kind of tasks can be found throughout the entire organization and these provide possibilities to create employment opportunities...*” For the unsuccessful group, two of the organizations make use of job carving in a similar way. Other unsuccessful organizations do not use job carving and one organization tried to use job carving, but due to downsizing, this did not help them in creating employment opportunities. Furthermore, job carving is used more than job crafting. Whereas job carving is mentioned by more than two third of all organizations as a performed activity, job crafting is mentioned by only few organizations. Remarkably, one successful organization said that they make more use of job crafting than of job carving. They look for a candidate that is able to do most parts of the offered job, and once this person is employed at that position, within the team they are going to exchange tasks in such a way that tasks are coupled with the talents of each team member as much as possible. Another successful organization and one unsuccessful organization use job crafting in a similar way. In contrast to the lesser use of job crafting practices, I-deals are used by almost all organizations. Another aspect of customized employment that was

available for everyone was workplace adjustments. If necessary, all organizations have some kind of finance to make that possible. The last form of customized employment, job creation, is not used by many organizations. Respondents replied predominantly negative towards the creation of new jobs. As some HR professionals expressed: “...*We are not in favor of creating new jobs in order to employ someone who is just performing a job that does not add value to the organization...*” and “...*We are not going to invent new work, it have to be regular activities...*” All organizations remarked that a position should have added value for the organization and created positions were not perceived as added value in times of downsizing. For none of the organizations job creation was the primary focus and most organizations said that they do not (want) to make use of job creation. Remarkably, two organizations that did create specific jobs for the target group that were not performed before within their organization were two successful organizations. Creating jobs is not their primarily focus, but they have found extra positions which could add value to their organization and may become sustainable. Another successful organization is investigating whether they could create new jobs that have added value for the organization.

Besides looking at internal HR activities to create employment opportunities for people with reduced work capacity, employers might also look for opportunities outside their organization. It appears that successful organizations already do more beyond the borders of their organizations. For instance, one organization offers an advisory process for customers, while other organizations try to motivate other employers and customers and organize events to meet each other and share knowledge. Activities that are executed by several successful and unsuccessful organizations are creating opportunities at organization’s suppliers and supporting social entrepreneurs by purchasing their products. The reason why successful organizations look for opportunities beyond the borders of their organizations might be because they more actively adopt a social legitimacy perspective compared to unsuccessful organizations. These activities are not helpful for their own realization of sufficient employment opportunities, but are aimed at helping others to comply as well. Since it is agreed that the organizations in the financial sector are not competing with each other on this topic, much cooperation is going on in the sector. All organizations are cooperating with specific institutes and other employers, but the successful organizations do this to a larger extent than the unsuccessful group. Cooperation has been designated by more than half of the respondents to be a facilitating factor. One HR professional spoke about an institute which is founded to help organizations to comply with the Participation Act: “...*The X has been founded for organizations who are somewhat further in the execution of the Participation Act*”

in order to share information with each other and to enlarge this topic. But if you only have a membership, but you never show up, that will not help you. We are going to X on a regular basis. I notice that it helps us further...” Working together with other employers and institutes helps organizations to find the right candidates and share a lot of valuable knowledge which brings them further in the execution of the Participation Act.

Using job coaches when someone got employed is important to make employment successful. Initially, this study only included HR activities that would help in creating employment opportunities and excluded the activities that would be helpful once someone was on the job. However, job coaches are important to mention. Most successful organizations used job coaches compared to none of the unsuccessful organizations (which makes sense, as there is no one to coach in unsuccessful organizations). As one of the HR professionals said: “...*We notice that candidates with a job coach achieve significant better results and are more easily to sustain compared to candidates without job coaches. Even candidates of which we thought [...] they are this good, they do not need a coach were getting out of control by small details, which I had never expected. If you can overcome these small things with a job coach, then the problem will not escalate...*” Some unsuccessful organizations had people employed, but failed in retaining them. The absence of job coaches can explain why these attempts to employment failed.

All factors that are mentioned by downsizing organizations in the financial sector are also mentioned by the public organizations. The results are found to be comparable. Only few differences can be discovered. With regard to recruitment activities, public organizations are less active than financial organizations in recruiting people from the target group. Whereas financial organizations look for recruitment partners and visit meet and greet events, public organizations only send specific job profiles to the Public Employment Service or put these profiles on a vacancy site. Not much difference is found between the successful and unsuccessful group of organizations in the public sector. Furthermore, as for HR activities performed beyond the borders of the organization, the division between successful and unsuccessful organizations is comparable to the division regarding financial organizations. Only the successful organization that is exclusively focusing on social legitimacy perspective is performing activities beyond the organization’s borders. This organization is cooperating with the Public Employment Service to improve their internal procedures. It appears that the HR perspective an organization adopts matters in the decision to contribute to the execution of the Participation Act more generally. Last, the cooperating with institutes and other employers is the same for successful and unsuccessful public organizations. However, the

extent to which they cooperate is significantly lower than the cooperation showed by financial organizations.

Experts mentioned the most important HR activities they found at multiple organizations across different sectors. Organizations remarked that regular processes hinder realization of employment opportunities. Having a budget is important for every organization. Especially for profit organizations that evaluate departments on their business line budget a central budget is a facilitating factor. At the same time, the experts acknowledged that if an organization is really inclusive, they need to be willing to pay it from business line budget as well. This factor plays a role for large organizations in particular. Experts state that if the organization is focused on profit, the processes are more formal and a central budget is more important, whereas non-profit organizations focus less on budget, but focus on the ultimate result. Furthermore, having a project team or dedicated person to execute the Participation Act is an activity that is executed by many large organizations. In these organizations experts believe it is useful to appoint a project team. In times of downsizing it is particularly important to have one person that is an ambassadors who can erase issues among employees and structure the process of executing the Participation Act. Searching for ambassadors is confirmed to be helpful to start by multiple experts. Job carving and job creation are expressed as helpful customized employment forms when they add value to the organization. Also, cooperation and sharing knowledge is perceived as a facilitating factor by many organizations across different sectors. In this sense, networks and events are found to be very important. Organizations look for comparable organizations to see which solutions are implemented and copy these to their own organization. Last, experts consider buddy's and job coaches as a base for success once someone with reduced work capacity is employed.

Use of external support and policy instruments

Downsizing organizations experience lack of knowledge of the target group and they feel not supported by the Public Employment Service. Most successful organizations have the necessary knowledge and acknowledged that having this knowledge facilitates in compliance with the Participation Act: “... *Yes, I think knowledge is of great added value to give someone a good opportunity in the right way and that it helps to provide more opportunities...*” As for the unsuccessful group, over two third acknowledged that they lacked this knowledge of which half of the respondents recognized this as a barrier. Moreover, the support in recruitment by the Public Employment Service has been perceived to be insufficient by both

successful and unsuccessful organizations. However, this was perceived to be a real barrier by unsuccessful organizations only. As said by one of these HR professionals: “...*The Public Employment Service cannot offer the needed support. That is really hindering, I asked their help several times...*” Furthermore, subsidies can be seen as stimulant to offer employers enough resources to make realization of jobs possible. Approximately, half of the respondents make use of these financial resources, whereas the other half thinks it is too complex to arrange and pays everything themselves.

The aforementioned findings regarding knowledge, external support and policy instruments are found to be similar for public organizations. Furthermore, all experts confirmed these findings as well for other organizations. One of the experts conducted a research among their clients and found that the limited support of Public Employment Service is experienced as the most inhibiting factor. Many employers experience a lack of knowledge and do not know what to expect. This inhibits compliance with the Participation Act. The presence of knowledge is found to be important according to the experts.

Many factors are found to explain the difference between successful and unsuccessful organizations in complying with the Participation Act. The overall findings and comparison between successful and unsuccessful organizations are summarized in Table 2.

Table 2: Summary of findings

	Successful organizations (N = 4)	Unsuccessful organizations (N= 7)
External context	Critical notes	Real impediments
Managerial issues: Downsizing	Surmountable	Insurmountable
Other managerial issues	Surmountable	Insurmountable
Organizational characteristics	Surmountable	Insurmountable
Attitudes of dominant coalition	Great presence of support throughout the entire organization.	Mostly absent
Dominant HR perspective	Social legitimacy perspective and fully integrated in policy	Economic rationality perspective and partly integrated in policy
Perceived obstacles	Surmountable	Insurmountable
Inclusive HR activities		
<i>Ambassadors</i>	Present and actively searching for ambassadors	No search for ambassadors
<i>Starting point</i>	Mostly start with finding a job/position	Mixed starting points
<i>Recruitment activities</i>	Cooperation with specific recruitment partners and executing specific activities	Cooperation with specific recruitment partners
<i>Budget</i>	Mostly central budget	Central/line budget or no budget
<i>Project team</i>	Present	Absent
<i>Customized employment</i>	Extensive use of job carving. Job creation only when it has added value	Limited to no use of job carving and job creation
<i>Collaboration</i>	Extensive with other employers and specific institutes	Limited with other employers and specific institutes
<i>Job coaching</i>	Mostly present	Absent
External support		
<i>Support from PES</i>	Limited	Limited
<i>Knowledge about target group</i>	Present	Mostly absent

CONCLUSION

In this study it has been investigated which strategies can be successful for downsizing organizations to create employment opportunities for people with reduced work capacity. Many factors have been found to play a role in the ability employers perceive in complying with the Participation Act. Although inhibiting factors to employ people with reduced work capacity have been found in previous studies as well (Borghouts & Freese, 2016), no former study investigated how these factors interact and which factors are crucial for successful employment of people with reduced work capacity. Central to this study was the examination of downsizing organizations in the financial sector. Additionally, several public downsizing organizations are studied and to corroborate these findings, some experts were approached as well. Building further on the inclusive HRM model of Borghouts and Freese (2016), organizations that have been able to create employment opportunities for people with reduced work capacity (successful) have been compared to organizations that have not (yet) been able to do so (unsuccessful). This study showed that successful and unsuccessful organizations differed on distinct factors which indicates that some factors are imperative to create employment opportunities for people with reduced work capacity successfully.

All downsizing organizations that contributed to the study intended to comply with the Participation Act. Although most organizations from the financial sector expressed that they wanted to comply due to their CSR, the extent to which the attempts to comply were stimulated by the Participation Act differed among organizations. Several factors indicated that successful organizations acted more upon their inclusive character to comply with the Participation Act. These organizations expressed their absolute will to create employment opportunities for people with reduced work capacity as part of their mission and identity as employer. Besides creating these opportunities within their own organizations, these employers also executed activities to create opportunities beyond the borders of their organization. Furthermore, the employment of people with reduced work capacity is fully integrated in their HR strategy and organizational policies. In these organizations a shared feeling of acceptance exists throughout the entire organization when people with reduced work capacity are employed, even in times of downsizing. Compared to unsuccessful organizations, successful organizations felt less obligated to comply with the exact terms of the Participation Act and dared to run the risk of non-compliance due to deviations from the Participation Act. Unsuccessful organizations strive towards an inclusive climate, but the

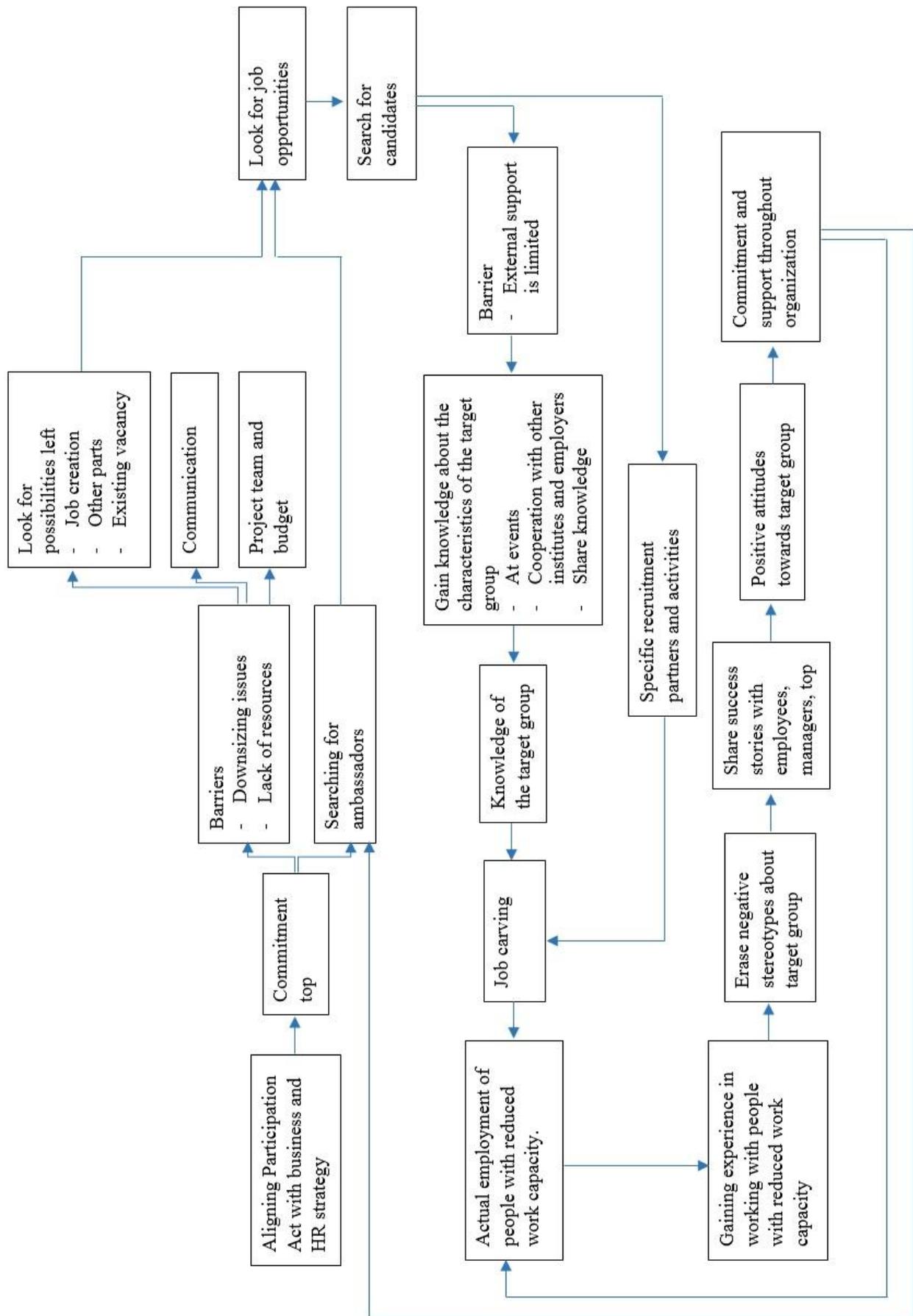
employment of people with reduced work capacity is not fully integrated in their strategies and policies. They try to motivate compliance with the Participation Act through their identity, but their behavior shows differently. The idea of the possible fine and consequences of the Participation Act played a larger role within these organizations and they aim to meet all exact requirements of the Participation Act. Following this, it is remarkable that strictly wanting to comply with the Participation Act is not contributing to successful employment of people with reduced work capacity, but more a hindrance to comply. In general, compliance with the Participation Act is more difficult for organizations focusing on delivering services instead of producing products. This is a disturbing finding since the greatest part of the Dutch economy is based on service industries.

Although organizations from service sectors are found to be in a more difficult position to comply with the Participation Act, this study showed that downsizing organizations within the financial sector can be successful in creating employment opportunities for people with reduced work capacity. Thus, what can be successful strategies for downsizing organizations to create employment opportunities for people with reduced work capacity? What is important is that organizations that want to comply with the Participation Act strategically align the execution of this Act with their current HR strategy. Downsizing organizations that are successful in employing people with reduced work capacity acted upon their inclusive character and predominantly adopted a social legitimacy perspective. This facilitated them in complying with the Participation Act. Unsuccessful downsizing organizations are good willing organizations that want to comply with the exact terms of the Participation Act. Although successful and unsuccessful downsizing organizations have to overcome many similar barriers, successful organizations are better able to do so due to their different approach. For instance, the definition of the target group is named by most organizations as being a hindrance to comply with the Participation Act. However, successful organizations mention this more as a critical note, whereas it really inhibits unsuccessful organizations to find the right candidates. The same applies to the perceived barriers such as disappearing jobs in times of downsizing, perceived unfairness or negative stereotypes. Additionally, successful organizations executed more inclusive HR activities compared to unsuccessful organizations. Inclusive HR activities that show differences between successful and unsuccessful organizations are the search for ambassadors, a central budget, a dedicated project team, use of job carving and collaboration with other employers and institutes. These findings indicate that these HR activities can be facilitating when downsizing organizations want to comply with the Participation Act.

Furthermore, at successful organizations more knowledge, support and commitment were present throughout the entire organization, whereas these factors were mostly absent at unsuccessful organizations. This indicates these factors are imperative to make compliance with the Participation Act possible. This becomes even more interesting when one specific organization is considered. As suggested, one organization was questionable whether to assign it to the unsuccessful or successful group. This organization is most successful in the unsuccessful group, but by far not as successful as successful organizations. When the barriers, HR perspectives and HR activities of this organization were considered, it was remarkable to discover that they already execute many inclusive HR activities and that the execution of the Participation Act was entirely integrated in their strategy. The only factors on which this organization differed from successful organizations was the lack of knowledge and the absence of commitment. This indicates the importance of these factors even more and thus can be seen as preconditions to comply with the Participation Act. If these factors are missing, it will be very difficult for HR professionals to actually get people from the target group employed.

The mentioned factors that are in play when executing the Participation Act are related to each other and by overcoming perceived barriers successful organizations create their own success. For instance, when employers just employ someone with reduced work capacity, employees will get experiences with the target group, they will experience that negative stereotypes are unjustified, this success story will be shared, which ultimately creates more support and commitment throughout the entire organization, creating new opportunities to employ the target group. Stating that employers just have to employ someone is easier said than done. However, to find the right candidate to fulfill a position, HR professionals can make use of recruitment activities that are more extensive and especially focused on recruiting people with reduced work capacity. Difficulties experienced by the lack of support from Public Service Employment to recruit candidates can be reduced for instance by gaining knowledge about the target group at events such as meet and greets. As suggested, it is more likely to achieve successful employment if positions are created before a candidate is recruited. Thus, HR professionals first need to find a position available for a possible candidate. Several ways are possible to create employment opportunities, but initially managerial issues need to be solved, which can be done by for instance a central budget and project team. The search for ambassadors can also be facilitating in realizing employment opportunities. However, crucial factors in making employment for people with reduced work capacity possible are commitment from top management and the alignment with the HR

strategy. As indicated, without the presence of these factors, compliance with the Participation Act will be very difficult. By taking all these barriers and activities into account, a flowchart has been developed. All factors that are indicated to be successful for downsizing organizations to create employment opportunities for people with reduced work capacity are presented in flowchart 1.



Flowchart 1: Indicated factors to successfully comply with the Participation Act

DISCUSSION

In this study, many factors have been found that inhibit or facilitate the employment of people with reduced work capacity. These are mostly conform previous studies (Bruyère, 2000; Burton et al., 2004; Hirst, et al., 2004; Schur, et al., 2005; Chan, et al, 2010; Kaye, et al., 2001; Erickson, et al., 2013; Borghouts & Freese, 2016). A factor that contradicts previous studies concerns negative experiences. Although it has been shown that employers who had negative experiences were less likely to hire disabled people (Graffam, et al., 2002), this study showed that negative experiences do not play a role in the willingness of employers to employ people from the target group. Multiple examples were given by HR professionals that indicated the presence of negative experiences and the willingness to try it again at the same time. According to the HR professionals, the attitude towards the target group and personal affection of managers play a larger role in their decision to employ someone with reduced work capacity again than did the negative experience itself. Another finding that is not conform previous studies involves the existence of a policy on employment for disabled people. Hirst and colleagues (2004) found that organizations that execute such a policy before effectuation of institutional legislation are more likely to employ people with disabilities. However, this study found that the policy itself does not reveal differences between successful and unsuccessful organizations. It appears to be more important that the execution of the Participation Act, be it in formal or informal policy, is completely integrated into the HR strategy and organizational policies.

Furthermore, this study has theoretical implications for disability and Strategic HRM literature. As suggested, many studies have investigated separate factors and reasons why employers are reluctant to employ people with disabilities. Hemphill and Kulik (2015) are the only researchers who investigated differences between employers that employ disabled people and those who do not. The findings of the current study are conform the results of Hemphill and Kulik's study (2015). However, no former study related these factors to each other and determined which factors are necessary to create employment opportunities for people with reduced work capacity. This study showed imperative factors that can contribute to successful employment of people with reduced work capacity. Furthermore, it is of importance that alignment exists with the business and HR strategy. This is recognized by most literature, but the predominant focus in Strategic HRM literature is on the effects of HR on organizational effectiveness and literature on the social legitimacy perspective is scarce (Boon, Paauwe, Boselie, & Den Hartog, 2009). How the employment of people with reduced

work capacity is aligned with the business and HR strategy is non-existent in literature. This study contributes to Strategic HRM literature by showing the importance of alignment between the execution of the Participation Act with the HR and business strategy to be successful in employing people with reduced work capacity.

Additionally, this study contributes to literature by being the first to develop a flowchart indicating the factors that are successful for employing people with reduced work capacity for downsizing organizations. This is a useful addition to existing literature and a starting point for future research. This flowchart is based on the findings of this study, namely the differences between successful and unsuccessful organizations. The distinction between these groups have been based on the amount of jobs already created. It is believed that the organizations were assigned to the right groups, since the organizations that were addressed as successful in this study were also mentioned by multiple employers and experts as being successful in their sector. Besides the evidence for the flowchart found in this study, findings from change literature authenticate these factors as well. Employing people with reduced work capacity and creating an organizational culture that is open towards these people is a new HR initiative for most organizations since the effectuation of the Participation Act. This means that organizations have to deal with change in their organizations. Conform the findings of this study, top management support and commitment are found to play a crucial role in successful change (Carnall, 1995; Kotter, 1995; Johnson & Leavitt, 2001). Furthermore, one change agent or a support coalition have been stressed to be necessary elements for successful change (Kanter, 1983; Carnall, 1995). As found in this study, ambassadors and project teams are facilitating factors to employ people with reduced work capacity. Also providing sufficient resources are necessary to support the process of change (Fernandez & Rainey, 2006). Coherent with this study, the need for time and financial resources are found to be important for successful compliance with the Participation Act. Based on the findings of this study combined with outcomes of studies from change literature results in the expectation that the proposed flowchart offers a solid basis for successful compliance with the Participation Act. Future research should prove that the linkages between the different factors indeed exist.

Limitations and future research

As with all studies, this study contains several design limitations. First, some limitations can be found regarding the sample used in this study. The sample size of this study is small. However, following the majority of qualitative studies, this study used the

concept of saturation to determine the sample size (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Saturation is achieved when the collection of new data does not reveal new issues regarding the study (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Saturation was reached at nine interviews in the financial sector. In this sense, the sample size used in this study is sufficient if results are drawn for the financial sector only. But the fact that only organizations from the financial sector have been taken into account limits the generalizability to other sectors and should be done with caution. Including financial organizations only was a deliberate choice in order to study the effect of downsizing on complying with the Participation Act under conditions. The financial sector was chosen, because this sector has to deal with many downsizing issues currently. To diminish this limitation, the results of this study have been compared to samples from other sectors and by interviewing experts regarding this topic. The generalizability of these results to other sectors is slightly enhanced by the fact that the results are found in both private and public sectors. Furthermore, only downsizing organizations that were willing to comply with the Participation Act participated in the study. Organizations that did not want to participate lacked time due to downsizing. Additionally, only large organizations participated in the study. The results can differ for smaller organizations. Despite the fact that these sample characteristics could have influenced the results, no study investigated the execution of the Participation Act in times of downsizing, thus this study can be seen as a valuable first step towards a broad understanding of this topic. It is recommended for future research to investigate other sectors and smaller organizations to achieve a more complete framework on how organizations can successfully create employment opportunities for people with reduced work capacity. Since it has been found that organizations from service sectors are in a tougher position to comply with the Participation Act compared to industrial sectors, it is also recommended for future research to focus explicitly on investigating specific opportunities to comply with the Participation Act for these type of sectors.

Additionally, only Dutch organizations have been included in this study. This seems obvious since the Participation Act is a Dutch legislation, but in some foreign countries similar active labor market policies exist, for instance the American with Disabilities Act (ADA) in the United States of America. By including only Dutch organizations, this study was able to investigate how employment opportunities can be created for people with reduced work capacity under conditions. However, this also limits the generalizability of the results to other national contexts. Downsizing is increasingly becoming a global phenomenon (Datta & Basuil, 2015), which makes it more important to investigate how downsizing organizations can comply with active labor market policies regarding the employment of people with

reduced work capacity. For future research it would be interesting to investigate the differences between national contexts and the way they comply with legislation regarding the employment of people with reduced work capacity. In this sense, policy makers can learn from each other on how such legislation can be executed successfully.

Third, conducting interviews can contain some limitations as well. Interviews may be biased by the way the interviewer asked the questions and interpreted the results (Kvale, 1994). With regard to the questions asked, the interviewer has a particular research question and the questions asked to the interviewee may be unintentionally biased to achieve the desired answers. The interviewer needs to be aware of this bias, because it can influence the reliability of the results. In this study, semi-structured questionnaires were developed and used with open-ended questions, which are believed to reduce the possibility of this bias. As for the interpretation of the results, interviews ask for interpretive validity which refers to an accurately understanding of the things said by the interviewee (Johnson, 1997). However, a possible bias in qualitative research is that different readers can interpret the same interview results differently (Kvale, 1994). Because in this study only one interviewer coded and interpreted the data collected, the findings are subject to the interpretations of this interviewer. This may lower the validity of the results. The possibility of this bias is reduced as much as possible by the strategy of summarizing the answers given by the interviewee during the interviews. However, when interpreting the results, readers need to be aware of the possibility that other interpretations are plausible.

Fourth, social desirability bias is a common found bias in social sciences (Fisher, 1993). HR professionals who participated in this study are responsible for the execution of the Participation Act. Since they are responsible, it may be the case that they want to project a rosy picture to others regarding the execution of the Participation Act. However, the effects of social desirability are expected to be limited in this study. First of all, the possibility of social desirable answers was reduced by asking mostly open-ended and in-depth questions. Furthermore, confidentiality and anonymity have been promised, which made it easier for HR professionals to project a realistic image instead of an ideal one. Moreover, respondents expressed that they participated in this study in order to get some insights in what they could alter to make compliance with the Participation Act possible. It was not their aim to show how well they did regarding the execution of the Participation Act, but they acknowledged the difficulties they faced. Only one HR professional is suspected to give not completely honest answers. This was indicated by the interviewee's focus on absolute anonymity, avoiding direct answering and by other interviewed HR professionals who expressed that this

organization did not take action regarding this topic. In general, most respondents explained situations which are not favorable for the organization. This indicates that social desirability bias is minimal, but should be taken into account when results are interpreted. For future research it may be an option to collect data by observations at multiple moments in time. This will reveal actual practices instead of self-reportage.

Last, only HR professionals have been interviewed in this study. What HR professionals perceive as successful does not mean that it is perceived as successful by line managers and employees. HR professionals are more involved in policy making and recruiting the people of the target group, whereas line managers and employees are the ones that are actually going to work with these new employees. There may be a difference between the intended HR practices and the way these HR practices are implemented and perceived by other organization members. At this moment, organizations are addressed as successful if they are recognized as precursors in their sector regarding this topic and have been able to create employment opportunities. However, it is unknown whether the line managers, employees, and the employed people with reduced work capacity are satisfied with this employment and the implementation of the HR practices. According to Wright and Nishii (2007), multiple units of analysis should be considered to show how HR practices are perceived by other organization members. Only if intended, implemented and perceived HR practices are aligned, it can be said that the HR practices contribute to achieving organizational goals (Wright & Nishii, 2007). It is recommended for future research to take the perceptions of other actors on different levels of the organization into account by including HR professionals, line managers and employees with and without reduced work capacity. In that way, it can be investigated whether the HR practices that are found to be successful according to HR professionals in this study, are also perceived as successful by other organization members. This study is a good start for future research to investigate how the Participation Act can be successfully executed at multiple levels within the organization.

In this study the HR perspective of organizations have been examined. However, no valid scale on the indication of HR perspective exists. Based on literature, for this study some HR outcomes are indicated to be related to one of the HR perspectives. Future research could investigate which factors really indicate the predominant HR perspective an organization adopts. The same goes for inclusion. This study used some indications which suggest the extent to which an employer is inclusive, but these indications are not significantly proven to be valid predictors. Future research should focus on identifying or developing a scale which measures the inclusiveness of employers in a valid way.

Moreover, this study proposed a flowchart on how downsizing organizations can successfully comply with the Participation Act. As suggested, some factors are already found to be important by studies in change literature. However, future research should investigate whether the proposed linkages between the barriers and HR activities are significantly proven by conducting quantitative studies. Furthermore, conducting a longitudinal study regarding the compliance with the Participation Act can also reveal different stages of the process to create employment opportunities. This may provide even more insight in the hindrances, processes and activities HR professionals execute in order to comply with institutional legislation.

Practical implications

Also practical implications can be drawn from the results of this study. Many HR professionals struggle with the execution of the Participation Act at the same time as reducing the amount of jobs in the organization. This study reveals factors and HR activities that can facilitate the execution of the Participation Act for downsizing organizations that want to comply with the Participation Act. The focus on a social legitimacy perspective and the integration of employment for people with reduced work capacity into the organizational strategy facilitate compliance with the Participation Act. Especially in times of downsizing, the focus on inclusion helps to retain a shared belief that employment of people with reduced work capacity is important. A coherent set of inclusive HR activities, such as a project team, job carving and specific recruitment activities, have been shown to be successful in complying with the Participation Act. Unsuccessful organizations can learn from successful organizations with regard to sustainable employment for people with reduced work capacity. For organizations that are not yet inclusive employers, it is important to pay attention to these kind of activities, especially in times of downsizing. This study indicates that compliance with the Participation Act can still be successfully executed and even in times of downsizing this does not need to be a lost battle. HR professionals can win this battle by aligning the employment of people with reduced work capacity to their business and HR strategy and in that way gaining the commitment from top management. By working together, this battle can be won!

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APPENDIX I Interview guidelines (English version)

Includes questions for both successful and unsuccessful organizations

General

- Short introduction from interviewer and interviewee.
- How long are you employed at this organization?
- What are the main tasks of your function?

Organizational characteristics

- Do you already employ people with reduced work capacity?
 - If yes, since when are you employing these people?
 - If not, what is the reason for that decision?
- Would you describe the organization as an inclusive employer, an awaiting employer, or a reluctant employer with respect to hiring people with reduced work capacity? Why?

Downsizing

- Was your organization involved in downsizing practices in which jobs have been eliminated?
- What did downsizing contain in your organization?
- What was the reason for downsizing?
- Which type of functions disappeared? And which remained?
- Are there still vacancies left?
- What was the reaction of organization members to downsizing?

Participation Act

- How are you involved in the issue of compliance with the Participation Act?
- Do you know someone in your environment who makes/will make use of the Participation Act?
- How do you feel about the Participation Act?
- Is there support/commitment for the execution of the Participation Act in the organization? (Top management, HR, co-workers?)
- How many jobs did you realize for the target group?

- If you did, in what kind of functions?
- Questions specific for unsuccessful organizations:
 - What inhibits you to comply with the Participation Act?
 - What could help you to comply with the Participation Act?
- Questions specific for successful organizations:
 - What inhibited you to comply with the Participation Act?
 - What facilitated you to comply with the Participation Act?
 - What was the reaction of organization members when an individual from the target group got employed? (Top management, HR, co-workers?)

Inhibiting and facilitating factors

- What do organization members think of the execution of the Participation Act in times of downsizing? (Top management, HR, co-workers?) Does/did that help/inhibit you to comply with the Participation Act?
- What do organization members think of the target group in terms of performance and skills? (Top management, HR, co-workers?) Does/did that help/inhibit you to comply with the Participation Act?
- What do organization members think of the target group in terms of accommodation adjustments and associated costs? (Top management, HR?) Does/did that help/inhibit you to comply with the Participation Act?
- Regarding the individuals of the target group, what is the attitude of top management, HR, co-workers? Does/did that help/inhibit you to comply with the Participation Act?
- Does the organization have previous experiences with the target group? Positive or negative? Does/did that help/inhibit you to comply with the Participation Act?
- Do you have knowledge about the target group? Does that help/inhibit you to comply with the Participation Act?
- Questions specific for unsuccessful organizations:
 - Which other factors inhibit the execution of the Participation Act in times of downsizing?
 - Which other factors (could) facilitate execution of the Participation Act in times of downsizing?
- Questions specific for successful organizations:

- Which other factors inhibited the execution of the Participation Act in times of downsizing?
- Which other factors facilitated the execution of the Participation Act in times of downsizing?
- What was the reaction of organization members when an individual from the target group got employed in times of downsizing? (Top management, HR, co-workers?)

HR perspectives

- What are the core values of your organizations? Where do you stand for?
- What are the key pillars of the HR strategy? (Top 5) Yes No

○	Yes	No
○ Productivity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
○ Quality	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
○ Efficiency	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
○ Performance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
○ Satisfaction	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
○ Commitment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
○ Fairness	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
○ Employee well-being	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
○ Health	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
○ Reputation/employer branding/image	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
○ Valuing vulnerable groups	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
○ Inclusion/diversity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
○ Sustainability	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
○ Social legitimacy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
○ Other		
- Do you have a policy on employment for disabled?
- Did you already have it before the effectuation of the Participation Act?
- Does the execution of the Participation Act fit with the current HR policy? Does the HR strategy facilitate or hinder compliance with the Participation Act? How did it facilitate/hinder?
 - Is this still the case in times of downsizing?

Possible HR activities

- What have you done to comply with the Participation Act?
- What worked? What did not?
- What kind of activities do you use to attract people of the target group? Why (not)?
Did it help you to comply with the Participation Act? Why (not)?
- What kind of activities do you offer to employ people of the target group? (Job carving, job crafting, I-deal negotiations, workplace adjustments, other?) Why (not)?
Did it help you to comply with the Participation Act? Why (not)? Is it possible in times of downsizing? Why (not)?
- Did you create specific jobs for the target group? Why (not)? Did it help you to comply with the Participation Act? Why (not)? Is it possible in times of downsizing? Why (not)?
- Instead of focusing on creating jobs for the target group within the organization, do you also focus on creating employment opportunities outside your organization? Why (not)?
- Do you cooperate with other organizations or institutes to comply with the Participation Act? Why (not)? Which organizations?
- What is most important to take into account when organizations want to comply with the Participation Act in times of downsizing? Why?

Do you want to correct or add something to what you have said during the interview?

APPENDIX II Interview guidelines (Dutch version)

Algemeen

- Korte introductie van interviewer en interviewee.
- Hoe lang werkt u al in deze organisatie?
- Wat zijn de kerntaken van uw functie?

Organisatie karakteristieken

- Heeft u al mensen met een afstand tot de arbeidsmarkt in dienst?
 - Zo ja, sinds wanneer neemt u deze mensen al aan?
 - Zo niet, wat is daarvan de reden?
- Zou u uw organisatie omschrijven als een inclusieve werkgever, een afwachter of tegenstander ten opzichte van het aannemen van mensen met een afstand tot de arbeidsmarkt? Waarom?

Reorganisatie met baanverlies

- Is er in uw organisatie sprake van reorganisatie waarbij banen verloren zijn gegaan?
- Wat houdt reorganisatie voor uw organisatie in?
- Wat was de reden voor de reorganisatie?
- Welke type functies zijn er verdwenen? En welke zijn gebleven?
- Zijn er nog vacatures?
- Wat was de reactie van mensen uit de organisatie op de reorganisatie?

Participatiewet

- Hoe bent u betrokken bij het uitvoeren van de Participatiewet?
- Kent u iemand in uw omgeving die gebruik maakt of gebruik zal gaan maken van de Participatiewet?
- Hoe staat u tegenover de Participatiewet?
- Is er draagvlak in de organisatie voor de invulling van de Participatiewet? (Top management, HR, medewerkers?)
- Hoeveel banen heeft u gerealiseerd in het kader van de Participatiewet?
 - Zo ja, in welke functies?
- Vragen specifiek voor onsuccesvolle organisaties:

- Wat houdt u tegen om de Participatiewet uit te voeren?
- Wat zou u kunnen helpen om de Participatiewet uit te voeren?
- Vragen specifiek voor succesvolle organisaties:
 - Wat hield u tegen om de Participatiewet uit te voeren?
 - Wat heeft u geholpen bij het uitvoeren van de Participatiewet?
 - Wat was de reactie van mensen uit de organisatie toen er iemand met arbeidsbeperking werd aangenomen? (Top management, HR, medewerkers?)

Belemmerende en faciliterende factoren

- Hoe wordt naar de invulling van de Participatiewet gekeken in tijden van reorganisatie? (Top management, HR, medewerkers?) Helpt/Hielp of belemmert/belemmerde u dat in de uitvoering van de Participatiewet?
- Wat vinden organisatieleden van mensen met een arbeidsbeperking in termen van vaardigheden en prestatie? (Top management, HR, medewerkers?) Helpt/Hielp of belemmert/belemmerde u dat in de uitvoering van de Participatiewet?
- Wat vinden organisatieleden van mensen met een arbeidsbeperking in termen van werkplek aanpassingen en verbonden kosten? (Top management, HR?) Helpt/Hielp of belemmert/belemmerde u dat in de uitvoering van de Participatiewet?
- Wat is de houding van top management, HR, medewerkers ten opzichte van de doelgroep? Helpt/Hielp of belemmert/belemmerde u dat in de uitvoering van de Participatiewet?
- Heeft de organisatie eerdere ervaringen met deze doelgroep? Positief of negatief? Helpt/Hielp of belemmert/belemmerde u dat in de uitvoering van de Participatiewet?
- Heeft u kennis over de Participatiedoelgroep? Helpt/Hielp of belemmert/belemmerde u dat in de uitvoering van de Participatiewet?
- Vragen specifiek voor onsuccesvolle organisaties:
 - Welke andere factoren belemmeren de invulling van de Participatiewet in tijden van reorganisatie?
 - Welke andere factoren faciliteren de invulling van de Participatiewet in tijden van reorganisatie?
- Vragen specifiek succesvolle organisaties:
 - Welke andere factoren belemmerden de invulling van de Participatiewet in tijden van reorganisatie?

- Welke andere factoren faciliteerden de invulling van de Participatiewet in tijden van reorganisatie?
- Wat was de reactie van mensen uit de organisatie toen er iemand met arbeidsbeperking werd aangenomen in tijden van reorganisatie? (Top management, HR, medewerkers?)

HR perspectieven

- Wat zijn de kernwaarden van uw organisatie? Waar staan jullie voor?
- Wat zijn de pijlers van de HR strategie? (Top 5)

	Ja	Nee
○ Productiviteit	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
○ Kwaliteit	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
○ Efficiëntie	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
○ Prestatie	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
○ Tevredenheid	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
○ Betrokkenheid	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
○ Eerlijkheid	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
○ Welzijn van werknemers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
○ Gezondheid	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
○ Reputatie/imago	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
○ Waarderen van kwetsbare groepen	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
○ Inclusiviteit/diversiteit	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
○ Duurzaamheid	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
○ Sociale legitimiteit (rechtvaardigheid, werkgelegenheid)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
○ Anders
- Heeft de organisatie een beleid voor het aannemen van mensen met een arbeidsbeperking?
- Was dit beleid er al voordat de Participatiewet in werking trad?
- Past de invulling van de Participatiewet bij het huidige beleid? Houdt de HR strategie u tegen of faciliteert het u om te voldoen aan de Participatiewet? Hoe heeft dit geholpen/tegengewerkt?
 - Geldt dit ook in tijden van reorganisatie?

Mogelijke HR activiteiten

- Wat heeft u gedaan om de Participatiewet uit te voeren?
- Wat werkte? En wat werkte niet?
- Welke activiteiten gebruikt u om mensen van de doelgroep aan te trekken? (Speciale wervingskanalen, essentiële functieprofielen, anders?) Waarom (niet)? Heeft dit u geholpen bij de uitvoering van de Participatiewet? Waarom (niet)?
- Welke activiteiten biedt u mensen van de doelgroep? (Job carving, job crafting, Ideals, werkplek aanpassingen, anders?) Waarom (niet)? Heeft dit u geholpen bij de uitvoering van de Participatiewet? Waarom (niet)? Is dat mogelijk in tijden van reorganisatie? Waarom (niet)?
- Heeft u speciale banen gecreëerd om mensen van de doelgroep aan te nemen? Waarom (niet)? Heeft dit u geholpen bij de uitvoering van de Participatiewet? Waarom (niet)? Is dat mogelijk in tijden van reorganisatie? Waarom (niet)?
- Zag u, in plaats van te focussen op creëren van banen in de organisatie, ook mogelijkheden om werkmogelijkheden te creëren buiten de organisatie? Waarom (niet)?
- Werkt u samen met andere organisaties om te voldoen aan de Participatiewet? Waarom (niet)? Welke organisaties zijn dit?
- Wat is het belangrijkste om rekening mee te houden wanneer organisaties aan de Participatiewet willen voldoen wanneer ze aan het reorganiseren zijn? Waarom?

Wilt u nog iets corrigeren of toevoegen aan de dingen die u gezegd heeft tijdens het interview?

APPENDIX III Additional interview guidelines (English version)

Questions used for the interviews that were conducted additionally.

General

- Short introduction interviewer and interviewee.
- Short introduction research study.
- What are the most common inhibiting factors regarding the execution of the Participation Act you heard about?
- What are the most common inhibiting factors regarding the execution of the Participation Act in times of downsizing?
- What are the most common facilitating factors regarding the execution of the Participation Act you heard about?
- Which HR perspectives are mostly used by employers considering the execution of the Participation Act?
- What are the most common HR activities employers conduct regarding the execution of the Participation Act?
- Is there a difference between large and small organizations in terms of the execution of the Participation Act?

Specific questions

- In the financial sector, the definition of the target group as formulated by the Participation Act has been found to be a large hindrance, do you think this is due to the sector they are operating in, or do you see this phenomenon in other sectors as well?
- In the financial sector, budget has been found to be an important factor, do you think this is due to the sector they are operating in, or do you see this phenomenon in other sectors as well? Or does it have to do with the size of the organizations?
- In the financial sector, support for the target group and the Participation Act has been found to be an important factor, do you think this is due to the sector they are operating in, or do you see this phenomenon in other sectors as well?
- In the financial sector, there is a difference between the dates when organizations started hiring individuals with reduced work capacity. Do you think this will make a

difference when organizations already focused on hiring these individuals compared to organizations that started at the point of effectuation of the Participation Act?

- In the financial sector, employers think it is a complex law and are not familiar with the targets they have to realize. Do you think this is due to the sector they are operating in, or do you see this phenomenon in other sectors as well?
- In the financial sector, employers believe the external information is lacking. Do you think this is due to the sector they are operating in, or do you see this phenomenon in other sectors as well?
- In the financial sector, previous negative experiences are not hindering employers to comply with the Participation Act. Do you think this is due to the sector they are operating in, or do you see this phenomenon in other sectors as well? Do you see a difference between large and small organizations regarding this issue?
- In the financial sector, knowledge has been found to be an important factor, do you think this is due to the sector they are operating in, or do you see this phenomenon in other sectors as well?
- In the financial sector, a dedicated project team has been found to be an important factor, do you think this is due to the sector they are operating in, or do you see this phenomenon in other sectors as well? Or does it have to do with the size of the organizations?
- In the financial sector, employers that already employed the target group experience difficulties hiring more employees with reduced work capacity. Do you think this is due to the sector they are operating in, or do you see this phenomenon in other sectors as well?

APPENDIX IV Additional interview guidelines (Dutch version)

Questions used for the interviews that were conducted additionally.

Algemeen

- Korte introductie interviewer en interviewee.
- Korte introductie van het onderzoek.
- Wat zijn de meest voorkomende belemmerende factoren als het gaat om de uitvoering van de Participatiewet?
- Wat zijn de meest voorkomende belemmerende factoren als het gaat om de uitvoering van de Participatiewet in tijden van reorganisatie?
- Wat zijn de meest voorkomende faciliterende factoren als het gaat om de uitvoering van de Participatiewet?
- Welke HR perspectieven komen vooral voor bij werkgevers die invulling willen geven aan de Participatiewet?
- Wat zijn de meest voorkomende HR activiteiten als het gaat om de uitvoering van de Participatiewet?
- Is er een verschil tussen grote en kleine organisaties als het gaat om de uitvoering van de Participatiewet?

Specifieke vragen

- In de financiële dienstverlening is de doelgroepdefinitie zoals geformuleerd in de Participatiewet een veel voorkomende belemmering. Komt dit door de sector waarin zij opereren, of komt deze belemmering ook voor in andere sectoren?
- In de financiële dienstverlening is budget gevonden als een belangrijke factor. Komt dit door de sector waarin zij opereren, of komt deze belemmering ook voor in andere sectoren? Heeft dit te maken met de grootte van de organisatie?
- In de financiële dienstverlening is draagvlak een belangrijke factor. Komt dit door de sector waarin zij opereren, of komt deze belemmering ook voor in andere sectoren?
- In de financiële dienstverlening is er een verschil in de startdatum waarop werkgevers aan de slag gaan met mensen met een afstand tot de arbeidsmarkt. Maakt uitvoering van de Participatiewet een verschil wanneer organisaties al langer met deze werknemers aan de slag zijn ten opzichte van organisaties die hier pas mee beginnen bij het inwerking treden van de Participatiewet?

- In de financiële dienstverlening vinden werkgevers de Participatiewet een complexe wet en heerst er onbekendheid over de te behalen doelstelling. Komt dit door de sector waarin zij opereren, of komt deze belemmering ook voor in andere sectoren?
- In de financiële dienstverlening vinden werkgevers dat externe informatievoorziening niet goed geregeld is. Komt dit door de sector waarin zij opereren, of komt deze belemmering ook voor in andere sectoren?
- In de financiële dienstverlening worden negatieve ervaringen niet gezien als reden waarom managers niet meer mee doen. Komt dit door de sector waarin zij opereren, of komt deze belemmering ook voor in andere sectoren? Heeft dit te maken met de grootte van de organisatie?
- In de financiële dienstverlening is kennis een belangrijke factor. Komt dit door de sector waarin zij opereren, of komt deze belemmering ook voor in andere sectoren?
- In de financiële dienstverlening is het hebben van een projectteam een belangrijke factor. Komt dit door de sector waarin zij opereren, of komt deze belemmering ook voor in andere sectoren? Heeft dit te maken met de grootte van de organisatie?
- In de financiële dienstverlening ervaren organisaties die al een groep werknemers met een handicap aan het werk helpen meer moeite om nog meer arbeidsbeperkten aan te nemen. Komt dit door de sector waarin zij opereren, of komt deze belemmering ook voor in andere sectoren?

APPENDIX V Example invitation e-mail

Below, an example of an e-mail is given that was sent to potential organizations to ask for participation in this study. The e-mails have been sent in Dutch.

Dear ...,

The Participation Act is a challenge that many organizations currently have to deal with. The execution of this Act is not easy, especially not in times of downsizing. How can an organization create jobs for individuals with reduced work capacity while the amount of jobs have just been reduced in this organization? This is the central question in my study that I conduct for my Master Human Resource Studies at Tilburg University.

Since my study is focusing on organizations in the financial sector, I address this mail to you. Is your organization currently downsizing and busy with the execution of the Participation Act? If so, I would like to interview you about this topic for approximately one hour. I am willing to come to your organization or we can make some appointment for an interview via telephone. Your contribution can help me with my study and the final results can also be of value for your own organization. I would like to hear from you whether you are willing to participate.

If you have any questions, feel free to contact me by e-mail or telephone.

Awaiting your response,

With kind regards,

Anke van Rossum

06-27507086

Attachment: Flyer Participation Act.

For the attachment, see below, in Dutch only.



Aan de slag met de Participatiewet!

Bent of kent u een HR professional die werkzaam is bij een organisatie die:

- ▶ op dit moment aan het reorganiseren is; en
- ▶ betrokken is bij de uitvoering van de Participatiewet?

Dan is deelname aan dit onderzoek zeer relevant voor u! De participatiewet; een uitdaging waar veel hedendaagse organisaties mee te maken hebben. De uitvoering van deze wet is nog niet altijd zo eenvoudig. Zeker niet in tijden van reorganisaties. Want hoe kan een organisatie nu banen creëren voor mensen met een afstand tot de arbeidsmarkt als er net banen verdwenen zijn?

Deze vraag staat centraal in mijn afstudeeronderzoek dat ik uitvoer in het kader van mijn opleiding Human Resource Studies aan Tilburg University. Tijdens dit onderzoek wil ik op zoek gaan naar de kansen voor organisaties om arbeidsmogelijkheden te creëren voor de Participatiewetdoelgroep in tijden van reorganisatie.

Sommige organisaties zullen verder zijn met het realiseren van banen voor mensen met een afstand tot de arbeidsmarkt dan andere organisaties. Voor dit onderzoek maakt het niets uit hoe ver uw organisatie is met het realiseren van banen voor de doelgroep. Doe juist mee met het onderzoek, zodat we van elkaar kunnen leren!

Door middel van een interview (ongeveer één uur) zou ik met u willen spreken over dit actuele onderwerp. Alle interviews met verschillende organisaties worden geanalyseerd en kunnen uiteindelijk ook voor uw organisatie waardevolle inzichten opleveren!

Aarzel niet om mij te contacteren om samen op zoek te gaan naar mogelijkheden om te voldoen aan de Participatiewet!

Anke van Rossum
Tilburg University
a.f.a.vanrossum@tilburguniversity.edu

APPENDIX VI Example invitation e-mail

Below, an example of an e-mail is given that was sent to organizations that are more broadly involved in the execution of the Participation Act. These e-mails were used to invite experts to participate in the additional interviews. The e-mails have been sent in Dutch.

Dear...,

For my Master Human Resource Studies at Tilburg University, I am busy doing a study on the Participation Act. More specifically, in my study I included organizations that are currently downsizing and operating in the financial sector. I have investigated which factors are inhibiting or facilitating downsizing organizations to comply with the Participation Act. Furthermore, I have investigated which HR perspectives they use and which HR activities they conducted in order to create employment opportunities for individuals with reduced work capacity in times of downsizing.

To strengthen my results, I would like to ask you whether you are willing to meet for a talk in which I share the results found. Based on your role and organization, I expect that you can give me insights in whether the results I found are sector specific, or whether these also apply to other sectors. A contribution from your side would be really helpful to create a broader image of the execution of the Participation Act. Ultimately, it will give you some insights as well, since I share my findings found in the financial sector.

I would like to hear from you whether you are willing to contribute. If you have any questions, feel free to contact me by e-mail or telephone.

Awaiting your response,

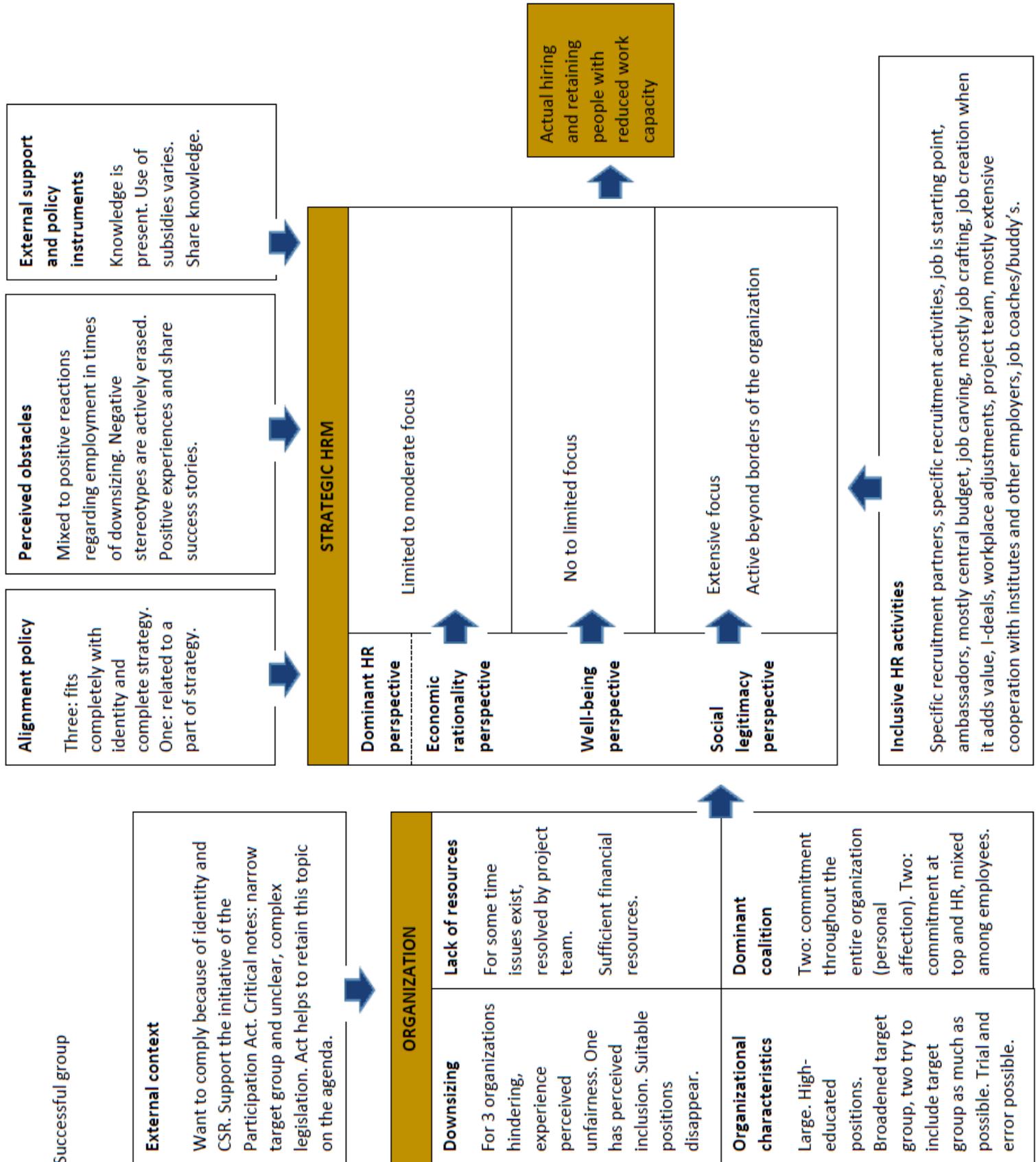
With kind regards,

Anke van Rossum

06-27507086

APPENDIX VII Results plotted into inclusive HRM model

In this appendix the results can be found for each group separately plotted into the inclusive HRM model.



Unsuccessful group

External context
 Most want to comply because of CSR.
 Mixed to positive reactions regarding initiative of Act. Mostly seen as complex topic, agreed amount of jobs to be created is unclear, narrow target group.

ORGANIZATION	
Downsizing For all downsizing is hindering. Suitable positions disappear, vacancy policy, perceived unfairness, no place.	Lack of resources No time, other priorities. No to sufficient financial resources.
Organizational characteristics High-educated positions. Some broadened definition of target group, some not.	Dominant coalition No commitment at all to mixed commitment or expressed commitment but not perceived in practice.

Alignment policy
 No link at all to strategy, or a link to one part. Only one organization shows fit with all parts of their strategy.

Perceived obstacles
 Mostly positive reactions towards target group.
 Negative stereotypes.
 Positive experiences help.

External support and policy instruments
 Mostly lack of knowledge. Lack of knowledge at Public Employment Service. Bad services at Public Employment Service (candidates not visible).
 Most used subsidies.

STRATEGIC HRM	
Dominant HR perspective	Moderate focus.
Economic rationality perspective	Limited focus.
Well-being perspective	No to moderate focus.
Social legitimacy perspective	

Actual hiring and retaining people with reduced work capacity

Inclusive HR activities
 Mostly specific recruitment partners, mixed starting points, limited use of ambassadors, budget varies, limited customized employment forms, no to moderate cooperation with institutes and other employers.