

U A U C U



Student Research Exchange *Collected Papers 2020*

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Student Research Exchange Papers.
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University of Aruba

UCU

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MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING
BETWEEN
UNIVERSITEIT VAN ARUBA (U.A.) ORANJESTAD, ARUBA
AND
UNIVERSITY COLLEGE UTRECHT (UCU), UTRECHT UNIVERSITY, THE
NETHERLANDS

AGREEMENT

THIS AGREEMENT is made, and entered into as of the 26th of February 2013 by and between
UNIVERSITY COLLEGE UTRECHT, hereinafter designated as (UCU), and UNIVERSITEIT
VAN ARUBA, hereinafter designated as U.A.

In view of their similar dedication to excellence in teaching, research and cultural exchange,
University College Utrecht and University of Aruba hereby agree to this Memorandum of
Understanding with the objective of promoting academic, research and cultural exchange
among their students. To achieve this end, the parties have agreed as follows:

ARTICLE 1

1. Each academic year during the term of this Memorandum of Understanding, up to 2
full year students enrolled at University of Aruba participating in the study
degree basis. Students from U.A. participating in the study degree basis
will be counted as one half (0.5) FTE. The enrollment of students from U.A.
beginning with the fall term, of each institution's academic year. U.A. will
select a consistent number of students from semester to semester and will
achieve the agreed upon exchange ratio, averaging over a five-year period.
2. Six to eight UCU students and six to eight U.A. students, and faculty members of both
institutions, participate annually in a joint undergraduate research program. The
research phase takes place at the University of Aruba. Details about this joint
undergraduate research program are included in an appendix to this MoU.
3. Participating students will be nominated by their home institutions based on
following criteria: (a) Academic excellence as reflected in their academic records.

UAUCU
Student Research Exchange
Collected Papers 2020



UAUCU
Student Research Exchange
Collected Papers 2020

Keti Kapanadze

Jairzinho Croes

Charlotte Mehlhart

Mikayla Quijada

Michele Li

Hannah Mayr

Introduction to the sixth edition of the UAUCU Student Research Exchange Collected Papers

This volume presents research reports and personal reflections written by the 2020 participants of the UAUCU student research exchange program. This program, now in its sixth year, is founded on the principle that education should challenge students to engage actively not only with the content of their studies, but with the world at large.

As in previous years, students from the University of Aruba (UA) and from University College Utrecht (UCU) of Utrecht University carried out empirical research in and about Aruba, and supported each other in that process. Like the students of cohorts before them, they defined their own guiding principles and goals for their participation in the project during the orientation period. These ideas reflect their hopes of working in ways that could be meaningful to others as well as to themselves.

As in previous years, the topics of the students' research are wide-ranging, drawing on the diverse backgrounds of their study programs, and yet all related to the sustainable development goals (SDGs) of the United Nations 2030 agenda. The works included here deal with issues of culture, employment, equality, leadership, media, policy and the rights of the state and of its people. The type of research ranges from studies on governance to studies on anthropology, economy and sociology. We think that the papers also show how participation in a diverse team influenced the authors' approach to their work. The students provided each other with feedback on approaches to their research, and on the content, style, language and structure of their papers. The papers appear for the most part as submitted by the authors, including the occasional raw opinion or as yet underdeveloped conclusion. Some of the contributions reflect completed studies, some of

the contributions are preparatory explorations. Most of the student-researchers are still working on interpretation and presentation of their findings and will finalize these soon in bachelor theses based on the results of the projects presented here.

This year's research cycle, though, was anything but typical: 2020 brought COVID19 to Aruba along with the rest of the world. The extraordinary circumstances of the pandemic created an extra set of challenges for the students participating, beyond the challenges usually faced by students in their first serious efforts in empirical research. As of mid March, Aruba went in lock down, and the participants from UCU had to leave Aruba by the end of that month. These challenges, and the rewards of meeting them, are reflected in the personal reflections that all the contributors to this volume have written as a preface to the summary of their own research.

As in previous years, a range of people have also made crucial contributions to the students' success. We, and our students, appreciate the importance and power of their input to this project as a whole. Among those, we especially want to thank UA's Carlos Rodriguez-Iglesias for his help in proofreading the papers in preparing them for publication here. And to the many others who have had roles as guides, lecturers, mentors, advisors, facilitators, respondents, interview participants, and engaged citizens, thank you! We hope that you are as excited about the work presented in this volume as we are.

Eric Mijts & Jocelyn Ballantyne
Project coordinators UAUCU

A tree begins with a seed.

Guiding principles 2020

Be open

Be flexible

Adapt to context, situation and people

Provide safety

Respect confidentiality

Preserve the safety of our respondents

Work independently and together

Accountability and transparency

Be aware of our subjectivity

Recognize authority of community

Give back to society

Be humble and respectful

Goals 2020

Communicate our goals and outcomes with respondents and partners

Contribute to society

Strive for inclusivity

Involve community as much as we can

Fill gaps in knowledge

Make our (thesis) research valuable

Contribute to continuity

Facilitate change

Stick to deadlines

Plan well

Keep journaling or logging

Ask for help when you need it

Get real!

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Keti Kapanadze, University College Utrecht

Everlasting memory - always light and constantly blue

I remember my first day in Aruba quite vividly. The dominant emotions were excitement, confusion, happiness, fear, intrigue. I knew that I was about to embark on a very interesting journey of my life and yet I could not really comprehend the reality that I was living. The whole two months now seem like a dream. I tell my friends and family the stories of my research, of the people that I met along the way, of the days that burned in the sun, of eating the best fried-chicken in San Nicolaas, swimming with the waves of Arashi, coming home from three interviews brain-dead and exhausted but waiting for the next day to write about all the interesting things that I heard the day before.

My time in Aruba was transformative in many ways. When I was a kid, I could never imagine that I would have a chance to go to the Caribbean, not as a tourist, but as someone who would live there, even for a short amount of time. To me,

that part of the world always seemed so unreachable. The moment I saw the sea from the airplane, the inner child in me started screaming and jumping. It was a very different environment that I found myself in and I am very happy that it was because living in Aruba led to my personal as well as academic growth.

When people tell you that doing research is scary but exciting, they are right, but no one will ever be able to tell you about how life-changing it can be. Yes, it is scary. You will find yourself confused, lost, and overwhelmed by the diversity of opinions that you will hear. You will find yourself unable to decide what the next step should be, and all these will happen repeatedly.

But,

At the same time, you will find yourself being happy in that confusion, you will realise that you have never been

overwhelmed in this way and you will start to enjoy the intensity. You will appreciate the diversity and realise the value of different opinions. Most importantly, you will also have the time of your life!

This beautiful rollercoaster of challenges and emotions would not have been possible without many individuals that I have met on the way, so I want to thank my friends Hannah, Charlotte, and Michele. Aruba for me was you, you were an integral part of what now I miss every day! I will always remember the drunk evenings that we had on our balcony, the days spent on the beach, the songs that we played and danced to.

I want to thank Eric and Jocelyn, for your support, for the conversations we have had and for giving me a chance to be part of this.

I want to thank you, Abbie, for your positivity, cheerfulness, and interest in my research, for your help and support. I hope we meet again since we did not have a chance to properly say goodbye.

I want to thank Thijs, who supported and tolerated me in what can only be characterized as one of the hardest writing processes that I have ever had.

I want to thank Tobia, for showing me the sea turtles, I am grateful to everyone whom I met in Aruba, Miguel, Tracy, Natasha, Nyohmi, Clifford, and many more. Your contribution to this research that you will read in the next pages is extremely big, and it would not have been possible to do this without you, I am scared that I will forget to mention someone so I want to say thank you to everyone who took an interest in my research, who complimented me, made me feel better, who challenged me and my ideas, who spent time with me, listened to me, I will be eternally grateful!

I am holding on to something right now, I am holding on to the fact that I will come back,

I know I will.

Until next time Aruba.

Beyond Opinion Polls: Multiple Voices of (Non-)Sovereignty from Aruban People

Keti Kapanadze



(Oranjestad, Aruba)

**“With the undeniable results
A sign of faith
For our sacrificed children
Who fought once upon a time,
For our sovereignty”**

(The Sadness of Aruba in Na Occasion di Celebracion di 25 ana di Status Aparte (2011))

Section I: Introduction

Walking in the centre of Oranjestad, the capital city of Aruba, one could almost miss this painting on the wall. I know that I would not have noticed it if it was not for the terrible, yet golden afternoon heat that made me stop in the middle of the road and have a look at the sun-soaked neighbourhood of Rancho. Two details strike the eye: the sentence on the top of the painting “Freedom is the road less travelled !!” and the face of the woman depicting sadness. I spent a couple of minutes standing in front of this painting, trying to notice every detail. It was my first week on the island and therefore my field research was in its earliest stages. I was highly susceptible to everything around me and without realising at that moment, this painting became the symbol of my research.

It was after seeing this painting that I began wondering about the notion of freedom. Freedom not as an abstract concept, not as a universal sentiment but freedom as something specific, in relation to colonialism. Wondering around the streets of Aruba, I found myself thinking about how the idea or a desire of freedom forms part of people’s daily lives, and about the connections between freedom and power, when does power obscure freedom, when does power make it more vivid? And where, in the painful history of colonialism and domination is it possible to see peoples’ belonging and agency through the ideas of freedom?

I believe that freedom is a word that reveals itself without explicitly mentioning it. You see it in the eyes of the people, in their expressions, and in the ways, they describe the simplest things in life. It is not only the presence of freedom that makes it very visible but more importantly, the absence of it. When one is constrained, scared, or has the potential of losing it, freedom is the emotion that takes up the whole room. Freedom is a positive attachment but also a dangerous tool when it is used for one’s advantage, it goes through and

beyond the boundaries of personal and political, occupying a space that requires attention.

This space that is inhabited by the idea of freedom, is also a space that is charged with notions such as independence and sovereignty. Two concepts that form the fundamental core of my research. It is from the interest that I have with making sense of how sovereignty and independence unfold in practice that I started devising a plan for my research. This is exactly the aim of this introduction: to show the reader a journey that started in June 2019 and to explain what this road entails.

When I decided that I was going to do fieldwork for my bachelor’s thesis in Aruba, I had to take a course about Caribbean studies in the summer of 2019. The course involved a diversity of topics about the Caribbean region that also identified the challenges that it faces currently. It was on our very first lecture when I found out the arrangements that exist between Aruba and the Kingdom of the Netherlands when I realised that Aruba is neither independent nor sovereign. A couple of months before taking this course, I spent some time working with the concept of sovereignty from the perspective of International Law, so the connecting links started forming immediately. The case of Aruba was exactly what I needed to look at the workings of sovereignty even more critically.

The perspective that I wanted to take for this research kept changing as I entered new phases of my fieldwork. In June there was an initial stage of formulation of a broad question, which then needed to be narrowed down before going to Aruba. While I was in Aruba the specific details also were subject to constant re-defining as I talked to people. The last stage of analysing the empirical data and putting it together with the theory also resulted in a slight modification, until finally the last version of my question was formulated. The question then that this research paper posits is the following:

How do material and immaterial elements contribute to shaping the outcome of semi-independence and non-sovereignty on a post-colonial island?

The following chapters of this paper will try to address this question by telling a story of people from a post-colonial island who have faced challenges in their political life, and who continue to be affected by the socio-economic forces that go beyond their territory. The aim is to explain that the decision to become independent and sovereign is affected simultaneously by the relative position that Aruba has in the world-system and by how people identify with the island. What I hope for, is to demonstrate that in the current inter-state system, which is inherently unequal and divided on the lines of power, the question of an independent, sovereign state is not a simple one. I also hope to show that it is a question that occupies all three levels of decision making: micro, meso and macro.

Section II: Methodology – Why turn to interpretative political science?

“We can expand our range of understandings before we enter the world of others, yet we will always suffer from some short-sightedness and points of blindness”
(Zirakzadeh, 2009)

While studies have been done on Aruba investigating the driving mechanisms of status aparte and the choices that people made in the 1980s to vote for semi-independence rather than for full independence, much of this research has been either comparative between the six islands of the Dutch Caribbean or they have focused on investigations through opinion polls and surveys (Oostindie, 1998). The need for a more in-depth exploration of people’s motivations, reasonings, and opinions about status aparte was clear in the first stages of my fieldwork, as I started

talking to people. Some of them were quite excited that I decided to pick up this theme and dive into it, therefore they were also key actors in helping me to meet people who were willing to talk to me about this issue. Even though I knew that ethnographic methods were, in this case, attractive and appropriate, the field itself is quite general. I was also not sure to what extent it would be possible to do ‘proper’ ethnography with the time and language limitations that I could already anticipate before going to the field. Furthermore, ethnography has been acknowledged to be methodology of anthropology, while the topic of my research stems from political science. The analysis section is also based on the tools from this discipline rather than from anthropology.

There is a saying, “to kill two birds with one stone”, which means to achieve two things by doing a single action. This *stone* in my research is *interpretative political science*, which I will discuss in this section. Political science and ethnography were for a long time considered to be a match that did not quite fit. The dominant methodology for political science has been rooted in rational choice theory and quantitative studies (Rhodes 2017). However, in recent years there have been many attempts to bridge this gap through different methods (Schatz 2013; Vrsti 2008; Wedeen 2010; Aronoff et al. 2013; Auyero 2006).

Interpretative political science highlights the importance of meanings, beliefs, and actions of people for whom the study is designed. It is fundamentally grounded in observational fieldwork with the aim of *edification*, which is “a way of finding new, better, more interesting, more fruitful ways of speaking about politics and government” (Rhodes 2017: 14). Through searching for interpretations and meanings, interpretative political science attempts to explain actions and practices (Rhodes 2017: 51). The specific practices of interpretative political science involve fieldwork, participant observation, and (intense) ethnographic interviewing. In the second part of this section, I will talk

about these practices, and methods, and the limitations that I experienced during my time in Aruba.

Methods

The wonderful part about doing fieldwork is that one lives simultaneously in a state of constant excitement and fear. The need for flexibility and quick decision-making is present every day, therefore, adaptability of the methods for me became the key aspect of doing fieldwork. This research used conventional ethnographic methods such as interviews, informal and formal conversations, participant observation, and additionally, for the historical insights the primary material of newspapers written from the 1970s to 1990s was also translated and used for the analysis.

i) Interviews

It was my second week of fieldwork when I sent a couple of emails to the people who I thought would want to talk to me. Days passed, but I did not get any response. I was nervously checking my emails every morning and then sending even more messages. At the beginning of my third week, I received most of the responses that I had so eagerly been waiting for. Suddenly, I had five meetings and three scheduled interviews in five days. I was excited and slightly nervous which resulted in me over-planning the questions for the interviews.

What became very clear from the first interview was that I could not have fully formally structured interviews for two reasons. First, I discovered that there were questions that people did not necessarily want to answer, especially if there is a tape recorder between me and them, and if the issue touched on politics. Secondly, I wanted to keep it more open-ended, to see which themes would be put forward by them and *how* they choose to respond. I believe that the patterns that emerge between the question and the answer are interesting themselves. For these reasons, my interviews took a semi-structured approach. I had some questions that

I asked in every interview but if there were topics posed by the respondent that my questions did not cover, I followed that path. The key attributes for me were listening, following the line of their thought, and acknowledging in which areas they felt uncomfortable. For example, I noticed during the first couple of interviews that asking questions about voting created an awkward space between us because they felt like this topic was very intimate and they needed to trust me more. In contrast, during the second and third meetings, I could see that the awkward space between us was getting smaller.

In total, I managed to have sixteen full interviews, and a couple of informal, semi-formal conversations that happened randomly without planning. Sometimes I was introduced to people as a researcher who was interested in uncovering stories about status aparte and we would engage in casual conversation about this issue or some other topics that the conversation would bring. I would not record these sudden encounters because the flow and the mood of the meeting were not formal. I sometimes worried that recording these conversations or transcripts added a certain type of formality and restriction on the side of the respondents. Most of the interviews were recorded, the people were asked at the beginning, if the conversation/interview could be recorded. Anonymity is also a fundamental aspect of my methods because I think it was important for the people that I interviewed that their name is kept anonymous, therefore, in this research paper the names are not mentioned.

ii) Participant observation

One of the most interesting experiences that I had during my fieldwork was when I was invited to a conference about Aruba's future export possibilities. The conference was in Papiamentu, so I could not understand anything. However, I was invited to this conference by one of the 'gatekeepers' who then helped me to find other people to get in touch

with. Even though content-wise I could not understand anything, I needed to *be there*. I could observe how formal conferences were held in Aruba, what type of professionals were present there, how people interacted, how is the formal setting when talking about important socio-economic issues? What is break-time like? The observations from that day filled six pages of my field notes notebook.

What I found sometimes difficult to grasp was where was the line between me as a researcher and me as a social actor. Some activities that I participated in and attended, for example, carnival and a poetry evening at the university were interesting in both realms. As I also wanted to find out how Arubans identified with the island, it was important for me to be part of the activities that went beyond the interview setting. I was lucky in this sense because I had the chance to meet some people with whom I could 'hang out' before or after the interviews, to see either their individual lives or more generally, Aruban life.

iii) Newspapers

Articles from fifteen newspapers were translated to be used for analysis from the period of 1970s until the 1990s. The newspapers were the Truth, De Volkskrant, NRC Handelsblad, and Amigoe. The aim was to use the newspapers as the primary material to describe the political climate during the status aparte and its aftermath. It was possible to find out the contemporary opinions about MEP, Betico Croes, and other political parties which were involved in decision-making during the processes of acquiring status-aparte.

Limitations

i) Language

The first constraint that I experienced the very first day when I arrived in Aruba was the fact that I did not speak

any of the languages that the local population used for their everyday interactions, except English. The issue of language was not a problem for my interviews because the people that I talked to spoke English but this, on the other hand, creates two limitations. First, not everyone speaks good quality English on the island, which means that I was only exposed to a certain class of people who either are employed in sectors that require knowing English or intellectuals and students who are involved with the university. Secondly, as it will be elaborated in the last section, Papiamentu is the heart and soul of Arubans. It is their everyday language; their way of expression, it would result in a remarkable difference in documenting their opinions if some parts of the interviews happened in Papiamentu. Additionally, not knowing Dutch was also a constraint because I could not understand many policy documents and previous studies that have been done before on Aruba.

ii) Time

Time is a key variable for any fieldwork. I believe that full immersion is only possible if the researcher has enough time to spend in the field. On some days, the pressure from the lack of time was very restraining because it is easy to fall into over-planning and wanting to receive the answers to your research questions sooner. The act of waiting and patience is also harder because of the fear that something will be missed.

When time is short on the field, it works against the researcher because the way the researcher perceives the time that he/she needs to gather enough data sometimes works in sharp contrast to the way the people in the field experience time. You are in more of a hurry than they are because they live their everyday life and you try to fit yourself somewhere in the day. In the beginning, you are an outsider and it takes some time until you are not an outsider. However, one cannot write a universal formula of how much time one needs to immerse, gain trust, and learn

about the community. The two months that I had on Aruba, which on the one hand were restraining, were also charged with a beautiful intensity.

iii) *COVID-19*

The first two cases of the novel Coronavirus were confirmed on Aruba on the 13th of March. Aruba's government responded quickly to prevent the spread of the virus and advised everyone to stay home. Public events were cancelled, flights from Europe restricted and hence the self-isolation process started. It goes without saying that this external factor hugely affected this research. When the outbreak happened on Aruba, it became clear that the celebrations of the 18th of March, which is the national flag and anthem day would be cancelled as well, hence one very important sub-section of my research was gone. The plan on this day was to observe the celebration, talk to the people, take photographs, and to document the day when Arubans feel proud about status-aparte and about being Aruban. Another important appointment that had to be cancelled was the visit to the elderly centre, which would have given me the possibility to interviews and conversations with older people who were part of the political processes in the 1980s. The number of interviews that I had planned in the upcoming weeks of March had to be postponed as well. It was possible to re-arrange some of them online, however, in the state of stress and worry, when everything changed every day and the general situation was characterized by confusion, my research could not be on their front radar.

One should learn from mistakes, acknowledge limitations, and plan in a way that those constraints are limited as much as possible. While I cannot promise that I will be able to learn Papiamentu and Dutch in the foreseeable future, other limitations can be worked with. For example, time is a key variable here. If I were to continue this research, I would make sure that I have more time on the island and, that I have a driving license.

Positionality and reflexivity: How did I affect my research?

The importance of writing a section about my positionality in the research process became very evident to me in the earliest stages of doing fieldwork. As I started devising questions for my interviews, I noticed that my perspective was far from neutral. My field notes also were written from a certain position. Even though I am aware of the ways through which I see the world, I was still quite surprised when I realised that it also affected and shaped what I saw as important and interesting for my analysis. Soon, it became apparent to me that I am not the only one who has experienced this, so I started looking for ways to use one's positionality and perspective in a productive, efficient way so that it does not harm the research but rather helps and nourishes it.

I started writing about my positionality, as I thought that discovering where I come from and why would also give me some answers about how I can combine that with this research. My gaze has been affected by many different processes in my life. It is not only my high school or university education that contributed to giving a form to it but also where I was born, the society that I consider myself part of, and the larger political processes that have been going on around me since I was a child.

I was born in Georgia, a country that has been experiencing territorial, political conflicts. These conflicts have involved the loss of territories, war, struggles with the government, a society that is dissatisfied, protests, intense formulations of national sentiments, and much more. These are my primary experiences, but I have also been exposed to stories and memories from my parents who have told me about their past struggles. I understand now that many ideas such as freedom, independence, territorial integrity, a balanced view of your state and the violent sides of nationalism, have not been the kind of ideas that I was born with. I always knew from the people around me that these are the ideas that you have to

struggle for, therefore a certain type of anger and discontent about the ever-changing status quo has been a part of my life, which later also took part in forming what kind of education I wanted and more generally which career path I wanted to continue. I was taught to be critical and to question the things around me, especially in the realm of politics. But this critical attitude had a certain type of taste, that was specific rather than general. At some point down the road, I got accustomed to being angry, sceptical, and always having a lack of trust.

This is where I was challenged and where because of this challenge, my role as a researcher also took a better form than I expected. When I arrived on Aruba and started having some informal conversations over lunch or a drink, I started noticing a different way of experiencing a status quo and therefore also contrasting ways in which the people that I met challenged the present conditions of life around them. When I was faced with this difference, unintentionally I started looking for the opinions that would fit with my way, and this was when I became aware of what I was doing.

It would be lying if I said that it disappeared completely, I do not think that it is possible because on most occasions a researcher has been exposed to different experiences some of which play a fundamental role in forming a general perspective about the world. But what is possible is to become aware of one's ground and standing and let it *critically* shape the process of searching, writing, and analysis. This critical shaping, on the other hand, involves always having a background voice that is actively alarming to keep the balance: recognize the past but be open to the new.

Section III: “Chicken-egg dilemma”- Theory beyond dichotomy

The attainment of full independence and becoming a sovereign state has been for a long time identified as a

natural and the *only* acceptable outcome of the process of decolonization (Veenendaal & Oostindie, 2017). The narrative of self-determination became the heart of this discussion in 1942, as the right to it also became codified in the Charter of United Nations. The main idea was to free the colonized states from domination and therefore to assist them in becoming sovereign independent states. The keyword here is *sovereignty*, it was during that period when international law was forming as a guiding, organizing principle of the international relations between the states. As respecting the sovereignty of each state is a fundamental aspect of international law, the focus for the colonized territories was to also become sovereign, politically independent states. The assumption that every territory would want to become independent was clearly one of the pitfalls of the way the decolonization process developed. A strand of literature emerged that started criticizing the whole idea of decolonization, calling it a ‘myth’, western way of manipulating the international arena (again), and a fiction that created a false reality that by removing the colonial administration from the territories, colonialism would disappear. While it is beyond the scope of the research to talk about every scholarly criticism of decolonization, this section will put the notion of ‘coloniality’ as a central matter and build a theoretical model for analysis according to what has come to be called ‘colonial power matrix’.

i) Colonial Power Matrix and Coloniality

When eventually the time for the ‘desk-work’ phase of fieldwork arrived, my quests for trying to make sense of the empirical data that I gathered during my fieldwork began. This was when I ended up facing a big problem that could not be avoided. The problem was that what I had previously thought about how I would organize my analysis did not make sense to me anymore. The previous organizing principle that I was building up in my head for the last three months also did not fit with the information that I had at hand after decoding and examining the transcripts of my

interviews. Fortunately, this type of alienation is not an unusual by-product of doing fieldwork. Many ethnographic manuscripts pose and discuss the same problem of how fundamentally difficult it is to establish the balance and not privilege the expert forms of knowing and theorizing over the situated ones (Wilkinson, 2013). Logically, I started looking for a new theoretical framework, something that would be a better fit. By that time, I had already realized that it would be impossible to find *one* overarching theory which would flow perfectly with what I envisioned. As a result, I found myself torn between the long-standing battle between political economy and politics of representation, between dependency theory and postcolonial theory, and more generally between structuralist versus post-structuralist explanations and analyses. It seemed to me for a while that it would be impossible for me to find a way to connect the space between these two. How does one connect socio-economic perspective that sees power concerning capitalism *and* cultural perspective that focuses on agency and discourse? The answer to this question involves two aspects:

First, when one does fieldwork it is very likely that the separation of the two types of power, origins, and analyses becomes impossible. Eventually, it is the researcher who chooses to state either/or, but it is not necessarily the kind of separation that might come from situated, local forms of knowledge. The common experience that I had with the people was the depiction of reality as a mixture of symbolic and more structural forms of power, the way they explained positions was also the interchangeable use of factors that belong or cross the boundaries of the political, the personal and the cultural.

The second answer was found in the works of a group of individuals who as an attempt to research and question decolonization paradigms and how modernity and coloniality are inseparable and therefore represent two sides of the same coin, formed a group, known as the

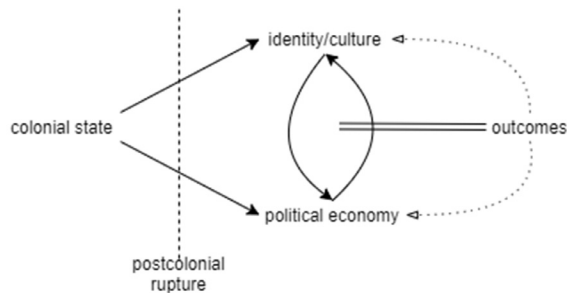
modernity/coloniality Group. The entry point to this group is the idea that decolonization was one of the most powerful myths of the 20th century, which created an illusion that by removing colonial administrations, the territories would be decolonized. However, “the heterogenous and multiple global structures put in place over a period of 450 years did not evaporate with the juridical-political decolonization of the periphery over the past 50 years” (Grosfoguel 2011:14; Mignolo 2007). As one of the organizing principles of this group, the term “colonial power matrix” was introduced, which posits the understanding that exploitation and domination are exercised “in multiple dimensions of social life, from economic, sexual or gender relations, to political organizations, structures of knowledge and state institutions and households” (Quijano 1991; 1998; 2000; 2007). My theoretical perspective therefore also attempts to establish the existence of multiple hierarchies of powers that colonialism brought to Aruba. *The aim is to discover how different dimensions interact with each other and how they contribute to shaping the outcome of semi-independence.* The matrix in this paper is fundamentally relational, as it tries to connect different types and sources of power to explain the status quo. The types of power, on the other hand, involve explanatory factors from both socio-economic as well as cultural perspectives.

One of the theories that are part of this colonial matrix is *World Systems theory* developed by sociologist Immanuel Wallerstein. The theory originated in the early 1970s and presents a new perspective on social reality (Wallerstein, 2004). It posits the idea of a world economic system in which some countries benefit, and others are exploited. This system has a three-level hierarchy which involves core countries, semi-peripheral countries, and peripheries. The domination is exercised by core countries that use the labour and war material of peripheral countries because peripheries are dependent on the core for acquiring capital. Semi-peripheries, on the other hand, share the traits of both the core and periphery. The world economy described by

Wallerstein is defined by capitalism which is a collection of many institutions intertwined with each other. These institutions involve: the market(s), the firms that compete in the markets, the classes, the status groups, and the *multiple states within an interstate system* (Wallerstein, 2004).

While one part of the analysis tries to establish Aruba's relative position in the world-system through the explanatory variables introduced by Wallerstein, the second part of the analysis will focus on the aspects of culture, identity and agency which are not part of World system theory but form the core of the postcolonial theory. Therefore, the second strand of the colonial matrix is postcolonial theory.

My visualization of the colonial matrix:



(Diagram by author)

Section IV: Setting the stage - History of

Aruba

i) *Colonialism and separacion*

Aruba, a beautiful island in the Caribbean, has a dynamic history of transitions and struggles. Like any other island in the sea, Aruba has experienced its share of colonial

powers since 1499 when Spanish first arrived in the island. Surprised by the tallness of the inhabitants and the unsuitable environment for agriculture they were quick to call it a “useless island”. The Spanish rule on the island was not long and the Dutch sailors soon took over the power. In 1634, the Dutch conquered Curaçao, and two years later they acquired Aruba and Bonaire. The aim of these colonies was to become agricultural colonies as part of the Dutch West India Company (WIC). Oostindie (2003) has extensively researched Dutch colonial history both from a stand-alone and from a comparative perspective as well. What is important to note here is that in contrast to the colonial structures of Spain and France, Dutch colonialism never had the aim to create an overarching empire. Driven by pragmatic needs to foster trade, the Caribbean region was always seen more as a liability than an asset. Dutch policies in this region were not directed at civilising missions and were very different from the ways in which the Netherlands approached Indonesia.

It was at the same time when the sounds of decolonization were heard in various territories around the world that the Dutch government announced its wish to reorganize the kingdom's structure after the war (1942). Consumed by the fear that the domination of Curaçao would have been permanently fixed, the demand for *separacion* became louder and clearer intending to leave the Netherlands Antilles (Alofs 2001). During these times too, the separation only meant from and Curaçao, not from the Netherlands. In the years that followed slogans of “Aruba for Arubans” started to appear, and the movement took a nationalistic and ethnic undertone that aimed to “empower the section of the population that had benefited least from economic prosperity: the traditional Aruban” (Alofs 2001). Henny Eman's political party AVP was a key figure during these times. However, the wish for separation from the other islands was not granted and the previously existing relationship became codified in the Statute for the Kingdom of the Netherlands (1954), which defined the kingdom as a

federal state of three autonomous countries: the Netherlands and two countries in the Caribbean – Netherlands Antilles and Suriname (De Jong & Kruijt, 2005). The Statute was never meant to last forever, it was a temporary solution to a situation at hand, therefore the idea that the islands would eventually become independent was assumed. The resistance towards Curaçao's dominance transformed into different areas of political life after the Statute. The imbalance was reflected in the number of seats that Curaçao had in comparison to Aruba in a representative unicameral system, 22 and 8 seats, respectively. In this hierarchical arrangement, while the question for separation disappeared for Aruba. It is beyond the scope of this paper to describe the political climate of the period between the 1950s and 1970s in details, what is important for this paper is to tell the story of how the situation changed from the arrangement identified before to the new *status aparte*.

ii) *Status Aparte*

History of the movements has repeatedly demonstrated the importance of the leaders in driving a change in the status quo. In a small community such as Aruba, sometimes the importance of one person can get to another extreme. What soon became easily noticeable is the role that people ascribed to Betico Croes. Often referred to as the people's man and liberator, Betico is identified as a driving force of the status aparte. In most of the interviews I did not even need to ask a question about him because as soon as I mentioned status aparte, his name was the immediate response.

Being himself a deputy member of AVP, he left the party in 1971 and founded a political party of his own Movimiento Electoral di Pueblo (MEP). His success came fast as he managed to gain government power in 1973 (Alofs, 2001). Even though there were similarities between his movement and the separation movement, in both being an island and an ethnic movement, he questioned the lines of Aruban identity more strongly than the previous movement as he

made "traditional identity and folklore of Aruba central to the new nationalism" (Alofs 2001). In pressing the idea of what it means to be Aruban, the differences with the Afro-Caribbean character of Curaçao were highlighted even more. The idea though, was the same, separation from the Netherlands Antilles. The Referendum held in 1977 showed that 54% of Aruban society supported the same idea.

In March 1983, the Hague granted Aruba its Status Aparte with the condition that Aruba would become independent after a ten-year transition period. The status would come into force in 1986. Here is where the friction between MEP and the opposition parties started, as they accused MEP of accepting independence instead of Status Aparte, the outcome that no one on the island except for a small portion of the population desired.

The year of 1985 witnessed the devastating incident for Aruba's economic path as Exxon closed the Lago Refinery. This meant losing one of the most important sources of employment on the island. Uncertainty around Status Aparte and the independence that was *awaiting* in 1996 spread around the island, people were not very convinced about the advantages of being separate and autonomous, but they were quite sure about not wanting to be independent.

Aruba found itself in a vulnerable, economic crisis. Tourism was the next alternative and saviour of the situation. As Alofs (2001) mentions politics also became polarized, the relations with the other islands worsened and the question of independence was pushed further. However, the situation in the 90s even with a better state of the economy did not necessarily provide a fertile ground for independence. Furthermore, the negotiations about the independence clause already started as soon as the new status was acquired (Jong, 2005).

Due to the prominence of organized crime and the already non-existing need for independence, it became possible for

Aruba not to become independent and to fix this status in a permanent state. After Curaçao and St. Maarten followed the same path of Status Aparte, the Netherlands Antilles was officially dissolved in 2010, resulting in the arrangements that exist now.

iii) *Kingdom of the Netherlands: One Kingdom – Four Countries*

As the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands states, the Kingdom of the Netherlands consists of four autonomous countries: the Netherlands, Aruba, Curaçao, and St Maarten. The country of the Netherlands, however, includes “the territory in Europe, and the islands of Bonaire, Saba and St. Eustatius in the Caribbean” (Charter). The current structure of the Kingdom emerged on the 10th of October 2010 when the Netherlands Antilles, as one country, dissolved. Aruba became an autonomous country within the Kingdom in 1986, Curaçao and St. Maarten obtained the same status, while Bonaire, Saba, and St. Eustatius remain as Dutch municipalities. The Charter is clear to state that Aruba, Curaçao and St. Maarten are not overseas territories (Veenendaal & Oostindie, 2017).

From the international law perspective, it is important to note that while Aruba, Curaçao and St. Maarten are autonomous territories, they are not *states*. Only the Kingdom of the Netherlands is a state, has international legal personality and therefore international legal responsibility towards other states in the world. This involves the ability to become part of international legal agreements, such as treaties. While in the international arena their powers are limited, the internal affairs are in the hands of their governments and parliaments. This is where the political structure of Status-Aparte, being an autonomous country within the Kingdom becomes important because compared to Bonaire, Saba, and St. Eustatius, intervention is left to the minimum.

Section V: Why Status Aparte - Aruba in a capitalist world-system

“Independence is active, not passive. You cannot say that you are independent and then sit back and relax”, he told me as he sipped his coffee and continued talking about how the idea for independence is so complex that we would need the whole day to discuss it.

One of the characteristic features of this world-system is the fact that it is an interstate system. In this sense the World Systems theory takes the structure of the sovereign state systems for granted. However, what is important to note here and the reason we need this theory is to explain Aruba’s choice of semi-independence by not seeing Aruba as a singular, isolated territory to seeing Aruba in a more relational context, where the choices and the transitions affect the outcome. Therefore, the strength or weakness of one state is not only measured internally but by its relative position to the other states.

Sovereignty, the overarching ideology of the interstate system, by ascertaining the ideas of equality, inclusion, the act of non-intervention, clear bordering, as well as internal and external autonomy, is exactly what keeps the states from being equal, autonomous, and to defend non-intervention. But it is not only sovereignty, the ideology and the structure of the systems that are at work, but sovereignty (the ideals that it brings) together with the system of capitalism (the divisions that it creates) that combined together mark the fate of the state not in a permanently fixed position, but in the position that cannot be changed through the formal recognition of full independence and sovereignty from other states. If we divide the current world-system into two layers (and let us do this for the analysis), inequality is captured by the political and economic realm. The political arena is occupied by the ideas of sovereignty and independence, which are codified in international law and

creates *requirements* of what a territory must be, to become a member of a club. On the other hand, economic life is captured by capitalism, the international division of labour, markets, trade structures, and most importantly the power of the core countries to dictate all the above. If a territory wants to become independent, and by this, I mean, self-sustainable and self-reliant, it is not enough if *one* of these layers is fulfilled. If a peripheral territory, such as Aruba, becomes sovereign then it is automatically exposed to the types of economic domination that are difficult to resist. The second option is that a periphery does not become sovereign, and since it already is part of the capitalist world-economy, it has very little means to protect itself because formally a sovereign state can create rules on the conditions of when and how capital and labour cross their boundaries, rules concerning property rights, tax regulations, etc. (Wallerstein, 2004).

The current relations of Aruba with the Netherlands should be placed within the framework of the capitalist world-economy, system that makes it difficult for small-island economies to develop. Being part of the competitive market, which is one of the key defining features of capitalism, requires Aruba to constantly push the limits of its own resources (land, for example). On the other hand, this way of operating “on the edge”, leads to a relative inability to be self-sustainable, and therefore the will for full independence is not something that is feasible or appealing. Arubans identify the realistic picture of their own island and in many instances see this issue in pragmatic light. In their own words, they say that they realize the fact that without financial support from the Netherlands, for example, it would be very difficult to stand alone and implement policies in many crucial areas of the social and political life of the island. There were two other issues that came up in this sense of pragmatism, which were having the Dutch passport and the absence of the military. In the latter, we can see the assumptions made by the theory of realism played out. The vulnerability that is caused by the

absence of a military and defence force in the international arena is one of the key decision points in terms of what is worth giving up sovereignty and independence. Because by giving up the formal idea of independence, they guard their independence more. Arubans kept pointing out that if something happens, they have no means of defending themselves, so what they were talking about is the *potentiality of threat*. What is more important here is the fact that defence and military play a role in deciding between which type of control is desirable. By accepting and subscribing to not being independent and sacrificing one’s own agency, the space of negotiation opens where this exact sacrifice does come with its benefits.

In many ways, the arrangement that Aruba has with the Netherlands and within the Kingdom is beneficial. As it has been identified by the people, most of the time it is a perfect middle ground that they found. The middle ground that gives them a certain type of autonomy but that also safeguards their interests in relation to the other states. Because while in 1986 and then in 1996, Aruba seemed to be ready to become independent, it was also going through its internal economic transition. As the Lago refinery closed its doors in 1985, the main source of employment on the island disappeared. Arubans quickly had to pick up another industry and make it flourish so that they could survive, which turned out to be tourism. This coincidence of both major events happening one year apart put Aruba in a vulnerable double transition phase in the realms of its political as well as socio-economic life. When the main pillar of the economy shatters to the ground, the confidence of the nation for acquiring and more importantly sustaining independence follows the same path. The question for Arubans at that time was not if it would get the non-desired independence, but how would they carry their nation through the newly acquired status which was not only formal but also brought with itself tangible changes. For one thing, the financial aid and supervision from the Netherlands would be gone, the island would be

left defenceless and people would be left without the Dutch passport.

Another positive side of being part of the Kingdom that was repeatedly identified is the ability to have a Dutch passport. Some called it Dutch, others called it European. The use of both categories is interesting. On the one hand, one might say that this terminology does not matter, and it is interchangeable, but in my opinion, it is not necessarily the case. By using “European passport” instead of “Dutch passport”, the agency of the Dutch is taken away from the picture, meaning that it was important for the Arubans to see that their passport is not only Dutch but more importantly it is European. This mindset has implications in mental as well as territorial spatiality. In terms of mental spatiality, if Arubans resent the fact that they are still part of the Kingdom, while painfully identifying the need of it and the benefits of it, naming their Dutch passport as European passport does less harm to their sentiments towards Aruba, in other words, their belonging to the island. Furthermore, in terms of geographical spatiality, it opens a door to Europe, to many more countries other than the Netherlands, which is crucial in their understanding because it is not necessarily the Netherlands where they want to go to but rather to have the choice and the ability to have other doors open too. In my opinion, however, this advantage of having a Dutch/European passport points to larger structural power inequalities that exist in the world and goes beyond the colonial relations between Aruba and the Netherlands.

Independence has been associated by the Arubans to being able to sustain and to having a system in which an island is possible to have the means to support its people and uphold good living standards. Seen from this perspective, Arubans do not think that their island can stand alone without any help that is why being independent makes little sense to them. One big factor that contributes to this inability is the extreme nature of Aruba’s dependency on tourism.

The intensity with which Aruba is challenging its carrying capacity might not be sustainable for the future. The tragedy lies exactly in this complex web from which one cannot see a positive escape: Unless Aruba creates a new industry for its economic sector, it has to rely on tourism because there is very little possibility for Aruba to pick up local production of goods and then try to establish exporting channels, and additionally it also relies highly on imports of food, which digs the ground of dependency even more, creating a certain type of vulnerability especially in the times of crisis like the one of 2020, COVID-19. One might wonder, in what ways is Aruba highly susceptible to larger global crises like the Coronavirus? This reliance on tourism, among many other things, is not viable in the long run. When a crisis like COVID-19 hits, it shows how fragile the whole industry is. Just before I left Aruba, I saw the beaches and hotels previously packed with people, completely empty. This emptiness and absence of tourism directly mean the very high unemployment of everyone who is working in this sector. Aruba has been designing this tourism sector, so that there would be jobs for people. That is why, when it is successful and brings a lot of tourists Aruba is well-off compared to the other islands in the Caribbean. However, when disaster strikes, then Aruba is left with very little. Furthermore, as mentioned before Aruba is also dependent on the import of goods and supplies from the Netherlands and the United States, after the trading pathway was closed between Aruba and Venezuela. In the short run, due to the COVID-19, this reliance on imports is going to create food shortages in the island because it will become harder to keep the trade pathways working as the world faces a financial crisis worse than the one of 2008. The problem is that the blame cannot be put on Aruba’s tourism representatives or government officials who brand Aruba as ‘one happy island’ because they are working within the system of what they have at their disposal, the means for their survival, for a territory that is in the periphery. They are always, to a certain extent, defined next to what is provided by the core. On the shoulders of the periphery

has the core prospered, and currently there are many mechanisms in the place that sustain this division. Aruba's independence and full sovereignty would mean completely falling out of this system. Wallerstein being himself quite critical of modernization ideas and the interstate system still assumes independence as an 'at some point inevitable outcome' for the states, even the weakest states, that is, for him the colonies. Therefore, the assumption lies in the fact that by becoming independent and sovereign, the states (maybe) will have more ability to become stronger states, or simply 'improve' their relative position in the world economy, but what he misses that it is exactly by denying independence, by denying the sovereignty status that this 'weak' colonial states not only find the hack in the system but also fix their position in the outcome that occupies both grounds: remaining the ties with the metropole so that financial, military protection as well as the citizenship of the metropole are granted but also acquiring a certain level of autonomy to its population, that is in the realm of domestic policies and symbolic representations of the nation such as having a distinct flag and anthem, symbols that have been named as necessary aspects of identification with one's own territory. This middle ground, call it a compromise or a negotiation is because of the fact that interstate system is an unequal system and that (former) colonial states still stand very little chance for establishing a solid ground in a competitive environment of strong, core states (Wallerstein, 1984; 2004)

The relative position of Aruba in the world system has been established and the attempts were made to try to connect this position to the outcome of semi-independence however, what remains unanswered is the fact that not all peripheries have chosen to be semi-independent and to keep the ties with the metropole. Other islands in the Caribbean region, which can also be identified as peripheries, have opted for independence and sovereignty. In the 1970s and 1980s, the choice for independence was also an option for many islands for example, the Bahamas (1973), Saint Lucia (1979),

Belize (1981), Dominica (1978) all became independent So, there must be something else as well to explain the decision for status aparte and not independence. Here is when the analysis turns to the aspects along the lines of culture and identity.

Section VI: Why status aparte - Aruba as a belonging

"At the end of the day, I am an island girl"

The second aspect of the colonial matrix focuses on the aspects of identity and culture. The aim here is to discover if these factors also contribute to the outcome of status aparte and what kind of role they play. The previous section focused on the explanatory variables that operate in the realm of political economy, however, the peripheral position of Aruba alone cannot fully uncover the non-sovereign, semi-independent status as other islands that can also be considered as peripheries, opted for full independence. It is important to note here that I fully acknowledge the material differences between each island and that specific systemic mechanisms are at work in each of the territories, however, it is beyond the scope of this research to compare all the territories. Instead, the possibility is to focus how Arubans identify with the island as the empirical data of my research also points in this direction.

Radical detachment, liberation from the colonial powers, rebellion, and violent separation have been assumed to also be the inevitable processes of decolonization and self-determination. The assumption has been that whenever the former colonies would get a chance to become independent, they would. The root of these assumptions can be found in theories of dependency theory, world-systems theory as well as in postcolonial theory. These theories vary in terms of where they shoot their arrow, Dependency theorists, for example, would say that the only possible way of liberation

from capitalist colonial power is through socialism (Frank, 1966; Cardoso & Faletto, 1979). What has been missed in these dialogues is *why didn't this radical separation happen everywhere?*

After reading books and articles about possible theories in preparation for this research, I arrived on the island with the same assumptions that I would hear negative opinions about the Netherlands, the Kingdom, and current arrangements. The interesting aspect here is that what revealed itself was a big diversity of opinions that were both negative as well as positive. Surprised by this space that has not been revealed to me before, I began thinking about the postcolonial identities from this lens.

Belonging to the island can be grouped into three categories, *resistance to the Antillean belonging, pragmatic identification with the Netherlands, and national pride*. These three categories are not separate, but they work together in interaction and are connected to the outcome. The new rhetoric that is also noticeable on the island are the pressing issues of sustainability, preservation of identity, culture, and environment, the fields that are not separate.

i) Resistance to the Antillean belonging and identity

“We were forced to work together, and it did not work, forced marriages don't work”

The movement of separation and status aparte have located themselves against the position that Aruba had in the arrangement of Netherlands Antilles. As was mentioned in section IV, this positionality brought the focus on who is Aruban and what are the symbols of native Aruban identity. Clegg (2012) identifies that the in-between island rivalry is also one of the identity markers for the former colonies in the Caribbean. During the conversations about Status Aparte the issue of Curaçao was one of the first topics that came in the dialogue. The opposition with

which Aruba identified itself against the Netherlands Antilles and especially Curaçao contributed to shaping parts of the political, social, and cultural identity of Aruba. The radical detachment was needed not from the Netherlands per se, but from Curaçao's domination which as identified in some of the historical newspapers was a pressing issue of that time. Razak (1995) also mentions that native identity is especially expressed in opposition to those that have the potential to exert power over Aruba's identity, for example, it was also asserted that the “Arubian Tumba is better than Curaçao's Tumba and so is an Arubian carnival”.

ii) National pride

The people that I spoke to in Aruba have a very strong feeling of who they are, what it means to be Aruban, and what are the symbols associated with being Aruban. One of the key features of being Aruban is the diversity of its society. This diversity is something that can be found in history books of Aruba, in the streets, in conversations, but especially in the ways that they characterize themselves as having a ‘welcoming culture’. Being influenced by the huge influx of workers from different places since the time when Lago refinery was operating, Arubans kept pointing out that the influence they have experienced on their island is not *only Dutch* but rather a mix of many different cultures. For example, San Nicolaas, Aruba's second-largest city where Lago refinery was located is also an English-speaking community of the island. Furthermore, as tourism is the main pillar of the economy on Aruba, the population is exposed yearly to cohabitating with people from different states, cultures, and nationalities. Aruba has been referred to as ‘melting pot’ by many to describe the flexible identity which they defined by diversity.

The opinions about Dutch control varied per interview. Some described the bond with the Netherlands as

“beautiful and not oppressive” others identified the need for the ties with the metropole while sadly smiling at me and saying that they wish there were no need. Young people, on the other hand, usually identified the relationship in two different spheres. They could talk about the bond in a positive light when the conversation was about education, living standards, health care system, however, when the I asked them if they felt like their culture was influenced by the Dutch, then they would clearly state that in the area of culture, Aruba has its full autonomy. What can be observed among the Aruban community is the fractured and scattered opinions about how Dutch control is exercised in contemporary times as well as how it was exercised in the past. But there is no unified agreement on, for example, the idea that the relations with the Dutch are exploitative or violent. Therefore, what did not happen was the collective mobilization towards the Netherlands with the aim of radical detachment.

The very crucial symbol of Aruban identity, which can also be identified as their *mode of resistance* is the creole language, Papiamentu. During my time on Aruba, I was interested in asking a question about who could become Aruban the answer that I usually received was that *everyone can become Aruban*, “a person who works and likes the island”. They sometimes even mentioned that learning Papiamentu was not a strict requirement however, I always had the feeling that Papiamentu was an integral part of Aruban life.

This section will further be developed by concentrating on the symbols that were integral for the movement of Status Aparte, such as flag and anthem. The sentiments about sovereignty and independence are also vivid in the poems that were written about this theme, therefore the content of those poems will be further examined to trace where the national sentiments originate and how they can be connected to semi-independence.

Section VII: Conclusion

The problem is, I think, that every intervention, no matter how plural, diverse, or acknowledging it might be, tends to privilege one or two interpretations out of three or even more. Therefore, this paper also presents my way of interpreting the reality that Arubans currently experience.

Now as I am writing a conclusion to this paper, Aruba, once again finds itself in a crisis. This time, the crisis is caused by force largely outside of Aruba’s control, as the COVID-19 is a global pandemic, collective struggle, and the source of the demise of the global economy as we knew it before. But, even though there is a certain uniformity in the ways in which territories around the world are experiencing this struggle, what once again becomes painfully clear is that states with dependent economies in vulnerable positions suffer the most and are highly likely to experience the after-crisis struggles more severely than some of the other states. Before I left Aruba, on the 28th of March, what I witnessed was a sharp contrast between how the island looked before the first two cases of the coronavirus were discovered and after. The beaches were empty, shops, bars, entertainment centres closed. The island looked like a ghost town. Now, you, the reader might think that every city/village looks like that and you would be completely right, but what stands behind this emptiness is different for each territory and has consequences that are also specific. Aruba’s emptiness means loss of jobs, uncertainty, increased vulnerability but also an open space. An open space for activities and decisions in times of crisis that bring short-term solutions but are devastating in the long run. What is created is a need for immediacy and the actual result so that the symbolic, as well as practical fear of, for example, not surviving for another month, becomes a little bit quieter. It is during these times that the present is questioned and the need for change comes forward. The role of the government becomes clearer as the answers are expected, Netherlands is mentioned more frequently and in the wake of worrying about the state of the island, its status might be challenged again.

Like states, individuals living in these states, and their decisions cannot only be measured by the degree to which they assess the situation of their state internally but by seeing where that particular state stands in relation to the other states, that is, in the world system. The application of this varies between different positions that people occupy within the states. For example, a politician involved in the movement might have different expectations and ideals than its counterpart opposition, the opinions of people working in manual jobs also might differ from the people who occupy more white-collar jobs. Therefore, while the will for independence can be measured by to what extent the people of the nation subscribe to the ideal notions of an independent sovereign state, the same will is constantly affected by the relative position of that state to the other states, to the world economy, to the state's relative military power and by other personal preferences of citizenship as another characteristic of the global inequality is the fact that being a citizen of EU is actually better than only being a citizen of peripheral country. It is not only in terms of the number of states that you have access to with that passport, although this is also one of the reasons but also in terms of the other rights that are associated with that passport, for example, a right to search for the employment in the Netherlands where there is more diversity in terms of types of jobs, access better educational institutions, better living standards for the family/household, the ability to avoid the material as well as immaterial consequences of having a status of being an immigrant and an alien, etc. In the case of Aruba (as anywhere), the political status of the country and the extent of formal sovereignty not only depend on the collective national sentiment but (at least) equally on preferences/interests which vary according to socioeconomic/class position and status group.

Many issues in life fall victim to the battle between what is available and what is possible. However, both availability and possibility are shaped by contextual factors. They do not exist without certain conditions that dictate what

the outcome of the battle will be. In the case of Aruba, coloniality is one of the fundamental elements which has shaped the outcome of whether it would be independent. However, Aruba also shows us that the independence of a territory cannot be defined in exclusionary terms by either focusing on the individual/group level sentiments of wanting to be independent or by positioning Aruba as a vulnerable island in a world-system.

But what Aruba depicts is that the movement and the will for independence is always a friction between these two: practical and imagined reality.

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Jairzinho Croes, University of Aruba

Effective leadership is important in times of uncertainty

I am grateful to have participated to the UACU program. It was a great opportunity to speak and work with different researchers. Although, our time was cut short I was fortunate enough to meet some great people. I was excited to join the program to discuss the issues related to sustainability. I want to thank all of the students, lecturers and volunteers for our valuable time spent together.

I have learned through our guided tours that there are many issues that need to be solved in Aruba. This program helped me to be able to express the importance of leadership in solving these issues. Although, due to the COVID-19 pandemic I was not able to collect data to include in this book. I believe that this situation stresses why effective leadership is important in times of uncertainty. I am confident that the research results will illustrate findings that can be implemented in future for the better development of Aruba in areas of sustainability.

I am thankful to Mr. Eric Mijts through our discussion via online meetings to center and clearly define my research and its value for the community. I am also thankful to coordinators of Utrecht University for guidance and our discussion on issues of sustainability and governance. For future students I believe that the UAUCU program helps a student to grow through experiencing many issues of climate change on the island.

Leadership and Good Governance in Public Organizations in Aruba

Jairzinho Croes

1. Introduction

The different theories of organization in scientific management have significantly contributed to our understanding of better use of human resource and decision making in large-scale organizations. Selznick mentions, “From the standpoint of social systems rather than persons, organizations become infused with value as they come to symbolize the community’s aspirations, its sense of identity” (1957, p. 19). This sense of identity is then defined in the organization’s goal where the institutionalization is carried out by the leaders. Selznick mentions, “Institutionalization is a process. It is something that happens to an organization over time, reflecting the organization’s own distinctive history, people who have been in it, the groups it embodies and the vested interests they have created, and the way it has adapted to its environment” (1957, p. 16). Many scholars argue that leaders play a key role in the institutionalization and determination of decisions and methods in large-scale organizations. Selznick emphasizes that, “The default of leadership shows itself in an acute form when organizational achievement or survival is confounded with institutional success” (1957, p. 27). In contrast, students of scientific management discern the weak direct relationship between leadership and organizational performance. Brewer and Selden say, “The leadership and supervision index (.037) is positively related to employee perceptions of organizational

performance, and it is highly significant ($p < .001$). Yet the weak predictive power of this variable is disappointing” (2000, p. 704).

In 2015, the United Nations proposed 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) along with 169 targets and 232 indicators. The United Nations emphasizes, “We envisage a world in which every country enjoys sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth and decent work for all. A world in which consumption and production patterns and use of all-natural resources from air to land, from rivers, lakes and aquifers to oceans and seas are sustainable. One in which democracy, good governance and the rule of law, as well as an enabling environment at the national and international levels, are essential for sustainable development...” (2015, p. 7). Global effects on social, economic and environmental developments created a sense of urgency in leaders to practice good governance in large-scale organizations. Jukneviene and Kareivaite argue, “The idea was substantiated that state governance and public administration organization should actively employ principles and techniques of good governance because the objective of sustainability is making the impact on the state policy...” (2012, p. 28). Furthermore, Elsmarj and Bakri emphasize that, “Good governance is considered one of the significant requirements for development and competency in the public sector organizations” (2019, p. 1). In contrast,

the term governance in Aruba is often described in terms of favoritism, bribes and corruption, and government thinking in terms of power, arrogance, excessive bureaucracy and lack of adequate communication. Hessels emphasizes, “There are large number of offenses, bribery, abuse of function, money laundering, ambiguous leadership, forgery, participation in criminal agencies, illegal employment as characteristics of governance in Aruba” (2020, p. 118). Moreover, the Kingdom of the Netherlands adopted the 17 SDGs proposed by the United Nations. The island of Aruba is a part of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, and since 2018 has committed to implementing the 17 SDGs on a national scale. The government of Aruba emphasize, “For Aruba, this means a new manner of doing things and entails re-skilling and teaching new competencies” (2018). This paper follows a multidisciplinary approach to addressing issues of sustainability by focusing on leadership and good governance practice in public organizations in Aruba. This research aims to shed a light on the relationship between leadership and good governance in public organizations in the context of Aruba.

To achieve this, the following main research question has been constructed: To what extent is there a relationship between applied leadership styles and level of good governance within public organizations in Aruba, and is there a gap between applied leadership styles and the one needed to apply good governance in public organizations of Aruba? The main research question will be answered by the following sub questions;

1. *How is leadership defined?*
2. *What are different leadership styles in public organizations?*
3. *What are characteristics of good governance principles?*
4. *Which leadership style is linked to good governance?*
5. *Is there a gap between the applied leadership style and the one needed to apply good governance?*

The following sections will discuss a literature review, a theoretical framework and research methods to be used in

the development of a research instrument to conduct this study.

2. Literature Review

This section focuses on the different theoretical perspectives from the literature on leadership and good governance. This section is divided into the following sub-sections; (a) leadership, (b) leadership styles in public organizations, (c) good governance principles, (d) the relationship between leadership styles and good governance, and (e) a theoretical framework.

2.1 Leadership

This section discusses theories on leadership. Selznick emphasizes, “Leadership is a kind of work done to meet the needs of a social situation” (1957, p. 22). Many scholars argue that there are significant differences in leadership behavior between public and private managers. Andersen argues, “Three explanations for the differences in leadership behavior between public and private sector managers are presented. The first refers to organizational differences leading to behavioral differences. The second has to do with the choice of profession or vocation. Finally, the criteria used by the organizations for promoting people to leadership positions may present yet another explanation” (2010, p. 140). This paper will focus on Andersen’s (2010) leadership perspectives that focus on differences between public and private sector managers, including organizational differences leading to behavioral differences and choice of profession or vocation. The criteria used by the organizations for promoting people to leadership positions may present yet another explanation. The following sections will discuss the four leadership styles that the literature suggests to be common in public organizations.

2.2 Leadership Styles in Public Organizations

2.2.1 Transactional leadership

This section discusses the concept of ‘transactional

leadership'. The transactional leadership style is conceptualized as a focus on the exchange relation between leaders and their followers and monitor deviation from agreed upon normative standards (Bass, 1985; House, 1971, 1996, as cited by Hamstra, Van Yperen, Wisse, & Sassenberg, 2013, p. 415). Transformational leaders make it clear to employees what they can expect in return for their compliance with certain performance criteria. Hamstra et al. state, "Transactional leaders specify that rewards are contingent on achievements, which make individual task performance salient and thereby set followers apart from another in terms of their achievements" (2013, p. 415). Similarly, transactional leadership is a process exchange between leaders and subordinates in which leaders recognize subordinates' needs and provide them with financial incentives and organizational recognition to motivate them (Basse, 1990, 1998; as cited by Asencio, 2016, p. 8). Transactional leadership emphasizes task and people-oriented behaviors (Van Wart, 2011). Asencio argues, "Transactional leaders engage in contingent reward, they reward subordinates for acceptable behavior such as improved performance and penalize them for unacceptable behavior" (2016, p. 8). Moreover, transactional leaders actively or passively monitor performance and take corrective action when there is a problem or when standards are not met (Asencio, 2016, p. 8). Similarly, Samanta and Lampakris argue that transactional leadership is a process of 'transaction' between the leader and others which include followers, employees and members. That is, the employees fulfill the tasks arising from their contractual obligations in return for the leaders' care for the supervision of the full process of achieving the objectives and for the rewards of those who complied with them (2018, p. 176). Samanta and Lampakris state, "Transactional leaders specify the role and responsibility of each worker/employee individually and they also reward, either financially, by a salary increase, or morally, by recognition and promotion, those workers/employees who achieved their goals" (Bass, 1990; as cited by Samanta & Lampakris, 2018, p. 176). For transactional

leadership the focus is not on future vision, but on current practices requesting employees to officially abide by the rules. The transactional leader is committed to the existing procedures, ignoring the need to develop ideas in order to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the organization (Samanta & Lampakris, 2018, p. 176). Transactional leadership has been theoretically shaped comprising three essential behaviors that include:

- a. Contingent reward which includes accepting the exchange of payment in return for the effort, promising to reward good performance and compensating for achievements. Employees who have not succeeded are 'penalized' with sanctions. The whole relationship between leader and follower is ruled by the well-established principle of transaction, which is reward in return for good performance and the adverse consequences for poor performance;
- b. Management by exception-active presumes that the leader keeps the others constantly guided by him, identifying deviations from the rules and making the best remedial actions;
- c. Management by exception-passive presumes that the leader's intervention only in extreme cases where standards are not respected (essentially a step below laissez-faire leadership). (Antonakis, 2001; Bass, 1990; Day and Antonakis, 2011; as cited by Samanta & Lampakris, 2018, pp. 176-177).

2.2.2 Transformational leadership

This section discusses the concept of 'transformational leadership'. The transformational leadership style is based on a 'leadership that encourages and motivates employees to go beyond their personal interest for the team and organization, with achievement of optimal performance levels' (Samanta & Lampakris, 2018, p. 175). Bass states, "Transformation leadership should be encouraged, for it can make a big difference in the firm's performance at levels. Managers need to do more than focus on the exchange of material, social, and personal benefits for services

satisfactorily rendered” (Bass, 1990, p. 25). Similarly, Asencio emphasizes, “Transformational leadership takes place when leaders broaden and elevate the interests of their employees, when they generate awareness and acceptance of the purposes and mission of the group and when they stir their employees to look beyond their own self-interest for the good of the group” (Bass, 1990, p. 21, as cited by Asencio, 2016, p. 8). Moreover, Asencio mentions, “Transformational leaders also emphasize people-oriented behaviors; they do not rely on financial incentives to motivate employees” (Van Wart, 2011, as cited by Asencio, 2016, p. 8). In comparison, Bass emphasizes, “Managers who behave like transformational leaders are more likely to be seen by their colleagues and employees as satisfying and effective leaders than are those who behave like transactional leaders” (Bass, 1990, p. 21). Asencio identifies the following as leadership behaviors that transformational leaders engage in:

- a. Employ idealized influence;
- b. Act as role models and display ethical behavior;
- c. Be admired;
- d. Be respected;
- e. Subordinates identify with their leaders and want to be like them;
- f. Utilize inspirational motivation;
- g. Communicate and demonstrate commitment to organizational goals;
- h. Communicate an inspiring shared vision of the future;
- i. Engage in intellectual stimulation;
- j. Ask for employees’ ideas and encourage them to view issues from new perspectives;
- k. Display individualized consideration;
- l. Show concern for employees’ welfare and development and empower them.” (2016, pp. 8-9).

Similarly, Samanta and Lampakris argue, “Transformational leadership has been theoretically shaped comprising four essential qualities or factors”. These include:

- a. ‘Charisma or idealized influence’ which creates and puts forward the vision and the sense of mission,

instilling primacy, respect and mutual trust. That is, transformational leaders act in exquisite and innovate ways, demonstrating attitudes and values that exercise maximum influence on others, in order to seek their self-reflection with these leaders;

- b. ‘Inspiration or inspirational motivations’ which communicates high expectations, uses symbols focusing on effort and expresses the ultimate purpose by simple means. The transformational leader is a bearer of a vision that inspires and motivates others, instilling the idea that they can achieve things beyond the expected ones;
- c. ‘Intellectual stimulation’ which demands intelligence, logic and prudent decision making in solving problems. The transformational leader indicates to others new ways of thinking, news ways to leverage opportunities, focusing on creativity, development and innovation;
- d. ‘Individualized consideration’ which targets each employee individually, guiding, advising and empowering him or her. The transformational leader expresses personal responsibility and functions as a mentor to others. Such leader respects the personality and contribution of every individual to the overall effort and assigns tasks according to aptitudes and interests of each employee” (Samanta & Lampakris, 2017, p. 176).

2.2.3 Servant leadership

The servant leadership style is described as a holistic approach that engages the rational, relational, ethical, emotional and spiritual aspects of both leaders and followers such that they are both transformed into what they are capable of becoming (Sendjaya, 2015; as cited by Sendjaya, Eva, Butar Butar, Robin, & Castles, 2017, p. 941). Furthermore, servant leaders exemplify spirituality when they nurture in their followers a deep awareness of higher purpose or calling that ought to drive what they do and how they do it on a daily basis, and a sense of alignment between one’s self and one’s occupation to develop an intrinsically stimulating and rewarding career (Ashmos & Dunchon, 2000; Dent et al., 2005; Fairholm, 1997; Giacalone and

Jurkiewicz, 2003; Korac Kakabadse et al., 2002; as cited by Sendjaya, 2017). Furthermore, Sendjaya et al. argue, “It is no longer sufficient to expect leaders to rely on charisma contrary to transformational leadership. This study in particular identified six items that would correspond to the six dimensions of servant leadership behavior found in the 35-item SLBS. The ‘six dimensions’ of servant leadership include:

- a. ‘Voluntary subordination’ as a willingness to relinquish ones rights and interest in order to serve others;
- b. ‘Authentic self’ as a deep commitment to stay true and accountable to ones self;
- c. ‘Covenantal relationship’ as a personal, profound and perpetual bond between leaders and followers characterized by shared values, mutual trust and reciprocal honesty;
- d. ‘Responsible morality’ as a capacity to engage others in moral reasoning that results in moral action;
- e. ‘Transcendental spirituality’ as a conviction to nurture within self and others a sense of meaning, direction, and interconnectedness;
- f. ‘Transforming influence’ as a resolve to help others to be what they are capable of becoming thorough personal and professional growth. (Sendjaya et al., 2017, p. 942).

2.2.4 Laissez-faire leadership

The laissez-faire leadership style constitutes the absent and non-existent leadership which avoids decision-making, does not make use of its power and refuses its responsibilities (Samanta & Lampakris, 2018, p. 177). The laissez-faire leaders are not informed of their duties; they do not decide, do not guide and do not intervene in case a problem arises. The leaders allow others to perform their duties any way they see fit without caring about entailing results (Antonakis, 2001; Bass, 1990; Day & Antonakis, 2011; as cited by Samanta & Lampakris, 2018, p. 177).

2.3 Good Governance Principles

This section will discuss the definition of good governance.

The concept of governance is often related to terms of accountability in different organizations. In the literature, the term governance is defined as the process by which different organizations make their important decisions, determine whom they involve in this process, and render accountability (Graham, Amos & Plumtore, 2003; as cited by Khanna, 2017, p. 22). Similarly, according to Maseland (2000), governance is described as the science of decision-making, the art of public leadership, the written and unwritten policies, procedures and decision-making units that control resource allocation within and among institutions, and how key institutional objectives are determined and realized in an organization through possible means (Khanna, 2017, p. 22). In comparison, the term governance in Aruba is often described in a negative light with regard to public organizations. The term governance in Aruba is often associated with favoritism, bribes and corruption, and government thinking is described in terms of power, arrogance, excessive bureaucracy and lack of adequate communication (Hessels, 2020, p. 32). Findings in a study by Hessels illustrate that governance in Aruba is characterized by a large number of offenses, bribery, abuse of function, money laundering, ambiguous leadership, forgery, participation in criminal agencies, and illegal employment (2020, p. 118). Another finding in Hessels’s study suggests that respondents believe that there has been an increase in corruption in the government apparatus. Hessels says that, “The relationship between businesses and politics often leads to corruption and also that the parliamentary system contributes to corruption” (2020, pp. 34-35).

The term good governance is characterized as the existence of collective participation and accountability, transparency and openness, the exercise of legitimate power, freedom of information and expression, sound financial management and public financial accountability, respect for the rule of law, and enhanced opportunities for development (Khanna, 2017, p. 22). In this study by Khanna, a good governance

framework is developed, with basic principles with good working practices that provide an environment for good governance. The 'good governance framework' consists of 'seven basic principles' which are;

- a. Performance (effective and efficient): the term 'performance' refers to public organizations to effectively and efficiently perform their responsibilities and roles. Khanna says that 'every institution is expected to manage its respective organization in a way such as to exhibit to good performance at the desired level' (2017, p. 27).
 - b. Transparency (openness): the term 'transparency' refers to the requirement of public organizations to be transparent about sharing information about their performance, development, reports, products and processes. Khanna says that 'transparency' refers to 'the availability of information to the people concerned to all aspects related to the operation and management of the institution concerned' (2017, p. 27).
 - c. Accountability: the term 'accountability' refers to actions of actors in public organizations linking performance with organizational targets. Khanna says that accountability involves the power of one actor to make demands upon another to provide information about, or justification for his or her actions, and compulsion of the actor to subject to those demands to respond (Brinkerhoff, 2006; 2017, p. 27).
 - d. Participation: the term 'participation' refers to collective participation in institutions that increases the effectiveness of public organizations. Khanna says that, "All players of governance in the institution would set an example of good collective participation in example they would work in close association with each other for the overall development and smooth operation of the institution concerned" (2017, pp. 27-28).
 - e. Leadership (direction and strategic vision): the term 'leadership' refers to leaders setting the overall direction of the public organizations in principles and values. Khanna says that, "Leadership is about setting the directions, developing the culture of the organization, determining its principles and values, and motivating the people in the organization to commit themselves to those principles and values" (IGNOU, 2008; as cited by Khanna, 2017, p. 28).
 - f. Fairness and equity: the term 'fairness and equity' refers to the procedures and policies of the public organization to ensure a fair environment of good governance, and equity implies being fair to all actors concerned. Khanna argues that, "Thereby a compliance with legal requirements which involve equal opportunities and anti-discrimination would be achieved; referring resources of institutions to achieve desired goals (Sen, 2001; Starfield, 2001); and that all institutional managers in the organization would have equal status in discussions and have collective responsibility for its decisions" (2017, p. 28).
 - g. Consensus orientation: the term 'consensus orientation' refers to whether all decisions are made based on democratic principles with all persons concerned. Khanna says that, "Institutional governance mechanisms would mediate differing proposals to reach a broad consensus on what is in the best interest of a particular organization, and where possible, on policy formulation and decision-making as well" (2017, pp. 25-28).
- Moreover, the 'good governance framework' and these 'seven basic principles' are structured with 'good governance practices' which include:
- a. Focusing on the organization's purposes and outcomes;
 - b. Performing effectively well-defined functions and roles;
 - c. Promoting values for the organization and demonstrating the values of good governance through behavior;
 - d. Making well-informed and transparent decisions with full information, advice and support;
 - e. Managing effectively the risks, the conflicts and the conflicts of interest;
 - f. Enhancing capacity and capability of all players of governance in the organization;
 - g. Assigning clear responsibilities and accountability;
 - h. Improving integrity while working faithfully with loyalty

and devotion (Khanna, 2017, p. 25).

As seen in this section, one of the basic principles of good governance entails the leadership style that is being applied in the organization. In the following section, this relationship between leadership and good governance will be elaborated on.

2.4 Leadership Styles and Good Governance

In this section, the relationship between leadership and good governance will be elaborated on. The role of leadership is linked to the application of good governance. Leaders motivate individuals to achieve their goals. In the public sector, good leadership fosters environments for which good governance is practiced. One of the main factors that influence good governance is the role of leadership. Leaders motivate individuals to achieve their targeted goals. Leadership plays an important role in the public sector in applying good governance principles. One study conducted on the factor of leadership in public organizations illustrates that leadership fosters accountability in local governance and institutions (Salleh & Khalid, 2011; as cited by Elsmar & Bakri, 2019, p. 9). Based on the conclusions derived from the above-mentioned literature, the following hypothesis has been constructed;

Hypothesis 1: There is a positive relationship between applied leadership style and level of good governance in public organizations.

Furthermore, different studies also suggest that there is a positive relationship between transformational leadership style and good governance in public organizations. Elsmar and Bakri illustrate in their findings that most of the general managers perceive that the practice of transformational leadership in the public sector in Palestine is at quite a high level (2019, p. 8). Elsmar and Bakri emphasize, “An interesting finding from the analysis test was that one of the behaviours of transformational leadership which is inspirational motivation did not influence good governance. While the other three behaviours which are idealised

influence, intellectual stimulation, and individualised consideration were positively and significantly related to good governance” (2019, p. 9). Moreover, research findings claim a positive relationship between transformational leadership and good governance in the public sector (Bumgarner, 2016; Mohamad et al, 2014; Elsmar & Bakri, 2019, p. 9). Based on the conclusions derived from the above-mentioned literature, the following hypothesis has been constructed:

Hypothesis 2: There is a positive relationship between transformational leadership style and good governance in public organizations.

2.5 Theoretical Framework

Based on the above-mentioned literature, the four different leadership styles that this study will focus on are: transactional leadership, transformational leadership, servant leadership and laissez-faire leadership. These four leadership styles are independent variables to be tested. The dependent variable is good governance based on the following principles: performance, transparency, accountability, participation, leadership, fairness and equity, and consensus orientation. The relationship between these two variables will be analyzed in this study. The relationships will be measured with IBM SPSS in order to measure the relationship between these variables to a desired significant level ($p < .001$). This paper developed a theoretical framework to conduct this search in order to test the hypotheses derived from the literature to either accept or reject the hypotheses.

The Relationship between Leadership Styles and Good Governance	
Organizational Setting (public organization)	
Leadership Style (independent variable)	Good Governance Principles (dependent variable)
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Transactional leadership 2. Transformational leadership 3. Servant leadership 4. Laissez-faire leadership 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Performance 2. Transparency 3. Accountability 4. Participation 5. Leadership 6. Fairness and equity 7. Consensus orientation

Figure 1. Designed theoretical framework for this thesis using the theories and concepts retrieved from Asencio (2016), Sendjaya et al (2017), Samanta & Lampakris (2018), and Khanna (2017).

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Charlotte Mehlhart, University College Utrecht

Big and little moments made my experience special

From when I first heard of the UAUCU programme, I knew that I would love to participate. Still, I wasn't quite sure if I would go until the summer of the preparatory course. Finding a research topic that would matter, and receiving so much support from everyone in the course helped me decide, and I am so glad I made that decision!

Coming to Aruba and being swept up into life here was a wonderful experience. I met so many friendly people, deepened friendships and made new ones. What made this experience really special was meeting so many people that were passionate about the sea, and wanted to share this with me.

At first, I was unsure how fishers would respond to someone coming in and asking them a bunch of questions about their lives, especially since I didn't really have any experience fishing. Luckily, that turned out to be a totally

unfounded fear - people I talked with were friendly and excited to share their stories and experiences, whether we talked for 10 minutes on the bus ride or we ended up talking for over an hour at a place that was important to them.

Encounters with fishers and others who shared their perspectives made all the difference in writing research that could be meaningful to those who were involved. I learned so much about a topic I had little experience with, and that no amount of research could have prepared me for, because context and perspective matters.

Still, like everyone else, I sometimes struggled with how to continue and how I could contribute something meaningful. What kept me going once again, was the support I received and there being so many people that thought this research was worth their time. Being able to discuss my research and

challenges with others was always really helpful, and I am happy that we could be there for each other.

In the process of researching and writing this paper, I learned a lot about myself, and I also learned so much from everyone that shared their time with me.

Apart from meeting so many great people through my research, it was amazing to get to explore the island with new and old friends and participating in events like Carnival, but also small events like the poetry night at UA. All these big and little things made my time in Aruba special and I wouldn't want to change it.

One last time, thank you to everyone who I met, whether as part of my research or just because we were studying at the same table at the UA.

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The Ocean Paradox - Values systems held by resource users in Aruba's fishery

Charlotte Mehlhart

Introduction

Fishing has always been a means of survival for communities in the Caribbean Sea, one of the most biodiverse waters worldwide. On Aruba, fish provided a main source of protein for the islands' first inhabitants and continue to play an important role in their food security, especially of those with few means to afford products from a quickly globalizing market. Aruba hardly has any of its own food production, and although this is being expanded, for Arubans fishing remains a mainstay that has been dependable for centuries – as a source of food and for those involved in the harvesting process, as a source of income. Especially given the current situation in the times of a global pandemic, food security has become an incredibly important topic. In the Caribbean region, especially for small island states, food security is a challenge given the dependency on the international market. (Beckford & Campbell, 2013)

Fishing occurs at a relatively small scale in the waters surrounding the islands, with artisanal fishing taking place around coral reefs and further offshore. With the expansion of the tourism industry on the island, sport fishing and charters have become a pillar of the services sector (Boekhoudt, 2015). Yet, even in smaller-scale fisheries, the effects of anthropogenic activities have become a concern, with less predictable effects on the marine ecosystems and species

changing their behaviours, which has led to increasing pressure, at an international level, to contain extractive practices in the oceans. In the Caribbean, it has also been noted that catch is affected, and the FAO describes Aruba's stocks of the main catch species of snapper, grouper and wahoo as overfished (Boekhoudt, 2015). Experts internationally warn that humans' practices could have irreversible consequences for marine species, and the humans and animals that depend upon them (Sherman et al. 2017).

As the pressures they face have increased, Aruban fishers have sought to navigate the changes to their livelihood, with increasing modernization of their gear, to a market that is adapting to globalization and the impacts of management legislation that may impact them in unprecedented ways.

As marine management becomes more integrative of resource users' needs and perspectives, it is an important opportunity for including information on the values systems they hold. Understanding values systems will be a crucial pillar of sustainable resource management that receives support and understanding from those most directly affected by its regulations. In Aruba, the fishermen are one stakeholder group among many, but nonetheless one with a long-standing relationship with the ocean whose significance should not be overlooked. This includes knowledge systems, economic valuation

and social valuation of fisheries practices, along with the perception of environmental value of the ocean life. Improving the understanding of the status and continuous change of fisheries, especially at the regional and local level is important. This requires cooperation between different stakeholder groups, and the integration of various forms of knowledge as well as values that often times underpin how fishers navigate the use of the ocean. An international discussion of fisheries management policy and the introduction of the marine park has brought fishers to the forefront of debate, as major stakeholders in marine management that potentially find their livelihood at risk. This research aims to investigate the forms of value resource users involved in fishing associate with their practices and with the marine environment.

The main research question has been formulated as follows: What are the various forms of value that resource users associate with fishing and marine resources? (including, social, economic, cultural values and possibly competing forms of value)

Sub-questions:

- The History of fishing
 - How have fishing practices changed over time?
 - Have these changes been welcomed?
 - How has it affected the formation of a community around fishing practices?
- How is resource use conceptualized by the resource users?
- Are there differences in the values resource users attribute to the practice of fishing and marine resources based on the importance placed on fishing for their livelihood?
- What stories about fishing are told by resource users?

Methods

Tsirogianni & Gaskell (2011) describe values in the following way: “Social values not only order states of the world and ways of living in terms of preference but they

also have two significant additional features...social values carry a normative component—a specification of not merely what is desirable and what is undesirable, but crucially what ought to be, or not to be, the case.” (p. 442) While the subject of values is becoming increasingly recognized as important, how to explore values and classify them without stripping them of their meaning for values holders by oversimplifying them is a concern for researchers and their respondents. Nonetheless, Chan et al. (2011) argue that not engaging with values, as has been the case in most economic studies that relayed other forms of value as externalities, is no longer an option: “... the risks associated with their loss are central to public thinking and discontent associated with land management decisions.” (p.207)

Schwartz’ circumplex values theory

An early study of values was made by Shalom Schwartz, who researched the existence of certain *transcendental values*, values that are held around the world across cultures and groups. Schwartz represents these values in a circular framework, where 10 transcendental values are grouped under 4 themes, so that the circle is divided into 4 equal parts that are then further divided. Schwartz (2012) contends that while these values are shared universally, specific values are given more or less importance for individuals in some groups than others, depending on the circumstances and the context. In his framework, values that are furthest from each other are considered least compatible, and are not expected to be given equal significance by value holders. His framework has since been criticized for the finality with which it addressed the presumed incompatibility of values that opposed each other in the framework (Tsirogianni & Gaskell, 2011).

Openness to Change

Self-Direction - valuing independence and in pursuit of personal interests

Stimulation - cherishing new experiences

Hedonism - pursuing gratification of the senses (e.g. appreciating beauty)

Self-Transcendence (consideration of others)

Universalism - showing caring for one's 'In-community' (direct social relations)

Benevolence - caring for the wellbeing of others also outside of one's in-community and includes non-human beings

Conservation

Tradition - valuing practices that have importance at a group level

Conformity - aligning with others for the sake of preserving e.g. traditions

Security - valuing income security and feeling a part of a community and wanting to preserve it

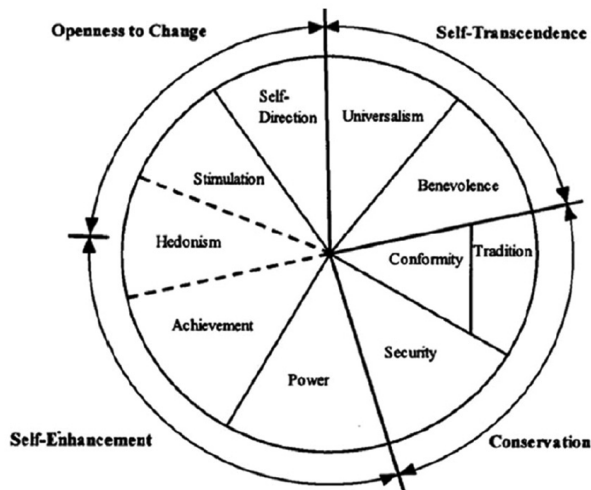
Self-Enhancement

Achievement - valuing feeling content with sense of self and receiving verification from others

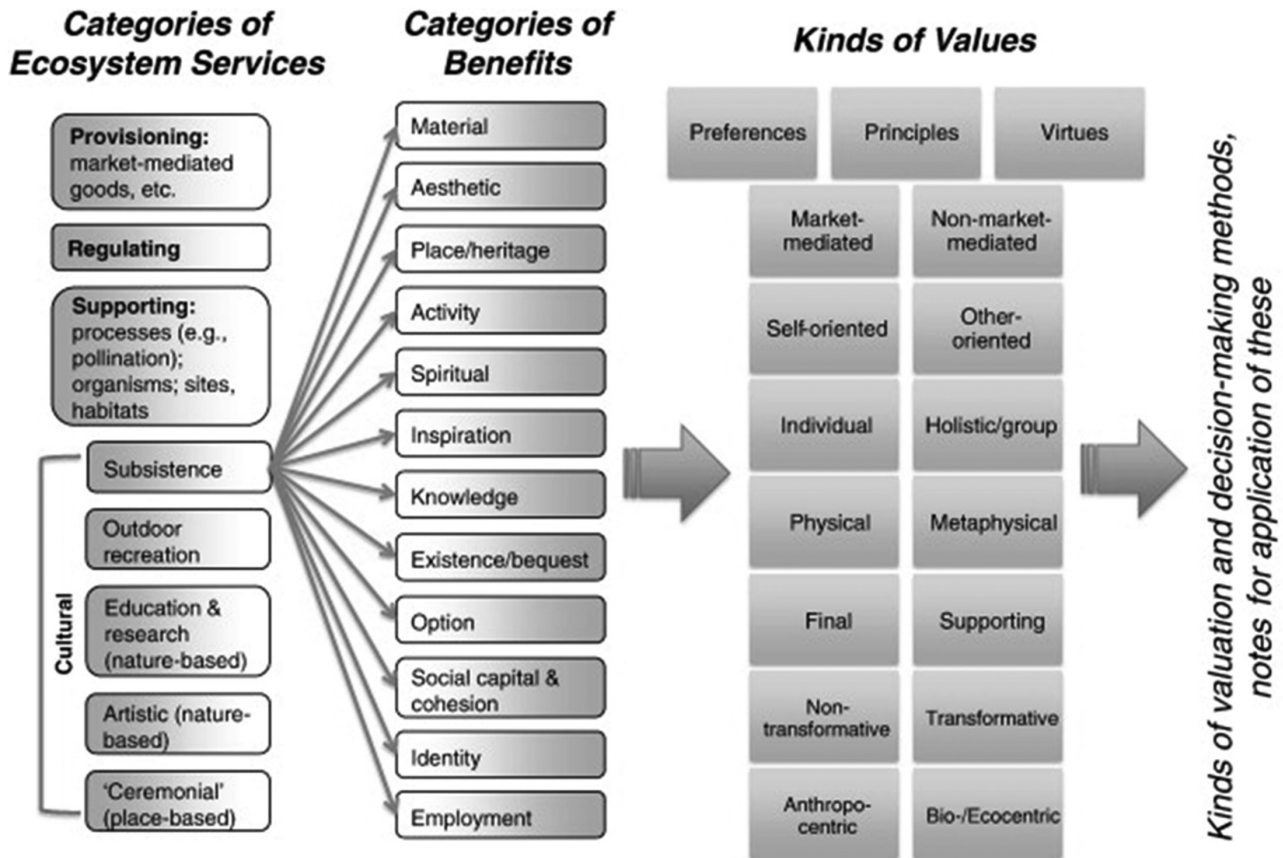
Power - holding a position of influence within a group that is mediated by interactions with this group

Chan et al. (2012) Cultural values framework

Chan et al's (2012) framework of values relates to the concept of ecosystem services, which has become a cornerstone of resource management since the 1990s. The premise of this concept is that nature holds value to humans because of the services that ecosystems provide. These services can take diverse forms, including pollination, as well as subsistence and recreation, and have been classified into *economic valuation* and *socio-cultural valuation*. The theoretical and practical use of ecosystem services in research and governance has mostly focused around understanding the thresholds people have towards their use of natural systems and how an understanding of value may help assess the potential impact of management strategies. Among others, Chan et al. (2012) have criticized that within the ecosystem services framework, socio-cultural services, and attempts towards understanding and navigating communities' cultural values connected to the ecosystems they live with, have become sidelined. They become hidden externalities that could not be adequately included within the ecosystems services framework, whose strength is thought to lie in its relative simplicity. Chan et al. (2012) contend that it can be possible to engage with cultural values in a meaningful and understanding way, even as this entails a considerable simplification of the essence of such values to contextualize them. Ultimately, they propose a framework consisting of 7 'kinds of values' - within these themes, values are not explicitly one-or-the-other, but may move fluidly across a scale:



Schwartz (2012)



Cultural values framework, Chan et al. (2012)
 Chan et al. (2012) recognize the many challenges that arise when considering intangible values dimensions and seek to organize them within recognizable themes that make then applicable within the wider ecosystems framework, while accounting for the fluidity of many of these values that evade a distinct classification. As such, the framework's thematic organizations rests upon values that exist within

a context of economic valuation - such as buying a good and gift-giving, but also how values relate individuals to the communities they find themselves a part of, and how values encompass relationships to ecosystems, physically as well as spiritually. The framework appears to be one of the first comprehensive, but also considerate, frameworks of values that especially addresses cultural values while remaining relevant within policies for resource management.

The Sustainable Livelihoods Framework

Livelihoods are complex. That individuals or communities may identify with various forms of livelihoods at first found little resonance in academic studies on resource users, as it was easiest to allocate people as pursuing one specific livelihood than to engage with the true complexities of making a living. The Sustainable Livelihoods Framework (see e.g. Ashley & Carney 1999) was developed as a tool for researchers to navigate the various different aspects that may form part of how someone sustains themselves and to avoid simplification of someone's means of making a living based on an outsider's perspective. This approach will be important to gain a perspective on how people that may see themselves as 'fishermen', or in another way related to fishing practices, sustain themselves. The framework makes it possible to organize the various components of someone's livelihood, and how they relate to negotiations of access, institutions and legislation, as well as various forms of capital associated and the ways a livelihood may become vulnerable through these processes and related coping strategies. This is especially relevant to Aruba's fisheries as people involved in fishing seek to continuously adapt to the challenges they face.

Research Approach

As noted before, talking of values, especially when they relate to intangible aspects of one's life, and when they are addressed by someone outside from one's social circle, is difficult. At times, this means finding words for something that is intrinsic, that you may never have tried to express to someone who may not feel about them the same way. These difficulties have also been addressed by other researchers who have engaged with communities on their forms of value, and two of these approaches seemed applicable to this context. The first is the process of deliberative mapping (Palomo et al. 2014), where participants are asked to locate where they use their environments on a map, followed up by questions on why the marked areas hold value. This process has been applied in a number of studies, often times

in group settings where participants are able to share and deliberate, but in this research will be used with participants individually. Storytelling is another way of talking about values in ways that may make it easier to express them: whether this be through sharing physical or spiritual experiences of oneself, or someone else, they will be infused with one's subjectivity. This may allow inferences on values expressed not explicitly but that can be found within these stories, and was used in research such as a study by Claudia Biehling (2014).

Six resource users participated in open-ended interviews that mostly took around an hour and a half. Questions reflected the values of Chan's and Schwartz's frameworks, but I also sought to situate these within a context of opportunities, change and experiences of participants as they shared them. Of the six participants, half were still engaged in fishing as a principal activity, while for others, it ranged from being their former source of income, to being only considered as a hobby that meant a lot to them. Participants shared a variety of perspectives on what the ocean and practicing fishing means to them. Most participants had spent the majority of their lives fishing, reflecting varying levels of experience. Most interviews were conducted individually, while one also took place with 2 participants who were friends, in settings that participants felt comfortable in. Participants were Clifford, founder of Stichting Rancho; Arthur, chairman of Fundacion Hadicurari; Marietta, fisherwoman from Barcadera; Carlos, fisherman from Rancho; Ruben, who grew up as son of a fisher in Pos Chikito and continues to fish in his free time; and Kim, who spends much of her free time hunting lionfish with family and friends. These interviews reflect a great diversity in living situations and perspectives on fishing, but all interviewees shared a passion for fishing and the sea. Further, interviews were conducted with the foundation ALFI (Aruba Lionfish Foundation), the Ministry of Nature and Environment (DNM), Santa Rosa (Department of Agriculture & Fisheries), Arikok National Park and other participants who expressed their

perspectives as Arubans and long-term residents on the situation of fishers in Aruban society and the impacts of societal and political pressures over time.

Ethical Considerations

Respondents were informed of the purpose of the research and were provided with a form where they could indicate their consent. These forms were provided in English and Papiamentu, and participants were encouraged to ask any questions they had about the research and share their concerns. Participants were informed that they would be able to withdraw at any time and that transcripts of interviews would be kept confidential. Interviews were followed up with contacting participants to obtain their consent for including parts of our interviews in this paper. The topic of values and politics were handled delicately, and respondents could choose to go into as much or as little detail as they wished.

1. Context

1.1 History of Aruba's fishery

The Caribbean Sea is a highly diverse system. As one of the world's large marine ecosystems, it has high biodiversity (Sherman, Sevilla et al., 2017). The countries that border the Caribbean Sea share this connection to the sea, but are diverse in their cultures and management approaches for marine ecosystems. All around the world, the sea provides food, income and other important services for populations, at times especially vulnerable groups of society, which depend upon the sea for making a living (Fanning, Mahon & Conney 2011). In the Caribbean region, fisheries are diversely developed, from large-scale 'industrial' fisheries to small-scale artisanal fisheries conducted by mostly family-based fishers and for subsistence. Recreation is another important aspect of the Caribbean Sea for its users. Users have learned they can depend upon the sea, especially in times of hardship. For the islands' first inhabitants, indigenous groups who migrated from the mainland in

the Pre-Ceramic period, and with its proximity to the South American mainland, Aruba was among their first settlements. These groups were foragers and therefore highly dependent on the sea for their survival. As they settled and began to practice agriculture and livestock over time, the vital importance of fishery resources lessened to an extent, although fish remained a staple food. The ocean was further an important part of indigenous cultures' daily experiences and an integral part of their spiritual wellbeing. Fishbones could be made into tools and populations forged an intricate relationship with the sea in relation to 'negotiating' nutrition, safe navigation, and the weather with entities and deities such as Mama di Awa. Places like the Rancho neighborhood in Oranjestad have a heritage of being built upon the fundamentals of these early societies, and is, until this day, known as a fishing neighbourhood (Nationaal Archeologisch Museum Aruba, 2010). Aruba went through much economic change throughout the centuries, with a quick succession of industries, from a gold rush to aloe plantations, and then in the early 20th century, Aruba became the center of the oil industry's expansion, with the building of an oil refinery, which has left legacies in society that go way beyond their direct impact on the island's economy (Bowen, 2019). People like the fishers of Rancho saw themselves presented with new economic opportunities, such as working in the port and as boat pilots for freighters. Not all of these opportunities were long-lived unfortunately, yet this brought new capital for the fishery as well, followed by the influx of gear such as boats with outboard motors, fiber boats and electrical winches. With the decline of the refineries, tourism became the main economic pillar for Aruba, as it is now in most small island states in the Caribbean (Bernal et al. 2004).

Not few fishers invested capital into fishing as an economic enterprise and the charter industry has since become a flourishing part of Aruban tourism. The change of Aruba's economy has had significant impacts in Aruba's fishery. Nowadays, the sport fishery is operating at a similar scale,

in terms of a similar number of participants, as the small scale artisanal fishery (Boekhoudt, 2015). Both fisheries mainly target pelagic species of wahoo, grouper and snapper, which are also economically the most important, although the artisanal fishery especially is also highly diversified in what it catches, depending on seasonality and expendable effort given the gear they have at their disposal. Overall, total catch of Aruba's fisheries combined is at around 140 tonnes per year, which the FAO assesses as a 'very small' total catch. Nonetheless, there is concern that the main targeted species are at risk of overfishing, especially in the artisanal subsector (FAO, 2018). Fishing pressure on marine populations is a legitimate concern for fisheries, especially as gear advances and fishers are able to travel farther and catch with less expended effort per unit but at the same time, it is important to recognize that there is much we do not yet know about with regards to marine populations.

1.2 Establishing presence

A major concern for fisheries management is the assessment of marine populations. Assessing the status of fish stocks is a challenge for a number of reasons. Difficulties arise over establishing an accurate baseline of the current health of populations, despite concerns over the validity of historical assessments (Pauly, 2019), also for Aruba (Pauly et al. 2015). A number of especially targeted fish stocks are migratory, making it difficult to monitor their status at a national level. Amorim et al. (2018) accumulated data on snappers and groupers and concluded that these species are especially vulnerable given their life history and fertility patterns, and that therefore accurate data on these patterns is of utmost importance for fisheries management. These factors add to what Appeldoorn (2011) calls the *fog of fisheries*. He expands his concept of the Fog of Fisheries not only to locating stock in physical space, but also relative to 'some optimal target value or critical threshold. Stephen Hinchcliffe (2008) deduces that the goal of ecosystem management is sheltering species and ecosystems in time and space in a

specific configuration. A challenge of establishing presence though, is especially connected to physical presence, which can be difficult to determine with certainty. Nonetheless, this is what much of our current understanding of ecosystem health is based upon. Hinchcliffe reflects on Latour's concept of a new political ecology - based around an understanding that stability in nature is produced by anthropogenic interventions and need to be viewed not as an 'end point' to management, but recognizing nature as unfinished. "Any stabilities that are produced need to be provisional, working categories, that enable rather than disable further learning and another reconstitution of nature" (p. 96). Therefore, flexibility in data collection is key. Capacity is another important factor of fisheries assessment - having the resources of time, material and personnel to invest into collecting data, on individual species as well as on a larger scale (Bustamante & Vanzella-Khoury, 2011). Approaching data collection more holistically has become more and more advocated by fisheries researchers and social scientists alike. For marine management, collecting data that does not only focus on one species in particular has been stressed as an important step forward in fisheries management, as it enables to understand the interactions among species and how the situation of one species affects other species, a matter that is crucial for management but had received relatively little attention up until more recently. Research increasingly highlights the importance of recognizing how species function together in a system and affect each other in ways that have until recently been rarely explored. This research builds upon systems thinking and understanding the interplay of species within ecosystems, and humans as part of social-ecological systems, not outside of them. Studying these ecological assemblages is thought to provide important insight on the status of ecosystems as a whole (e.g. Horrocks et al. 2011), but it will require adjustments and flexibility (Bustamante & Vanzella-Khoury, 2011). Scholz et al. (2004) advocate for including local stakeholders in data assessment, allowing knowledge to be shared and connections to be

built. Further, increasing cooperation in regional entities like CARICOM in the Caribbean, and other regional data assessment projects could allow countries to share data and increasingly cooperate on building knowledge of fisheries.

1.3 Marine management

For management approaches to have a chance at success they have to embrace uncertainty and the absence of complete data - a precautionary approach, like Ecosystem Based Management (EBM) strives for. It forms part of a turn towards an ecosystem approach to management and has become implemented at the international level in the UN and FAO, urging countries to implement it too. The ecosystem approach originated within Ecosystems Services Research, which has become an integral component of policies and assessments related to resource management. Ecosystem Services provide a way of making sense of human-nature relations and is appreciated for its relative simplicity (Vihervaara et al., 2010). Yet, lately, the Ecosystem Services approach has been receiving much criticism for oversimplifying, and passing over, an important aspect of services provided by ecosystems - sociocultural services. Valuation has been 'dominated, almost exclusively, by an economic concern for value', which has resulted in a neglect of other forms of value (Scholte et al., 2015). Values are an important part of people's relations to the wider systems they form a part of, as well as an important guide of behavior. Studying values systems can help understand Social Ecological Systems (SES) – the recognition of humans as part of ecosystems - by highlighting the complex interactions and feedbacks among these nested systems (Villamor, 2014). The Ecosystem approach emerged from a call for *Principled Ocean Governance* that puts special emphasis on the human component of resource management (Mahon et al., 2011). This includes concerns for resilience of affected communities as well as gender discrimination among disadvantaged resource user groups (Bennett, 2005; Coulthard 2012). For instance, Bennett (2005) notes, "lack of attention to the gender dimension of fisheries

management can result in policies missing their target of creating sustainable livelihoods at the community level". Management policies, as advocated at the international scale and then implemented at country level, were often focused on restricting access to specific species that had an endangered status, given available data, through policies aimed at banning destructive gear, setting fishing quotas, fishing seasons and banning the fishing of certain species. It is argued that few of these policies had the intended effect, both due to showing little understanding of local context and potential repercussions of policies implemented with little to no backing from local populations, and a lack of understanding of ecosystem complexity. Yet, Hilborn and Ovando (2014) note that the criticism of traditional marine management in its diverse forms, from quotas to community co-management, is potentially uncalled for in its severity. Reviewing literature and data on international marine management, they conclude that the issue is not necessarily a lack of management of assessed stocks, but an absence of management for unassessed stocks, making data assessment the prime concern.

Aruba introduced its first marine legislation in 1987, focused on banning highly invasive fishing gear of trawling nets and spearguns, and ultimately precluding the establishment of an industrial fishery (FAO, 2018). Further, a flora and fauna law was introduced in 1999 to outline the protection and management of endangered and fragile species and ecosystems in Aruba's territorial waters, for migratory and sedentary species. Matters of marine legislation are handled by the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries (known as Santa Rosa) and DNM, the Ministry of the Environment (Dieren, Natuur en Milieu). Legislation has been a balancing act between protecting a special and fragile environment and meeting the needs of fishers, making this a complex and at times difficult cooperation at a political level too. Aruba is partner to a number of international fisheries organizations and agreements, including UNEP and FAO, and is an associate member to

CARICOM. Molenaar (2003) remarks on concerns over autonomy in fisheries for small island states as a possible factor in decisions to join regional and international agreements. Guidance on establishing environmental legislation can be incredibly important for the small island states of the Caribbean, especially when it comes to finding a balance between harnessing the oceans' substantial benefits to their populations, and maintaining them, and with increasing pressure from human impact arises increasing pressure from organizations for Small Island States to find solutions that are aware and considerate of a local context and holistic system functioning as well. In reality, it will take time to adapt legislation that is in place in ways that can be considerate and keep up with the pace of current new avenues in ecosystem management (Bustamante & Vanzella-Khoury, 2011). These are considerable hurdles for the legal systems of small island states, and improving marine legislation will take time, but is certainly underway.

An important component of the EBM approach is the establishment of marine protected areas – spaces that can function as spaces of recovery for various species in their most vulnerable life stages. The idea is that Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) will eventually reach an extent that will allow them to overlap and thus act as a form of wildlife corridor for marine species to move between habitats. Ideally, MPAs are meant to respect human activity as part of the social ecological system, and MPAs thus follow a zonation pattern. Aruba is currently diligently working on establishing its own marine park. The current effort appears promising - Fundacion Parke Arikok, the foundation that manages the island's large terrestrial park, was tasked by DNM to establish the marine park. The preliminary management plan for the park, from 2019-2021 (Management Plan 2019-2021) acknowledges the long-term, varied process that still lies ahead of the management for establishing an effective, and widely supported network of marine protected areas that allow for marine management that embraces the importance of functioning as a social-ecological system

for protecting biodiversity and supporting human use simultaneously.

Findings

2.1 Description

The following section, titled Relational Values (Chan, Gould & Pascual, 2018), will reveal how respondents expressed values they hold concerning their communities - their neighborhoods and customers, as well as their 'communities of practice' - of fishers, along with their relationship to government institutions and other beings. Respondents address how these communities are delineated, who forms part of them and who does not, how fishers relate to their respective communities, and where they meet. Community values especially were often not expressed in response to a question specifically on held values on community, but rather emerged organically in conversations and stories about being a part of a community that is tight-knit as well as dispersed, and supportive of each other. The second section of the findings will investigate the individual values that were expressed – related to personal relations to the sea, value of fishing as a livelihood and the importance of holding knowledge, for oneself, regardless of the value it holds for others. Further, the importance of spaces for experiencing the sea was addressed. Individual values are values where the individual expresses what he or she values for oneself, whereas for relational values, the valuation is expressed in terms of the individual's relation to others.

2.2 Relational Values

Considerable importance was given to a) feeling part of a community, b) finding the time to interact with one's community - often at the sea, c) respecting each other, for their practices and decisions, and d) being supportive of each other by sharing one's time, expertise and effort.

2.2.1 Communities of Practice

Feeling a part of *communities of practice*, was centered around

the values of *respect, benevolence, knowledge* (for possessing knowledge in itself, as well as value of *bequest, independence* and *passion* (expressed also in support of traditions), which became especially apparent in conversations about stories and experiences. For *communities of living*, value expressions were focused especially around *respect, reciprocity, altruism* (not expecting returns), and *safety*. Respect for knowledge and elders emerged when competitions made it directly possible to compare skills.

Further, this section addresses participants' concerns about how to maintain their communities of practice and how traditions can help in maintaining communities of practice that share a common passion for the sea and fishing.

On a Sunday morning in early April, Carlos invited me to come with him as he awaited the return of his cousin who had been out at night to catch red snapper. It was quiet at the harbor when we arrived. The boat was not yet in sight, so we looked out to sea and waited for customers to arrive. Carlos did not know whether his cousin had been successful that day, but he hoped he would be able to distribute to all. Carlos greeted many of his customers heartily, as he knew them as long term customers and neighborhood friends. We waited together on a bench overshadowed by trees at the harbor, looking out at the sea. As they chatted and discussed about fishing, there was a feeling of companionship in the morning stillness.

For most respondents, possessing intricate knowledge of the ocean was not only a sort of pride and component of a strong bond to family, but is also an indicator of belonging. Fishers are connected through the knowledge they share, even if they practice fishing differently. This shared value of knowledge is very important, especially since it is a foundation of the respect they have for each other.

Respect emerged as one of the fundamental values from the interviews. It was expressed by respondents

in various ways. By respecting others for their courage and perseverance even if they disagree, fishers are able to maintain another important value: that of *trust*. Especially given the antagonism that has been directed at them given the increasing politicization of marine resources, many fishers felt easily criticized when addressed about their perspective on politics and the recognition of their work in wider society. Their communities represent a space where there is less judgement towards each other, as there is mutual understanding of how everyone has to navigate their use of the sea themselves.

Nonetheless, there has been conflict. Arthur shares that fishers became divided as they argued over the most damaging gear types and who took the most. Arthur shared his concern over this, especially since it also shocked him on a personal level, as he knows many fishers around the island, but he also hopes that they are currently in the process of rebuilding the community:

".. to bring back together.. cause I know most of them, I really know their lives.. together, and we ..(as) one group.. come back together.. So it's going good.. Because we have a group.."

Arthur felt distressed by the disagreement within the community, and other participants shared his enthusiasm and hope for reviving the bonds among their groups, no matter how tightly or loosely bound they may envision their community personally.

"... We have a tradition of seeing each other. So it does create a type of community, yeah. And I don't know all of them, but I do know some names and others, you just say, 'Hey, how are you?' And then you always ask, 'What did you get today? How much? Can I get one?'" (Laughs) – Kim

To foster the feeling of community again, it is important that fishers feel able to share their knowledge in a respectful matter that is not perceived as hurtful or degrading by other

fishers - such spaces include the club at Hadicurari, and also rescue organization in which Ruben participates:

“We use the rescue organization a lot, people would listen. They have lost friends, they have lost brothers.. but what we do a lot of times is, we give lectures.. So, especially when I’m doing it, I start to talk about the environmental things and that we should take care of it.”

During our interview, Kim brings up how being female has influenced her experience of feeling part of the community:

“... before we started hunting lionfish, ... I used to clean them and fillet them on the pier. And that was also a whole thing.. ‘You do that?’ They thought girls wouldn’t do it because it stinks or whatever, exactly, but that’s also the thing, I used to get comments from the men that come in..”

While she notes that today it is becoming more commonplace that women participate in lionfish hunting contests, women are overall rather invisible in the fishery and this is connected to the idea that fishing is considered dangerous, dirty work. When I ask Marietta about whether she knows any female fishers, she laughs - in her experience, other women that she would invite fishing did not have the patience to spend such a long time out on the sea. Still, women play an important role in supporting their fishing husbands that is seldom acknowledged outright.

The traditions connected to fishing are mostly based around events where fishers come together and enjoy the sea together. Carlos shared that he really enjoys participating in the contests of small sailboats that take place all around the Caribbean. He remembers stories that adults and children alike from Rancho would race their miniature sail boats on the nearby Salina, and although the Salina no longer exists, he spent much of his childhood practicing with the boats and participates in races today. He is very proud of this practice, but also notes that the objectives of ‘playing with

the boats’ is changing - before it was simply a hobby that the community participated in together, but “now it’s a race”.

Arthur shares a touching story of when he organized a fishing contest at Hadicurari, shortly after his grandfather, who had been his main mentor, had passed away.

He remembers that he organized the event. His friends and acquaintances teased him since he did not go out to participate in the fishing contest, but he felt an obligation to the sponsors who had come to attend, so he stayed behind although he really wanted to participate. Only when they urged him to go out, he took some of his friends and a boat and went out. At this point, the competition to catch the largest wahoo, snapper and kingfish was already well under way, so he considered his chances of winning to be slim, and he just wanted to enjoy the time out at sea with his friends. In the meantime, the competition drew to an end and no one had caught a kingfish yet. Arthur’s boat caught a kingfish and brought it back, but did not know yet that this meant that they had won the competition.

Arthur closed his story by remembering his grandfather, who taught him to fish, and how important he was for him. He felt deep gratitude for his grandfather and being able to demonstrate his skill to others who recognized it filled him with pride for his grandfather.

Traditions bring together friends and acquaintances, but they also often keep alive the memories of those who passed away, and who had profound influence on the fishers that go to the sea today.

2.2.2 Living Communities

Living communities are the groups that fishers frequent and feel a part of. For some respondents, living communities encompassed their neighborhoods, while others delineated who formed part of their living community less closely and not place-bound. Values that emerged from conversations

and interviews that related to living communities included the importance of respect, feeling benevolence towards community members, and sharing knowledge and passion. Being there for each other was expressed as important by many, allowing fishers and other community members to feel that their living communities are a safe space where hardship and joys are shared.

Their knowledge of the sea is also what connects fishers to their living communities and makes them an important part of them. Fishers were unanimously proud of their work, and an important aspect of this was receiving support in their communities of living, whether emotionally by noticing their work being valued and respected. At times fishers are provided with opportunities for work in uncertain times. Marietta shares for example that when she was younger, she was very poor. She started working very early, and was able to secure food and income for her family by taking up tasks from fishers, such as cleaning the boats. Other respondents expressed that they would collect salt or clean the fish. Arthur notes that fishermen could find work with farmers during the start of the year when high winds prohibited them from fishing often. The community can be relied upon for buying their catch. It is also a group where they do not feel judged.

“Do you think that the fishermen that are still fishing today, that they are still proud of what they do?”

Yes, to be a fisherman, that is something that they feel, that they are proud of for sure

Is it also valued by the rest of the community? Are they respected for it?

In the young generation they don't see that as much but with the middle ages and the old ages they are very proud to be able to speak with the fishermen, and to be able to buy the fish from the fishermen, aiming to support them, yeah what they are doing.

So that's really a community thing.

Yes, yeah that's why we say, that's something of the

neighbourhood also, we know who are the fishermen - in conversation with Clifford

Customers and community members appreciate the effort, physical and mental, that fishers invest, and in a sense there is a feeling of solidarity in the community that is motivating fishers to continue their work, apart from what they earn with it.

Fishers share a sense of responsibility for providing for their communities, and as I experienced when I accompanied Carlos, often know their customers well. Some respondents expressed that they will share their catch with those most in need and when they see their work appreciated especially, but also that they do their best to provide for all customers. Wanting good for others is encompassed by the value of *benevolence*. In the community of living, it was often expressed by showing understanding for each others' challenges and hardships and thus a willingness to share the benefits from the sea.

For Carlos, this has meant paying it forward and making it possible for customers who cannot pay him immediately to pay later. It is also about wanting to share the experience, and the passion, for the sea and for fishing with others, even if they are not striving to become fishers themselves. Marietta enjoys meeting people and talking about what they know or appreciate about the sea and sealife. She feels that she can sense who feels a passion for the sea, and that she would like to engage with those that show such a passion, to share her catch and her knowledge. Other respondents also hoped to share their knowledge.

At the same time, Clifford voices concerns for the continuation of a community around fishing in the Rancho neighbourhood, of how to balance change and the heritage:

“... how to be more conscious of the history, of the heritage of that area that need to be, ok, developed, but also taken into consideration the neighbourhood too, and the community.”

2.2.3 Connection to Others

Growing up with the sea creates a bond that ties fishers and the sea together. This bond rests upon the way that fishers put their trust in the sea for providing a source of food and income that they are able to rely on. Although the sea is at times erratic, there is a relationship of mutual care - respondents shared their personal values related to the sea, and throughout them, there is a sense that the ocean is powerful and cares for itself. Yet, resource users see themselves as having a responsibility to honor the sea by acting according to their principles and practicing modesty. For them, this is a service to the sea and to the populations that depend on ocean resources, today and in the future.

Expressing one's respect for the sea by being accountable for what you take is something that most respondents expressed that they learned from a mentor figure in their lives when they began to go out to sea. They shared stories of being excited by making a catch and wanting to continue to catch more and more, and then having someone explain to them why it was important not to be excessive and to show respect for what you receive from the sea.

Carlos shared that he learned from a relative about the impact that fishing gear can have on the sea. He explains that when there is a lot of current, the winch will build up such pressure on the fish that it will be torn free from the hook and become injured in the process. Carlos expressed empathy for the pain the fish experienced from resource users' actions.

C: *Handline. We don't use, ehm, how you say.. Winch. We don't use winch. We still fishing hand. Hand fishing. With line.*

I: *"... Why do you do the handline and not another method?"*

C: *"Yeah.. my cousin said, when you use winch, you have lot of current, they broke the mouth of the fish.*

Through their shared stories and experiences, fishers expressed that they valued the sea for its own sake, that it held value irrespective of the value it brought to human communities. Respondents often expressed this through an eagerness to learn more about the ocean system and marine life, and respect for the regenerative forces of the sea. Marietta shared that she felt that 'fish are like Serlimar' and she expressed admiration for the beautiful utility of ocean ecosystems - everything plays a role in the system and maintains it. Carlos expressed his reverence for the sea by sharing that he thinks it takes care of itself - "the currents cleans the sea", sharing a confidence in the ability of marine life's and the ocean as an entity to protect itself when necessary. That the force of the sea is regenerative, was something many respondents deeply revered, also in connection with the value they place on independence.

Ocean currents are especially strong during spawning season around Easter, acting as a kind of natural barrier against excessive exploitation of spawning grounds when populations are at their most vulnerable. Arthur shared his awe for how the moon influences the fish:

"it's very valuable what the moon does for the fishing ... Really, really have a lot to do with moon. ... how it happen.. how the fish feel.."

Spirituality was also considered when exploring connection to the sea. A number of fishers were uncertain about experiencing spirituality at sea, while others were eager to share their spiritual experiences. Ruben was unsure about such stories, but explains that he does feel a spirituality, but in way that is not at all tangible and has thus not been expressed in such stories in a way that he really recognizes or empathizes with. He relates the following experience:

"You know I have done a lot of rescue at night, and sometimes, its kind of strange, and I don't know what it is.. I don't know if it's just because of your eyes fooling you. No, I haven't seen

anything to date.. I know people have, my father tells a story, a fisherman story maybe, but..But I must say, when I'm in the water, I feel something."

Even though he found it difficult to articulate this vague sense, Kim immediately agrees and shared a story that was special to her, based upon a sense of unreality that was also familiar to other respondents:

"I didn't go hunting, but I went on a night dive, it was my first night dive, and, it was pitch black, I turned on my divelight, and, I'm not sure at what point, but at some point it can get dark enough that you see bioluminescent particles, like, floating around, and if you move your hands in the water, they light up... water on coral, and they light up. So, it's super cool to see, something that I would have never seen otherwise and I remember driving home at night afterwards and seeing, ... there aren't any light poles on the side of the road, so it's pitch black when you drive, .. so you can see the stars pretty well. So, I remember driving home, .. and thinking, ... I just saw this underwater! So, and at that moment, it was like, wow."

2.2.4 Politics

In the context of the politicization of marine management, the value attributed to trust and respect is once again fundamental. When they sense that there is genuine interest for them, an understanding of their practices as well as a passion for the sea, fishers may willingly engage with other forms of knowledge. In Marietta's experience talking with fishers who fish where she does and trying to convince them of the importance of respecting the sea and staying safe, it is possible to influence others' behaviors if there is trust and respect among negotiators. At times, fishers have felt powerless when marine legislation has been established.

"Someone have to protect those guys.. I'm feeling right now that, soon it's going to happen.. Go fishing for nothing.. We'll die. Cause there is no one, ...Catch the fish, {this is} how we

do it.. And if they catch.. how you know we catch a Mahi-Mahi? But they come now, talk to everyone, fishing... but they have, you don't even know what fish kind.. and they protect the grouper. to protect.. and after that the grouper.. not nice.. it hurt the fishermen."

Finding ways to articulate themselves and their considerations is not always easy. In a way, these experiences have made many fishers want to express that they are not acting selfishly and not only for an economic benefit. Fishing is their livelihood, but it is also something they can enjoy: when they do not make a catch, the experiences they can share the experiences with others.

Currently, the Santa Rosa Ministry and DNM are collaborating for reforming the Flora and Fauna Law, which was last updated in 1999, to align with current concerns for species protection.

"When I just graduated ... and came here, the participation was very low, people accepted a lot from the government and accepted as a policy maker themselves, but there was also a point of view, from, you have to come with the solutions and we benefit from the solutions. - DNM

A number of respondents were very worried when we talked of the impact it would have on them to restrict the catch of further species, and whether these measures were justified. There were good intentions to accommodate the deliberation of stakeholders' concerns, still there was apprehension concerning the rules that emerged especially beyond the window of opportunity that had been allocated for stakeholder discussion. In our interview, DNM voiced a concern that artisanal, full time fishermen are becoming a marginalized group. This highlights the difficulties in projecting a political voice, especially when institutions ought to adhere to a timeline, working within a timeframe that seeks to include cooperation with stakeholders is challenging.

In an exchange with a representative from the Santa Rosa Ministry of Fisheries and Agriculture, we touched upon how sharing knowledge and building trust could be achieved. The representative shared their perspective on how there could be meaningful cooperation between fishers, scientists and politics:

“Education and awareness. Fishermen are very aware of conservation practices. They self regulate. They have been doing it through time. Of course, with the limited knowledge on hand. So, if new knowledge is available, that for example warrants the protection of a species, use Nassau grouper as an example, that knowledge should be passed on the fishermen. Not as it is now, with a sudden prohibition, but with instilling knowledge.”

Sharing knowledge systems of different origin and giving the time and space to deliberate these knowledge systems is an important part of cooperation in marine resource legislation.

Abigail Vrolijk, one of the founders of the lion fish foundation (ALFI), which consists of volunteers that hunt the invasive lionfish, is concerned with the state of data on fisheries in Aruba, and how this makes it difficult for management to be successful:

“There’s no baseline in Aruba, there’s nowhere to start ... So, you want to protect something but you don’t know what you’re actually protecting.”

In our interview, she also shared that ALFI is currently in the process of obtaining lion fish specific traps that can be employed by fishermen who cannot dive or cannot afford the expenses this entails. ALFI and the fishermen with whom they have talked about the project with, such as the fishers at Hadicurari, are enthusiastic for the possibility that earning an income from lion fish hunting could hold, and how this may be able to reduce the stress on marine ecosystems as well as other fish species.

Rudy Davelaar shared his experience of presenting a plan in 2009 for a marine park that would have been island-wide. ‘I spent around 9 months talking with fishermen. I spent a small fortune buying them beer,’ he laughs. But ultimately he was successful - by patiently explaining the project and its benefits he was able to get many of them involved. Although the project was originally accepted, it remained suspended until around 2017, when it reemerged, but entailed different areas. This has left fishermen feeling unsure of what the changes to the plan mean for them, and are skeptical of whether they can be supported. Sietske van der Wal, marine biologist and interim marine park manager of Parke Marino Aruba, believes in the importance of taking responsibility and fostering trust. She says of the project with the four designated marine protected areas:

“they are relatively small in size and therefore very limited in what we can do for conservation purposes. But on the other hand, they are a window for awareness and outreach, and they are a way to start engaging stakeholders...”

Ms. Van der Wal notes that making sure that MPA management is effective and that stakeholders and users have trust in the managing organization, as well as the marine park’s contributions, is an important factor in the possible future expansion of the MPAs and our ambition to have an island-round marine park.

2.3 Individual values

In contrast to relational values, these values reflect specifically striving for personal emotional wellbeing, such as enjoying spending time at the sea for one’s peace of mind. When respondents expressed individual values, these were subjective and tied to their individual experiences. It is important to highlight that often times, a value can be expressed in terms of the way one relates to others and other beings and related to oneself.

2.3.1 Knowledge

Respondents expressed a deep reverence for knowledge,

especially learning from mentor figures and how this influenced their 'life trajectory' in giving them the opportunity to make a living on the sea. While individuals may at times pursue different goals, the reverence for knowledge is almost universal.

R: *"I do, I mostly do, deep, deep, especially with my father that's the only thing he did, but after a little while..."*

K: *"Oh, with a rod, or?"*

R: *"No, with a line. I still fish by hand. I don't use any machine on the boat. My brother sometimes goes with me, he uses his winch and thinks twice before putting it in the boat. (Laughs) Because he's not going to throw it overboard, it's a lot of money (Laughs). So, you better leave it. But, you can fish with it. I have it from my father.*

2.3.2 Identity

During our interviews and conversations, identity was an important theme that linked relational values and individual values by relating to finding a sense of purpose, playing a role of caretaker for one's community, for one's family and for the sea. Many respondents expressed that this purpose brought them joy. For Clifford and Carlos especially, identity was connected to the physical space of Rancho, yet other respondents also shared that they felt their identity in fishing, similar to what Ruben and Kim expressed:

K: *Yeah, exactly. It's calming, and, in a way, it's physical exercise, cause it's a physical activity as well. I do think there's the element of being one with nature. You do get that feeling. I'm guessing if you're out alone on your boat, in your element..*

R.. *Yeah, ... But there is a different feeling out there. Maybe it's to do with, this is an island, this is what we have, try to be good to it.*

K: *It becomes part of your identity*

- Kim & Ruben, in conversation

2.3.3 Passion

To make the sacrifices it takes to dedicate your life to fishing,

it takes passion, determination and a love for the sea. This passion was often a connection that young apprentice fishers were able to share with their mentor and with others from the community.

".. As a kid, I used to look at it when my father used to go.. I was the only one that woke up at 3 o'clock to go with him, and I didn't care much that I was wet, and I'd still need to go to school, cause we would start going fishing at 3:30, and he woke me up.. And, sometimes, I don't go with him and I would wait for him the whole day to come."

Ruben shares how his father's passion for the sea was almost infectious for him, from a young age.

When I ask Carlos what it takes to be a fisher, he responds:

"Oh, you need to have fun! You have to.. You need to have fun for fishing. Because there are people they can't {be on} the sea. They have seasick. So, you must have fun for fishing. You must like it. You have people, like my cousin, he's a maniac for fishing. When he's on land, he's ... I don't know how to explain it.. he want to go fishing. When he's on the sea, he's happy."

For him and many others, fishing is something you dedicate your life to, for your wellbeing, that of your family and that of your community. To be able to withstand the difficulties this way of life brings, it is important to have fun with it and to love what you do.

"But you have to have love to fish. If you don't have passion, you don't get the fish. It's a hard, hard thing to do... But that is hard work to do, fishing. You come sometimes, tired. You don't want to see nobody, but you have plenty fish to sell, you have to sell it then, clean everything, then you can go relax. But it's nice." - Marietta

"But, I would always say, it gives so much passion. My girlfriend always tells me, go fish, please go fish. Because, I can always tell, when I come back, I will smile, because I like it." - Ruben

2.3.4 Independence

Going out to fish in itself is often solitary. This independence means freedom, but also self-reliance. Many respondents shared that they enjoyed spending this time on their own, and Carlos expressed that it allows you to be your own boss and set your own rules. Yet, it also requires dedication to not put yourself or others in danger by exploiting the independence to behave recklessly.

“But, yeah, I do everything in the boat. I ride the boat, I do everything because you have to know everything. Cause if you go to the sea, you don’t do nothing. Only the capitan is riding. You see, something happen to the capitan, what you going to do?” - Marietta

It is necessary for survival that you are able to rely on yourself. Still, it is important to find a balance between being independent and evaluating one’s intentions in relation to others. It is necessary to take responsibility for your actions, and most feel accountable to their family and their community, who rely upon them for receiving highly nutritious, affordable food.

I: Cause it {fishing} has a lot of history, right?

C: Yeah. So you can survive. Fishermen, that is a job, a craft, you can survive, you can sustain you family. A lot of people, the older fishermen, was sustain they family completely. Send they kids to school, yeah? Send them to the university. To be a professional.

I: Right.. Is the ocean important to you?

C: Yeah, is important. Is life. We go swimming, do everything. They give our food. (Chuckles)

Respondents felt that maintaining their independence limited the exposure of others to the vulnerabilities of life at sea, both in the physical sense of endangering others that respondents touched upon when they explained why they often went out alone, as well as the emotional vulnerability that can come with not being in full control over your

‘resource acquisition’ and at times feeling a dependency on the sea that cannot be overcome by experience or knowledge.

Vulnerability is something that resource users have learned to cope with, in the current known state of uncertain weather and currents, as well as the uncertainty of making a catch. Respondents shared that this was often a learning process, of understanding one’s own limits. Respondents felt mostly at ease with navigating this vulnerability and uncertainty, as it formed part of their relationship with the sea. Vulnerability was mostly explored through stories of being scared of the physical force of the sea or frightening spiritual encounters. Fear of spirits or the ocean’s power could be put into words, whereas the distress that is caused by the insecurity of income from fishing was shared much less in conversations.

“That’s, is normal. You happy.. And when you catch a lot of fish you gonna be more happy (Laughs) Sometime you are down, when you don’t fish nothing, you say ‘Oh, I lost my whole night..’ You are just came to sleeping, you don’t catch so much.. Sometimes. You get ups and downs.” - Carlos

For most respondents, fishing was one among multiple strands of income, as a way of limiting dependency on a certain activity and may also play a role in minimizing the emotional pressure experienced on an everyday basis regarding the uncertainties beyond their control, of making a catch. Their income security used to be directly related to fishing, such as in collecting salt to preserve fish and then selling this as a marketable fisheries product, and earning an income from cleaning the catch and cleaning other fishers’ boats. For Marietta, these activities are memories from a childhood where she sought to help secure an income for her family from these activities.

For Junjun, who has lived in Rancho for most of his life, it is his reality. When I meet him at the pier, he tells me that

he helps fishers to clean their boats, clean the catch before it is sold, and has a close relationship to the fishermen of Rancho. He shows me the bucket with tools for fishing and cleaning and explains that he dives for fish, to earn money and for food. He is proud that he can take care of himself, but he also shares his vulnerability with being dependent on the sea for his nutrition and income. There used to be a large number of tires in the shallow waters at the pier that had been dumped there, which fish used as a habitat. When they were removed in a cleanup action, Junjun felt devastated that the fish had lost their habitat - 'It was their home', as well as that he had lost a catch site. This was one of many instances where economic value became intertwined with values of *benevolence* to other people and other species.

Respondents from the main interviews expressed that for them, subsidiary activities related to fishing, such as cleaning gear, cleaning catch or preparing the catch, were no longer a part of the fisheries value chain as something they earned money from. Carlos explains that especially at the beginning of the year, during Cuaresma (Lent), he only goes out to sea around once per week as the currents are incredibly strong in this season. The strong currents coincide with the spawning of many fish species, making it possible for the sea to regenerate while fishers pursue other activities. Even today, with outboard engines, the currents are still incredibly dangerous and fishers prefer to limit how much they go out during these times.

Preparing fish dishes is something that many respondents expressed was something they genuinely enjoyed and valued as part of fishing and having fresh catch. Nowadays, this preparation has mostly moved from a product that is quantifiable by a transaction, into a tradition, for Carlos for example, who enjoys telling me about dishes he likes to make, and prepares dishes with his wife when I visit them. Now, this preparation is like giving a gift.

2.4 Spaces of Encounter

Participants' expression of value for the sea were often times represented by physical spaces that played an important role in learning about the sea, and experiencing the ocean alone and with others. Nowadays, most artisanal fishing takes place on the open ocean. Clifford explains that there was a time when fishers would not have to go out so far, and Ruben also remembers that when he grew up in Pos Chikito, there was always fish there, and then suddenly there wasn't. These narratives of change connect to many of the localities that are mentioned.

Barra

Barra is a site that Carlos referred to multiple times in our interview. It is a place where he and his cousin used to be able to catch a lot of kingfish. He explains that the name relates to the size of the fish - one barra is around an arm's length. When the fishing ground got its name, it was possible to catch very large kingfish there. While these bigger fish brought more income, it may have also been a question of social acceptability to catch the large ones, as long as they were available, instead of catching younger ones;

"Yeah, you caught smaller.. too, but a good kingfish must be a barra." Names often hold more significance than may seem evident at first.

Monchi Islands

Ruben explains to me that Monchi refers to monks. Why, he is not quite sure. These are an island group close to the Colombian coast that belong to Venezuela and are a very productive fishing ground.

"They take his boat and they go with another boat, sometimes 2, sometimes 3, and they come back with, a thousand kilo fish. You could fish, 20 miles from the islands."

Both Carlos and Ruben know family members or acquaintances that fish there, but both also expressed a lot

of respect for the rough and dangerous conditions of the sea there. Neither were willing to risk their safety despite the apparent financial benefits fishing there might bring.

Mambo beach

This beach is located close to the harbor in Oranjestad. *'It is our beach'*, Carlos says, referring to the Rancho fishermen. It is one of the fishing grounds that fishermen from Rancho have frequented for generations. It also holds a deeper personal value for Carlos as part of his family legacy. He shares that his grandfather, who was also known as a great fisherman, was stranded at Mambo beach after he was imprisoned in Venezuela for shipping contrabands. Place-based knowledge forms a crucial component to fishers' knowledge systems - knowing where to fish, but also how to navigate. Knowing the landmarks was something Carlos and Ruben especially took pride in. Ruben remembers how his father would go out with him to sea and challenge him to guess their position from the landmarks. This is also how he learned the significance of different place names. Today, fishermen are able to use GPS for navigation. Ruben shares that he keeps it as a safety measure in case of emergencies, but continues to navigate the way he learned to. Carlos also expresses pride in the ways of fishers who used no tools such as navigation:

"But before they don't have nothing. And they not fishing in a yacht. That is, they are wet the whole night. But now you have boat with cabin ... facility, right? But before not. That was the fishermen of Rancho."

Places also have importance for being spaces to meet with others. Marietta and Arthur share an enthusiasm for having a space to talk and share, and she explained that she had an idea of creating an organization as well, to have a space to share knowledge and experience.

"No, we are connected... and we give a lot of information to each other... I do... they ask me..." - Arthur

Carlos relates that for him, the bench at W'hafi Rancho, where we also sat when I joined him to sell his catch, is a space he cherishes: He sits there and talks with the other fishermen every evening when they do their round to check on the boats at the dock.

For all participants, the sea provided a place to be yourself and to relax. They shared that the sea could make them feel at ease when they felt stressed, and that its beauty was something they cherished. Being able to have these moments of serenity played an important role in creating a bond with the sea. Marietta notes that she also talks with the sea, to calm it down when it is angry. Carlos shares as well why the connection to the sea is important for him:

C: When you have a stress, you go to sit by the beach. I go by the wharf, sit. You see the sea, so quiet, so relax, it relax you. And you can do with aquarium too, you sitting down, see fish in Aquarium. It relax you.

I: Right. Would you say that you also feel a connection to the animals in the ocean?

C: Yeah. That's nice. You feel good.

2.4.1 The ocean paradox

M: The water can give you, and it can get back.

R: Yes, that's how it is.

...

R: She say, and when it takes from you, you keep on going.

-excerpt from a conversation between Marietta and Ruben

As I explored value of the sea with interview participants, the theme of physical safety and volatility of the sea came up many times. Many respondents expressed that they recognize the sea as an entity that reacts to its surroundings - at times it will be calm and convey trust and benevolence, at other times times will be treacherous, and then there will be times where it will be dangerous and appear malevolent. As Marietta says, the relationship with the sea is one of

give and take - and to maintain this relationship, showing respect and trust is important. How respondents convey their respect differs. Marietta speaks with the sea to appease it, while Carlos trusts in his good intentions by continuing his families' practices with the sea and manifests his values by using practices he believes to be least harmful. Arthur strives to maintain the balance of marine life by fishing, acting as a steward of the sea, and Ruben and Kim believe that respecting means taking what you need, but being conscious of how you affect the system.

"Yeah, to add onto that, it's super important to respect the sea. First of all, because it's what's feeding you, and second of all because you need it to live, as well. Ehm, so, be conscious of the value that it gives you, but also of the power. And that it's... It's hard work. So, definitely you have to be careful but you also have to realize that it's not easy money and that you have to respect it enough to be conscious, again, in what you take. Because, for lionfish, sometimes you need to make the choice that you'd rather leave the lionfish than breaking a piece of coral."

- Kim

Ruben shared the story of his father returning to sea even after he was lost, a story which explores the attraction it exerts on people that have grown up with the sea. At times, the pull of the sea can be deadly. Over the years, many fishers have died at sea, and there is a memorial for seamen who did not return. In March, a free diver was lost at sea after he went diving, and at the time of our interview, when we visited Marietta, she expressed her worry:

"It's very sad, for me, I don't know those people but I still am a fisherwoman, I think everyday, what can happen? What can go wrong? I was brave, I told the people, I want the people to come, if it is possible that he is alive, let it be. If he is not alive, let them get the body. Don't know what happened. But like that, we all think, for us, fishing, we don't know what happened in the sea. That thing bother us."

There is an element of uncertainty to the sea that is always present. It cannot be controlled, not by improving gear or sharing knowledge. The mystery has kept fishers inquisitive about understanding the sea and passionate about sharing their knowledge, but at the same time it is inherently physically dangerous. Going to sea and becoming a fisher takes a toll - it demands a tribute of your time, your physical and emotional energy, and, as Mike, who works as a charter captain at the marina, says, 'It's a sacrifice'. Fishers may sacrifice relationships and friendships, for pursuing what they are passionate about. While in many ways, knowledge is power for the fishermen who are able to apply it, the sea regularly challenges their sense of self and humbles them. Living with the sea is difficult, and it can take a lot from you, but at the same time, respondents agree that it always gives a lot back, whether in the form of catch or feeling at ease, recognizing beauty, building trust in yourself and facing challenges. Even if they do not always succeed in catching something, the experiences they have are rewarding in their own ways, along with valuing the time they can spend out observing the sea.

In conversation, Kim and Ruben call these feelings of certainty and uncertainty that come together when they are at the ocean, the *Ocean Paradox*:

R: I'm not a believer, I don't believe, but there's something there.. the sea makes you very vulnerable. There's something there, that ...

K: It's a paradox. It's super calming, but it can kill you.

R: .. So, it's, yeah.. It's a paradox. It sure is.

C: Related to that, do you feel a relation to the ocean?

R: It's a love hate relationship.

3 Analysis

With the aid of the frameworks of Schwartz (2012) and Chan et al. (2012) and applying the Livelihoods Approach to Aruba's fishery, it was possible to analyze the different dimensions of nature and community values surrounding

the practice of fishing and life at the sea, as well as to contextualize these values systems within the Livelihoods Approach. This study of fishers operating artisanal and recreational fishing allowed a reflection on how certain values are shared among resource users based on their experiences and knowledge systems. Fishers had varying experiences of fishing as part of their livelihood, which holds implications for the values held by these individuals. Unfortunately, it was in the end beyond the scope of this study to engage with resource users in a group setting. This may have made it possible to talk more about the values that are held and deliberated at the group level, which is an especially important component of valuation in connection to management approaches. During the interviews, it became apparent that fishers see themselves as part of a loose community of practice and a more tightly bound community of living. These communities are the ones that best expressed why they practiced fishing. The trust that existed within communities of practice as well as living communities made them spaces where it was possible to explore one's values and, at times, allow them to adapt, consciously or subconsciously. Overall, the values that were cherished by respondents most universally included trust and respect. These values took on different dimensions within contexts of in-group and out-group relations, relations to other beings and identity. Market valuation of goods further played an important role as a part of most respondents' livelihood: however, learning to moderate resource use and income with regards to experiences of uncertainty and relation to the ocean also emerged as a widely held value, often expressed as having discipline.

3.1 History

The history of fishing in Aruba emanated from physical places like Rancho and Hadicurari, where fishing has been essential to the life of those who live on the coast. The value of tradition and the heritage of practicing fishing was not often referred to as having explicit importance for most fishers. Valuing fishing traditions, as fishing contests and

miniature boat tournaments was expressed especially by Arthur, Carlos and Clifford. The latter also noted the implicit 'intangible heritage' such activities and the transferral of knowledge through generations, made possible. Community is expected to be closely associated with conformity within Schwartz' (2012) framework, encompassing adjusting to a 'forming' pressure from within one's 'traditional circle'. While resource users express a desire to not have dependency on others when it comes to securing resources and allocating their time, there is also a certain openness to being 'formed' by one's community, expressed in a desire to learn and to teach others. To hold knowledge that others want to learn about and practice is expressed as important, and to have a 'system of tradition' into which it is possible to integrate one's identity as a resource user. At the same time, tradition is valued also because it can offer a feeling of security in a practice that can at times be very physically insecure (varying levels of catch, physical danger), as well as the mental insecurities that may arise in times where livelihood is endangered, through changes to the built environment (like the development of Rancho), changes to the natural system (migrating population, changing cycles), and challenges to systems of resource use through changes to economic valuation or political pressure. Ultimately, in such situations, communities and sharing something within groups, such as traditions and values systems, can be a coping mechanism for adjusting to change. Many of the traditions in fishing are not static. Practices like boat racing have adapted to security concerns and changing times, and still are an important aspect of the enjoyment of fishing as a way of life. Within knowledge sharing, paying heed to the knowledge of one's ancestors and mentors is considered as a token of respect, but adaptations are made where they are considered beneficial and 'justifiable' within one's system of values and experiences. For some, like Marietta, it may be justifiable to use winches even if she learned handlining, while others, like Arthur, Carlos and Ruben, hold on to practices like handlining and net fishing because these practices connect deeply to their held values of an equitable

relationship with the fish, and honoring one's ancestors and the hard work they did. These beliefs may adapt with time and exposure to different experiences. Within knowledge systems, knowledge of 'spaces' takes up an important place. This relates to species' physical position in space, and navigating to fishing grounds with the help of landmarks and constitutes a practice that many respondents feel can continue to exist alongside owning a GPS. For knowledge-based practice of fishing gear, change may play an important role: change to the physical places the gear can be used and the species it can be used for can ultimately also impact who is willing to continue implementing these traditional knowledge systems. Within the artisanal fishery, gear has been adapted over generations to serve the purpose of catching specific species. Thus, apprehension for legislation such as the Flora and Fauna law extends at times beyond a concern for income security to a concern for one's security as part of a community and its traditions. Respondents connected their identity to the sea, whether fishing was one of their main forms of earning a living or they consider it a hobby. Fishers provide their time, a part of their income, at times their physical security, and sometimes may even sacrifice relationships: they dedicate their lives to the sea. While the aspect of 'personal gain' plays an important role, as fishers are important as providers of income and nutrition for themselves and their immediate families, the physical gain of making a catch is something that they cannot expect when they leave with the boat. It is this uncertainty that they have learned to arrange themselves with to be able to cherish a life at sea, that for most respondents has formed a part of the majority of their lives, a connection that has become almost natural as to be fundamental to them.

3.2 Place-based value

Fishing is an activity that is inherently place based. The sea, where fishers often spend a majority of the day (or night), holds intrinsic value beyond its role in securing catch that can form part of a market transaction. Respondents shared that they felt that specific places played an important role

in their lives. Zube was among the first to explore place-based value specifically, in his work (1987). He sketches the different 'branches' of conceptions of human-landscape relations, from a perspective of the human as a perpetrator of impacts, to humans as receiving and processing information from their environment, to the perspective of a reciprocal relationship, where the human is a participant of the landscape and interaction is a continuous process that includes interactions with more or less perceptible impacts, on all involved actors. The impact model suggests humans' experiences within landscape systems are rarely a focus within research on landscape use (Zube, 1987). Fishers give their time, their energy, their passion to the sea, and the sea reciprocates with its own passion and strength. Resource users form the ocean by challenging this strength, in ever new ways, harvesting resources and at times leaving something behind, such as in the form of plastic waste. The ocean in turn forms resource users - they become independent, aware and cautious individuals. Within fishers' conception of their relation to the sea, they recognize the sea as an actor with intentions and reactions. Both actants are characterized by their high degree of adaptability even in adverse conditions, which forms a part of resource users' conceptualization of the sea as self-regenerating. In conversation with distressed fishers, it seems that they feel they are being forced to reach their thresholds of adaptability, and that thus 'another entity' is affecting this relationship. The Impact Model (in Zube, 1987) may best be able to encompass what this relationship means to them, even if incompletely so. Zube (1987) reflects on the relevance of place value for management purposes, "The individual is sensitive to those bits of information which are related to his or her needs or desires and which invite the individual to become an active participant in the landscape. Values are clearly tied to the individual's personal experiences and purposes"

Information is essentially processed selectively, in relation to experiences, sense of purpose and the values associated to an activity.

3.3 The intersection of Community and Environmental values

For most respondents, the relationship to the sea and sea life was essentially connected to what one valued for oneself and for one's community; resilience and self-reliance - although there was recognition of processes of change such as migrating fish populations, as in the case of the kingfish at Barra, decreasing fish size and increasing travel costs, time wise and economically, as well as less certainty. Almost half of respondents reflected upon these changes as not yet being clear evidence of larger changes. Concerns for the fishery were in their description based more around 'communal practices' than the status of fish stocks, per se, but at the same time, the uncertainty in data warrants this skepticism. In relation to Hinchcliffe's (2008) theorization on presence, for fishers, their own experience is paramount in forming their knowledge systems and values systems. While manifesting presence can be considered as essentially physical, it is also not time-specific. They recognize that species and the entity of the sea have their own cyclicity that they operate by and that not seeing presence does not necessarily mean it doesn't exist. This is especially important to consider for the fisheries that depend upon migrating species, where presence in space is not a constantly valid indicator. Community and environment values are not essentially incompatible, and neither are personal values. Fishers know hardship; most have experienced frugality, by choice or not. Values are nested within each other and therefore not always separable; respect for the sea is deeply related to valuing knowledge and especially respecting mentors, as well as putting the community first, leaving little space for selfishness. If these values are also held at the community level and are fostered, this can play an important role for impacting when and what fishers take from the sea. Ultimately, "... any instantiation of value, eg. a person's motivation for conservation, will be a complex mixture of value types and not cleanly just one part of a binary (e.g. not just for oneself or others, but both intertwined)" (Chan et al. 2012, p. 10)

3.4 Way of Resource Use

With the participants I interviewed, community was a factor of fishing that was expressed more intensely by those who were able to foster interaction with their community on a very regular basis. A sense of purpose with fishing was felt for all interview subjects, whether it be to also provide a platform to inform fishermen of the dangers of the sea but also why it ought to be protected (Ruben), or to inform others about fishing on Aruba beyond chartering (Arthur). Achieving security for oneself and those close to you was considered paramount for the resource users for whom fishing formed a part of their income base. While the costs of gear maintenance were also a factor for those who didn't or no longer depended upon fishing for income or only a little, they expressed that they felt like their passion and sacrifice of time played a larger role than it may for resource users for whom fishing was a primary form of income. Yet, resource users who sold fish expressed that discipline and passion played a very important role in their relation to the sea and sea life, especially since returns from the sea were never easily guaranteed.

Also, younger generations, who were considered by some respondents as potentially 'doing it for the wrong reasons', may be given less credit than they deserve in their decision making. Their experience of fishing will not be the same as that of their ancestors. There are more opportunities and it may also be a question of where to invest their passion. As Arthur and Clifford recognize, it is now up to older fishermen to explain why their practices ought to be continued, and to be accepting of change (to an extent). Values connected to community and self-reliance tend to be especially persevering, and as Marietta, Arthur and Clifford's experiences show, it can be possible to foster understanding and cooperation on values that are important, while also accepting that some values transform; fishers starting now may no longer have the same extent of responsibility to their families that Carlos and Arthur felt, or if they do, may opt for a potentially less volatile career path. At the same

time, people like Junjun may feel like they have no other opportunities. And while for him, this brought passion, for others it might lead to self-reliance becoming the main goal, with less concern for providing for others.

3.5 The Market Value of Fishing

Market-mediated value often become expressed in monetary terms, pushing into the background the value of labour for instance (Chan et al. 2012). Within living and working communities, these aspects of producing a marketable good are still highly valued, and play an important role in maintaining the relationship between resource users and customers. Further, this may include the many small and bigger ways in which family members assist fishers, even if they themselves do not go out to sea. Practices like selling salt fish, and collecting the salt from the Salinas, or producing medicine, no longer holds a market value although it used to. Producing these resources may continue, but has migrated more and more to a sphere of gift transactions that are not quantifiable in monetary terms, but reflect the kindness they feel towards their communities and anyone who shares respect for the sea and for their livelihood decisions.

3.6 Synthesis: Livelihoods Framework

The Sustainable Livelihoods Framework is an approach that exists beyond establishing the conditions of people living in poverty and fisheries-dependent people, in the form of suggesting an approach to policy development and practice. In this research, the hope was to contribute to a first understanding of Aruba's fisheries within the livelihoods framework, that can then be expanded upon with further research on salient topics such as gender relations and food security, as well as considerations of power relations, and could further be important in the political process of involving fishers in marine management in inclusive and respectful ways.

The Livelihoods framework gives an important contextualization for research on small-scale resource sectors,

like Aruba's fishery. Especially to recognize the interplay and possible friction of forms of value, it is important to recognize the role of forms of capital, institutions and fishery as one of multiple activities that resource users pursue, as well as their vulnerabilities that may play a role in the articulation of what values are considered important when it comes to ultimately, securing a living. Allison & Horemans (2006) argue that enabling resource users to enhance their flexibility by providing opportunities to move among sources of income is an important consideration for maintaining sustainable livelihoods.

Within the category of capital, various types of 'inputs' are considered that influence how marine resource users become enabled to pursue fishing. This includes the *physical capital* of having access to boats and gear, which in itself is not always a given as fishing for a living was long concentrated as a family-based activity and not all, like Junjun, who seek to live from fishing, are able to afford it. It also includes access to infrastructure like harbours, which for the Rancho community is becoming an increasing concern as the promenade development decreases not only the physical connection to the sea, but also has severed emotional ties for Rancho residents as fishing has vanished from their line of sight.

'*Mental capital*' becomes especially apparent in the transposing of knowledge through generations. This does not always exclusively relate to fisheries. While Arthur shared for example that his grandfather 'taught him everything' about fishing, his father also provided Carlos the opportunity to become a pilot boat captain, which provided him with another livelihood opportunity. Still, knowledge holds a special place within resource users' values systems as something that provides them certainty and makes it worthwhile for them to invest their effort and *physical capital* in the form of 'fuel money' and money to maintain gear, into fishing. Shocks and changes to systems may be increasing fishers' vulnerability: "while

many SSF have learned to adapt to predictable or common environmental shocks and stresses, these fisheries are now facing disturbances with increasing intensity, frequency, and uncertainty.” (Finkbeiner, 2015, p. 140).

These assets within the framework can become positively and negatively affected by policy decisions. (*Allison & Horemans, 2006*)

The diverse livelihood strategies these are a part of are further rooted in resource users’ social capital - their kinship ties, institutions, and peer networks that allow them to work through hardships as well as a celebration of success that fosters feelings of belonging. This social capital also plays a role in the leverage they hold in political processes that affect them, and if and how they are empowered in them.

Institutions play an important role in fisheries, from social institutions that can influence individual actions, to political and legal institutions that set standards and laws for the interaction between humans and the sea. Researchers voice concern not only for the capacity of political institutions, but also how to make cooperation truly meaningful for communities (Lemos & Agarwal, 2006). How to examine and address power relations meaningfully also remains a challenge within the Sustainable Livelihoods framework (Allison & Horemans, 2006)

As social institutions, Stichting Rancho and Fundacion Hadicurari are important for fishers in these communities for maintaining social networks. At the same time, many fishers are still strongly independent. At times, forms of livelihood support can be ineffective or damaging to resource sustainability. It is important to note community concerns and initiatives to provide support that is welcomed for it to have a chance to be successful. Further, the livelihood framework approaches resource users as ‘households’, leaving little space for the discussion of individual agency, which is highly valued, as well as the position of individuals

within households that pertain to livelihoods, as well as to power, with relation to age and gender especially. As Marietta and Kim shared, fisherwomen are almost nonexistent in the way that fishers are conceptualized as going out to sea and fishing, yet many women continue to be invisibly involved in the functioning of allowing their families to maintain a livelihood from fisheries.

Resilience was long a term reserved for ecological systems, yet resilience is also of crucial importance for Social-Ecological Systems as a whole. Resource users diversify their livelihood strategies in fisheries within a context of seasonal and cyclical complexity of the fishery. Allison and Ellis (2001) suggest that fishers face considerable vulnerability due to a variety of risk factors, ranging from potential changes on the market for fisheries catch, to climate fluctuations, and the existence of support networks and coping mechanisms for the individual fisher. Fishers can cope with their vulnerability by maintaining geographical mobility based upon the movement of fish populations, diversifying their livelihood strategies and maintaining flexibility within fisheries by targeting a variety of species. (Allison & Ellis, 2001) This is also the case in Aruba, where a large variety of species are fished, intermittently, over the year. For local communities, fostering resilience means coping with this vulnerability and evaluating one’s preferences and values in accordance to this, as well as continuing to diversify one’s livelihood strategies in ways that allows to continue one’s passion while also ensuring families’ and communities survival in the long term, and especially in times of shock, such as now in times of a pandemic. Clifford’s idea of sustaining fishery by the introduction of a fishery school could serve as a way of legitimizing and sustaining an important practice, while possibly also fostering social-ecological values especially and providing opportunities for work in the harbor. Further, diversifying the fishery by enabling fishers to participate in lionfish hunting through trap setting, may make it possible for fishers to broaden the species they rely upon. Finding

a way to support communities that allow them to adapt in ways that they can embrace will be a challenge. For it to be possible, political institutions and fishers must be truly invested in cooperation and mutual respect may be a deciding factor. This will also include strengthening data collection, sharing knowledge among stakeholders and engaging with each other at eye level, which will require all stakeholders to reevaluate their position and perspective in relation to others.

3.7 Stories

Stories were mostly shared about spiritual encounters and of sharing experiences with friends and family. They provided a basis for talking about difficult topics such as fear and discord within a community and made it possible for respondents to explore these concepts, in many cases by sharing others' experiences first before they shared their own. The stories fishers told were diverse in the topics they related to. Some were about awe-inspiring experiences, such as Kim's night dive; others were about fears - fears of the physical strength of the ocean, or encounters with spirits or sightings they couldn't explain. Still other stories shared the joy that respondents felt, exploring the sea, sharing stories and knowledge with friends, family or others, and participating in community events like boat racing or fishing contests. The stories reflected respect, but also sincerity and love for the sea, and the experiences they have cherished through fishing that have had an impact on them.

4 Preliminary conclusions

Through this research, I meant to engage with fishermen on their values systems. It was important to approach this research with awareness of my own biases, especially connected to environmental protection. The individuals that I encountered were very friendly people, who had different connections to fishing today, but for whom a childhood at the ocean had fostered a passion for the sea

and for fishing that they were very willing to share, if people were willing to listen. All of the fishers who shared a part of their story were very open and proud of what they do. In relation to valuation, many respondents addressed that, given the uncertainty connected to fishing, they cherished the independence that they had from pursuing fishing, and also the money that it brought in, but economic value overall played a less important role than I had anticipated, also in discussions over politics. This might be because as an activity of resource extraction, the economic value of the resource is simply considered a given, but it was nonetheless important to see the wealth of non-economic value that fishers associate with fishing. Fishing practices have become more closely focused on families and direct communities, for whom the work fishers do is important and where they find support, even as there is increasing polarization over their practices.

In light of current political developments, the values of respect and trust stood out especially. *Respect* was addressed as having importance explicitly and implicitly, across the dimensions of knowledge sharing and *universalism* especially. The role that trust played was not as explicitly referred to but became evident in stories of interaction with fisher's in-communities, and their concerns for other interactions with the sea and other Arubans. In connection to interacting with society at large, trust could be considered important for adopting a role as a participant in the political process and feeling at ease in the political setting. However, as has been noted in the research and in interviews with organizations especially, building this trust takes time and will be a significant challenge to a project where results are expected along a timeframe, such as the Parke Marino. The Parke Marino appeared aware of their responsibility to ensure stakeholders can trust them, and the project itself, and that time is an important factor to allow trust to build. In relation to political participation, what especially remains to be explored further are values held at the community level. The fishers I spoke to were well connected within their

communities of practice, and some aspect of community-based values may have been captured by place values for instance, but this topic warrants further attention, especially since deliberative values are thought to play an important role in regulating resource use. Such research would have to be addressed in more extensive research beyond the scope of this present project. These could be explored within group settings in which participants feel willing to share, such as within their social networks.

I hope that this research has provided a glimpse into how fishers base their resource use around values that are shaped by knowledge systems and personal experiences, that can be built upon in conversations with users and more community-based research. Hopefully it has shown that fishers have a lot to offer to conservation projects like the Parke Marino, if they are trusted to contribute throughout the process and their perspectives are acknowledged and respected as valid contributions in stakeholder engagement. Understanding which values are articulated and in what ways is especially salient within the current context of social change and political engagement, to enable resource users to express their values in new ways also on the political scene.

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Mikayla Quijada, University of Aruba

An opportunity to learn more about my island

I am happy and grateful to have formed a part of this research program at the UA. As an introverted student at the UA, it is easy to become busy and focused on your studies in your own little bubble. When I received an email about this research opportunity, I decided to step out of my bubble and participate in this program. This research program gave me the opportunity to get to know some nice and wonderful people from the University of Utrecht, with different backgrounds. This research also gave me the opportunity to learn more about my island and to contribute back by doing my research on the education system of Aruba.

When I first joined this program it was clear to me that I was the only student majoring in Accountancy & Finance in this group. The other UA participants were all from the Organization, Governance and Management (OGM) program. When we met the

students from the University of Utrecht, it became clear that most of them were studying Anthropology. This meant that everyone had more experience with research compared to me. However, this turned out to be something great as I got to sit in the meetings and hear the in-depth conversations that they had about research. It gave me a lot more knowledge and experience, and I know I can get help from them at any time.

This program turned out to be not only educational, but also fun. We went on different field trips and learned a lot about Aruba. We also organized different activities such as cookouts or beach days. We all got along very nicely, got to know each other and became friends throughout this project. This was a program that gave me more knowledge, experience and friends from different educational backgrounds.

By the end of this project, we faced a big challenge which was the coronavirus situation. Because of this virus, it was not allowed for groups of people to come together and thus we had to practice social distancing. This had as consequence that we could not continue our group meetings or the symposium. The exchange students also had to go back to the Netherlands for their own safety. This had as result that we needed to continue working on the research paper from afar and through digital platforms. The government was also asking for everyone to stay in their homes as much as possible. Some people were laid off, while others lost their jobs. This made it difficult to keep conducting interviews because people were either not at their job, or did not have the time. However, I did two interviews before the situation worsened, and these interviews gave me enough information to work with.

In the end we made it work. We had meetings and helped each other out through digital platforms and therefore finalized our research with success. I want to thank all of the students from the University of Utrecht for sharing their experience with us. I also want to thank the students from OGM for being kind, open and helping me whenever needed. I want to thank Eric Mijts, Jocelyn Ballantyne, Frank Wijnen and Lonia Jakubowska for guiding me and all the participants with our research.

All in all this was an enriching and amazing experience that contributed to new knowledge, experience and friendship.

Treating education as a business

Mikayla Quijada

Introduction

According to the Director of Stichting Katholiek Onderwijs Aruba (SKOA) and teachers from different schools, the governmental school budgets are currently insufficient. Teachers, especially from primary schools, are taking money out of their own salaries in order to buy school supplies or to decorate their classrooms. Fundraisings are being held to generate money to renovate schools or to buy new materials. It is currently unclear why the budget received from the government is not enough.

This research will be on the question of whether treating education as a business can help solve current educational budget problems. If education is looked at as a business, there will be a product or service type and its clients. The service that the school will be providing is education for its clients. The clients will be the students together with their parents. The students are the ones who receive the service, but the parents are the ones who make the decision to buy the service at that specific school or not.

When discussing the treatment of education as a business, this can be seen from 4 different perspectives. First of all, it can be seen from the student's perspective. After completing secondary education on Aruba, students are currently choosing for the study program that will bring more profit

and opportunities in the future, rather than choosing the study program that they are passionate about. Second of all, it can be seen from the parent's perspective. Currently, parents are not putting a lot of thought into choosing a school for their kids, because there is currently not a lot of competition between the schools on Aruba. If the parents treated this as a business, they would check which schools have the highest success rate, which school offers the best quality education and which school has the best fee. Parents tend to be willing to pay a higher fee for a better school. Thirdly, it can be seen from the school's perspective. Schools will be functioning as a business when they depend more on the parents paying a certain fee and when they treat the parents and students as customers. Lastly, it can be seen from the perspective of the government. If the government treated school as a business they would focus on low cost and high return or profit. In this case the return will be the percentage of students who pass their grade.

A business will also base the level of investments on the return that they get. If the investment brings a higher return than the money spent, the investment is approved. If the investment does not generate profit, it will be disapproved. A business also means treating the market as a competition. Would treating education as a business help the government with their financial problems? To what extent is the government already treating it as a business?

Education is one of the most important factors to help a country grow. Clemens says that educating children eventually produces educated adults and this type of investment raises income and productivity of a country. A decorated classroom, good quality school supplies, hardcover books, schools in good condition, high quality education, motivated parents and happy teachers are essential in motivating the students and providing a positive ambience for the students to receive an education in. Bearing this in mind, my goal with this thesis is to bring a clear insight as to how the government is currently handling education, whether treating education as a business will help solve the current problems and to advise the government for any possible improvements or alternatives.

Problem statement

This chapter will reflect on the current problems that the education system of Aruba is facing, and therefore the reasons for my research. At the end of this chapter, the sub-questions will be discussed.

The education system of Aruba has been facing many problems in the last few years. First of all, the funding of education on Aruba has been an issue. Aruba is currently in a tough financial position. In order to meet the budget requirements set by The Board of Financial Supervision Aruba (CAFT), the government has been cutting down on different costs including the education budget. This results in school boards and teachers being unhappy about the amount of subsidies and other funding received. As a result, schools have to increase the school fee that they charge the parents, organize fundraisings, and take money out of their own salary in order to give the students what they need. Second of all, based on the interview with the Director of SKOA it can be concluded that the government has been giving different school boards priority in comparison with

others when it comes to the budget and the covering of costs. This causes unfairness and a difference in school quality in Aruba. A third problem is that the government is currently giving an education that is just enough to educate all the children. This means that their education is not tailored to the needs of the students and classes or standardized. In business economics, mass production entails high quantity, low quality and low costs. This analogy means that the education in Aruba provided by the government is currently not of the best quality. Lastly, another problem is that parents are not motivating their children enough in school. When it comes to choosing a school, parents often choose the school which is the closest to their home or the school where their family went to as opposed to the best quality school. It has been noticed that mostly parents who are highly educated are the ones putting more thought into choosing a school and motivating their children.

Can these problems be solved if education was treated as a business? My research will focus on the main question, which is: Should education be treated as a business? I will research this question based on the following subquestions:

1. What does it mean to treat education as a business?
2. What are the current financial problems in education on Aruba?
3. What are the current social problems in education on Aruba?
4. What consequences will treating education as a business have on the government?
5. What consequences will treating education as a business have on the schools and community?

To conclude, the education system of Aruba currently faces different challenges. Four of these challenges were discussed in this chapter. My research will tackle the question of whether education should be treated as a business. This main question will be supported by 5 sub-questions.

Research method

This chapter will focus on the methodology used to conduct this research, together with a brief explanation of each method.

This research is a qualitative research combining insights from document study, a literature review and interviews. As such, qualitative research is defined as “problems based on situations, events and persons are described and interpreted by way of qualitative data like experiences, assigning meanings, which are collected by way of open interviews and/or participant observation and/or by using existing documents.” (Baarda, 2014, p. 22). This means that research will be done by conducting interviews, doing desk research and a literature review.

For starters, desk research was done on existing documents. This type of research included researching the education system of Aruba. Desk research was done on the funding of education and the education policies on Aruba. I also researched how other countries dealt with this topic.

Next, interviews were conducted. These interviews were done with people who work in the education system of Aruba. The first interview was based on SKOA schools. This interview was mainly focused on the funding of primary school and the noticeable differences between the funding of SKOA and other school boards. This interview was a semi-structured interview. According to Miles & Gilbert, semi-structured interviews are “...conversations in which you know what you want to find out about - and so have a set of questions to ask and a good idea of what topics will be covered - but the conversation is free to vary, and is likely to change substantially between participants.” My second interview was with the Minister of Education to receive his point of view on the funding of education. This interview focused more on the educational policies and the government budget for education. This was a structured

interview. A structured interview is “an interview that uses a DCI to gather data, either by telephone or face to face”(GAO published methodology paper). A DCI is a Data Collecting Instrument, which is a list of questions in this case. The list of questions was sent to the Minister beforehand and answered during the interview.

Thirdly, I did data analyses. When conducting an interview, the answers were being recorded by handwriting or online. The acquired data was then analyzed through a simpler version of selective coding. According to Gibbs (2010), selective coding is an analysis method by which a researcher systematically relates the core category of the research to other categories and fills in categories that need further refinement. The sub questions were defined as core categories and it was noted which interview answers belonged to which category and which category needed more information, or which answers needed more elaboration.

To conclude, this chapter discussed the methods used to conduct this research. This research is a qualitative research based on interviews, a literature review and desk research.

Literature review

This chapter will discuss the information gathered from the literature review. There are a total of 5 topics researched in this review. These topics are educational goals, education funding system, historical perspective on education funding, incentives for teachers and digitalization in education.

Educational goals

This paragraph will elaborate on educational goals. This topic was chosen because it is important to know what the education goals are, to know what should be achieved in school. If treating education as a business will negatively affect these goals, it should not be implemented.

According to Dennis Littky, the real goals of education are:

- Be passionate
- Be ready to take risks
- Be able to problem-solve and think critically
- Be able to look at things differently
- Be able to work independently and with others
- Be creative
- Care and give back to their community
- Have integrity and self-respect
- Have moral courage
- Speak well, read well, write well, and work well with numbers
- Truly enjoy their life and their work

Littky explains that he wants his students to learn how to use resources around them. He wants them to follow up on things they see or hear, and talk about new ideas that they have.

“When I imagine my students as an adult, I imagine a person who is a thinker, a doer, and who follows his or her passion. I see an adult who is strong enough to stand up and speak for what he or she wants and believes, and who cares about himself or herself and the world. Someone who understands himself or herself and understands learning. Creativity, passion, courage and perseverance are the personal qualities I want to see in my students” (The Big Picture: Education is Everyone’s Business. p. 2). Students should feel good about themselves and be good and honest people in their lives. Students should respect each other and get along with each other. Everything about the real goals of education would not be possible if the students do not get along with each other or respect each other or the people they meet outside of school. When a kid leaves school, he or she should have basic life skills to help them get through life and get along in the adult world. “Like knowing how to act in a meeting or how to keep her life and work organized. Basic stuff that too many schools forget about in their rush to

cram in three sciences, three social studies, four maths, and so on.” stated Littky. If each of us live to be 70, we would’ve spent only 9% of our lives in school. This means that “the only really substantial thing education can do is help us to become continuous, lifelong learners. Learners who love to learn. Education is not the filling of a pail but the lighting of a fire”. (The Big Picture: Education is Everyone’s Business)

Next to these goals, there are the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG). The SDGs are a number of global goals set to achieve a more sustainable future for all. The total number of SDGs is 17. This is including the education goal. The education goal is called the SDG4. The SDG4 is aimed to be achieved by the year 2030. According to the United Nations’ official website, it aims to “ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.” The SDG4 is made out of 10 targets. These are:

1. Free primary and secondary education
2. Equal access to quality pre-primary education
3. 3. Equal access to affordable technical, vocational and higher education
4. Increase the number of people with relevant skills for financial success
5. Eliminate all discrimination in education
6. Universal literacy and numeracy
7. Education for sustainable development and global citizenship
8. Build and upgrade inclusive and safe schools
9. Expand higher education scholarships for developing countries
10. Increase the supply of qualified teachers in developing countries

To conclude, Littky in the book *The Big Picture: Education is Everyone’s Business* summarizes the goals of education in a moral aspect. This means the goals of education are more about being passionate, creative and morally a good person and less about the specific subjects like biology or

math. However, the SDG4 goals relate more in the aspect of education for all. This means that the goals of SDG4 are based on equality in education.

Education funding system of Aruba

This section introduces the education funding system of Aruba. This section will help with the understanding of how the funding system works and the current challenges it faces.

The education in Aruba is mostly subsidized by the government. This is with the exception of only 3 schools which are International School, De Schakel and Ibero American High School. These schools are the only 3 privatised schools on Aruba. However, De Shakel is currently in a transition to become a government subsidized school. This means that soon there will be only 2 privatized schools on Aruba, with only the International School offering the level of primary school. When it comes to the primary schools, there are different school boards. These are DPS, SKOA, SPCOA and SVEOA.

In my interview with the director of SKOA and the Minister of Education, I understood the steps that must be taken in order to receive funding from the government. First, the schools have to set up a “wish budget” and send this to the school boards. The school boards will then send these budgets to the Department of Finance which would need to approve these budgets. After approval, they will receive the funding. However, the system is running behind. This means that the budgets are not being approved on time, resulting in the schools receiving funding based on budgets from the past.

To gain a better understanding of this system, I read the thesis of Robin Lake, a former UA student, on “The Implementation of Performance Based Financing in the Education Sector of Aruba”. It explains that the education sector receives funding from the government for 90% of the

operational costs and 100% for the personnel costs. In 2015, the government expenditure on education was 6.2% of the GDP of Aruba. This in comparison to the Netherlands (5.5%) and the United States (5.0) is not bad at all.

According to Lake, the funding process at the DEA (Departamento di Enseñansa Aruba) is divided into 2 departments. These are the Department of Education Finances and the Department of Education Personnel. The Department of Education Finances manages the funding of operational costs, keeping financial policies up to date and the administration of the finances in the education sector of Aruba. The schools are asked to submit their desired budgets before 15th of December each year. After these are submitted, the DEA will check these budgets and calculate the financial estimates using a fixed norm per student. The DEA has to also make sure not to exceed the maximum amount allowed by the Minister of Finance. The DEA has to then submit these budgets before the 1st of March to the Minister of Education and the Department of Finance. The Minister of Education and the Department of Finance have to then approve these budgets before the end of the year so that the schools can begin the next year with the correct funding. However, these budgets are mostly not approved on time. The schools will then receive a budget based on the past budgets that they received. If the budgets are approved on time, the DEA will then send the funding to the schools. The funding is considered to be an advance payment. These payments are given out on a quarterly basis. The financial statements at the end of the year will show the difference between the precalculated costs (advance funding) and the real costs. If the precalculated costs exceed the real costs, the funding is considered a surplus and the schools will have to give money back to the DEA. If the real costs exceed the precalculated costs, the funding is considered a shortage and the DEA will have to cover this shortage.

When it comes to the Department of Education Personnel, they are in charge with managing the costs of personnel, the

policies for the school employees and taking care of legal positions for the employees. The type of personnel expenses that are subsidized are salaries, jubilee payments, retirement contributions, payments to the beneficiary of a deceased employee and payments for a teacher immigrating to Aruba. Employees include not only teachers, but everyone working at the school such as janitors, guards and concierges. The funding of the personnel costs takes place with the help of a payroll software program. The Department of Finance also uses these programs in order to allocate the funding. However, the Department of Education Personnel has no access to these programs, but does wish to get access in the future. The process of funding salaries occurs on a monthly basis.

The author of this thesis, Robin Lake, used the methodology of desk research and qualitative research to gather the necessary information. The qualitative research was conducted through semi-structured interviews. All of these interviews were done face to face and a question list was made beforehand. “The respondents were selected through recommendations made by the organization mentor and the university mentor based on the role the respondents play in the education sector of Aruba or based on their knowledge or expertise on the topic of performance based financing (PBF)” stated Robin Lake.

To conclude, this literature review was based on the education funding of Aruba. The review was done on the thesis of Robin Lake. The education funding system of Aruba is currently facing different challenges, which are explained in this review.

Historical perspective on education funding

This section will elaborate on the goals and challenges of education in a historical perspective in different countries. Each country has their own goals and challenges.

According to Clemens, an international gathering of policy makers has solemnly promised to achieve universal primary

education in developing countries ever since the Second World War. However, their stated quantitative goals were never achieved. “In 2000, the largest-ever gathering of heads of state adopted a new set of goals including universal primary school completion and full gender parity in education by 2015” (The Long Walk to School: International Education Goals in Historical Perspective. 2008). These goals were also not met. “Many will ascribe the outcome as others have when past deadlines came and went-- to lack of funding or ‘political will’ ” (The Long Walk to School: International Education Goals in Historical Perspective. 2008). However, this article questions to what degree education policies can control the outcome of educational goals.

Everyone agrees that education can create positive externalities. Others will also benefit from the resulting human capital. However, families and individuals invest in education only if the benefit exceeds the costs. They stop investing when the cost is too high, or the benefit is too low. If the government is interested in increasing schooling levels, what can they do to promote it? One option is reducing the private costs of parents, by subsidizing demand or increasing the available supply. But lowering the costs will not have much effect if the level of expected benefit remains relatively low. “This private benefit depends in large part on expectations of firms’ demand for skilled labor, which is hard for governments to control. In short, the demand for educated workers is limited in some measure by the pace of economic development. With limited demand, governments can lead their young people to the fountain of education, but cannot make them drink. If educational decisions are based in part on the private returns to education, and those returns depend in any way on the educational decisions of others, then there can be poverty traps.” (The Long Walk to School: International Education Goals in Historical Perspective. 2008).

This article states that support for public finance in education has a venerable tradition in economics. The economist

Adam Smith advocated public finance of basic education and the economist Alfred Marshall wrote that economists with one consent consider such spending a true economy and that to refuse it is both wrong and bad business from a national point of view. “At the same time, they have long held that the decision to invest in education depends on its return.” (The Long Walk to School: International Education Goals in Historical Perspective. 2008). Jean Baptiste stated explicitly “Education is capital which ought to yield interest”. There is no shortage of arguments that schooling children produces an educated workforce and thereby increases national productivity and income. “Obviously it is true that educating children

eventually produces more educated adults, and many economists have suggested that this type of investment raises incomes in developing countries more than in others”. (The Long Walk to School: International Education Goals in Historical Perspective. 2008).

“There is also a large and growing literature suggesting that there is a complementary path of causation running in reverse: from family income to child schooling, and from adult education levels to child schooling. The idea goes back at least to Harbison and Myers (1965), who call education both the seed and the flower of economic development” (The Long Walk to School: International Education Goals in Historical Perspective. 2008). Most of the studies on determinants on outcomes such as school enrollments include variables representing school quality or availability such as distance to school. While these influences are often significant, they are nowhere near as economically significant as household income and parental education when explaining the variance of school choices. “Starting many years ago, micro-level country studies have shown again and again that household income and parental education are fundamental determinants of parents’ schooling choices for their children” (The Long Walk to School: International Education Goals in Historical

Perspective. 2008). Psacharopoulos and Arriagada (1989) find that household income and parental education are major determinants of schooling attainments in Brazil. Lavy (1996) finds that these factors are much more important in Ghana compared to factors such as distance of the school, school fees or teacher education. Burney and Irfan (1995) find that these factors have a major influence in decisions regarding school enrollment in Ghana. In Ghana, households with a low income or low level of parental education are much less likely to enroll their kids in school and instead will choose for child labour.

In order to determine how fast enrollments can increase, the researchers in Ghana created a math formula. Parents make sure that their children complete primary school if “the present value of the consequent lifetime wage increment exceeds the combined value of 12 foregone labor and of direct schooling costs” (The Long Walk to School: International Education Goals in Historical Perspective. 2008). The formula created can be seen below.

$$R \equiv \left(\frac{\theta}{r} - 1 \right) w - c > 0,$$

The R stands for the present value of the net return to completing primary school, w is wages without primary schooling, c is the direct costs of attending primary school, θ is the increment in the value of the child’s labor due to a complete primary education, and r is the return on the parents’ best alternative investment. The restriction on child labour or the education of teachers can influence the θ .

To conclude, this review was done based on The Long Walk to School: International education goals in historical perspective by Michael A. Clemens. This review explains how education can help the economy of a country. The review also explains how the government can increase schooling levels and social factors that can influence the school enrollment.

Incentives for teachers

This section introduces the possibility of incentives for teachers. The goal of giving out incentives for teachers is to motivate teachers to help their students succeed. Incentives for teachers can increase a school's performance and success rates. But this has also its challenges.

The Department of Economics at the University of Chile published in 2003 an article called "Monetary incentives for teachers and school performance. The evidence for Chile." written by Dante Contreras, Lorena Flores and Felix Lobato. This article states that educational activities are essential for economic growth and development based on the impact they have on productivity. Also, educational activities tend to help overcome poverty. This is why policies to help improve education are essential for a sustainable economic path.

Since 1990 Chile has increased its educational expenditures. "This process has occurred via widespread and profound reforms of the school system, such as decentralization; demand side subsidies; standardised evaluations such as the SIMCE test; special educational quality and equity improvement programs such as MECE; focalized support programs for the poorest schools (P-900) and extending the school day; amongst others. These have been implemented through basically four routes: curricular reform, full school day, professional development of teachers and teaching improvement programs." (Monetary incentives for teachers and school performance. The evidence for Chile. 2003).

Since 1996, the government implemented a bonus for the education system. This bonus is a productivity bonus and is called "The National Subsidized School Performance Evaluation System (SNED)". This bonus is for teachers who work at schools that show the best results in the SIMCE test. This has created a competitive system as a result. The SIMCE scores are used to measure the academic performance of the schools. When evaluating a school, the

University of Chile takes different factors into consideration such as parental schooling, family income and geographical location of the school. The schools are put into groups with the same external conditions. Through this it was observed that schools with bad external conditions benefit less from the bonus and score lower on the SIMCE test.

In Chile, schools are divided into 3 school administrations. The first one is public schools that are completely funded by the government. The second one is private-state subsidized schools which are funded by the parents and the state. The third one is private fee-paying schools which are completely funded by the parents/family. The bonus is directed to all the primary schools that are funded by the state, meaning that the private fee-paying schools do not receive this bonus. Schools whose performance is 25% over the rest will be eligible for the Teaching Excellence Subsidy, which is a monthly amount calculated per student. 90% of the fund goes directly to all the teachers of the winning schools based on the number of hours worked by each teacher. The other 10% will be given to teachers whose work was noteworthy or who contributed more to the results. In 1998-1999 the total bonus received by each teacher was \$221.401. This is 50% of a teacher's monthly income. There are 6 factors that are considered to measure the performance and determine whether the bonus is won or not. These factors are:

1. Effectivity. This entails the educational results in relation to the population served. This factor has a weight of 37%.
2. Improvement. This is based on the previous scores and weights 28%.
3. Initiative. This is measured through new projects, teaching workshops or any other innovations in its teaching activities. This factor weights 6%.
4. Improvement of working conditions and operation of the school. This is determined by a complete permanent teaching staff and substitutes when necessary. This has a weighting of 2%.
5. Equality of opportunities. This is based on the accessibility

to facilities and incorporation of groups with learning difficulties. The weighting for this factor is 22%.

6. Integration and participation of teachers and parents in the development of the educational project of the school. This has a weighting of 5%.

The results of this research indicated that the bonus improves performance.

The thesis of Robin Lake, a former UA student, on "The Implementation of Performance Based Financing in the Education Sector of Aruba" discussed a few advantages and disadvantages of performance based financing on Aruba. The advantages were:

- improved quality of service
- resolves the principal-agent problem
- more autonomy, innovation and efficiency
- greater accountability

The disadvantages were:

- Decrease in worker motivation
- False reporting
- High costs
- Performance risk
- Insufficient evaluation of effectiveness

False reporting could take place if the teacher decides to help the students during exams in order to achieve a higher score, or to not let certain students partake in these exams. The implementation of performance based financing will also lead to high investment costs. Performance risk entails the external factors that can influence the performance of a student.

This thesis concluded that performance based financing might not be an appropriate funding method for the education sector of Aruba at this time.

To conclude, the Department of Economics University of Chile published in 2003 an article called "Monetary

incentives for teachers and school performance". This article discussed the results of an incentive introduced for primary school teachers in Chile. However, according to the thesis of Robin Lake, Aruba is not ready for such incentives yet. These incentives bring different challenges with them such as decrease in worker motivation, false reporting, high costs and performance risk.

Digitalization in education

This section introduces the idea of digitalization in education. This topic was included because according to the 'Plan Educacion Nacional 2030' (PEN2030), Aruba is also aiming for digitalization in education. The coronavirus situation has also forced schools to quickly make this transition and has proven that Aruba needs to include digitalization in their education.

"Affordable, restructured education: a solution through information technology", by Alan Benjamin, 1994, is a book which explains how technology can offer an affordable education. Alan believes that if every student had access to a workstation, for example a laptop, we would achieve a major social gain, being that every student will have equal access to information. He gives examples such as "a lone parent, unable to find the bus fare to college or the babysitting money, can connect to the local college, enter a programme, engage with a tutor and seek new skills or obtain some foundation skills such as literacy or basic numeracy. A young child who is very bright will no longer be chained to the pace of the average, becoming bored and uncertain. He or she is now able to enter a world of learning and indeed entertainment, which with the knowledge that his or her own progress relates to achievement, which becomes the deciding factor for future development" (Affordable, restructured education: a solution through information technology. 1994).

The book continues by exploring the social dimensions. Benjamin explains that we have a divided society. "There

is a lethal combination of inappropriate education and low expectations which has led to two citizenries” (Affordable, restructured education: a solution through information technology. 1994). The first one is the minority of society (20%) for whom the academic system works. These 20% later form the majority of young people at universities. For those outside the minority it is much tougher, because they are facing a world of work which is demanding higher vocational and technical skills. Many young people in today’s schools and colleges are bored and uninspired. They are often presented with educational material that is out of date and teachers who have no real understanding of the new technology. This can lead to them dropping out, or developing drug problems since this is most common in people who have no purpose and who are unchallenged. Those who have access to technology will have a big advantage over those who do not. The underequipped will become the unprivileged.

The opportunity that we have is to exploit technology to enable fundamental changes in education. “We must recognise that education and training are permanent features of our lives and that a major proportion of learning takes place outside of the classroom and the workplace” (Affordable, restructured education: a solution through information technology. 1994). When using technology, this book explores the possibility of ‘pay as you go’ because Benjamin is of the opinion that this will make people more aware of their value for their money. Another option is ‘pay by achievement’ in order to put pressure on the quality, and to not negatively influence the slow learner. These two options mean you will pay to use the laptop based on the hours that you use it (pay as you go) or by your achievement (grades). Lastly, Benjamin suggests that public funding is never sufficient to meet our education and training investments. “We need a new, comprehensive partnership between the public sector and the private sector to provide the capital and working cash flows. This partnership will be a business and will have income and profit targets to sustain

its viability. It will provide the facilities and operations management for the utility and seek to sell its capabilities to schools, colleges, universities, local businesses, public bodies, military authorities, and all the potential customers in the community” (Affordable, restructured education: a solution through information technology. 1994).

According to PEN 2030 (Plan Education Nacional), the government of Aruba also wants to start using technology in our education system. This is called the digitalization plan. They state that digitalization gives more opportunity for studies. It also gives the opportunity to study independently. (PEN 2030 p.34)

To conclude, this review was based on the digitalization of education. This means introducing technology, including devices such as laptops or tablets, and online learning into the education system. Alan Benjamin gives different positive effects that digitalization can have on education. At the end, PEN2030 was discussed.

Interviews

One of the methods used to gather information was interviews. These interviews were done with professionals on the education field in order to gain accurate knowledge about the current education situation. The interviewees were asked about the current challenges that the education system of Aruba faces and their opinion on treating it as a business. First, an interview was done with Anuesca Bailey. Anuesca is the Director of SKOA. Anuesca was chosen to interview because SKOA forms the majority of primary schools in Aruba. Next, there was an interview with the Minister of Education and his advisor, Kar-Lie Ng. This interview was focused on the education policies, its challenges, possible solutions and plans for the future.

Interview with Director of SKOA (Anuesca Bailey)

The interview started with the focus on the financing of

education. Bailey explained that SKOA receives the amount of Awg. 93,- per student per year. This amount has to cover all the costs. These costs are in the “Landsverordering Basisschool Aruba”. A few examples of these costs are water, electricity, internet, school supplies, books and maintenance. The school has to have a minimum of 150 students in order to get subsidized. There are some exceptions, especially with neighbourhood schools. The 93,- is an amount calculated since 2010. Bailey explains that a lot of changes occurred since 2010, for example the cost of wifi, air conditioning and inflation.

Next we focused on the difference in financing received per school board. Bailey explained that the school board of Dienst Publieke Scholen (DPS) has more preference than the other school boards. For starters, DPS also receives 93,- per student, but their costs (water, electricity etc) are covered by the government. Since they fall directly under the Minister of Education, they also get preference when it comes to renovating or building new schools.

Bailey then explained how the budget is set up. First, the schools make their own budget individually. Next, they send this to their school board and the school board will send this to the government. The budgets are made quarterly. The budget has to be based on the number of students that the school has, and therefore can change each quarter. This budget has to be approved. When it is approved, the school board will receive the money and allocate it accordingly to each school. She mentioned that most of the time the government does not approve the budgets on time. When this happens, the schools receive a budget based on the previous year. This can result in overfunding, where the schools have to give money back to the government, or underfunding where the government has to give more money back to the schools. Most of the time, this does not happen on time. Some matters are important and cannot wait for the approval of the government (for example fixing the roof). If the school decides to fix the roof and afterwards asks the government

for the money, it would most likely be declined. She also mentioned that the government does not have an emergency pot for urgent cases such as the burning down of a school. There was recently a case in Aruba where a part of a school burned down and there was no funding to help this school. This school relied mostly on volunteer funding.

In this interview, the salary of teachers was also a topic. Bailey’s opinion on the teacher’s salary is that it is demotivating. The reason for this being that the salary on Aruba is based on age and not on experience. Teacher’s salaries will stop growing when they reach the age of 38. There is also some unfairness in determining the salary for MAVO and Colegio¹ teachers. A MAVO teacher has to work 32 hours a week in order to get a 40 hour based salary. A Colegio teacher has to work 27 hours a week in order to get a 40 hour based salary. Both teachers would have the same level of experience (2de graads)² and still the teacher at a MAVO school will have to work more hours than the one working at Colegio Arubano.

When discussing the students and parents, Bailey explained that one of the most important things right now is for the parents to motivate their children. Most parents are not motivating their kids or helping them with school. This should change in order to improve the school results.

Lastly I asked Bailey what she thinks about running schools as a business. She is of the opinion that competition in schools would help because schools would be forced to offer a better service, while parents are forced to evaluate schools for their kids. Parents will be paying for the education and as a result will motivate their kids more to do better. Parents have to find a way to let their kids realise the worth in an education so that the kids will want this for themselves. Students should also stop treating education as a business. Choosing a major based on the work and profit that they can gain later will result in workers who are unmotivated and less passionate about their jobs, which is also bad for the companies.

To conclude, the interview with Anuesca Bailey brought a lot of information forward. One of these is that the budget per student is currently Awg. 93,- and this needs to be reevaluated. She also explained how the setting up of a budget works, the inequality when it comes to budgets for DPS schools and budgets for SKOA schools and the inequality for the salary of MAVO teachers and HAVO teachers.

Interview with the Minister of Education, Armando Rudy Lampe, & Kar-Lie Ng

This interview was done to gain perspective on the current education policies and their challenges. The interview was mainly done with Kar-Lie Ng. She is a financial advisor for the Minister of Education. She studied at the UA and has a double master's degree in tax law. During my interview with her, I got to interview the Minister of Education for a short amount of time (maybe 10 min).

Ms. Ng started the interview by explaining how the budget system works. She explained that the schools have to make a “wish budget” (*wenselijke begroting*). This entails the amount of money that they wish to receive. The department of education will test this amount to see if it is in accordance with the *landsverordening*³. She explained that the minister of education may also decide to give more than was asked, but this would happen in only rare cases. She also explained that the amount of 93,- per students is supposed to be evaluated every 3 years. Unfortunately this has not been done since 2010. It is their plan to start evaluating that amount as soon as possible. She is sure that after evaluating it, this amount will increase. She also explained that there are currently no guidelines on how to set up the budget or financial statement. They are planning to create guidelines and rules that specify exactly what the budget and financial statements should consist of. They are also planning to start checking the expenses of the schools. There are currently no one who is evaluating the expenses of the schools or how the schools are spending the money. She believes that there

could be schools that are not spending the money correctly. The minister of education would like to receive details about how the money is spent. They would also like to test the profit that they receive back. This means they would like to know how much they get in return for giving the schools money. Where does the money go and what do they get out of it? She explained that the minister of education has to base the budget of education on the CAFT. If the CAFT does not allow more expenditures, the minister of education will cut the budget of education.

Their goal is to give out a good education while spending a minimum amount of money. Aruba has currently 2 primary private schools on the island. These schools are not subsidized by the government. These are the Schakel and International School. These schools have a different type of education model and have a high success rate. The success rate is measured by the percentage of graduates. When Ms. Ng was asked to elaborate on this, she explained that the goal of the government is not high quality education, but education for all. It would cost too much money to research and implement the same education model as Schakel or International School.

She also mentioned that all school boards with the exception of DPS are considered “bijzondere scholen” which means special/out of the ordinary. All “bijzondere scholen” need to follow the *landsverordening* (National Ordinance). DPS is not required to follow this, but they mostly do in order to have a guideline. Ms. Ng was asked if schools in neighbourhoods with social problems have a lower success rate and how the government is contributing to this problem. She believes that there should not be any problems or low success rates at schools in neighbourhoods with social problems, because kids who do not get accepted at SKOA will be accepted at a DPS school. This means that the government is contributing to social problem kids by letting them join DPS schools that have more funds. She explained that DPS gets a school renovated quicker than

other school boards because DPS falls directly under DOW⁴. I asked about the funding for special needs schools, and she explained that they receive the same amount as any other school.

When talking about salary, she is of the opinion that the salary is more than fair for the teachers. She explained that teachers are being treated as government workers even though they are not. They receive all the same benefits as government workers and also 60 days of vacation.

To conclude, I asked her to formulate the current problems. She said that the government is not a place to just ask for money. The schools have to think for their own and come up with new ways to be efficient and effective. The government is currently not seeing where their money goes when given to schools. Some schools are asking for money for a certain project, but when the money is received they use it for something else. The costs are becoming higher and the government is not seeing a change in the schools. The government has to comply with the CFT and keep the costs as low as possible.

Minister of Education

This interview was short. He started by stating that it's his plan to treat schools as a business because the costs have to be lowered. He is planning on subsidizing the Schakel School in order to create competition for Colegio Arubano, because he believes that competition is good. The topic of students treating their education as a business by choosing the major that will bring more profit instead of the major that they love was also brought up. I stated that a lot of the time if the student chooses a major that he loves, he will not get work on Aruba. He explained that he thinks that is okay. He does not think that students should make their decision based on finding a job on Aruba because he knows that Aruba cannot offer that to everyone. He would be proud if people choose what they love and find jobs all over the world because they will be setting a good name for Aruba abroad.

Data Analysis

This chapter will pair every data collected with the correct sub-questions. In each section, the sub-questions will be answered as much as possible.

Sub-question 1: What does it mean to treat education as a business?

In this section I will first research what it means to run a business and to run a school. Next, I will analyze the similarities and differences between running a school and a business. Then I will research what would happen if education was treated the same as a business.

What determines a business?

According to the Cambridge English Dictionary, a business is defined as the activity of buying and selling goods and services. When looking at education being treated as a business, this would mean that the school will be performing the activity of buying and selling goods or services. In this case, schools will “buy” education models and qualified teachers in order to sell the service of knowledge, education and help from a teacher when needed.

How does a business start?

The first step to starting a business is a business concept. This means a business idea that the owner has in mind. Sometimes it will be necessary to conduct market research in order to determine if there is enough demand for this business. Next, this business idea will be put into a business plan. A business plan is a formal document containing the business goal, mission, objectives and strategies as to how the goals will be achieved. To continue, the owner will have to arrange for any legal documents necessary. These can be registration requirements, secure permits or licenses to legally operate. It is also important to determine what kind of business structure is desired. The most common structures are sole proprietorships, partnerships, corporations and limited liability companies. Sole proprietorships are

businesses run by a single natural person. Partnerships are run by 2 or more people. Each partner will contribute money and resources to the business, and will share the profits or the loss with each other. A corporation is run by a group of people acting together as a single entity. The owners are mostly shareholders. In this form of business, the owners are released of financial liability of business obligations. However, a corporation has unfavorable taxation rules for the owners. A limited liability company has the taxation rules of a partnership and the limited-liability benefits of a corporation. When the business structure is determined, the owner will proceed by determining the business size and the industry. There are different types of industries such as the transport industry, construction industry, education industry, food industry and much more. After deciding all these factors, the only thing left to do is requesting capital if necessary and registering at the chamber of commerce.

Business characteristics

There are different types of business characteristics. Below I will discuss some of these characteristics.

1. Creation of utilities
A business is established to satisfy human wants in return for profit.
2. Dealing in goods and services
Every business sells either goods or services. Some businesses will produce these themselves, while others will buy and resell them. The goods may be consumer goods or producer goods. Producer goods are raw materials, machinery and other equipment used in manufacturing. Consumer goods are the final products. Services like banking and insurance may be seen as intangible and invisible goods.
3. Continuity in dealings
Dealing in goods and services has to happen on a regular basis in order to be considered a business. A one-time deal in goods and services does not equal business.
4. Sale, transfer or exchange
All business activities involve exchanging goods or services

for something in return. Mostly the return is expressed in terms of money. According to Peter Drucker, an American business consultant, “any organisation that fulfils itself through marketing a product or service is a business”.

5. Profit motive
The primary goal of a business is to make profit. A business's growth and survival depends on the profit that it makes.
6. Element of risk
Risk of a business includes the uncertainty of profit or the chances of loss. Businesses function in uncertain environments. Changes can occur very fast in demand, customer's desires, fashion, government policies and competition. Insurance can help reduce risk, but not all risk can be eliminated.
7. Economic activity
Business is an economic activity as it includes the selling of goods and services for profit in return. Business is also a social institution. A business helps improve the living standards of people through effective utilisation of society's scarce resources. Non economic activities do not form part of a business.
8. Art as well as science
A business requires personal skills and experience. This is why it can be considered an art. A business has also to do with certain principles and laws. This is why it can be considered science.

How is a school run in Aruba?

Above I analyzed how a school is run in Aruba; I will now analyze how a school is run in general. As mentioned before, in the business industries there is also a category for education called the education industry. The education industry is a group of different types of school to provide knowledge and skills on different levels. There are 2 types of educational institutes: public and private institutes. The public institutes are funded by the government. The private institutes are run by a single person or by a group of people. The private institutes can either be non-profit or for-profit.

According to Kennedy, there are different tips to keep a school running. These tips are mostly focused on private schools. These are:

1. Marketing plans for school. Times are changing and the marketing strategies should change with the times. For example, newsletters are now being transformed into emails and 24/7 communication methods.
2. Hiring a consultant when wanting to implement big changes
3. Financial management
4. A good administration department to report requirements and deadlines. The administration department can also handle school safety, public relations, fundraising and hiring practice.
5. A qualified head of school to keep the public relations and performance of the school positive.
6. Professional associations for staying in touch and keeping your network current.
7. Affordable suppliers. This means finding goods and services that your school can afford, but that is also the quality level that the school stands for.

Next to these factors for successfully running a private school, Cynthia Ejike, the author of *50 Powerful Tips on How to Run a School Successfully*, gives, as the title says, 50 tips on how to run a school. These tips are applicable to both private and public schools. To name a few of these tips, these are:

1. Get the priorities of the school straight
2. Make feedback a priority
3. Put students first
4. Embrace technology
5. Keep the central office informed
6. Create a vision and implement it
7. Hire the right people
8. Change needs to be done quickly
9. Manage through personality. Teachers have all different personalities and cannot be managed the same way.
10. Set up performance indicators and create incentives

When analyzing how a school is run on Aruba, the information is based on the interviews done with the director of SKOA and the Minister of Education. It is also based on the literature review of the thesis of Robin Lake.

To open a school, permission is needed from the government. When asking for permission to open a new school, it needs to be clear what kind of education they want to offer. First of all, the level of education needs to be determined. There are different levels of education starting from kindergarten to university. Second of all, education can be offered in different languages in Aruba. There are currently schools who offer education in Dutch or English. However, if the schools want to be funded by the government, the language of instruction must be Dutch. Currently, primary schools also have the option of Papiamentu as the language of instruction. Lastly, there are different education systems. If the school wants to be funded by the government, it needs to implement the education system that has been approved by the government and that most schools in Aruba are implementing. If and when the government approves, the building of the school can start. For the school to function it has to have a qualified school director, qualified teachers, supporting employees and lastly of course the students.

Most schools in Aruba are funded by the government. The schools that are funded by the government are also considered to be non-profit. This means that the schools do not aim to make profit. The schools receive a fixed amount per student per year. This amount is currently Awg. 93,- per student. Apart from this amount, the schools also charge the parents a fee per year. SKOA schools have different fees than DPS schools. DPS charges the parents a fee of Awg. 200,- per year per child. SKOA, on the other hand, charges the parents a fee of Awg. 250,- and another fee of Awg 175,- per year for air conditioning. These amounts will form the revenue of the school.

Next to the revenue, the school has different costs. According to the National Ordinance of Primary Schools

in Aruba, article 53.1, the government has to cover most of these costs. These costs are mentioned in article 54 of the National Ordinance. These costs are:

- a. The salary of the school employees
- b. The foundation costs such as renovation costs, building of schools and expansion
- c. The rent costs, if the school is currently renting a space
- d. Furnishing costs such as school furniture and learning tools
- e. Operating costs such as:
 - Maintenance costs and insurance costs for the school buildings
 - Cleaning costs, electricity, gas and water
 - Maintenance for the school furniture and learning tools
 - The costs to buy learning tools
 - Administrative costs
 - Parents committee costs
 - Other costs to ensure to smooth running of education

Because schools funded by the government are non profit, the revenue should be just enough to cover the costs. This is why the schools need to set up a desired budget each quarter to demonstrate what are the expected costs for that quarter based on the number of students that they have. When these budgets are approved by the government, the school will receive the fund necessary. However, most of the time the funding by the government is not enough to cover all the costs. This is why the schools charge the parents an extra fee to make sure these costs are covered.

When operating a school, various laws and regulations are important. These laws and regulations are mostly to be found in the National Ordinance. Each educational level has its own National Ordinance.

The director of the school will be in charge of running or managing the schools. They will have to make sure that the school is following the rules and regulations, that the

teachers are following the rules and that the students are following the rules. The director of the school will set up a desired budget and send this to the school board that the school falls under. This can be, for example, SKOA or DPS. the director of the school board will collect all the budgets from the schools and send a final budget to the government of Aruba for approval.

Apart from this, schools on Aruba also implement the general tips for successfully running a business, as mentioned above.

Similarities and differences between schools and businesses

When looking at how to open a new business and how to open a new school, there are a lot of similarities. Both will start with a concept, which then moves on to becoming a formally documented plan. Next, both will have to obtain legal documents for different purposes. However, schools need extra legal documents necessary because it is important for the education of the school to be recognized all around Aruba and abroad such as in the Netherlands. This will give the school more value. Next, there are the business structures. These structures are different for schools. Private schools can choose between sole proprietorships or partnerships. Public schools are mostly run by the government and therefore cannot choose one of these structures. When choosing a business industry, the schools automatically fall under the education industry. To finalize the opening of a new business or school, both will have to find capital. Public schools will automatically be funded by the government, while private schools will have to take out a loan or find capital in another way.

Next, I will compare the business characteristics with a school to see if schools also have these characteristics.

1. Creation of utilities

A private and public school should both be established to satisfy the needs of its students. These needs are to obtain

a quality education, knowledge and skills.

2. Dealing in goods and services
Schools will offer a service to their students. The service will include qualified teachers ready to help students achieve their educational goals.
3. Continuity in dealings
The dealing of the services at schools happen on a regular basis.
4. Sale, transfer or exchange
All school activities are offered for something in return. All schools demand funding from either the government or the parents.
5. Profit motive
Not every school is profit driven. Private school is the only type of school that has the opportunity to be profit driven.
6. Element of risk
Changes can occur fast for a school. These changes would be changes in the student's motivation, emotions or situations such as their home situation. The changes can also be an economic change. If the economy goes south in Aruba, the government will have less room on their budget for education. Parents will lose their jobs and have a sense of stress in the household. This will also lead to low income households. Students can also be under stress because of the economic situation. This situation was seen during the coronavirus outbreak on Aruba. Another risk that schools face is a downfall in the productivity or success rates of the schools. The school can also have the risk of the government not funding the school enough and thus the school will not have enough money to cover the costs. Risk of competition can also be a risk factor for schools, but currently there are not a lot of competitors for schools in Aruba.
7. Economic activity
Private schools will be an economic activity as they sell their services for profit in return. Public schools sell their services as well, but they are not profit driven. Both types

of schools are social institutions as they help improve the living standards of people by offering them knowledge and skills.

8. Art as well as science
Schools require personal skills and experience to be successful. This is why schools can be considered an art. Schools have also to do with certain principles and laws. This is why schools can be considered science.

After evaluating these characteristics, I conclude that schools have a lot in common with a business, except for the profit aspect. When considering a private school, these are completely seen as a business.

Below, a table can be found with the characteristics demonstrated for business and schools.

Characteristics	Business	School
Creation of utilities	x	x
Dealing in goods and services	x	x
Continuity in dealings	x	x
Sale, transfer or exchange	x	x
Profit motive	x	Only private schools
Element of risk	x	x
Economic activity	x	x
Art as well as science	x	x

School as a business

To see school as a business, we should analyze its market structure. The students should be seen as the customers. The product would be education and the service would be the service of the teachers. The price of these products and services will be the fee that the school charges. The formula of revenue = $p \times q$ will also count here. Revenue per month will be the fee per month times the quantity of students in that month. The fee charged per month should be the total variable costs per month + the total fixed costs per month + a profit margin. The profit per month will be the revenue per month - the total costs per month.

When treating school as a business, the existence of competition is also important. Schools in Aruba can find themselves in a monopolistic competition or an oligopoly. Monopolistic competition is when there are many sellers and many buyers, but the product is neither homogeneous nor heterogeneous. Each seller differentiates the product in a way. Oligopoly is when there are a few sellers to fulfill the demands of a large number of buyers. In my opinion, education falls under the category of monopolistic competition. The product is education, but each seller offers a different type of education. Some education is in a different language, or at a different level. But the product remains education and a set of skills and knowledge.

After analyzing these factors, I conclude that a school becomes a business the moment the school adds the profit margin in the fee that they charge the parents.

Interview topic: school as a business

In the interview with the Director of SKOA she explained her views on all possibilities of treating education as a business.

When looking at students treating education as a business, it means that students are choosing their major based on the major that will bring the most profit and job opportunities in the future. This can have its positive and negative effects. According to the Director of SKOA, the negative effect would be that the student will not have real passion for his or her work. If a student chooses a major based on money and opportunities, instead of passion for the major, he or she will lack motivation in his or her job. A company should want employees who have a love and passion for their job, instead of working only for the money. The positive effect is that the student will have a lot of job opportunities and a good salary based on his or her decisions. Not every major offers job possibilities on Aruba. However, the Minister of Education is of opinion that this is not a problem. He wants students to go for the major that they are passionate about.

If Aruba does not offer a job for this major, a lot of other countries will. He accepts as the Minister of Education that Aruba cannot offer the same opportunities as other countries. He wants the students to choose the major that they love, and represent Aruba all over the world.

When looking at the parents treating education as a business, both the Director of SKOA and the Minister of Education agree that competition between schools would bring a positive effect. If there is competition between schools, the parents will put more thought into choosing a school for their children. They will evaluate factors such as which school has a higher success rate, which school offers better qualified teachers, and which school has the best fee. Parents would be willing to pay a higher fee if the schools offer more for their money. Currently, most parents in Aruba are choosing the schools based on location or family and friends. If this was treated as a business, the parents would put more consideration into choosing a school.

When looking at the government treating education as a business, the Director of SKOA is worried because this would mean cutting the budget of education. If the government treats education as a business, it would mean having the costs as low as possible and having the return as high as possible. Schools are already unhappy with the amount received from the government. The Minister of Education wants to treat education as a business because it is required of the government to start cutting the costs for their budget, seeing that Aruba is currently having financial problems. With the economic crisis that will follow the COVID-19 pandemic, the government will have to cut more costs, and can do this by treating education as a business. However, schools will not be happy with the cutting of their budget.

Lastly, when looking at the schools treating education as a business it would mean that the schools are mostly funded by the parents. The schools will charge a fee per student.

The positive side of schools treating education as a business is that the schools will be more motivated when it comes to their students. The students will be seen as customers that the school does not want to lose, because that would mean losing money. The school will put in more effort to offer the best education and services for their students, in order to gain and maintain more students. If parents are paying a fee for the education of their children, they will also motivate their children more to be successful; otherwise, this will be money lost for the parents. The parents and the students will give education more value because they are spending money on it. However, the negative side of schools treating education as a business is that not every parent has the financial means to pay for school. Children who come from low income households will be left out and will not have the same opportunities as children who come from a high income household. This will go against the goal of education in Aruba which is "Education for all".

To conclude, this section discussed the possibilities of treating education as a business. It considered how a business is run, business characteristics, how a school is run and then a comparison of a business with a school. Lastly, this section explained different points of view regarding treating education as a business.

Sub-question 2: What are the current financial problems in education on Aruba?

This section will discuss the financial problems in the education system of Aruba. To answer this question, I will use the results from the interviews with the director of SKOA and the Minister of Education, together with the review of Robin Lake's thesis.

In the interview with the director of SKOA, Mrs. Bailey made it clear that there are different financial problems. One of these problems has to do with the fixed amount that the school receives per student. This norm is currently Awg. 93,- per student and this amount has to cover all the school

costs. When interviewing Ms. Ng, an employee of the Minister of Education, she made it clear that this norm is supposed to be evaluated every 3 years. However, this norm has not been evaluated since 2010. This results in the norm being outdated and insufficient. As Mrs. Bailey explained, a lot has changed since 2010 such as electricity costs, wifi, and internet costs and inflation in general. This results in the amount being insufficient to cover all of the school costs and consequently the school has to charge a higher fee to the parents in order to fill in this gap.

Next, there are currently problems within the budget process. The budget process starts with each school making their own desired budgets. These budgets are based on the pre-calculated costs and the amount of students. The desired budgets are made per quarter. Each school will send these budgets to the school board which they respond to. The school board will gather these budgets and send a final budget to the department of education. Article 53 of the National Ordinance of Primary Schools in Aruba explains this topic. The article states that the school boards need to hand in a desired budget before the 15th of February. This desired budget should be based on the number of students, the pre-calculated costs, learning tools and investments. To quote the article in Dutch: "*Het schoolbestuur dient vóór 15 februari van het lopende dienstjaar een verzoek om vergoeding van de geraamde kosten voor het komende dienstjaar in bij de Minister. Het verzoek is met redenen omkleed en gaat vergezeld van een prognose omtrent het te verwachten aantal leerlingen en van een voorlopige begroting van kosten, middelen en investeringen voor het komende dienstjaar*".⁵

According to the thesis of Robin Lake, the funding process at the DEA (Departamento di Enseñansa Aruba) is divided into 2 departments. These are the department of Education Finances and the department of Education Personnel. The department of Education Finances manages the funding of operational costs, keeping financial policies up to date and

the administration of the finances in the education sector of Aruba. The schools are asked to submit their desired budgets before 15th of February each year. After these are submitted, the DEA will check these budgets and calculate the financial estimates using the fixed norm per student. The DEA has to also make sure not to exceed the maximum amount allowed by the Minister of Finance. The DEA has to then submit these budgets before the 1st of March to the Minister of Education and the Department of Finance. The Minister of Education and the Department of Finance then have to approve these budgets before the end of the year so that the schools can begin the next year with the correct funding. However, these budgets are mostly not approved on time. The schools will then receive a budget based on the past budgets that they received. If the budgets are approved on time, the DEA will then send the funding to the schools. The funding is considered to be an advance payment. These payments are given out on a quarterly basis. The financial statements at the end of the year will show the difference between the precalculated costs (advanced funding) and the real costs. If the precalculated costs exceed the real costs, the funding is considered a surplus and the schools will have to give money back to the DEA. If the real costs exceed the precalculated costs, the funding is considered a shortage and the DEA will have to cover this shortage. However, the funding of the shortage also does not happen on time.

Lastly, when interviewing Ms. Ng, she made it clear that another financial problem is that the government does not have enough insights into how the money given to schools is being spent. The government plans to start investigating how each school board allocates the money, and will start requesting a summary of how the money is being spent. The government is also planning to create a guideline for the schools to use when creating the yearly financial statement. When reading the National Ordinance of Primary Schools in Aruba, I noticed that article 72.3 states that the school boards that received funding for the operational costs

during a school year need to deliver a written summary explaining how they allocated the funds received before the 15th of February of the following year. This means that the law exists, but is not being practiced.

Apart from these financial problems in education, it remains a fact that Aruba is currently facing financial problems. At first, Aruba had some major debts that had to be solved. This is why the government decided to cut on costs and increase the income of the government. As Ms. Ng explained, this is why the government had no room on the budget for an increase in the spending on education. Not only was there no room for an increase, but the government had to also cut on the education spending. Right now, Aruba is facing an even bigger financial problem following the COVID-19 situation. This situation led to Aruba losing its economy pillar of tourism, which led to companies not making enough money and therefore people losing jobs. This results in the government losing a huge part of the tax revenues. The government has also seen an increase in costs because they have to cover the medical costs of COVID-19 and they are offering an amount of Awg. 950,- per month per person who lost their job. This resulted in a shortage of 1.3 billion florins on the budget for 2020. For this reason, the government announced that everyone will have to sacrifice a part of their benefits or income to help the government overcome this economic downfall. The Minister of Education initially announced that teachers would not receive vacation pay and would only get paid per hour worked. However, this announcement was later withdrawn. Nonetheless, this means that the budget on education will get cut these upcoming years and will create more financial problems in the education of Aruba.

To conclude, the current problems include the fixed norm of Awg 93,- per student not being representative of the operational costs, the approval of budgets not happening on time, the government having no insight on how the money funded is being spent, and lastly the government having to

cut education spending.

Sub-question 3: What are the current social problems in education on Aruba?

This section will discuss the current social problems in Aruba that affect the education results.

During my UAUCU program, we visited a neighbourhood in Aruba called Rancho. Rancho is one of the neighbourhoods on Aruba that has the most social problems. As Rancho Foundation (Stichting Rancho) stated on their website, Rancho started out as a neighbourhood for fishermen. One of the volunteers of Rancho Foundation gave the students of UAUCU a tour of Rancho. During this tour he explained that the majority of the children raised in Rancho do not make it to secondary schools. The parents are mostly involved in alcohol, drugs or poverty. This leads to the parents not having enough time for their children. The volunteer explained that most of these parents do not believe in the education system and therefore do not care if their child makes it in school or not. Most of these children end up in gangs. Although Rancho is a neighbourhood known for its social problems, there are social problems present in every neighbourhood of Aruba.

According to the published roadmap to implement SDGs in Aruba (2017), there are currently income inequality and income poverty in Aruba. As measured by the Gini coefficient, income inequality Aruba rose from 0.40 in 1991 to 0.44 in 2010. This level of inequality is above the measures observed for European countries.

When searching for the definition of ‘social problem’ or ‘social issue’, Wikipedia states that “A social issue is a problem that influences many individuals within a society. It’s a common problem we see happening in our society. A social issue can be considered as a problem that influences many people and many people strive to solve the issue. It is often the consequence of factors extending beyond

an individual’s control, and is the source of a conflicting opinion on the grounds of what is perceived as morally correct or incorrect personal life or Interpersonal social life”. The University of Minnesota library defined it as “A social problem is any condition or behavior that has negative consequences for large numbers of people and that is generally recognized as a condition or behavior that needs to be addressed.”

To conclude, for a problem to be a social problem, it has to have a negative consequence for a large number of people. A social problem starts when the society starts calling for attention on this topic. Once the society agrees that this is a social problem, the government has to also agree in order to address the problem. When searching for social problem examples, these examples came up:

- Drug abuse
- Suicide
- Alcoholism
- Poverty
- Gender issues
- Violence
- Racism

UNICEF made a summary of the challenges that children and adolescents face in Aruba. This analysis was made in 2011-2012. The challenges mentioned in this summary were split into categories. Under the category of health were obesity and teen pregnancy. Under the category of education, the challenges included the education model being a Dutch education model that is not adapted to the local needs, the absence of communication channels between parents and schools (compounded by the fact that parents delegate all responsibility for their children’s development to the teachers.) and little diversity in the options offered at university level. Under the right to protection category, the challenges were domestic violence (The cases *Bureau Sostenemi* saw between 2007 and 2010 were physical, mental and emotional neglect, sexual abuse

and domestic violence). The right to participation category had challenges such as lack of spaces where young people can be heard and lack of equality for women in the public sphere.

According to Loop E., most social problems can have a direct effect on how the student performs at school. When seeing the poverty factor, parents from a low income household may be less invested in their child's education. As the literature review on historical perspective on education funding stated, the most influential social factors are the household income and the education of the parents. Parents who have a low household income or a low education level will be less invested in the education of the children. When the economy is taking a downfall, programs that are non-academic or art-related at school may get cut and teachers may get fired. These could influence the quality of education and the motivation of the student. Drug and alcohol abuse can also have a direct effect on the student, especially if the student starts to use them. This can lead to students dropping out. When considering primary school students, parents who use drugs or alcohol can lead to less attention to their children and thus less attention to school. Unplanned pregnancy can also have a direct effect on school performance. The student will mostly drop out because of this situation.

On a positive note, the published roadmap for implementing SDGs in Aruba (2017), stated that the literacy rate in Aruba is 96.5% amongst people 14 years of age and older. School attendance is 98.5% for children 5 - 14 years of age and good gender equality is observed. Aruba has also made an important achievement in education: 97% of students will transition from primary school to secondary school (p.10).

To conclude, this section discussed different social problems in Aruba that can affect school results. The specific education challenges that Aruba faces are the Dutch education model that is not being adapted to the local needs, the absence

of communication channels between parents and schools, and little diversity in the options offered at university levels. Apart from these challenges, Aruba faces social problems such as obesity, teen pregnancy and domestic violence. Some neighbourhoods such as Rancho also face problems such as drugs, alcohol and poverty. These problems can have an effect on the situation in the household and therefore on the children. These effects can turn into a lack of concentration or motivation at school, which can lead to failure.

Sub-question 4: What consequences will treating education as a business have on the government?

This section will discuss treating education as a business, from the perspective of the government.

Treating education as a business can have different consequences for the government. One of the consequences will be a financial relief for the government. Treating education as a business would mean lowering the costs as much as possible. A business would strive for high profit and low costs. The profit for the government would be in this case the success rates of the schools. An option for the government is to implement Performance-Based Financing (PBF). This method of financing was researched in the thesis of Robin Lake. It includes financing the schools based on their performances. The higher the performance, the higher the subsidy received. This would motivate schools to increase their performances. Schools will focus more on their students in order to achieve higher results. This way the financing of the schools depend on how well their students perform and how well they educate their students. However, this method of financing has its disadvantages. These are:

- Decrease in worker motivation
- False reporting
- High costs
- Performance risk
- Insufficient evaluation of effectiveness

False reporting could take place if the teacher decides to help the students during exams in order to achieve a higher score, or to not let certain students partake in these exams. The implementation of performance-based financing will also lead to high investment costs. Performance risk entails the external factors that can influence the performance of a student such as the household income or the education of the parents. Ms. Lake's thesis concludes that performance-based financing might not be an appropriate funding method for the education sector of Aruba at this time.

The government has to be careful with treating education as a business. If they cut the budget of education, schools will have a lower budget to operate with. This can result in demotivated schools, teachers and students. Schools educate students to help them become qualified workers in the future. These students will form the community of the future, and it is important that they are educated. Educating students can result in better productivity on the island. It can also result in low criminal rates and low homeless rates. Educating students can result in an educated community with high morals and standards who can think for themselves and make good decisions on their own. This is why the government should be careful when cutting the budget, and should see education more as an investment for the future.

Sub-question 5: What consequences will treating education as a business have on the schools and community?

This section will discuss treating education as a business, from all the perspectives. The reason for this is because all the perspectives can have an effect on the schools or the community. Each scenario will be discussed.

This sub-question depends on which scenario we are looking at. If students treat education as a business, the schools will have students who are going to school not because they are passionate about their studies, but because they are striving

for the future profits. This can lead to unhappy students because of the lack of motivation, students who do not finish their studies or who fail their classes because the study program is actually not the right one for them. As a community, we would have more qualified workers because the study program was chosen based on job opportunities on Aruba. However, we would also have different workers who are not passionate about their job.

If the government treats education as a business, they will cut the budget for schools in order to maintain the costs low. This can have negative effects on the school. The school will have a lower budget to work with and would need to figure out on its own how to accumulate more money. This can result in unhappy and unmotivated teachers and students. This could also lead to positive and negative effects on the community. The positive would be that our government would have fewer financial problems. In order to find solutions for financial problems, the government may choose between increasing the income, decreasing the costs, or both. If the government decreases the costs of education, they would not have to increase the income as much as they would've had to if the costs remained high. This would lead to less financial burden for the community. However, it can also have its negative effects. If the government doesn't see education as an investment anymore, it can result into a future community of drop outs, high criminal rates, high homeless rates and unqualified workers thus low productivity for the island.

If the parents treat education as a business, it can have positive effects on the schools. Schools would be forced to offer the best teachers, the best services and the best success rates in order to get more enrollment. External factors such as household income or parents education can affect these outcomes in a negative way. For the community, this would mean parents putting more thought into choosing a school for their kids, and the students going to a school where they are happy and willing to work hard.

Lastly, if the schools treated education as a business, this would have different effects on the school. For starters, it can have a positive effect because the parents will put more thought into choosing a school, the students would work harder because money is being paid to go to school and the students would receive a better facility, better teachers and better education. It can also have its negative effect because the school will have to invest more in order to offer a better education. These investments would mean a high fee for the parents. This would also lead to effects in the community. For the ones who have a good household income, this would have a positive effect. They would have an opportunity at a better education. For the ones who have a low income, this would have a negative effect because they would not be able to afford the good schools. This would create inequality in the community of Aruba.

To conclude, this chapter discussed the consequences for the schools and community if education was treated as a business. This chapter was written from the perspective of parents, students, schools and government.

Conclusion

When I started this research, I already had a conclusion in mind. Education should not be treated as a business. However, when doing my research, my opinion kept switching back and forth. After collecting all the data and analyzing it, I realised that this would not be an easy conclusion. Every scenario has its positive and negative effects.

When it comes to students, I can conclude that they should make a decision based on the aspect of passion and the aspect of business. Students should have passion for their jobs, but they should also be able to find a job and earn a modest salary with it. As a student myself, I would advise other students to choose a study program that they are good at, that they would like to do for the rest of their lives and that would offer various job opportunities and a good

income. These are all factors that should be considered when choosing a major. So to conclude, students should treat education as a business, but they need to combine it with their love and passion for the study program.

When it comes to the parents, I can conclude that they should treat education as a business. Currently, most parents are choosing schools based on location and family or friends. However, parents should put a lot of thought into choosing a school for their children. The level of household income and the level of parents' education should not have an effect on this. This is why the government should motivate all parents to make their decisions wisely, no matter what social background they come from. Especially since every child has the same opportunities on Aruba no matter the social background. Aruba is currently offering education for all. Parents should be evaluating which school board they want their kids to go to. A DPS school mostly has newer or renovated facilities and has extra curricular activities compared to a SKOA school. Religion can also play a role when choosing a school board. Next, the parents should evaluate which schools have a high success rate. When looking at primary schools, they can evaluate how many students succeed to the next grade and the percentage of students who go to Colegio Arubano, MAVO and EPB after the 6th grade in Aruba. Lastly, the parents should evaluate which schools have the best teachers. Some teachers have good reputations, while others have a bad reputation. Parents should look into this before sending their kids to the school. To conclude, parents should treat education as a business.

When it comes to the government, the decision becomes harder. From one perspective, I would advise the government not to treat education as a business. Treating education as a business would mean cutting the budget for education. This would also mean not looking at the students as individuals, but looking at the students as numbers. The students would lose a sense of individuality for the government. This

means that external factors or social problems would not be considered when making a decision. The government would try to offer education on a budget as low as possible. This could mean schools without social workers or schools without air conditioning. I am of opinion that the government should not treat it as a business, but should treat it as an investment. If treated as an investment, the students should have a sense of individuality. This would mean that the government should ask themselves what do the students need in order to succeed. A classroom with air conditioning can mean students who are less tired, who are more motivated and who are more willing to learn. Creating a nice environment for the students can have big positive effects on the students' results.

Another point would be that a good education would mean positive effects for the future. This is why the government should see education as an investment. It would be investing in a higher productivity for the future and a better educated community. Lastly, if the government treated education as a business, they would see their results (profit) as the success rates. The government would use the percentage of students who make it to HAVO or VWO after primary school as the success rate. However, I am of the opinion that students who make it to HAVO or VWO does not mean success. A community needs different types of workers. A community needs accountants, lawyers and doctors. But communities also need handymen, chefs, gardeners and electricians. These jobs do not require a HAVO or VWO degree. If a student goes to EPB after primary school, has a passion for cooking and becomes a chef, this student is also successful. This is why the percentage of students who make it to HAVO or VWO cannot be used when determining the success rate. Schools should focus on being successful by helping their students to be passionate, be ready to take risks, be able to problem-solve and think critically, be creative and truly enjoy their lives and their work. Treating education as a business would make these factors less important and this is why it should not be treated as a business.

However, the problem is that the government of Aruba currently does not have the money to invest in education. In contrast, they need to start cutting on the costs. When I researched another financing method such as the performance-based financing, it was concluded that this has also its negative effects and should not be introduced yet on Aruba. I would advise the government to look into private sponsors and investors in order to be able to lower their costs a little. To conclude, the government should not treat education as a business. They should look into other possibilities in order to be able to cut their costs.

Lastly, should schools treat education as a business? If schools treated education as a business, it could have different positive effects. If we look at the private schools of Aruba such as Schakel and International School, they are succeeding. These schools are charging the parents a high fee. In return, they try to give the best services possible. If they do not offer a good education or nice facilities, they will lose parents which would mean losing customers. This way the schools do their best to maintain their customers. On the other hand, the parents are paying for these services. This would mean that the parents would put more effort into motivating their children to do well in school, because more money is at stake. This is why these schools have a high success rate.

When looking at the business aspect, I also agree that competition between schools is good. This would motivate schools to do better than other schools in order to maintain their customers. However, the big problem with schools treating education as a business is the inequality it brings with it. Children from low income households would not have the same opportunities as other children. Aruba's education goal is "education for all" and no children should be excluded. I agree that all children should have the same opportunities.

However, there are currently 2 private primary schools that charge parents around Awg 20.000 per year, and various

primary school boards like DPS and SKOA that charge around Awg 200 per year. I am of the opinion that this gap difference is too big. Aruba should be able to offer schools that charge maybe Awg 2500 per year, which comes down to about Awg 200 per month. More parents would be able to afford that and be willing to invest that amount into the education of their children. However, school boards like DPS and SKOA should not be eliminated in order to give every child on our island the opportunity of education.

¹ MAVO = Middelbare Algemeen Voortgezet Onderwijs, which entails 4 years of secondary education
 Colegio = Colegio Arubano, a school that offers Hoger Algemeen Voortgezet Onderwijs (HAVO) and Voorbereidend Wetenschappelijk Onderwijs (VWO), which entail 5 and 6 years of secondary education, respectively

² 2de graads is a degree where the teacher can teach up to the first three years of a HAVO or VWO.

³ Landsverordening is the National Ordinance or legislation that governs education in Aruba

⁴ DOW = Dienst Openbare Werken (Department of Public Works)

⁵ Translation: The school boards need to hand in a request by the Ministry to cover all the costs for the year. This request has to be handed in before February 15th of each year. The request has to have a valid reason and has to be accompanied by a budget of the expected total amount of students and a budget on the expected costs and investments.

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Reflection by Michele Li

I arrived to Aruba after having changed my topic twice already and I was sure my third topic would work out after all the changes I had made to the original one. However, once there I realized I wanted to change my topic once again. Fortunately, this time, it wasn't because I had to or something didn't work out, but because I found my new topic to be so much more interesting and relevant for Aruba. And I was very motivated to work on it throughout my entire time there. In particular, the people I met really showed me how much they cared about my research.

I met social workers in both the government and NGOs who were eager to share their stories with me. I loved listening to them speak with such passion about children's rights and I truly felt like my research became more meaningful. As a result, I experienced the value of fieldwork not only for me as a researcher but also for the respondents who participated in my project. I got

to experience their stories first hand, which I believe I would never fully grasp had I just read about it from the Netherlands.

The experience was also great in helping me get out of comfort zone. It wasn't always easy getting used to life on Aruba especially because it differs greatly from life in Utrecht. For example, I acquired the new skill of taking the bus in Aruba which don't run on regular hours and sometimes take detours. However, this also became one of my favorite experiences because I met so many people taking the bus who as always were happy to talk to me about Aruba and its culture. These conversations gave me a glimpse of everyday life for Arubans but also made me feel at home there, knowing there were always people who wanted to make you feel welcome.

Lastly, I was extremely lucky to have had Ketí, Charlotte, and Hannah with me in Aruba. I didn't really

know them at first but I have really missed them after I returned to the Netherlands. We spent so many nights on our balcony together just chatting, drinking, and singing. When we weren't home, we were busy jumping into the sea from Bugaloe after a night of dancing. We got to meet the staff at Flor Di Oriente together as well as go snorkeling with Tobia. When corona arrived to Aruba, we all decided not to worry about our research for a while and enjoy our last few days together. So we went to the beach every day, ordered sushi for lunch and swam until it got dark.

Adolescent Health Issues on Aruba: A Children's Rights-Based Approach

Michele Li

Introduction

The Aruban government ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child which entered into force on January 17th, 2001, as Aruba pledged to commit to a wide range of rights designed as special protection for children under the age of eighteen (CRC State Report, 2003). In doing so, they submitted their first children's rights report to the Committee on the Rights of the Child, which has since then been monitoring Aruba's progress in the realization and promotion of children's rights. However, despite placing Aruba's progress in children's rights developments under the scrutiny of the Committee on the Rights of the Child, certain issues have persisted for more than 15 years. In particular, teenage pregnancies and teenage alcohol and drug use continues to remain a problem for Aruba even though the UN Children's Rights Committee has repeatedly recommended Aruba to address these issues by introducing mandatory sex education and raising awareness about the dangers of alcohol and drugs, as well as offering support to teenage mothers. Unfortunately, these measures have not been fully implemented and this study is thus an attempt to discover the reasons for the lack of implementation of adolescent health improvements albeit several UN recommendations.

The Aruban Context

Aruba is an island in the southern Caribbean Sea, which was historically colonized by the Kingdom of the Netherlands. In 1986, it gained *status aparte* as it became an official constituent country in the Kingdom of the Netherlands. As a result, Aruba became semi-independent and elections were held for its first parliament (UNIHRI, 1996). However, despite the semi-independent status, Aruban citizens remain Dutch nationals and the government of the Kingdom of the Netherlands is still responsible for certain functions on Aruba such as foreign affairs and defense. Due to this, Aruba has retained many Dutch influences. For instance, its legal system is based on the Dutch model, one of the official languages on Aruba is Dutch, and the educational system is also based on the Dutch system of education (Sharpe, 2005).

In terms of the state of human rights, Aruba usually becomes a state party to human rights treaties signed and ratified by the Netherlands as Aruba is recognized under the Kingdom of the Netherlands internationally (UNIHRI, 1996). Hence, they are committed to various human rights treaties via their position within the Dutch Kingdom and their human rights reports are submitted by the Kingdom on their behalf (although they draft their own reports which are then sent to the Netherlands). These include various UN human

rights treaties such as the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, and the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights. Most recently, Aruba became a state party to the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) following the ratification of the treaty by the Kingdom of the Netherlands (CRC State Report, 2003).

Adolescent Health in Aruba

In its first initial report to the Committee on the Rights of the Child, Aruba reported high rates of teenage pregnancies and teenage drug and alcohol use. Teenage mothers under the age of eighteen were recorded at 63 in 2000. Moreover, in terms of teenage pregnancy prevention efforts, Aruba financed Fundacion Pa Nos Muchanan (NGO) to provide sex education information in parenting courses which was also broadcasted in the media. A project was also being set up by the Association of Youth Welfare Work (ATHA) to offer assistance to the various needs of teenage mothers (CRC State Report, 2003).

Regarding adolescent alcohol and drug abuse, it was reported that alcohol was widely used by Aruban teenagers due to its prevalence in Aruban society. Additionally, marijuana was the most used drug even though the National Ordinance on Narcotics (*Landsverordening verdovende middelen*) strictly prohibits all illicit drug use. To combat teenage alcohol and drug abuse, primary and secondary schools have introduced various programs which aim to prevent drug and alcohol use. Most of the programs were developed by FADA (Anti-Drug Association) and consisted of workshops and lectures educating students on the dangers of alcohol and drug use while also offering guidance on making safe choices. In addition, the government funds all three rehab centers on Aruba but only two teenagers were being treated (at the time of reporting) as the facilities were mainly designed for adult addicts (CRC State Report, 2003).

However, despite Aruba's commitment to improve adolescent health by reducing teenage pregnancies and substance abuse, the Committee's concluding observations on Aruba's periodic reports in 2004, 2009, and 2015 all point out the same two issues and request continued initiatives to curb the further development of these issues (CRC State Report, 2003). In 2004, the Committee recommended Aruba "strengthen programmes on sex education to prevent early pregnancy" and "provide teenage mothers in Aruba with the appropriate assistance" while also "take all necessary measures to prevent drug and alcohol abuse" (CRC Concluding Observations, 2004). Five years later in 2009, the Committee again recommended that Aruba "strengthen sexual and reproductive health education, in and out of school, with a view to reducing teenage pregnancies and provide teenage pregnant girls with the necessary assistance" and used the exact same recommendation on drug and alcohol abuse (CRC Concluding Observations, 2009). Despite these recommendations, the Committee made nearly identical recommendations again in 2015 by asking Aruba to "adopt a sexual and reproductive health policy for adolescents, paying special attention to preventing early pregnancy" and "address the incidence of drug, alcohol, and tobacco use by children and adolescents" (CRC Concluding Observations, 2015). Moreover, the Committee in 2019 (one year before Aruba's next periodic report on children's rights is due), inquired on the same two issues with regards to adolescent health. The Committee asked Aruba to describe the measures taken to "adopt a sexual and reproductive health policy for adolescent health," "integrate sexual education into the mandatory school curriculum," and "address the incidence of drug, alcohol, and tobacco use by adolescent children" in their next periodic report due on September 6th, 2020 (CRC List of Issues Prior to Reporting, 2019).

Children's Rights in Practice

These reports raise serious questions about both Aruba's teenage pregnancy and drug abuse prevention efforts and

the ability of the Children's Rights Committee to instigate improvements in human rights standards. However, neither Aruba's state report nor the Committee's concluding observations document the reasons for the persistence of adolescent health problems on Aruba. Hence, the full extent of Aruba's progress in adolescent health improvements and the role of the UN Children's Rights Committee in the process remains unclear. This case therefore demonstrates that there is a clear distinction between children's rights in theory and in practice, a phenomenon which has been documented by previous literature.

A review of the first 20 years of the CRC's entry into effect revealed that although state parties have made significant progress in the promotion and realization of children's rights, they nonetheless continue to face several challenges. At the national level, the most obvious improvements are legislative and social measures taken by the state. These include aligning domestic legislation and policies with children's rights, social programs to promote children's rights, and occasionally the establishment of a national human rights institute with the appointment of a child's rights ombudsman to monitor the progress made in children's rights (Doek, 2009; Vandenhole, 2009). In addition, human rights bodies normally spark a process of domestic mobilization following their reporting procedures. The reporting procedure can re-establish certain topics in the national dialogue which can encourage states and non-state actors to increase efforts directed at certain human rights issues. Evidence of domestic mobilization can often be found in social media, where in addition to state reports, there is sometimes an increase in shadow reporting to further shed light on human rights practices (Simmons & Creamer, 2019).

However, despite these successes, it is nonetheless extremely difficult to achieve the full realization of all children's rights for state parties. The CRC grants children a very comprehensive list of rights ranging from civil and

political rights to social, cultural, and economic rights. Very often, the fulfillment of these rights requires vast financial and human resources which are not available for many state parties (Doek, 2009; Langford, 2008). The Committee on the Rights of the Child often recommends state parties allocate budget for the development of these rights but this usually produces mixed results across different countries and for different rights. Another key issue for some states is the lack of enforcement for legislation or social programs which promote children's rights. For example, in order to align domestic policy with children's right to education, South Africa introduced legislation which required all children under the age of 17 to attend school by law. Parents would be fined for non-compliance. However, to date, no fines have been issued and enforcement of the policy is weak (Wakefield, 2011).

Research Question

There are doubts as to whether the current enforcement of the CRC on Aruba has been effective at implementing children's rights, thus requiring an investigation on the ground (bottom-up approach) to uncover the factors which influence Aruba's compliance with the CRC. This is due to the fact that local NGOs and government representatives working on the implementation of UN recommendations can provide insights on the challenges associated with adolescent health improvements, which are not accounted for in UN reports. Their experience working on the ground can illustrate the reality of children's rights in practice, which can provide invaluable information for future policies aiming to implement human rights, thus leading to the research question: **To what extent has the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child inspired local Aruban institutions to make adolescent health improvements since Aruba's initial report?** In addition, several sub-questions have been formulated to assist in answering the main research question.

1. What is the main progress made in teenage pregnancy and alcohol and drug use prevention on Aruba?
2. What remaining challenges does Aruba face in the full realization of the right to health for adolescents?
3. How does the UN reporting cycle address factors which hinder the implementation of adolescent health developments?
4. How do these issues affect children's rights in practice?

The first sub-question will show the improvements made based on the Committee on the Rights of the Child's recommendations for Aruba. These are likely to include developments in sexual and reproductive health education, alcohol and drug risk awareness campaigns, and support systems developed for teenage mothers and drug users. Additionally, the second sub-question will reveal the barriers which prevent Aruba from successfully implementing the required changes in order to reduce teenage pregnancies and drug use. Next, the third sub-question will demonstrate if the UN reporting cycle can be a trusted tool to monitor or make progress for human rights improvements. Lastly, the fourth sub-question will reveal how children's rights work in practice on Aruba given its social context and based on this study's other findings.

Hence, the aim of this study is to examine the progress made in adolescent health issues on the ground by local stakeholders and how (and if) they have been inspired by the UN reporting cycle. Local stakeholders include NGOs, health professionals, and government representatives who work on teenage pregnancy and drug abuse issues. Since the purpose is to employ a bottom-up approach, local institutional perspectives will be examined, which can then complement international perspectives from the UN's concluding observations. The scope of this research will cover the period between 2003 and 2019. In 2003, Aruba submitted its first report to the Committee on the Rights of the Child and investigation for this research began in January 2020, so the most recent yearly developments can only be

traced back to 2019. Additionally, the current research will focus exclusively on the aforementioned adolescent health issues which have been repeatedly reported in the last 16 years.

Methodology

The methodology for this research will be two-fold. Desk research will be conducted using online sources and this will be followed by fieldwork. First, the right to health for adolescents will be theorized using the UN's General Comments 15, which offer guidance on the implementation of certain economic, cultural, and social rights due to their broad interpretation. GCs have been recognized as "soft" law due to their widespread usage by the UN. The study will next review existing literature on human and children's rights in practice. It will explore certain critiques on human rights and issues with their implementation. Lastly, the study will examine literature on the effectiveness of the UN reporting cycle to monitor state compliance.

Field research will later be conducted through semi-structured interviews (lasting between 30-60 minutes) to also allow participants to provide in-depth responses on information unknown to the researcher prior to the interviews. Key informants will include local NGOs, health professionals, government representatives and Aruban teenagers. Interviews with Aruban teenagers can provide complementary information to the information provided by local institutions. This will also help improve the reliability of the data. Additionally, social media (e.g. Facebook posts) will be analyzed to provide a secondary source of data.

Several obstacles are present for successful data collection. First, respondents may be reluctant to reveal certain information due to the sensitivity of the topics of adolescent health. This can also result from the researcher being a foreign male, which may influence certain respondents' level of comfort in disclosing sensitive information.

Second, there may be language barriers for the researcher as he does not speak Papiamentu or Dutch, which are the two most widely used languages in speaking and writing respectively. The researcher, as a non-native to Aruba, may also encounter difficulty finding suitable contacts for the interviews. Moreover, data collected from the interviews will also be subjective due to the researcher's personal involvement in the data collection process as data will be subjected to the researcher's personal interpretation.

In order to overcome these issues, the researcher will work together with a local student from the University of Aruba. She will help overcome language barriers and participate in the interpretation of data to reduce the degree of personal bias. She may also help increase respondents' comfort and trust due to her being a native Aruban student, when accompanying the researcher to interviews. The research partner will also assist the researcher with looking for social media sources suitable for the analysis of the research topic. In addition, the research partner and the coordinator of the Aruba Fieldwork Program will also help search for appropriate contacts if necessary. Under these circumstances, the research partner and program coordinator can act as the primary gatekeeper to Aruban stakeholders for the researcher. Otherwise, the gatekeepers for the researcher will include well-known NGOs and health professionals who can provide him with access to additional contacts.

Societal Relevance

The current study can have a profound impact on the development of adolescent health on Aruba. On a local scale, its conclusions can offer new insights on the successes and failures of Aruba's teenage pregnancy and drug abuse prevention programs. This will allow for a more comprehensive understanding of the main factors which advance and hinder the progress of the full realization of the right to health for Aruban teenagers. Due to this, data

collected from the study can also serve as a guiding point for future endeavors on Aruba tackling adolescent health issues. This is essential for the numerous teenagers on Aruba who are currently involved in teenage pregnancies or suffer from alcohol and drug use. Additionally, it can also serve as positive reinforcement to deter healthy children and adolescents from engaging in unhealthy behaviors.

Moreover, the study can also offer a critique of the UN reporting cycle and whether it can truly function as a tool to bring about human rights improvements across the world. Understanding the real effectiveness of the UN reporting cycle is vital to ensure the development of human rights standards worldwide as this is the same procedure used to monitor the compliance of all nine major UN human rights treaties. The study may also expose inherent flaws with the notion of children's rights as it will further desk research to examine children's rights in practice. This approach can highlight the complexity of human rights issues as they translate from a global to a local context and vice versa.

Legal and Theoretical Framework

In order to answer the research question formulated for this study, two theoretical frameworks will be used. First, a legal framework using General Comment 15 on the Child's Right to the Highest Attainable Standard of Health in 2013 will be employed as a standard to analyze adolescent health developments in Aruba. In addition, a second theoretical framework on human rights compliance theory will be used to analyze the factors which influence the degree of implementation of adolescent health rights on Aruba. Factors such as state interests, culture, and institutional norms help explain the successes and challenges of state compliance. Although this paper will only examine rights under the CRC, literature investigating other UN human rights will also be used to offer background on the general relation between UN human rights committees and human rights practice.

Legal Framework: The Right of the Child to the Highest Attainable Standard of Health

The Convention on the Rights of the Child guarantees each child the inherent right to health under Article 24;

States Parties recognize the right of the child to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health and to facilities for the treatment of illness and rehabilitation of health. States Parties shall strive to ensure that no child is deprived of his or her right of access to such health care services.

Moreover, the CRC recognizes access to adequate information, through education and other means, to also constitute the right to health for children, as state parties are expected to take necessary measures;

To ensure that all segments of society, in particular parents and children, are informed, have access to education and are supported in the use of basic knowledge of child health and nutrition, the advantages of breastfeeding, hygiene and environmental sanitation and the prevention of accidents.

To offer state parties more guidance on the implementation of the right to health, the Committee on the Rights of the Child has issued General Comment 15 on the Right of the Child to the Enjoyment of the Highest Attainable Standard of Health in 2013 to provide specific details on the expected measures state parties should take to ensure the fulfillment of the right to health.

General Comment 15

General Comment 15 is a full interpretation of Article 24 but it also discusses adolescent health with regards to teenage pregnancies and alcohol and drug abuse. GC15 recognizes there is a high rate of teenage pregnancies

around the world and a need to ensure pregnant teenage girls have access to adequate sexual and reproductive health services while also being free from discrimination. Contraception, family planning, and abortion services should be made available to pregnant teenage girls to allow them to make independent and informed choices about their own bodies. With regards to education, state parties should refrain from enacting school policies which expel pregnant students from school and also take measures to give pregnant students who leave school further opportunities to complete their education in the future (para 56). Additionally, since male students are also involved in teenage pregnancies, state parties should ensure boys are also informed about sexual and reproductive health (para 57). The GC continues to define sexual and reproductive health education as self-awareness of the anatomical, physiological, and emotional aspects of the body, while also including information on responsible sexual behavior and the prevention of gender-based violence (para 60). This type of information should also be made available to other stakeholders in society such as family members, community organizations, and the media (para 61). Additionally, GC15 interestingly asks state parties to ensure adolescents access to safe abortions, “irrespective of whether abortion itself is legal” (para 70).

On drug and alcohol abuse, state parties should take measures to protect children from alcohol and substance abuse and regulate sales and advertisements of alcohol and other toxic substances in the media and other areas easily accessible to children (para.65). Information on the dangers of alcohol and psychoactive substance abuse should also be made available to children and parents and caregivers (para 59). There is no precise definition for alcohol or drug abuse as abuse simply refers to any usage of alcohol and drugs. Furthermore, given the particularly harmful effects of the illegal use of drugs, the CRC has also included Article 33 to further safeguard children from the dangers of illicit drug use:

States Parties shall take all appropriate measures, including legislative, administrative, social and educational measures, to protect children from the illicit use of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances as defined in the relevant international treaties, and to prevent the use of children in the illicit production and trafficking of such substances.

This article does not include the use of alcohol or the legal use of drugs but only protects children from the illegal use of psychoactive substances. Since the nature of the illicit use of drugs in an unregulated environment poses substantially higher risks to children, an additional article was drafted to strengthen state protection and commitment to children's health.

Roles of State and Non-State Actors

Although the state is responsible for fulfilling children's rights enshrined under the CRC, they may delegate tasks to non-state actors such as NGOs or the private sector. If this occurs, the medical care provided by non-state actors will be subjected to the scrutiny of the Committee to evaluate whether they meet the demands of the CRC. However, states are still deemed primarily responsible under international human rights law for the fulfillment of children's rights (para 75).

Rights-Based Approach to Teenage Pregnancies

With regards to teenage pregnancies, previous studies have shown that various key institutions and actors play a crucial role in teenage girls' ability to exercise their right to sexual and reproductive health. Health systems include a number of stakeholders such as family, hospitals, schools, midwives, etc. All the relevant stakeholders should produce a health system offering adequate and accessible health care to all adolescents, which also includes information on sexual and reproductive health. In terms of duty bearers, many schools

begin providing sex education to children in primary school and continue throughout secondary schools. Hospitals and other medical services then provide medical treatments to adolescents if necessary (Sundby, 2006), although schools and medical services are often subsidized by the state.

Studies have shown that pregnant adolescents' exercise of their right to sexual and reproductive can be influenced by a number of factors (Goicolea et al., 2010; Guedes and Helzner, 2002; Richardson and Birn, 2011). Cultural attitudes can either serve to enhance or deteriorate pregnant teenagers' health rights. In some states, adolescent health is highly respected as an integral part of society's well-being and hence those governments usually invest more in adolescent health, which allows their citizens to receive appropriate treatment and help. In other states, adolescent health can even be disregarded due to cultural attitudes. A common example is the consideration of adolescent sexuality as a taboo and hence health services may refrain from intervening into private lives (Goicolea et al., 2010).

Next, gender stereotypes can also affect sexual health services. In some states, adolescent girls are deemed to be solely responsible for teenage pregnancies. This type of perception creates expectations for adolescent girls only to be aware of pregnancy risks and use proper contraception if pregnancies are unplanned. Although the General Comment has explicitly recognized the role of boys in pregnancies and their potential roles as fathers (if the pregnancy is carried out), the same gender stereotype has yet to translate across all cultures (Guedes and Helzner, 2002; Richardson and Birn, 2011).

Rights-Based Approach to Teenage Alcohol and Drug Abuse

Regarding teenage drug and alcohol abuse, there have been little to no studies which employ a rights-based approach

to adolescent drug and alcohol use. Although the literature on this topic from other disciplines is prevalent, it cannot serve as part of the literature review for the current study. However, the literature on the interpretation of articles pertaining to children's alcohol and drug use demonstrates that states are obligated to prohibit and prevent alcohol and drug use in children by introducing legislative, educational, and administrative measures. The degree of the implementation of these measures depends on states' availability of resources. (Barrett and Veerman, 2016)

Theoretical framework: Compliance theory

In the last couple of decades, new literature has emerged concerning the human rights compliance debate. Two main schools have developed since then which attempt to explain either states' compliance or non-compliance with international treaties. The first is the rational choice school which essentially argues that a state's commitment to its international obligations is dependent on the benefits or costs to the concerned state. Hence, compliance occurs when implementing human rights benefits states more than not complying (Guzman, 2002; Moore, 2002). The other perspective is known as the normative or constructivist approach. This perspective argues that state practice is constructed based on states' repeated interactions with certain norms which exist both internationally and in a local setting. After sufficient exposure to a particular norm, states can internalize a certain behavior which then affects state practice (Koh, 1996; Simmons, 2013; Simmons and Creamer, 2019). In addition, existing literature on compliance theory has also found that very often state compliance consists of elements which support both theories as different elements exist in the process of compliance which can be characterized by rational choice or normative explanations (Hathaway, 2002; Bates, 2014). These theories will be used to explain Aruba's compliance (or non-compliance) with the Committee on the Rights of the Child's recommendation.

Rational Choice

According to the rational choice model, state compliance with human rights is a result of states' calculation of costs and benefits associated with state compliance and other alternative actions. Human rights obligations differ from many other obligations under international law in the sense that they restrains the power of the state over its own citizens. For this reason, it can be very costly for states to implement human rights as it not only entails a need to establish a regime to protect human rights but also a partial surrender of power and control to citizens which can be used against states (Goodman and Jinks, 2008). Despite this, states can still perceive benefits from compliance. Some of the perceived benefits arising from human rights compliance include stronger reputation (on both a domestic and international level), geopolitical power, conflict avoidance, and advancement of ideological goals (Guzman, 2002; Moore, 2002). Hence, if the perceived benefits of compliance outweigh its costs or are greater than the perceived benefits of other practices, then compliance follows. Using this model, state practice is driven primarily by state-interest and compliance with human rights obligations is described as a coincidence or by-product.

Hathaway argues that treaty monitoring bodies which do not impose sanctions on states for non-compliance are usually unlikely to provide states with incentives to implement their human rights obligations. Although the UN reporting cycle regularly evaluates the state parties' progress in human rights, the absence of sanctions means there is no real penalty for failure to comply. Additionally, states can use the self-reporting procedure to their advantage in their portrayal of human rights. This occasionally results in misleading or inaccurate information regarding state practice. In these cases, it is often NGOs who reveal and improve the human rights conditions of state parties (Bates, 2014).

Normative Model

The normative model assumes that states have a “propensity to comply” with their human rights agreements as international norms are adopted at a national level. This is due to the persuasive power human rights regimes have which transmit into state practice (Koh, 1996). Normative theorists argue that repeated interactions and normative discourse between international human rights bodies and states shape legal norms in a domestic setting. This process is also termed acculturation which is defined as “the adoption of beliefs and behavioral patterns of the surrounding culture” (Goldsmith and Posner, 1999). According to this model, noncompliance can be caused by a state’s lack of institutional capacity or insufficient guidance on the implementation of human rights resulting from ambiguous treaty terms. Institutional capacity generally refers to a state’s financial and human resources. This decides the extent to which they can fully implement human rights. Additionally, the language used in international treaties can be vague, which provides states with insufficient information on the necessary measures states are expected to take for human rights compliance (Hathaway, 2002).

Normative Information

A key variable found to influence the protection or violation of human rights is domestic stakeholders’ access to information. There are two types of information which can be made available to local populations. First, there is normative information. This type of information is usually associated with values. For example, international conventions are considered normative as they underscore the values which state parties and its regulating body have deemed to be worthy of protection and enforcement (Simmons and Creamer, 2019). Moreover, the domestic ratification of an international treaty also translates similar values to the local community regarding acceptable and unacceptable practices (Koh, 1996).

In addition, the UN reporting cycle helps preserve the value system that states have agreed to on human rights law by consistently checking up on state parties on the implementation of rights. For domestic governments, the continuous reporting to UN Committees is an indication of their commitment to human rights treaties and thus to the values which are protected by those treaties (Simmons, 2013). Other stakeholders in society such as NGOs also participate in the reporting procedure which highlights additional segments within local contexts, which are also committed to the same value system. Occasionally, local institutions may even incorporate human rights into their vision statements or use them as a guiding point in their work (Hathaway, 2007).

Next, empirical information can also have the same effect. Empirical information includes statistics, new legislation, or information on new initiatives such as social programs. States are frequently asked to report on specific empirical information which UN Committees often use to make comparisons with previous achievements or other countries before making final concluding observations (Simmons and Creamer, 2019). This process again serves as an indicator of a state’s commitment to improve and also for countries to align objectives on an international scale. Lastly, local institutions can also use this information as a benchmark for success (Bates, 2014). For these reasons, making normative and empirical information available within a local context can be a significant factor influencing the degree of human rights implementation.

Teenage Pregnancy Prevention Efforts: Successes and Remaining Challenges

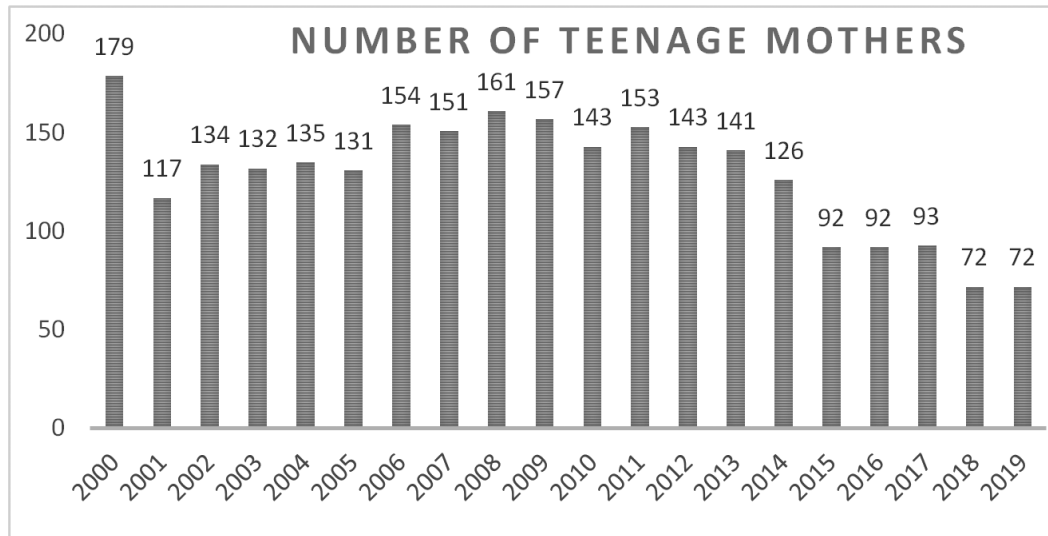
In order to understand Aruba’s teenage pregnancy prevention efforts from a legal perspective, this section will first examine the recommendations made by the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child since Aruba’s initial

report and then examine the progress made. This will be followed by challenges which Aruba faces in their implementation of the UN recommendations, which will be used as an analysis on children's rights in practice. The table below outlines all the UN recommendations regarding teenage pregnancies on Aruba the Committee has made since 2003.

Year	UN Concluding Observation Recommendation
2004	<p>(a) Strengthen programmes on sex education, including in schools, and reproductive health counselling for adolescents and take effective measures to prevent early pregnancy;</p> <p>(b) Provide teenage mothers in Aruba with the appropriate assistance and ensure that they can finish their education.</p>
2009	<p>(a) The Committee recommends that the State party undertake efforts to strengthen age-appropriate and gender-sensitive sexual and reproductive health education for adolescents, in school and out of school, with a view to reducing the incidence of teenage pregnancies, and provide pregnant teenage girls with the necessary assistance and access to health care and education, especially in Aruba and the Netherlands Antilles. The Committee further recommends that the State party strengthen its strategies of education and awareness-raising for the general public with a view to reducing the incidence of teenage pregnancies, especially in Aruba and the Netherlands Antilles.</p>
2015	<p>(a) Adopt a comprehensive sexual and reproductive health policy for adolescents and ensure that sexual and reproductive health education be part of the mandatory school curriculum and targeted at adolescent girls and boys, paying special attention to preventing early pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections.</p>
2019*	<p>(a) Adopt a comprehensive sexual and reproductive health policy for adolescent children;</p> <p>(b) Integrate sexual and reproductive health education into the mandatory school curriculum.</p>

*The report in 2019 is the List of Issues the Committee on the Rights of the Child has requested Aruba to work on, for which Aruba has to respond to in October 2020.

Current State



The statistics on teenage mothers were obtained from the Wit Gele Kruis, which has been given a primary role in teenage pregnancy prevention as well as establishing a support system for teenage mothers. In 2000, they began targeting teenage pregnancy reduction and first recorded the number of teenage mothers on Aruba. Since then, they have made significant improvements in their prevention efforts. The first large decrease in 2001 was a result of the introduction of an intensive sexual education. This was highly successful as many teenagers received sexual health information for the first time and it altered the sexual behaviors of many adolescents. However, although this was successful in its first year, the program was not able to influence the mindset of teenagers in the long run and the numbers increased again between 2002 and 2014.

During this period, social workers said that there was widespread objection to the implementation of sexual health education or other pregnancy prevention measures such as the provision of contraceptives due to the largely Catholic communities on Aruba. One example which illustrates this is a Catholic school's rejection of a large donation of condoms, as they believed that providing their students with condoms would encourage sexual behaviors. This meant that teenagers engaging in sexual acts had to find contraceptives in other places. This was a significant issue as one of the reasons for the high rates of pregnancies was the lack of contraception use by teenagers. Since many had not been previously educated on safe sex, they continued sexual behaviors believing the use of contraceptives was not necessary. Thus, the school's rejection of condoms for students potentially acted as a further challenge to

successful prevention efforts as students were unlikely to obtain condoms on their own. Furthermore, this type of mindset which aimed to discourage sexual behaviors as opposed to encouraging safety in sexual behaviors persisted for many years and across many communities. As a result, sex education was not always welcomed and accepted by Aruban institutions.

Fortunately, due to the gravity of the teenage pregnancy situation, many stakeholders have developed new attitudes to counter the high rates of pregnant adolescents. Since 2015, Wit Gele Kruis has developed new strategies to curb teenage pregnancies. In-depth analysis of the data showed that there is a spike in births to teenage mothers 9 months after the 8-week carnival celebrations. Carnival is a period associated with increased drug and alcohol use, when many adolescents have increased opportunities to seek sex amid festival celebrations. Moreover, when they are intoxicated, sexual behaviors, in particular unsafe behaviors, become more likely. Hence, Wit Gele Kruis has been cooperating with drug prevention agencies and customs officials to visit each school on Aruba immediately prior to the carnival season to provide them with information on safe sex as well as educate them in the dangers of alcohol and drugs. Schools have also become more cooperative in the last 5 years as they can no longer ignore the gravity of adolescent pregnancies and drug and alcohol use. Occasionally, women who became pregnant as teenagers will even give lectures to share their personal experiences. This has shown to be highly successful as for the first time since 2000, the number of teenage mothers has dropped to below 100. Additionally, 2018 and 2019 saw a further decrease to 72 teenage mothers. Another reason for the decrease in teenage mothers is the availability of abortion services on Aruba. Although abortions are illegal, and doctors or other people assisting the process of abortion can be punished with jail time, they are nonetheless carried out in secret. However, there is no data on the number of abortions due to its illegality.

Sex Education

1. Within Schools

Currently, there is no document which details sex education for all schools on Aruba. NGOs usually document their work in their yearly reports, but this is not a comprehensive list of all forms of sex education for schools on Aruba. However, responses from participants from a wide variety of stakeholders can offer a decent impression of sex education on Aruba.

a. Schools

Despite the UN recommendations on integrating sexual education into the mandatory school curriculum, no such policy exists as of now and schools are left largely to decide for themselves what kind (and if) sex education should be taught to pupils. Some schools have largely outsourced sex education to NGOs (such as Famia Planea) that send speakers to schools to give lectures on sex education as well as offer information on where to receive contraceptives or get screened for STDs and potential pregnancies. Occasionally, teachers will provide sex education, but this has been noted as a rare occurrence and is largely dependent on the teacher. However, one important aspect of sex education for all schools on Aruba is that it requires parental consent before any child under 17 can receive sex education. The degree of parental cooperation regarding sex education consent for their children is unknown; however, many NGOs usually do not consider this an issue that hinders the success of sexual education.

b. Students

Students who were interviewed for this research have generally indicated that there is some sort of sex education within schools, although the content and length of each sex education program varies across schools and even classes, sometimes depending on

the year of enrolment or the teachers. Sex education consisted of lectures on contraception and safe sex, pregnancies, sexually-transmitted diseases, and the biology of sexual and reproductive health. The age at which participants received sexual health education varied from 10 to 15. Some students did note that sexual education in schools was entirely limited to biological aspects and didn't offer any information on healthy sexual behaviors or its emotional aspects.

2. Outside of Schools

Various initiatives have been set up to provide sex education to students and teenagers outside of schools. Many NGOs host lectures, information evenings, and workshops in their respective communities (but open to anyone) to offer information on safe sexual behaviors with the aim of reducing STDs and unwanted pregnancies.

On social media, several campaigns have been launched to promote safe sex practices. This includes the F Yeahhh Project and Famia Planea's yearly campaigns, which aim to encourage teenagers to make independent decisions regarding their own sexual behaviors. In particular, safe sex advertisements have become ubiquitous during the carnival season. Statistics in the past years have consistently shown that there is a spike in teenage pregnancies 9 months after carnival. This is largely due to the excessive use of alcohol and drugs in party environments, which leads to an increase in unprotected sex. Hence, NGOs like Famia Planea often target this time of the year.

Support for Teenage Mothers

Since offering support for teenage mothers can be very costly in terms of both financial and human resources, participants have noted that some of the current programs in place are only directed towards teenage mothers in need.

This is usually defined as teenage mothers who come from abusive families or who severely lack the necessary financial resources. Currently, the majority of teenage mothers receive substantial help from their parents or other family members in raising their kids, which usually allows them to complete school. However, not all teenage mothers have the privilege of family support and hence certain programs aim to provide them with more support.

1. Government Welfare for Teenage Mothers

Government welfare for teenage mothers was introduced as far back as 10 years ago. The current government welfare offers between 400 to 980 florins a month depending on the needs of the teenage mother. However, criteria for grant has changed a few times, making teenage mothers living with their parents or their partners unable to secure government welfare.

2. CEMBRAH

In 2002, Comision Embarazo Hubenil (CEMBRAH) was set up with the aim of reducing teenage pregnancies and providing support to teenage mothers. CEMBRAH is a network of health professionals, NGOs, schools and Social Affairs Department representatives (many of whom were interviewed for this research) who work with adolescents or in the health sector. The network allows them to share information on teenage pregnancies as well as refer pregnant teenagers to the organizations that can best provide for their needs.

3. Appointment of Teenage Mother Consultant

Contrary to the teenage mom life-coaches in Aruba's state report, there is only one teenage mother consultant. However, she is arguably the best support system for teenage moms on Aruba. Her role has been embraced by stakeholders and she is always informed on new teenage mothers or pregnant adolescents. During pregnancy and the period after birth, she makes home visits to collect information on their developments.

Then, after a conversation with the pregnant teenager (and sometimes her family members) they make a plan for them to ensure they can handle their parental responsibilities by discussing future housing, career, and education. Then, the consultant makes visits in the next year to check up on them (the number of visits depends on the needs of the teenager).

4. Casa Cuna Teen Mom House

One of the biggest achievements in Aruba's efforts to offer teenage mothers support is the establishment of the Tiener Moeder Huis (Teenage Mother House) at Casa Cuna. The facility was opened on October 14th in 2019 after nearly two decades of preparation and offers individual rooms for teenage mothers with space for up to two children as well as a communal room which is shared between all the tenants. Teenage mothers are allowed to stay at the House for a maximum of one year after which they will need to leave. It is open for mothers between the ages of 13 and 23, but the current management has decided to only take mothers 16 years and older as they have yet to figure out a support system for younger mothers when they leave the Tiener Moeder Huis. As of now, it can house up to 4 teenage mothers, but there are plans for expanding it to rooms for 16 teenage mothers in the next couple of years if this program is successful. However, Casa Cuna's biggest aim for this project is to foster mother-child relations for teenage mothers in need. Their goal is to see teenage mothers become more independent in balancing their work and parenting responsibilities when they leave Casa Cuna.

As part of the project, a representative from an NGO working on child development comes once a week to give parenting lessons for the teenage mothers. For the rest of the week, the staff members at Casa Cuna monitor and adjust the behaviors of the teenage mothers to ensure they are giving proper care to their

kids as well as setting an ideal example of behavior for their kids to follow. To help support teenage mothers' school completion or careers, Casa Cuna's social workers take care of the children during the daytime. Additionally, a teenage mother consultant has been appointed to offer further guidance for teen moms. The role of the teenage mother consultant varies between a series of tasks from providing medication to prevent further pregnancies to offering information on the support systems in place for teenage mothers such as government welfare.

Due to this, Casa Cuna requires teenage mothers applying for housing to be highly motivated regarding their cooperation with Casa Cuna in developing their parenting skills. This has caused conflict between CEMBRAH members and the teenage mothers and Casa Cuna.

Challenges

1. Finance

One of the challenges of teenage pregnancy prevention efforts is the substantial finances required to implement these initiatives. The Teen Mom House required such vast financial resources that it only opened 25 years after it was first proposed as a plan. It even required external financing from an NGO in the Netherlands and other donations in order for it to be built. As a small economy, the Aruban government has a limited budget to allocate for the various social programs on the island.

2. Skilled personnel

When schools first introduced sex education as part of its curriculum, it was usually teachers who were responsible for teaching it. This later proved to be an issue as many teachers had no experience teaching sex education and were uncomfortable with teaching it.

As a result, many teachers either limited sex education to its biological aspects or simply did not teach it. Furthermore, sex education is not monitored.

3. Religion

Religious reasons were arguably the largest barrier for the full implementation of sexual health education on Aruba. Approximately 80% of Arubans are Roman Catholics who usually hold relatively conservative views on sexual behaviors. Due to this, many people interpret sex education as well as the provision of contraceptives as encouragement for teenagers to engage in sex. Since this strongly contradicts their personal beliefs, religious stakeholders have often refused to implement sex education for teenagers.

Additionally, certain schools have included sex education as part of the school curriculum for adolescents; however, the teaching was assigned to teachers with religious views. Although these teachers were not necessarily opposed to sex education being taught to their students, they themselves did not feel comfortable or trained to teach it. Hence, they sometimes refrained from teaching sexual and reproductive health matters due to their own personal issues. Furthermore, schools did not monitor the sexual education being taught in schools as there was no exam or assignment students were expected to submit, and consequently, whether students received sex education went unnoticed.

4. Emotional needs

The successes of Wit Gele Kruis and their partners have been instrumental, but each year there are still numerous cases of teenage pregnancies which are much harder to prevent. Many adolescent mothers who come from abusive families have a lack of vision for their lives. In addition, they usually have low self-esteem, which makes them far more likely to agree

to unsafe sex. When they find out they've become pregnant, they very often want to keep the baby as it offers them a source of hope for their lives. Adolescents in these situations are more prone to becoming teenage mothers who later also carry the financial and emotional responsibilities of a parent. Very often, they also become single parents. Prevention aimed at these individuals should target their psychological and emotional needs as the provision of information does not suffice.

Issues with the CRC

1. It only recommends action based on content that is reported

The UN Committee recommendations omit an important aspect of teenage pregnancy health. There is currently no dialogue on the topic of abortions in Aruba. This is particularly strange as the Committee has recommended legalizing abortions in Sint Maarten, as the current illegality of abortion has resulted in a spike in illegal abortion services, which are more likely to be unsafe. Sint Maarten is another constituent country within the Kingdom of the Netherlands hence their reports are submitted as part of the same document as Aruba's but under a separate chapter. However, the UN Committee has not pointed out the same issue on Aruba. This can largely be due to the fact that UN recommendations are only made on issues which are reported by its member states. Hence, if an issue is not pointed out in their initial report, the Committee on the Rights of the Child will likely not be aware of this issue and hence not recommend action to tackle the issue.

Despite this, abortions are still practiced on Aruba in secret. Due to this, there is little to no information on the quality and safety of abortion services on Aruba. Currently, key informants disagree on the quality and safety of abortions on Aruba. However, according to

most, abortions are usually carried out relatively safely by doctors in hospitals, which pregnant teenagers arrange in private, sometimes with the help of NGOs. One informant also claimed that they are easily accessible to pregnant women seeking abortions. Normally, a general practitioner can refer their patients to doctors who perform abortions. However, the cost for an abortion on Aruba is approximately 450 florins (225 euros) which is relatively high and sometimes unaffordable for teenage mothers. According to one respondent, abortions are not carried out safely on Aruba. Moreover, it is not required to have somebody to accompany the teenager after the abortion.

2. Age of children offered in CRC does not align with age of practice

The definition of a child as any person under the age of 18 in theory would not grant adolescents or teenagers older than 18 the special protection under the CRC. However, in practice, most teenagers who are in need of government support are between 18 and 19 and in 2018; only 20 teenage mothers were below the age of 18. Hence, this method of classification would not offer support the group which requires it most in theory.

3. UN only has a very superficial role

The Committee's role in the improvement of adolescent health on Aruba is at best superficial. Since they only monitor the progress every 5 years, they only become aware of new developments and problems much later. Due to this, the Committee on the Rights of the Child normally makes recommendations on issues that Aruba is already working on.

4. Cultural clash

The Aruban case on teenage pregnancy shows a cultural clash with the CRC and the Committee on the Rights of the Child. Although Aruba's ratification of the CRC does obligate them to fulfill children's rights and participate

in the UN reporting cycle, in practice this was a decision made by a few politicians; ordinary citizens were not a part of the decision-making process. Furthermore, this research demonstrates there are significant cultural clashes between the CRC recommendations and the local culture. The most notable cultural clash is on local attitudes towards sex education. The largely Catholic population on Aruba was initially opposed to the notion of sex education, as their religious beliefs deem the whole concept as inappropriate. This has delayed the implementation of sex education in schools for years. Although it is now being increasingly accepted, this case demonstrates that overcoming cultural barriers is a key challenge which the CRC Committee should take into account.

Teenage Alcohol and Drug Use Prevention: Progress and Challenges

Year	UN Concluding Observation Recommendation
2004	(a) Take all necessary measures to prevent drug and alcohol abuse, including education campaigns, and ensure that there are sufficient rehabilitation services specifically for children and adolescents
2009	(a) In line with its previous recommendations, the Committee recommends that the State party take all necessary measures to prevent drug and alcohol abuse.
2015	(a) Address the incidence of drug, alcohol and tobacco use by children and adolescents by, inter alia, providing children and adolescents with accurate and objective information as well as life-skills education on preventing substance abuse, including tobacco and alcohol abuse, and develop accessible and youth-friendly drug dependence treatment and harm reduction services.
2019*	(a) Address the incidence of drug, alcohol and tobacco use by adolescent children.

*The report in 2019 is the List of Issues the Committee on the Rights of the Child has requested Aruba to work on, for which Aruba has to respond to in October 2020.

The table lists the CRC Committee's recommendations for Aruba on teenage alcohol and drug abuse. It is interesting to note that the Committee has altered its language from recommending Aruba to "prevent" drug and alcohol "abuse" to "addressing the incidence" of alcohol and drug "use." This change in language highly reflects local attitudes on the issue. Many informants believe that teenage alcohol and drug use cannot be fully prevented but simply managed to reduce its occurrence. Additionally, these informants would not classify the current status of teenage alcohol and drug use as abuse. Most teenagers on Aruba do not use alcohol or drugs to the point where they need treatment or fail to handle their responsibilities. In fact, most teenagers usually use alcohol and drugs only after they fulfill their school or familial responsibilities.

One of the main issues with teenage alcohol and drug use is that there is little to no data on recent developments. The last major study which detailed adolescent alcohol and drug use on Aruba is the Health Monitor conducted in 2012 and published in 2013. Today, it still serves as one of the few sources which can be used as a benchmark for recent developments.

Progress

1. Lectures and workshops for adolescents

Schools have welcomed representatives from various NGOs to give lectures and workshops on the dangers and risks of alcohol and drugs to many classes in various grades. This project has expanded significantly to the point where nearly all individual classes on Aruba have received a lecture or workshop. In addition, customs officials give additional lectures on drugs. They usually go to schools with a briefcase containing the most common types of drugs which are accessible on the island and show to pupils what each type looks like. They then give examples of potential consequences of its usage.

With regards to workshops, Fundacion Anti Droga

Aruba (FADA) is one of Aruba's most notable NGO working on drug and alcohol issues. Their main progress has been their shift from treating alcohol and drug abuse as a core issue teenagers have to it being a symptom of a larger problem in teenage lives. FADA has found that heavy drug and alcohol use often follows consistent traumatic experiences and substance abuse acts as a coping method for teenagers. Hence, drug and alcohol use prevention should also be directed at other greater societal issues. This also explains why many teenagers use drugs or alcohol despite being fully aware of its dangers.

At FADA, this approach is referred to as empowerment. Hence, they have developed interactive workshops to improve adolescents' decision-making abilities as well as offer guidance on how to live healthy lives. Workshops also vary in topics and they aim to improve adolescent health by giving workshops on processing media information, choosing peers and friends who do not engage in antisocial behaviors, coping with mental health issues, etc. This approach has been deemed more successful as instead of patronizing teenagers on alcohol and drug use, FADA aims to give them a sense of power and control over their lives by showing them the various possibilities their futures can bring. This usually increases teenagers' aspirations for their futures and decreases their likelihood to abuse drugs.

2. Lectures for parents

One of the main progresses made in recent years regarding teenage alcohol and drug use prevention is organized on-site lectures delivered to parents working in the tourism industry. In Aruba, the tourism industry requires vast human resources and hence they employ many staff members who work long hours. A knock-on effect of this is parents often have less time to look after their kids who then become more likely to engage in risky behaviors in the absence of parental supervision. In order to tackle

this issue, FADA began cooperating with large hotels on Aruba, which employ hundreds of employees, to organize on-site lectures for their personnel on the dangers of alcohol and drugs for youth. This has been crucial to curb the development of teenage drug and alcohol use, as very often these are the parents who tend to dedicate less time to educating their kids on proper behaviors. Moreover, due to their busy work schedules, they are also less likely to attend the parenting workshops organized by FADA. This approach is arguably even more effective than organizing lectures parents can attend in their free time, as the parents who do show up usually already have the time to look after their kids. Certain large businesses have agreed to make these lectures mandatory as attempts to improve their employees' familial situations can also increase the employees' job productivity and satisfaction.

Challenges

1. Media

According to many key informants, the media plays a large role in teenage substance abuse. Most teenagers today have access to some sort of device and also report spending long hours on social media platforms such as Facebook or Instagram. Additionally, online trends have shown to have an effect on adolescent behaviors. Hence, it is crucial that teenagers develop the ability to accurately process the validity of information on various social media platforms. Currently, social media platforms display mixed information on the use of alcohol and drugs. Although social media is used by certain NGOs to discourage alcohol and drug use, others use it sometimes to promote an overly positive perception of alcohol and drug use.

During carnival season, many bars and restaurants will promote alcohol use as a strategy to boost their sales. Their advertisements will depict alcohol as a source of entertainment and ignore its negative effects. Although

primarily directed at adults, their advertisements will nonetheless appear on most social media platforms. This in turn can affect teenage behaviors who can be heavily influenced by external information.

With regards to drug use, the last year has seen a push for the legalization of medical marijuana on the political agenda. The legalization of medical marijuana aims to allow patients suffering from chronic illnesses to use marijuana for temporary pain relief. However, despite the intentions behind it, a knock-on effect of the promotion of medical marijuana in the media has been an increase in teenage marijuana consumption. Since Aruba is a largely conservative island, it needed an almost radical change to convince its citizens to support its legalization. Due to this, marketing campaigns for medical marijuana have been consistently present in many media platforms. The advertisements have largely advocated for its legality on the basis of its strengths as medicine. Moreover, this type of advertisements is also present in other countries that heavily influence Aruba. This includes the United States, where more than 20 states have legalized medical marijuana and 8 states have even legalized recreational marijuana, and the Netherlands, where recreational marijuana use is legal. Since many Aruban teenagers aspire to attend university or explore work options in these countries, their practices with regards to marijuana use will also affect the mentality regarding marijuana on the island. Unfortunately, many teenagers often interpret this as marijuana being a safe and acceptable drug to use, which has thus increased its consumption.

2. Peer pressure

One of the main issues causing drug use is peer pressure. Most teenagers are aware of the dangers and risks of using drugs. In fact, all 21 students surveyed for this study reported there were dangers and risks associated with drug use. However, one of the reasons that drug

use persists despite having sufficient knowledge of its effects is the social pressures which exist in teenage environments. These pressures are often difficult to mitigate as they come from a deeper psychological need to belong to a certain group. Hence, campaigns which provide information on drug and alcohol risks will not suffice in overcoming the effect of social pressures.

3. Familial

Since the rise of the tourism industry, many adults have started working longer hours to the point where parents have little to no time to look after their kids when they get home from school. This usually leaves parenting responsibilities to children's grandparents or aunts and uncles. However, since teenagers require less supervision, many parents very often commit even less time to look after their adolescent kids. This very often leads adolescents to misbehave in the absence of parental supervision. Furthermore, teenagers are naturally more inquisitive and hence they have a tendency to experiment with new drugs.

In addition, there are also other family-related issues on Aruba which can affect alcohol and drug use. Currently, Aruba has a high divorce rate which has detrimental effects for adolescents. Teenagers who struggle to cope are more likely to use drugs or alcohol to mitigate the psychological pain resulting from their parents' divorce. Additionally, teenagers who come from abusive families are also more likely to abuse drugs and alcohol. If teenagers' psychological needs of affection and care are not met by their families, drugs and alcohol usually offer them an escape from these issues so they can temporarily forget about them.

4. Culture

Alcohol is a common household drink in many Aruban homes. Many parents will have a stock of alcoholic drinks in their house and also use it regularly in the

presence of their kids. This reinforces the idea of alcohol use for adolescents, especially as they gradually become adults. Many participants have also noted that parents are usually the first people to offer alcohol to their kids, albeit in limited amounts, at a young age. Additionally, alcohol use surges, especially during festival celebrations. This makes alcohol readily available on Aruba and even teenagers will have quick access to it. Furthermore, their behaviors are usually modelled after their community's norms. Hence, because alcohol is so widely accepted on Aruba, most teenagers will inevitably use alcohol, and many will use it regularly.

Analysis

There is once again a cultural clash between alcohol use and the CRC Committee recommendations. The CRC Committee recommends Aruba to take measures to prevent alcohol use and later address its incidence. The intention behind is to safeguard the health of adolescents as they are more vulnerable to alcohol's negative side effects and more prone to engage in unhealthy lifestyles. However, although Aruba concurs with the recommendation, it remains difficult to fully prevent and reduce teenage alcohol use as it is deeply ingrained in Aruba's culture. In particular, alcohol use is extremely common and widespread at religious festivals and celebrations on Aruba. Participants of this study would not say it is absolutely mandatory to use alcohol in order to participate in cultural events, but it is an integral part of cultural life on Aruba.

The culturally accepted practice of drinking alcohol and frequency of certain drug use makes it difficult to draw a line to distinguish when intervention is needed. Moreover, the CRC Committee does not offer a precise definition of abuse for drugs and alcohol; instead, their approach deems any level of alcohol and drug intake as abuse for minors. However, this does not reflect the local culture where, for instance, drinking alcohol occasionally is accepted for older teenagers.

Role of CRC Committee

As aforementioned, Aruba still has a long way to go before it can fully realize and implement the UN CRC Committee's recommendations on adolescent health. In order to understand the reasons why change in these sectors will take this long, this research will expose the rather ineffective UN reporting cycle as well as domestic factors which hinder the progress of implementing the CRC Committee's recommendations. Key informants from Aruba's Children's Rights Commission have discussed the effectiveness of the UN reporting process and its impact on Aruba. According to them, although the reporting process does serve certain benefits, its effectiveness is nonetheless reduced by a series of factors such as its lack of authority and negative attitudes from key stakeholders in the process. Next, the influence of domestic factors will be discussed in order to understand reasons for Aruban compliance with the CRC recommendations.

Strengths

With regards to its successes, all members of Aruba's Children's Rights Commission agree that the reporting process provides them with the opportunity to reflect on the current state of children's rights. Due to Aruba's relatively small government, each member is usually required to take on several roles and tasks. Consequently, issues that do not appear to be pressing normally get little to no attention, as is the case with many children's rights issues. One informant noted that when she needs to ensure the functioning of basic services such as healthcare, there simply isn't enough time or even energy to consider the state of children's rights. However, the establishment of the Children's Rights Commission not only helps remind members of their international obligations but also requires them to meet every month in order to discuss the current conditions of children's rights based on the previous feedback from the CRC Committee. These meetings also

serve to reinforce international children's rights standards in Aruba as members are reminded of their duties and responsibilities under the Convention.

In addition, Aruba's Commission on Children's Rights demonstrates their commitment to the CRC. In meetings, members will discuss the latest progress that has been made in response to recommendations made by the CRC Committee as well as make further plans to complete the full implementation of said issues. For example, members will decide on the next actions for a certain project in order to reach the set goals which align with the CRC. This also helps to re-establish certain issues or topics in the national dialogue. Since certain issues may appear to be minor in importance, the actions of Aruba's Commission can demonstrate their importance and need to be addressed. Additionally, informants have also noted that these meetings are conducted to ensure that in Aruba's next children's rights review, they can report on their progress and show improvements to the CRC Committee, which further demonstrates one of the strengths of the reporting cycle.

Weaknesses

However, despite its strengths, there are also inherent weaknesses to the reporting cycle. First, many of the recommendations aim to address certain issues without targeting their root causes. As a result, many of these issues will persist despite any initiative designed based on the UN recommendations. For example, teenage pregnancy is a complex issue which cannot simply be solved by introducing mandatory sex education. Although mandatory sex education has shown to reduce the incidence of teenage pregnancies, Aruba continues to have a relatively high rate of teenage mothers even after 20 years. According to many interviewee responses, sex education has little to no effect on many of the teenage mothers today, as they choose to engage in risky sexual behaviors despite receiving

sex education in schools. As aforementioned, many teenage mothers come from broken families and lack self-esteem which is often the result of domestic abuse. Hence, many social workers believe reducing teenage pregnancy should begin by addressing domestic abuse. Similarly, the reason for teenage drug and alcohol use isn't a lack of awareness on drug and alcohol dangers; instead, it can be attributed to a lack of parental supervision, the media's portrayal of drugs, or cultural reasons. For these reasons, the CRC Committee's recommendations can only mitigate these issues to certain extents.

Moreover, the nature of self-reporting has also been criticized, as it allows the government full autonomy on how to portray children's rights conditions in Aruba, which may not be fully accurate. With regards to teenage pregnancy, NGOs have criticized the government for reporting simply teenage pregnancy as an issue as opposed to domestic violence as a whole. Many NGOs believe the high rate of teenage pregnancy is a symptom of a wider problem. Hence, simply reporting an issue of adolescent mothers conceals wider domestic abuse issues. However, the UN reporting cycle will not have an effect at tackling the wider societal issue because it relies entirely on government data. Moreover, Aruba is relatively poor at data collection, especially in terms of children's rights issues. Once again, frequent and consistent data collection requires human and financial resources Aruba does not possess; hence, the portrayal of Aruba's children's rights conditions becomes even more inaccurate as it is based on relatively old data with small sample sizes. One example is the yearly teenage mother report, which is usually completed a year late, and regarding children's rights issues on Aruba, the teenage mother reports are known for being one of the documents with the best collected data.

Next, the reporting process does not always reflect the progress and perspectives of NGOs who work on children's rights issues. On Aruba, the reporting process is largely

handled by government officials as the government is formally responsible for submitting periodic reports to the CRC Committee. Additionally, two NGOs have been included in Aruba's Children's Rights Commission to provide an NGO view on Aruba's state of children's rights. However, despite the addition of two NGOs to the Children's Rights Commission, certain NGOs continue to feel that their work and efforts are underrepresented. Moreover, certain NGOs also do not believe that the government can accurately report on certain issues because normally NGOs work on specific projects while the government acts as an overseer that monitors the overall progress of all projects. Due to this, the reports may be inaccurate or misleading and the recommendations can thus become inadequate to improve issues such as teenage pregnancy or drug abuse.

Lastly, the UN reporting system does not have sanctions, which is arguably its greatest weakness. The absence of any form of sanctions means state parties to the Convention will not face any real consequences for non-compliance. This reduces the authority of the Convention as it becomes viewed more as a set of ideals as opposed to a set of inalienable and universal rights for children. Furthermore, this makes the Convention particularly weak in Aruba's case because the island nation already lacks sufficient resources in its government to fulfill all of its domestic and international legal obligations.

Domestic Factors

Additionally, on a domestic level, compliance with the CRC recommendations depends on a variety of factors. First, it depends largely on the degree of alignment between an NGO's vision and the CRC. The Aruban government heavily subsidizes NGOs to help them achieve their children's rights obligations as they oversee a wider variety of issues. However, most NGOs were established out of their founders' interest for a specific cause and not necessarily for the improvement of children's rights conditions as defined

by the UN. Some NGOs have incorporated children's rights into their vision or mission statement, but many NGOs work on objectives set by their founders and board. Although there is usually an alignment between children's rights and NGO objectives, there are still quite a few occasions where children's rights may clash with NGO values. For example, the CRC Committee has recommended improvements in sexual education since its first review on Aruba; however, cultural clashes (as discussed above) have persisted for over a decade. Hence, in most cases, compliance with the CRC recommendations was more of a coincidence.

Next, the degree of government investment in children's rights issues is also dependent on the current government. Two major political parties exist on Aruba that seek to win votes each election season. Since they are usually rated on their short-term successes, each government hopes to implement plans that are popular among the Aruban population in order to secure a win in the next election. As a result, many decisions are made based on their popularity among the citizenry such as improving local infrastructure or expanding the economy. Unfortunately for children's rights, many issues do not appear to be as important on the island; in fact, many people are not aware of children's rights in the first place. Moreover, those who are aware of the CRC believe that granting such a long list of rights to children is excessive. This is further reflected in the fact that the Aruban government has been decreasing the budget for the social sector in the last decade. It was only in 2017 after the tragic deaths of two young boys (aged 3 and 5) that Aruba ramped up investment in social work. Previous to that, Aruba and its population often prioritized government measures that would help them face their economic hardships as opposed to social work.

Compliance

The information provided by respondents on the progress made in adolescent health issues, perceptions of the UN

reporting cycle, and on domestic factors demonstrates that Aruba's compliance with its CRC recommendations exhibit characteristics from both the rational choice and normative models of compliance. With regards to the rational choice model, Aruba's assessment on how to maximize its limited human and financial resources usually results in a relatively low priority for children's rights issues. The evaluation of costs and benefits for each decision shows that Aruba's compliance is motivated by the overall perceived benefits of implementing their human rights obligations. Furthermore, government actions in Aruba are also dependent on the popularity of these decisions among the general public in an attempt to secure votes in future elections, which is an additional sign of rational choice in regards to state compliance. However, Aruba's attempts to improve its children's rights situation does also show their commitment to the CRC and its Committee. The establishment of the Children's Rights Commission and their monthly meetings demonstrate their commitment to the Convention, which thus shows their propensity to comply. Unfortunately, limited financial and human resources can reduce their ability to fully implement the CRC Committee's recommendations. It is interesting to note that limited financial and human resources on Aruba can show both rational choice and normative mentalities with regards to children's rights implementation.

Conclusion

Since the CRC Committee first pointed out teenage pregnancy and drug abuse as the major adolescent health issues on Aruba, the Aruban government and various NGOs have made significant progress in reducing the incidence of these issues. In terms of teenage pregnancy prevention efforts, the number of teenage mothers has decreased significantly since 2003 and prevention efforts have become more successful. Sex education has become more accessible and available in and out of schools. Various NGOs visit schools in order to provide quality sex education

given by specialists. Additionally, TV commercials and other media campaigns help further spread information on safe sexual behaviors. In order to increase the effectiveness of these strategies, most pregnancy prevention efforts target the carnival season which is known for being a period where more teenagers become sexually active. Due to this, Aruba has been able to further decrease incidences of teenage pregnancies. With regards to teenage drug prevention efforts, more lectures have been set up which also reach parent audiences in order to discourage teenage drug use. However, Aruba continues to face challenges in both of these fields. These include cultural, familial, and environmental factors such as media influence or religious beliefs which may hinder the progress made. Furthermore, the research has shown that the UN reporting cycle is inadequate at addressing these factors.

By closely examining the role of the reporting process, this research argues that the influence of the CRC Committee is minimal. Moreover, the UN reporting cycle is a rather ineffective tool in terms of its ability to instigate change. Firstly, it does not address the root causes of adolescent health issues. Second, self-reporting may result in biased or incomplete data (sometimes due to a lack of perspective from certain key organizations), thus decreasing the value of CRC Committee recommendations. Lastly, the absence of sanctions for non-compliance is a major drawback of the reporting cycle as state parties face little to no consequences for non-compliance. The issues with the reporting cycle are further exacerbated by domestic factors such as a lack of human and financial resources which limit the funds allocated to children's rights issues. Additionally, local attitudes can also dismiss children's rights as less important than other pressing issues the island faces. Hence, compliance with the CRC Committee's recommendations has been generally weak. Fortunately, many NGOs continue to work on projects which improve children's rights conditions, but these usually stem out of local initiatives and are not a result of the CRC Committee's recommendations.

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Of Centipedes and the Surprise of Ethnography

The story about my experience in Aruba has to start with a 30 cm long, brown and orange creature, which, according to Wikipedia, has thirty-eight yellow legs and “preys on a wide variety of animals, including other sizable arthropods, amphibians, mammals and reptiles”. Apparently that centipede considered me a suitable prey when I was sitting in peace on our sofa, or it thought that life inside a sofa was a lot less exciting than crawling up my back. That situation certainly qualifies as ‘the surprise of ethnography’, but that’s not where I am heading with that.

I think if I had known that encountering the centipede was going to be decisive for my fieldwork, I would have cared a lot less about people telling me that what I was planning to do was impossible; that finding access to a community that lives in hiding would be complicated at best. Now, I feel a bit guilty for the lack of sympathy I had for my many legged confrère. But at the time, I did not know that that

person that came to our aid was Venezuelan, that his cousin was undocumented and not only willing to speak to me but also currently in our backyard. Neither did I know that this particular person would become a close friend, through who’s invitation I was suddenly part of a community. The surprise of ethnography includes all of that but really it meant that my idea of doing research had nothing to do with what it turned out to be. I think when ethnography was taught to me as a method, as one form to ‘study a phenomenon’, I thought of it as something from the outside. My idea of myself was probably closest to that of a neutral observer. But the people I worked with could not be further away from “respondents as sources of information”. The real surprise of ethnographic fieldwork was that it allowed me to meet people who I admire, who’s views I find inspiring and who I deeply care about; that conducting ‘non-hierarchical’, ‘participatory’ and ‘community-based’ research would not only become desirable but that doing anything else became

inconceivable. I cannot put in words how grateful I am for these incredible people who trusted me with their powerful stories.

For me, Aruba, and the experience I made is something of a strange mixture of freedom and enagement. Enagement because of the injustices, the absence information and political will to be understanding - humanitarian - towards the Venezuelan community. Especially now, with the Corona virus being particularly problematic for this group. But my experience also includes freedom. Freedom as the intensity and challenge of this project was exactly right for me. I valued the independence, the responsibility, the difficulty of it. I doubt I was prepared for the emotional intensity listening to stories of suffering implies, the fatigue hour long conversations in Spanish produced; and I did

not know how much the responsibility weighs of 'getting it right', being as faithful as possible to the situation and the views of the people who seek protection in Aruba. But this was exactly what I wanted and I got so much in return. While it was transformative for me to have that very independence and responsibility, sharing this experience was what made it enriching. I was fortunate to live with Keti, Micky and Charlotte, who became good friends, willing to spend their time listening to my outpouring of thoughts if my brain was not able to process them alone anymore, who would be there for conversations and distractions, for long nights on the balcony, midnight swims and sunset beers at the beach. I am thankful for this time, for the amount of experiences, new knowledges and surprises it included, and for the remarkable people I shared this with. It's been a very important experience for me.

The Condition of 'Illegality'

Deconstructing the 'Illegalization' of Undocumented Venezuelans on Aruba

Hannah Mayr



Figure 1. 'Deportation': Officer in front of Migrant's Belongings © Hannah Mayr

For the individuals who have trusted me with their powerful stories and whose names cannot be named.

CHAPTER ONE

THE CONDITION OF 'ILLEGALITY'

One evening, we were sitting on the terrace watching YouTube videos of 'la Resistencia' (the resistance) in Venezuela: the civil movement pushing for Nicolas Maduro's resignation in 2017. During the over 100 consecutive days unfolding protests, the violence escalated massively. The award-winning short documentary "Where Chaos Reigns" by Braulio Jatar and Anais Michel illustrates the violence of the protests following a group of medical students that attempt to provide first aid to those injured. During the 2017 protests, 127 people were killed (Jatar & Michel, 2019). Many more disappeared, others were detained by the police, mentally and physically tortured; many were left somewhere dead or left to die. It's one thing to read numbers in a newspaper article - even watching a video keeps one at a distance, not fully grasping it - it's another to talk to people you care about, knowing they were in there when tanks were driven over people, to hear how their friends disappeared and were never heard of again or when people were shot next to them. "The most absurd is that at the beginning the smoke bombs take your breath away. It burns badly in your throat, your eyes are watering but after more than 100 days of breathing it, you got used to it," my friend Julio tells me¹ (Julio, personal communication, February 21, 2020). He also told me that he was part of the block that would stay, even when the police would start shooting at people. Part of the group, he said, that was vulnerable to being killed during the protests, captured, tortured - maybe assassinated - as happened to many of the young adults driven by the desire to change their countries' fate, among them one of his close friends.

Unlike me, who is sitting there in despair watching videos of excessive state violence, something I, a German, middle-class citizen have never experienced and struggle to process, Julio tells me, he could watch these videos all night: "each video brings up different memories". Of course I have seen these videos before and, of course, I had read about the situation, but something changed during the last weeks. The deep sense of affection I feel for the people I am working with brings up an array of emotions while watching the videos. "This was brutal but this violence is nothing compared to Venezuela in general". He looks at me, hesitantly, checking if I can process more or if this was enough. What he talks about is the fact that there is no rule of law; that the police frisks people to place drugs in their pockets, incarcerates them until the family can obtain the money to buy them out. It happened to him; still he adds, "the street is even worse than the prison" because "on the street, everybody can rob and kill you". I am listening, and at the same time my thoughts are drifting off. What am I doing here? Noticing the effects of his words and the videos on me, once again, I feel frustrated. These videos are public. Everyone can see them, and each person has a story to tell; most of my respondents have people in their families that were killed or disappeared. "None of us wants to be here" is one of the most frequent statements I heard during my research. All respondents left because they felt like they had no other choice. How is it possible that the people I am speaking to are labelled 'economic migrants', thereby excluded from any claim to the need for protection?

Venezuela is experiencing an unparalleled political, economic and humanitarian crisis. After Afghanistan, it is the most dangerous country in the world (Organization of American States (OAS), 2019, p. 32). Precise calculations

are difficult to come by, but with over four million people estimated to have emigrated, the Venezuelan exodus has eclipsed migration from Syria (UNHCR, 2019, Camilleri & Hampson, 2018; Displacement Trafficking Matrix, 2019). It is estimated that more than 1 million children were left behind (Phillips & Rangel, 2020), and on Twitter many accounts document cases of children who were found abandoned on the streets (cf. Zaideth, 2020). The extent of the Venezuelan crisis is illustrated by a sky-rocketing inflation rate of 13,860% in 2018 (Raffoul, 2018), and most people left because of a widespread lack of access to basic services (Strategic Comments, 2017; Camilleri & Hampson, 2018; Hidalgo, 2019; Mixed Migration Centre (MMC), 2019). “The escalation of violence sponsored by the government, and the lack of proposals by the State for a viable solution to confront the serious problems facing the majority of the population, including access to essential livelihoods such as food, medicines and all basic goods, are generating a crisis never before seen throughout the continent”, said Erika Guevara Rosas, the America’s director of Amnesty International (Amnesty International, 2017). While people are perceived to voluntarily migrate, therefore characterized as economic migrants and non-eligible to protection, the present conditions in Venezuela are unsustainable at best; they force people to leave. Parents cannot afford to feed their children; many are starving or dying of illnesses that are not treated because of electricity fallouts and lack of medication (Camilleri & Hampson, 2018). Simultaneously, police violence escalated, allegedly supported by a narco-trafficking government that has refused to accept there to be a crisis (Rashbaum, Weiser, & Benner, 2020). Those who were in ‘la Resistencia’ have left Venezuela; my friend is one of them. Today, I’ve been told, people are demotivated. “There came a point for the Venezuelans where they only think about surviving this day. Your head is not busy with how we are going to change the power structure; it is busy with asking what to eat today. I am only worrying about how my children won’t die”, said Rony, who left the country at the age of 23, trying to save money for an expensive heart

operation his daughter needed. He is the sole provider for his family (Rony, personal communication, February 12, 2020). As the youth emigrated, those left in Venezuela are the elderly, some women, and many children, depending on the remittances of their relatives.

The UNHCR stated that a relevant portion of the fleeing Venezuelans merits international protection (MMC, 2018; Camilleri & Hampson, 2018). Nonetheless, in Aruba, the Caribbean island state in front of Venezuela, one of the places Venezuelans flee to, the non-judicial category of the “economic migrant” is used to deny Venezuelans protection and legitimize the active detention and deportation of undocumented Venezuelans on the island. In contrast to other Latin American countries, Aruba and the Caribbean region have not instituted temporary residence and work permits. The lack of temporary options or other legal pathways thereby produces an increasing number of ‘illegal’ migrants and asylum seekers, as means of authorised migration are impeded. Importantly, Aruba’s recently introduced asylum system theoretically allows for the protection of some, yet the outcome of the structurally inefficient asylum system is rather an “asylum-seeker limbo”, a condition of protracted uncertainty for asylum seekers, warranting very limited protection².

The number of undocumented Venezuelans on Aruba is unknown. The latest numbers are from 2019; estimates range between 16 and 25 thousand people (R4V, 2019; Brookings Institution Working Group on Venezuela, 2018; UNCHR, 2019). In December, a representative of the immigration office stated there are 20.000 asylum seekers (Noticia Impacto Aruba, 2019). Probably, at least one fifth of the entire population is undocumented or in the asylum system. Their insecure status forces them into violent conditions of structural dependency, marginality, and abuse; however, to my knowledge there has been no scholarly research conducted on the situation of Venezuelans in Aruba. Some reports covering the Venezuelan situation in the

Caribbean exist and also include Aruba in their discussion (Amnesty International, 2018; CCPR, 2002; Organization of American States (OAS), 2019). Nonetheless, data on the situation of undocumented Venezuelans on Aruba is limited and information is hard to come by. This research aims to address the gap of knowledge on the conditions of the Venezuelan diaspora in Aruba.

Additionally, the situation is interesting in relation to the Netherlands. That is, the discrepancy between the Netherlands as a nation-state that prides itself as a safe country where human rights are protected and honoured while they appear to close their eyes to the structural violence occurring in the Dutch Caribbean.

Unlike quantitative studies that mainly aim to explain the dynamics of migratory movements, anthropological studies attend to the perspective of the person and their real lived experiences, understanding migration not as fixed unidirectional flows but as multi-sided and non-coherent. To my knowledge, the case of Aruba has not been studied from these perspectives. Although Aruba is a unique case with a distinct socio-political setup and history, it is still just as much involved in neo-liberal capitalist production, post-colonial dynamics, and nation-building processes as other regions of the contemporary world order that have been researched. Insights gained by these studies can be helpful to shed light on the processes taking place in Aruba; I will discuss those and my research focus in more detail below.

The scholarship of border-regions, understood as porous but physical, heavily policed and enforced to protect nation-states' territories, has primarily focused on the border between the United States and Mexico (De Genova, 2002; Chavez, 2001; Coutin, 2005) or the externalized but increasingly virtual borders of the European Union (Bigo, 2014; Hess et al., 2017; Tazzioli & Walters, 2016; Tsianos & Karakayali, 2010; Walters, 2019). Other studies have focused on the new technologies of border enforcement developed

since the 1990s (Coutin, 2015; Peutz, 2006; Walters, 2015) and increasing surveillance (Bigo, 2014; Fassin, 2011). Moreover, the humanitarian border regime has been discussed by considering the consequences of humanitarian exceptions, such as the French 'illness clause'; humanitarian interventions that do not result in the intended outcomes (Fassin, 2011; Ticktin, 2011). Deportation studies can be seen as the field that emerged out of the need to study the macro-level structures that are affecting migration regimes, including the individuals' experiences of deportation and the impacts of removal on a societal level (Coutin, 2015, p. 674). Deportations studies have borrowed and furthered insights derived from security studies, especially forms and techniques of government and immigration scholarships regarding national borders and subjectivity (Coutin, 2015).

De Genova raises the issue that anthropological research on migration should be aware of the danger to become part of another iteration of the "formation that fetishizes 'illegality' as a given, taken-for-granted 'fact'" (De Genova, 2013, p. 1181). Classical studies of migration have often (un)intentionally played into the hands of states, serving to introduce stricter immigration policies as research on migration has added to the technologies of surveillance adapted to manage migration. There is also an inherent danger to anthropological research of migration to perform that role, which includes my research. The field of deportation studies responds to some of the criticisms raised by De Genova as it avoids reiterating the normalization and naturalization of migrant 'illegality' and deconstruct such conceptualizations. Scholars therefore incorporate the socio-legal, historical contexts, draw on theories of the state and anthropological understandings on nation-states, including "their immigration policies, politics of nationalism, nativism and citizenship" (De Genova, 2002, p. 432; Peutz, 2006; Chavez, 2002) and analyse the enactment of different modes of power and techniques of government to legitimize immigration control (Fassin, 2011; Walters, 2015; Bigo, 2014).

My research can be situated in the field of deportation studies and asks for an understanding of ‘illegality’ as historically specific, shaping the configuration of migrant ‘illegality’ through regimes of immigration control that govern particular migrations within a particular nation-state³ (De Genova, 2002, p.424). What I aim at is “ethnographic grounding” (De Genova, 2002, p.456) or an anthropology that goes beyond “the ethnographic visible” (Farmer, 2004). An understanding of Aruba’s immigration regime requires an interdisciplinary, in-depth analysis of a wide range of processes and interrelated factors, including at least the current situation in Venezuela, the legal production of migrant ‘illegality’, Aruba’s asylum system, its politics of citizenship, nativism and security, as well as public discourses, issues of identity, belonging and resistance, and embedding these in post-coloniality and the global production of labour. This project thus desires to analyse some of these mechanisms, but from ‘below’, desiring to provide a counter-discourse to the public perspective on Venezuelan ‘illegal’ migration by sharing the stories of systemically ‘illegalized’ people whose voices are silenced.

This research then seeks to examine how the condition of ‘illegality’ is constructed by the Aruban immigration apparatus, which techniques of power are enacted to shape and control undocumented Venezuelan’s conducts and what responses this provokes.

I do not perceive of immigration law as a “functional by-product of some presumed (and thus, teleological) structural logic” (De Genova, 2002, p. 424); rather I interpret it through what Farmer described as “structures that are sinful and ostensibly nobody’s fault” (Farmer, 2004) yet not homogenous and totalizing. I situate the ‘illegality’ of undocumented Venezuelans in Aruba in the relationship between power and resistance, drawing on the different modes of power delineated by Foucault: (I) sovereign power; (II) biopower and (III) disciplinary power. While

Foucault situates these three forms of power in different phases of modernity, he argues they have not replaced each other. I neither perceive them as discrete but as blurring and blending into one another and in their incoherence representing the complexity and messiness of the current situation.

I argue Venezuelan’s ‘illegalization’ is a form of structural violence. I aim to reconceptualize Aruba’s migration control, understanding it in terms of a larger apparatus including a variety of actors and practices, that governs through techniques of control and serves to control the conduct of Venezuelan migrants⁴. The first chapter analyses the construction of ‘illegality’. It is followed by a chapter on increased immigration control and the violation of undocumented migrants and asylum seekers rights, situated in a discussion on sovereign power that draws on the scholarship of de Genova (2011; 2013) and Agamben (1995). The third chapter discusses the asylum system and the discourses on Venezuelan’s criminality, prostitution and human trafficking as biopolitical techniques of control used to discipline the undocumented and general population to conform to certain behaviours. The fourth chapter investigates deportability as a form of disciplinary power in the global production of migrant labour and analyses its effects on migrant’s lives. It is complemented by the fifth chapter on resistance and the various ways migrants have found ways to respond to the forces they have been subject to. I conclude by highlighting the condition of ‘illegality’ as a form of structural violence, underlining Venezuelan’s ‘illegalization’ as part of wider border regimes that includes the Netherland’s response to the Venezuelan situation in the Caribbean.

1.1 THE VALUE OF BLACK AND WHITE

Over the course of eight weeks I conducted ethnographic fieldwork on the ‘Venezuelan-situation’, as the local terminology describes the condition of ‘illegality’ of

undocumented Venezuelans on the small island state Aruba. The data obtained stems from twenty interviews and numerous informal conversations. I conducted fourteen interviews with undocumented Venezuelans and asylum seekers, with a total of eighteen participants. All except one took place in person; one was via the phone. The Venezuelan respondents were primarily young adults in their early twenties, many former students who came to Aruba alone to provide financial support to their families. I further interviewed three mothers and some of their family members, who migrated with their families, which produces different responsibilities and additional challenges in terms of risks, financial struggles, health and education. The remaining six interviews were conducted with representatives of local NGOs, involving representatives of VeneAruba, TodosPorVenezuela, Stichting Rancho Aruba, Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society (HIAS), the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) on Aruba, and Human Rights Defense Curacao; all except the last took place in person. Due to the coronavirus, the research period was shortened and some of the planned interviews, including the RedCross, the Anti-Human Trafficking and Smuggling taskforce, and a focus group could not take place.

I perceived ethnographic research, characterized by participant observation and thick description as the most suitable method to conduct this research as it allowed me to capture and present the experiences of each individual in a format as true as possible to their views. All quotes were collected between the period of the 1st of February and the 28th of March, 2020, unless stated otherwise. Access to these stories was easier than originally expected as people wanted to share their experiences and were pleased to engage with a person who takes interest. I relied on unstructured interviews in which I aimed to have a casual conversation in order to avoid the hierarchy formal interviews often generate. The interviews took place at different locations. Sometimes

we had coffee somewhere, drank beer at the beach, sat in car trunks or met at their or my home. Some respondents I met more than once and over the course of the research, especially Julio and Rony became key-respondents with whom I spent many hours and met in different situations. I further took field notes on different situations and participated in diverse activities, including joining for church visits, meeting at the parks where people would work out, as well as visiting detention centres and witnessing deportations at the airport.

While I was aiming at a non-hierarchical form of research, there are inherent risks for my respondents, which came with certain responsibilities for me. The protection of my respondents is self-evidently of utmost importance⁵. As the consequences for them are severe, I informed them as accurately as possible about the content of my research, sometimes in written and sometimes in oral form. I asked for their oral consent for interviews being recorded, the use of the information they provided and the publishing of the photographs I took or they shared with me. I decided to not use written consent forms as this would have created the formality I tried to avoid. People had the chance to ask questions at any point. To protect their anonymity, I have changed respondents' names and kept their information as confidential as possible. I decided to withhold some information that I perceive as having the potential to play into the wrong hands.

I chose to include photographs as an additional way to convey a perspective of reality. Visual communication offers a complementary form of expression to the verbal system that can aid to create variants within the usual discourse structure of interviews (Lapenta & For, 2011, p. 210). Participants chose photographs to ground their story, to provide evidence that is tangible to their experiences. Photographs often elicited a different form of reflection by drawing on forgotten details, or brought up stories they initially did not think about. It was a chance to make the

research participant-led, by allowing respondents to decide what was valuable to their person and what they found important to share with me. By sharing photos that were meaningful to the participants some of the boundaries inherent in the research process could be weakened.

Secondly, I took photos to provide visual context and support to the stories I chose to tell. Photography can facilitate understanding because of “its ability to evoke reality” as it “offers a reflex reportage of real circumstance, and its recognizable life messages make it a bridge of communication” (Collier, 1995, p. 245). Photography has the merit of showing a different perspective and contextualizing the situation through visual imagery, creating proximity between the presented content and the reader. As Heyman & Smart articulated, “legality and illegality are simultaneously black and white, and shades of grey” (Matthews & Heyman, 2001, p.11). I therefore decided to present the photographs in this publication in black-and-white, as the legal construct concerning recently arrived Venezuelans on the island is often black and white, albeit it simultaneously produces a variety of different shades of grey that often go unnoticed.

CHAPTER TWO

THE CONSTRUCTION OF ‘ILLEGALITY’

The Venezuelan crisis produced the largest migratory movement so far witnessed in Latin America. Most Venezuelans migrate by moving through the Andean corridor through Colombia to Chile and Argentina, heading south to Brazil or travelling north to the Caribbean islands. Initially the Latin American countries were following an open door policy, and most instituted temporary permits⁶. However, the resulting regional response can largely be described as a “patchwork of uncoordinated, discretionary migration policies” and lately, entry has become increasingly restricted⁷ (Camilleri&Hampson, 2018, p.13).

The Caribbean region has been the primary destination for Venezuelans living close to the Venezuelan coast. Trinidad and Tobago and Aruba are located less than 30 kilometres away from the Venezuelan coast and Curaçao is not much further. Both the proximity and the amount of available information, arising from the long-standing social and economic relations in the area, make the islands attractive destinations. Since many Venezuelans leave because of the humanitarian situation and not because of political persecution, Aruba and other territories in the Caribbean region do not perceive there to be sufficient reason to grant Venezuelans asylum and stress the limited carrying capacity of the islands. The response of the Aruban government towards Venezuelan migration is illustrated by a statement by Prime Minister Wever Croes:

“The fact that Venezuelans flee their country due to economic reasons is not a valid reason for them to apply for political asylum, but are considered economic migrants” and “besides the threat for personal life, asylum seekers need to apply for asylum at entry point. Those currently living in Aruba do not qualify for political asylum. Aruba is bound to the political asylum treaties of the United Nations. Some political asylum requests have been received by the authorities and will be revised by a commission. [...] If their lives are indeed in danger and only if they qualify they might be granted asylum” (GoA, 2018).

As a result of the current policy, legal ways to migrate to the island are limited. Hence, most arriving Venezuelans are illegalized. Since Aruba’s economy primarily relies on tourism, and having a refugee situation is perceived to impede tourism, the classification of Venezuelans as ‘economic migrants’ is utile as it allows for the active detention and removal of ‘illegal aliens’ and the denial of asylum requests. Migration law is a government of Aruba affair, and the implementing body is the Department of Integration and Management of Foreigners (DIMAS); the enforcement of immigration control is executed by Guarda Nos Costa (literally translated as ‘protect our coast’).

The immigration law consists of the National Ordinance on Admission and Expulsion (Landesverordening Toelating en Uitzetting (LTU) of 2019), the Admission Decree (Toelatingsbesluit (Tb) of 2019), and the DIMAS' policy, detailed in their Admission Handbook (Toelatingshandbook 2018). According to the LTU, it is a violation of the law to enter and reside in Aruba if one does not have permission to do so through the mechanisms stated in Articles 1 through 8 (Article 23). The legal options for most Venezuelans to migrate are through a temporary work permit that can be obtained through employment by an Aruban legal entity who acts as a guarantor to the employee (Toelatingshandbook 2018, p.29), a domestic permit to live and work in an Aruban household as domestic help (Toelatingshandbook 2018, p.30), or marriage to an Aruban citizen. Anyone who does not have legal residence through the mechanisms defined in Articles 1 through 8 can be deported (Article 15). The current policy, where legality can only be requested from outside the island, implies that Venezuelans forced to migrate are left with few other choices than arriving illegally or legally, but overstaying their visas and remaining 'illegal'. Those staying as undocumented migrants live without legal protection and under the threat of deportation.

Over the course of the last years, more Venezuelans have attempted to seek asylum in Aruba; and while Aruba had been a signatory country of the Geneva Convention⁸ for many years, until 2019 there was no asylum system in place. Before the government started handling asylum claims, the Red Cross had an agreement with the UNHCR office in Washington D.C. to hand out papers stating that the UNHCR was evaluating their claim (24Ora, 2018). This fact is also recorded in the admission handbook, where these papers are not recognized but are considered as intentions to apply for asylum without legal recourse. On a domestic level, Aruba still does not have an official asylum law. Thus, the existing legal framework consists of the above-mentioned legal provisions, the LTU and the

Admission Decree (Tb), of which the latter contains the articles providing the structure for an asylum procedure. These articles were last amended in July of 2019, due to the increasing influx of Venezuelan asylum seekers.

The Dutch 'Schiphol model' was implemented, defining the period for the processing of asylum applications, and the right to work for asylum seekers was regulated. First, according to the Schiphol policy, asylum requests need to be processed within 28 days. I have been informed by representatives of different NGOs that the Schiphol model obliges people to request asylum upon arrival at the airport, who then can be detained and denied entry for up to 28 days during which DIMAS can do the preliminary adjudication of the case. Moreover, the Dimas Handbook also specifies that asylum seekers should request asylum upon entering the country if they seek international protection (Handboek, 2019, p.57)⁹. Second, Article 19 (Tb of 2019) states that if DIMAS cannot complete the asylum application within 28 days, the person is supposed to be released, with "no restrictions regarding the performance of work" attached, and Article 19 would be noted on the Asylum seeker's documents (Tb of 2019, p.3).

DIMAS registers and interviews asylum seekers and the decision is taken depending on whether or not the asylum seekers' information is in line with the refugee convention's definition on refugees¹⁰. To my knowledge, persons with pending asylum seeker documentation are not being returned to Venezuela. Instead cases seem to be finished swiftly, as, with the case rejected, the person can be deported.

Aruba's rejection rate of asylum requests is 97% as most people are perceived to flee due to humanitarian needs¹¹, and Aruba, unlike most Latin American countries, is not bound to the Cartagena declaration, which widened the refugee definition. Aruban case law adheres strictly to this narrow definition, as seen in an example where an asylum

seeker claims to have been persecuted by police inspectors, but because the persecution was done for personal reasons, this does not justify the claim to asylum (Hassel v. Vos & Giel, 2020). Asylum seekers have the right to appeal if their case is rejected¹², which most cannot afford. Throughout the time of the asylum process, a ‘meldplicht’ applies, which obliges asylum seekers to report to DIMAS monthly.

The agency in charge of migration control, detection, detention, and deportation of undocumented Venezuelans is Guarda Nos Costa. Once a person is detained, within 72 hours, the person concerned should be brought before an examining magistrate to verify the legality of their deprivation of liberty. Those persons that cannot be detained have the “obligation to report periodically to a place designated by the Minister responsible for judicial affairs or to be placed under electronic supervision” (Article 16, p.9). Asylum seekers cannot be detained unless there is good reason; for example, if they are a threat to public order, or if they are found working without work permission. Nonetheless, the judiciary does not consider a pending asylum claim as reason enough to consider detention as unlawful. Although an asylum claim needs to be evaluated before an asylum seeker can be deported, this does not mean that asylum seekers have a right to the ‘meldplicht’ instead of detention (Falconi v. van Suilen, 2019). Moreover, according to Aruban case law, before its amendment, the LTU did not have a mechanism through which a detention can be periodically evaluated by the judiciary¹³. Since the amendment, it has been explicitly laid out in Article 16, subsection 3, that detainees can always request evaluation of their detention, even after the detention was already evaluated.

As a result of the current regulations, some asylum seekers are detained, and those that are released are obliged to daily visit the detention centre at 10 am to get their documents stamped, while Guarda Nos Costa often retains their passports while their asylum application is processed. In

most cases, detained asylum seekers are asked to withdraw their asylum application voluntarily, after which their detention can be ended and they can be deported. The Minister of Justice has implemented a repatriation policy since the advent of COVID-19 cases for people residing in Aruba without regular migration status, or with a pending asylum claim. If they want to return to their country but do not have sufficient means to pay airfare, the ministry arranges this (DIMAS, 2020).

Aruba’s law and asylum system may appear rather definite and coherent. Put simply, you are either allowed to enter Aruba or not. If you do so anyway, you are expelled; if your life is in danger in your country, you should be given protection in another. In public discourse, the law has become imagined as natural and coherent, as rational and outside of subjectivity, which ensures states’ sovereignty and maintenance of the public order. Accordingly, the law informs people’s behaviour by establishing normalized understandings of what actions are deemed legal or illegal. Yet, laws are historically and spatially variable (Newburn, 2007) as, for example, laws on the legality of prostitution, homosexuality or fluctuating crime statistics demonstrate. They are hence socially constructed, malleable and subject to frequent change and transgressions.

Accordingly, the legal distinction between forced, legal, or voluntary, ‘illegal’, migrants is hazy and rooted in the dichotomy between voluntary and forced migrants created and decided during the Geneva convention in 1951. The convention demarcated clear-cut categories of ‘forced’ (political) migrants and ‘voluntary’ (economic) migrants and established the ‘threat of persecution’ as the benchmark against which a person’s migrant status is judged (Chatty, 2014, p.190). We are thus made to understand economic migrants as having no right to seek protection, and therefore as ‘illegal’ if they migrate anyways, and ‘illegality’ becomes perceived as a fixed and coherent attribute of a person. Yet a person’s ‘illegality’ is not some essential quality inherent

in “a migrant’s genetic code” (Chavez, 2007, p. 192); instead, a person should be perceived as ‘illegalized’, made illegal, through the unequal and discriminatory “politics of citizenship” institutionalized in immigration law (De Genova, 2013, p.1191). Through its strict criteria of access, hence, immigration law, also in Aruba, inherently produces a mass of ‘illegal’ and deportable migrants (de Genova, 2013, p.1181).

Therefore, I argue Venezuelans’ ‘Illegality’ has to be contextualized as a production of Aruba’s legal system. ‘Illegal migration’ from Venezuela is the product of shifting aims and policies situated within Aruba’s sovereignty that legitimize the island’s detention and expulsion agenda of ‘illegal’ subjects. Crucially, while states hegemonically claim that the “line between ‘legal’ and ‘illegal’ is held to be clear and definitive inside a given state”, the actual implementation is highly ambiguous and subject to manipulation (Heyman & Smart, 2001, p. 11).

For example, the ambiguity and arbitrariness of the current legislation is illustrated through the ‘right to work conundrum’ and the ‘arrestability’ of asylum seekers. If one has asylum seeker documentation from DIMAS, they should not be arrested. Nonetheless, asylum seekers are often arrested by Guarda Nos Costa, as NGOs told me, either because they looked like they might be Venezuelan or because they were caught working and their asylum seeker documentation does not have the subsidiary Article 19 printed on it, the application of which is inconsistent. Some people have documents that say they are allowed to work; others have documents that state Article 19, which implies the right to work but does not state it on the document, and another group of people has documents that say they cannot work. Asylum seekers supposedly have the right to work through Article 19, and there is not supposed to be a distinction between people who applied at the airport and people who applied for asylum elsewhere as that distinction is not made in Article 19. However, it appears to be a distinction

DIMAS makes to grant some the right to work and others not. The actual practice of Aruba’s immigration apparatus thus epitomizes the law’s invented character in contrast to its imagined coherence as its application is often arbitrary. The public’s understanding of the law as rational, consistent and precise in its execution stands in harsh contrast to its actual practice. Migration law is “subject to resourceful manipulation” and frequently transgressed as discussed in the later chapters (Heyman & Smart, 2001, p. 11)

The law can further be interpreted as a mechanism of sovereign power. Sovereign power, as understood by Foucault, is legislative, prohibitive, and censoring, executed through the law, and working through punishment and deterrence (Vinhagen & Johansson, 2013, p. 110). While sovereign power uses the law, it does so always in conjunction with disciplinary, normalizing power. Foucault captures this complex web of policies and social relations, with different aims and desires and ambiguous practices in his work on Governmentality. The undocumented migrant or asylum seeker can be perceived as “the paradigmatic site – and victim – of modern techniques of [...] ‘governmentality’”, showcasing “the organised practices and techniques used to produce, care for and/or dominate individual subjects” (Owens, 2009, p.568). Governmentality resonates with the Venezuelan situation on Aruba in some ways as it emphasizes intersections between different techniques of control, in which diverse technologies of power conjunctively produce the condition of ‘illegality’ and control people’s behaviours.

The following sections will illustrate some of these rationales and techniques of government enacted through Aruba’s migration regime. I first draw on the enactment of sovereign power through immigration control, and later continue the discussion by drawing on other different modes of government present in Aruba’s immigration regime, including biopolitics and disciplinary power. None of these sections should be perceived as being in isolation.

Instead, different modes of control are always enacted simultaneously; consequently, they work in conjunction.

CHAPTER 3

IDEALIZED LAW, ILLEGALIZED REALITIES

3.1 THE EXHIBITION OF BORDERS

Mariella, an elderly woman of 78 years, has recently joined her family in Aruba. Slowly, one by one, Mariella's family had emigrated from Venezuela. Ultimately, she was left in their house alone, with regularly occurring electricity fallouts and entirely dependent on remittances of those who were gone. At some point, her daughter, Lucía, decided that Mariella should live with her family in Aruba. The journey to get there was hard for the elderly women suffering from a respiratory illness. She walked and hitch-hiked through all of Venezuela. After crossing the Colombian border, she could finally take a flight to Aruba. Arriving as a tourist included purchasing a return flight she was never going to use, a hotel reservation and a \$400 demonstration of sufficient financial means to stay as a tourist. Mariella's story, told to me by her daughter, Lucía, could be different, if it were not for the ongoing closing of the Venezuelan-Aruban border, Venezuela's president, Nicholas Maduro initiated last year. Eliminating the option to fly from Venezuela to Aruba impacted people's movements, forcing many to rely on strenuous, illicit and dangerous routes to come to Aruba. One of those is the journey by boat, increasing their vulnerability to fall prey to smuggling or human trafficking. As some of my informants personally witnessed, the smuggling of Venezuelans to Aruba is accompanied by smuggling of arms and drugs, and is said to involve corruption and bribing the right people.

Jose, a chef from Venezuela, pictured a scene during a conversation we had which reminds me of the

Mediterranean¹⁴. In small fishermen boats that leave from Punto Fijo, the largest city at the coast of the Venezuelan peninsula, people pay around \$350 for a boat trip that is extremely dangerous. Moved onto fragile wooden boats enhanced by two 450HP motors, people cling up to hours to tiny benches, while the boat is racing high-speed over the treacherous Caribbean Sea. Within minutes everybody is soaked, many get sick, some are vomiting. Each moment of the journey accompanied by the fear of one of those waves being one too many, breaking the boat in half with nobody ever looking for them. Recently, on the 18th of March 2020, this happened to a boat with 19 persons onboard close to Curaçao (MasNoticia, 2020). Three of the bodies were found at the Aruban coast, others have drifted to Colombia or are still missing. Once Aruba was in sight, Jose and the other passengers were told to get off the boat or back to Venezuela. Aruba is close, Jose said he could see the dark shadow of the island 150 meters away. At the same time it's far, very far to swim, yet still sufficiently close to give him enough hope to get there; and he was desperate enough to try. Many do not know how to swim. Nonetheless, nobody stays on the boat. Crashing into waves, coral reefs, swallowing water - caught in absolute darkness, the real terror began for José when he started witnessing people drowning around him. People who were not given life vests and who could not swim. Losing your life while trying to save it. How can that be right?

A person Jose did not know was anxiously clinging onto his back, grabbing his rucksack, holding on in desperation. In panic, as they almost drowned together, Jose managed to get rid of his rucksack, letting go of all of his belongings - and the person with them. All he owned now was his phone and his passport, wrapped in plastic and taped around his thigh. He tells me, "you don't look back, only forward" (Jose, personal communication, February, 24, 2020). The only thought is to escape to the safety of the island. Just that it's not safe. It's potentially deadly, as the border control, Guarda Nos Costa, could be there, catch him and send him back to Venezuela where he cannot go

back to. Not after what he just survived, not after what happened in Venezuela, not because of what will happen to his family. Once he arrived at the shore, he started running. He felt the blood streaming down his leg. It did not hurt, not yet; he was still drawing from the adrenaline. Running in the darkness, while hearing the sound of the helicopter circulating, seeing the stream of lights of the police car or people's acquaintances, families, waiting for the arrival. He cannot know from the distance; they could be either a way forward or a way back.

While José's and many others' experiences are horrifying, they are not yet the norm and migrants all have their own individual stories and experiences, as shown by the two stories above. Most people, currently, arrive by planes from Colombia or Panama. This is about to change as the government of Aruba has introduced a visa requirement for Venezuelans starting in April, 2020 (GoA, 2019). The act by which a significant numbers of Venezuelans enter illegality - the act of overstaying a visa - is rather discrete. It is not very visible and not very dramatic. According to de Genova, it is hence exactly the border where the theatre of the spectacle of the "illegal alien" the law creates is staged (De Genova, 2002, p.436). The invisibility of the law, its covertness, requires the enactment of the 'illegal migrant' through a "spectacle of enforcement"; thereby "rendering a racialized migrant "illegality" visible and lending it the commonsensical air of a "natural" fact" (de Genova, 2002, p.463). While Foucault's theories are novel in terms of modern, non-sovereign forms of power, he also argued that these forms of power were added but did not replace sovereign power. In this section, I first rely on the insights derived by de Genova (2002; 2013) and in the subsequent chapter, those of Agamben (1995) to demonstrate the upsurge of sovereign techniques of control that are enacted to control migrants.

The trend of increasingly securitized approaches to migration rests on the omnipresent discourse of 'illegal'

migration, which frames migrants as a threat to national security. Like other nation-states, Aruba has also drawn on the 'threat' narrative of 'illegal' migration but as de Genova says, the border spectacle "works its magic trick of displacing 'illegality' from its point of production (in the law) to the proverbial 'scene of the crime', which is of course also the scene of ostensible crime-fighting (De Genova, 2013, p.118). Thus, the criminalizing discourse is the principal characteristic that "founds 'the' border as the scene of exclusion" (De Genova, 2013, p.118). This allows for certain measures of migration enforcement, increasing the visibility of immigration control and thereby maintaining the border spectacle necessary to legitimize migrant's exclusion.

I have become acquainted with some elements of the border spectacle Aruba's immigration apparatus produces. Daily, the helicopter of the Aruban Coast Guard circulates four to five times over the island, looking for construction sites. The immigration raids can happen at any time. Videos of raids are publicly shared via social media and occur frequently at construction sites that employ Venezuelan workers. The threat of deportation is tangible. When 'Migracion' - the term used by Venezuelans to refer to Guarda Nos Costa - enters the construction site everybody starts running. Running has become a constant in the lives of 'illegalized' Venezuelans. Julio, who worked in construction for more than two years, is a fast runner. So far, he has been able to outrun 'migracion' every time. Emotions flare when people talking about running. They get excited as getting away is an achievement they are proud of. In a situation where one is primarily limited, running is a way of knowing one's capabilities, resisting being the victim chased and caught, outrunning the officers provides a tangible way of reinforcing their sense of agency. But Julio is not running for himself. "Really", he clarifies, "I am running for my family" (Julio, personal communication, February 02, 2020). He prefers to run than to hide; nonetheless, sometimes hiding is the only option. Hiding means entering a space of waiting

and insecurity. It strips one of the feeling of being able to influence your fate; makes one feel like one is at the mercy of the situation. The anxiety changes the texture of the air. It becomes difficult to breathe, almost as if it was thicker than usual.



Figure 2. 'At Night': Between Visible and Invisible Walls © Hannah Mayr.

Once, he tells me, they were working on a larger hotel construction when 'migracion' arrived. His working partner warned him, but he ignored the person who was usually joking around. He only noticed the threat when it was too late to run. 'Migracion' had already circulated the building and blocked the entrances. He sprinted to another room, knowing that there was an unfinished wall that still needed

to be filled with isolation materials and hollow from the inside, and squeezed inside. The walls so close they barely provided space to breathe, he encountered another person, a Colombian immigrant. For three hours they were unable to move while 'migracion' searched the house.



Figure 3. 'Migracion': Immigration Raid © Research Participant.

“Tears were running down the Colombian’s face because it became so painful not to move. I shushed him, trying to tell him to not make any noise” (Julio, personal communication, February 02, 2020). Unable to see, all they could rely on was the sound of knocking on walls and ceilings from the batons used by the migration officers to search the building.

Stories like these are numerous. The threat of deportation means that people are constantly on the lookout. Once undocumented workers arrive at a worksite, the first thing they do is walk around, observe and consider the possible escape routes. If the place does not have any identifiable ones, people decline jobs, although they are already on the site and need the money. This continuous tension is noticeable. You can feel their alertness; it is changing me, too. When we meet in public places, no car passes by unnoticed, every strange sound is alarming. One day, we all jumped when we saw blue and red lights, assuming it was the police. It turned out to be a bike light but it illustrated how everyone is in a ceaseless state of alertness. Even while doing your job “half of your attention is focused on what you’re doing, the other half of your brain works to situate noises, looking out for ‘migracion’” (Rony, personal communication, February 12, 2020).

The sensational, frequent patrolling of the Aruban territory by Guarda Nos Costa has rendered ‘illegal migration’ from Venezuela its publicity. It created that spectacle of migrant ‘illegality’ necessary to legitimize Venezuelan’s exclusion, and allowing for the enactment of excessive¹⁵ technologies of government to police and control irregular migration (De Genova, 2002, p.440). Yet, it is not solely the militarized patrol of borders or territory that automatically and systematically activates the spectacle of violations that fetishizes “illegality” from a so-perceived objective position of legitimacy and control; instead, it is rather the fact that borders are enacted – they are performed through practices which distort the fundamental social interrelation of migrants and the legal regime in the destination country (De Genova, 2013, p.1183).

Through the homogenous classification of Venezuelans as economic migrants, Aruba’s current legislation forces people into a condition of “illegality” and deportability, where through spectacular demonstrations of immigration control, the state can execute its sovereignty through the active detention and removal of such ‘illegal aliens’. During

the last year, authorities have intensified the number of spontaneous immigration raids at construction sites, policing and detaining Venezuelans, irrespective of whether they had no documents, pending asylum applications or work agreements. The enactment of this spectacle by which the dark, dangerous, mystified figures of Guarda Nos Costa enter the scene, lends the issue of ‘illegalized’ Venezuelans its public visibility, yet hides the individual stories of suffering, exploitation and violations of rights through the systemic capture, detention and removal of undocumented Venezuelans, as well as the powers enacted to legitimize these practices. Here, I argued that the case of Aruba demonstrates a reinforcement of sovereign power through the persecution of undocumented migrants, legitimized by the border spectacle. This, I argue in the next section, works conjunctively with their exclusion from the law’s protection and their reduction to ‘bare life’.

3.2 LAWLESSNESS



Figure 4. Detention’: Detention Centre at the Airport © Hannah Mayr.

Rony is one of many ‘re-cyclers’. He has been deported twice and is on the island for the third time when he tells me about the time he and his friend were caught driving. The owner of the car had documents but was too drunk and asked Rony to drive instead. When they were stopped by the police, Rony talked to them normally. They were about to let them go, when his friend, Leon, lost his nerves and told the police that they had no documents. The police attempted to arrest both when Leon starts running and is chased after. When they caught him, they broke his arm. Rony tells me that in detention, “they left us there for a week and he was crying with that broken arm. And they told him they wouldn’t take him to the hospital. Then they deported us, took us to Venezuela” (Rony, personal communication, February 12, 2020). Now Leon is back in Venezuela, with a useless arm as the bones did not heal correctly.

Simon, a friend of Daniela who I first met in front of one of the detention facilities, has been in detention for over a week. He is suffering from a fever because of an infected leg, and while he urgently needs medical care, there is no doctor in the detention facility. Daniela is not allowed to bring him medication. The testimonies I received resemble the conditions reported by Amnesty International on detention practices in Curacao (Amnesty International, 2018). Guarda Nos Costa apprehends people in detention centres, of which one is said to be in conditions that are “worse than a prison” as even “in a prison they at least have medical assistance”¹⁶ (Miguel, personal communication, February 27, 2020).

Miguel reports to me that “the abuse is abysmal”, and his human rights were violated. He says, they were threatened by the person in charge who would “come to the cells to threaten us, that she could do something to us to say that we committed some crime and send us to KIA¹⁷. That we should preferably get off their island so that these problems wouldn’t happen”. They were told that if the authorities did not feel like it, they would not receive food; that if

they wanted, they could just put them on a plane back to Venezuela. The person in charge sometimes screamed from the hallways “Leave my island, you animals”. He said, they would turn on the lights at midnight, knock loudly on the doors and put the flashlight on them so that they would not be able to sleep.

As these the stories of respondents emphasize, the ambiguous socio-political category of the ‘economic migrant’ legitimizing Venezuelan’s exclusion not only offers no protection from the law, but has also served as a justification to deny undocumented migrants access to fundamental human rights and social privileges (De Genova, 2002, p.440). The representative of the NGO TodoPorVenezuela has publicly asked for measures to be taken against Trudi Hassel, the head of Guarda Nos Costa, for reasons of xenophobia, discrimination and violating fundamental international human rights of detained people (Noticia Aruba, 2019a). They also call attention to the persecution of undocumented Venezuelans that are already in Aruba. Informants confirmed that officers of Guarda Nos Costa stop people randomly and without any visible reason besides ‘looking Venezuelan’. It does not seem as if Guarda Nos Costa immediately confirms with DIMAS whether a person should be detained. TodoPorVenezuela asks to stop using detention as a means to make people renounce their request for international protection. They argue that the fact that people have to present themselves every day at DIMAS is discriminating, has no basis in international law and that there is no legal basis in confiscating asylum seeker’s passports. Lastly, they ask for the release of asylum seekers that have been detained for months without having committed a crime. There is no judicial argument to detain asylum seekers for longer than one month but it is frequently occurring as respondents confirmed. Quite a number of allegations have been made against Guarda Nos Costa, including last year an open letter to the ministry of justice (August, 2019) by employees of Guarda Nos Costa declaring mistreatment of foreigners and mistreatment of

staff as an NGO stated (NGO, personal communication, March 02, 2020).

At the same time, there are various videos shared on social media, including the news domain 24 ora and Noticia Aruba, of people accusing Guarda Nos Costa of mistreatment of undocumented migrants and asylum seekers (24ora, 2019; Noticia Aruba, 2019b; Noticia Aruba, 2019c). These include statements of people being detained in a cell for longer than 21 hours, who were denied visits and exposed to degrading treatment and xenophobic comments. On the 17th of June 2019, a letter was sent by asylum seekers, who were detained in the centre of Detention, Dakota, in which they declared to be treated in ways that have no legal basis and are in breach of their human rights.

Informants have also confirmed the trading of sexual favours for freedom from detention. One respondent said she had been sexually violated by Guards of Guarda Nos Costa and was deported within two days of the assault. Another informant said she was asked to show her breasts if she wanted to be released. Through copious ways officers of Guarda Nos Costa appear to have been able to abuse their position of power to exploit Venezuelan's marginality and gain profit from their insecure status. There are also several allegations of corruption and the forgery of asylum petitions. One informant confirmed the accusation that an officer of Guarda Nos Costa, who is still in charge, has been utilizing Venezuelans' by providing alimentation and accommodation in return for significant monetary compensation.

From the data I collected, it appears as if there is limited control over what officers of Guarda Nos Costa do as the repercussions for transgressions seem to be minimal. A representative of an NGO stated that police and Guarda Nos Costa "can do what they want". Besides, some officers of Guarda Nos Costa have been named but continue to work in their position (24ora, 2019; Noticia Aruba, 2019b),

I was told by representatives of NGOs that the government stated these were being investigated but nobody seems to further know which is the investigating entity dealing with these case and many find it surprising, given the number and the variety of complaints about Guarda Nos Costa. To my knowledge, none of the results of these investigations have been released.



Figure 5. 'Behind Bars': View at Migrants' Home © Hannah Mayr.

As a consequence of the interrelated forms of marginality, abuse and opportunisms, respondents shared a sensation of being in a state of rightlessness. Lucia said, "You know it's

hard, feeling like you don't belong anywhere. Not having an identity in the world. [...]. What is the use of having a passport that is not useful anywhere? That I don't have any rights at all?" (Lucia, personal communication, February 26, 2020).

Lucia, the mother of two children, fled to Aruba because her husband was politically persecuted. She feels restricted in her freedom as "even though my life is not in danger, like in Venezuela, in a way, I am in a prison because I don't have rights, of any kind, I am a zero on the left here. [...]. I sometimes say, 'the dogs have more rights than I do' because here there is a dog association where they get them on the streets and tend to them, they take care of them, they get them homes, while we don't receive anything (Lucia, personal communication, February 26, 2020).

Like Lucia, many people feel stripped of their rights; they perceive themselves to be without any protection, no longer seen as human beings. In a way, they may express feelings of being reduced to bare life (Agamben, 1995). Agamben draws on the Greek distinction between a person's *Bios*, people's political or social life, and *Zoe*, bare life, or a person's animal life. He evokes the position of the Roman figure of *homo sacer* to show the sovereign's ability to create a person that is forcibly reduced to bare life by stripping them of their political rights. While Agamben starts from the Foucauldian argument of biopolitics, which I will address in more detail in the subsequent chapter, for now, it is important to understand that Agamben argues that modern biopolitics are characterized by the manifestation of an "exclusive inclusion" (Murray, 2010, p. 60). Foucault argues that biopolitics is a phenomenon of modernity and in breach with classical understandings of politics; Agamben, however, reasons that it is rather a reinforcement of sovereign powers as a person can be excluded from politics: stripped of their political rights in a way that "it is no longer illegal for him to be killed" (Murray, 2010, p.60). Political control over bare life is what Agamben understands

a biopolitics and biology allows democratic states to create a *homo sacer* position within it. As biology introduces the idea of the norm, it also designates the other and sanctions the killing of the other. If the abnormal, the excluded part, which is still included in the system, is expelled, it can be placed outside of the law and the device used by states to expel people, to reduce them to bare life, is the state of exception; it describes "the suspension of law in order to further the ends of law"; for example, the suspension of "civil liberties [...] during a national emergency" (Coutin, 2015, p.674). Agamben argues that these suspensions, which reinforce the law itself, became the norm, instead of the exception.

For Agamben, "the refugee reveals the ways in which the spaces of sovereign power and the sovereign exception operate with a ruthless efficiency to define the life of its citizens from others" (Murray, 2010, p. 67). The undocumented migrant, pictured as a threat to the nation's well-being, may also be understood as a threat to the nation's sovereignty. The refugee throws the original fiction of sovereignty into crisis as it "points clearly to the fragility of the nation state, and to the erosion of its sovereignty" which can only be prevented through "a draconian reinforcing of sovereignty" (Murray, 2010, p. 73). Thus, Owens (2009) claims that for Agamben "refugees can be seen as the ultimate 'biopolitical' subjects: those who can be regulated and governed at the level of population in a permanent 'state of exception'" outside the normal legal framework – the camp (p. 568). In camps, refugees can be reduced to 'bare life'; humans become perceived as "animals in nature without political freedom" (Owens, 2009, p. 568). This idea resonates with deportation studies scholars given that deportees' legal rights are often limited, "even as the need to restore law is often given as a justification for deportation" (Coutin, 2015, p.674). Creating a state of exception in which legal order can be displaced - a place without laws, showcases the strange processes of exclusive inclusion (Humphreys, 2006).

While the situation in Aruba may not be as extreme as outlined by Agamben, certain practices, such as the abuse of undocumented Venezuelans in detention centres, the bypassing of indictments of corruption, and the misrecognition of undocumented Venezuelan's situation, including their reasons to migrate as well as their continuous exploitation and defamation, speaks for an understanding of the Aruban government that perceives of Venezuelan lives as counting less.

Nonetheless, the situation of undocumented Venezuelans and asylum seekers on Aruba cannot be separated from the relationship with the Netherlands. The delicate relationship between the former colonial power and Aruba plays out in reserved and inconsistent responses by the Netherlands¹⁸. The discussions about the protection of refugees on the Caribbean islands seem not occur from the Dutch side. A brief research from the University of Rotterdam, stated that "the Dutch government uses the Refugee Convention and development aid as means to keep refugees as far as possible from Dutch borders" (Heintze et al., 2019, p.10). This was confirmed by information provided by respondents on Aruba. In the Kingdom of the Netherlands, the asylum acceptance rate of Venezuelans is 4%.¹⁹ This sets the tone for any conversation that follows. The Dutch response to the humanitarian challenge of undocumented Venezuelans and asylum seekers residing on the islands appears to be covered in silence. Moreover, in terms of the allocation of the funds provided by the Netherlands, Lesley Fer, Curaçao's Minister of General Affairs stated in the last Inter Parliamentary Kingdom Consultation (IPKO) that financial provisions by the Netherlands have nothing to do with what the islands have asked for; that the situation speaks for the Netherlands only changing plans to locate the funds for what they intend to do. He argues most money goes to Dutch support staff, and the request to emergency aid was answered with the large scale provision of tents that the islands do not seem to need (Antilliaans Dagblad, 2020).

And yet, Aruba is not innocent. Interests prioritize overwhelmingly the safeguarding of the tourist economy and measures to confront the islands' own social problems. The state-sanctioned ignoring of human rights violations, seen as an inevitable evil caused by resource restraints, suggests an interpretation of governing migrants through a state of exception; a state in which migrant's rights can be suspended through defining them as the 'other' threatening Aruban society. While the island needs to ask for material assistance from the Kingdom of the Netherlands, Aruba did not ask for money for a healthcare fund, for help to build welfare housing or other projects that could aid the Venezuelan community. Instead, it requested assistance for emergency measures to respond to the threat of a sudden Venezuelan mass immigration. This is very unlikely to ever occur as the exodus to the Caribbean showcases modest but consistent migratory patterns, however, this 'threat' narrative allows the Aruban state to suspend its laws in order to protect the nation from the 'other', the disgraced Venezuelan immigrant. It allows for the 'illegalised' Venezuelan to be forcibly reduced to bare life, stripped of their political rights and access to citizenship, which then expresses itself also in terms of societies' general practices, i.e. letting undocumented Venezuelans complete dangerous work that no Aruban citizen would do.

The situation of undocumented Venezuelans on Aruba thus highlights, on the one hand, the fiction of sovereignty and human rights, both regarding Aruba and the Netherlands, but also the sovereign's ability to create a state of exception and remove people's rights. Biopolitics describes how the norm and the other can be created, allowing for increased surveillance and control of the migrant population, where the transgressions of the law, their suspension and the act of migration enforcement serve as clear demonstrations of an increase in the state's sovereign power as states respond to its threatened sovereignty. Nonetheless, the governance of undocumented Venezuelans is not reducible to excessive control. It is rather characterized by a variety of interrelated

techniques of government that include, but are not limited to sovereign power. Thus, first, the phenomenon of ‘illegal’ migration allows for revived sovereign power, through increasing border and law enforcement and other control mechanisms; secondly, it does so by applying mechanisms to discipline populations without the use of direct force as discussed next.

CHAPTER FOUR

TECHNIQUES OF GOVERNMENT

4.1 THE ‘ASYLUM SEEKER LIMBO’



Figure 6. ‘Duty to Report’: Asylum Seekers presenting at DIMAS © Hannah Mayr.

Let me tell you...” said, Mariana smacking her fist on the table. That is how our conversation started. I met Mariana through another contact who told me that I needed her story. And I did as it demonstrated that Aruba’s current legislation consists of a patchwork of widely disorganized, temporary regulations that leave a great deal of space for individual discretion and are ineffective in assisting

people but helpful for Aruba. Mariana is both mother and activist, asylum seeker and political opponent. She has been fighting to get her children into school and then fighting to get her family off the island. When she first arrived on Aruba in 2017, she was carrying her two daughters and a whole bag of documents with her, containing evidence substantiating her fear of political persecution and her need to receive political asylum. She told the authorities at the airport about her intention to request asylum. “Asylum was something they had never heard of”, she told me (Mariana, personal communication, March 03, 2020). Since that day, her life here has been a constant struggle. She was referred from one place to another, talking to a substantial number of people who did not know how to process her request to claim asylum. After three months of staying at the Red Cross shelter, she finally succeeded to receive a temporary document from the UNHCR, declaring she and her children were UNCHR registered asylum seekers. In the following year that document expired as Aruba started implementing its asylum system. Now, four years later, she is still registered as an asylum seeker without the right to work and has not received an answer to her request. By now, all she wants is to leave that island. Without the resources, however, she cannot leave, and without a denied asylum decision she cannot request asylum in any other country.

Like Mariana, many others have been caught in the protracted temporariness of the asylum-seeker limbo that seems to be extended indefinitely. This legal limbo, in other contexts conceptualized as “liminal legality” (Menjívar, 2006), “legal non-existence” (Coutin, 2000) or “permanent temporariness” (Bailey et al., 2002), has been shown to affect people’s lives substantially, engendering the lack of access to social services, denying them essential human needs, such as the right to work or access to health care, and impacting their integration into society as they are kept in an open-ended state of instability. However, an in-depth discussion of the consequences is not the aim of this section. Instead, I want to look into how the asylum-seeker limbo

not only causes a state of indefinite temporariness for the migrants themselves but is further useful for the Aruban state to govern migrants. Foucault's conceptualizations on governmentality become important in shedding light to the ways certain truth productions impact the way migrants' behaviours are shaped. The layers of domination and truth production I will discuss in this and the subsequent chapter range from government institutions (discourses and practices surrounding asylum requests and criminality of refugees) to everyday popular discourses and practices regarding women and sexuality also aiming to stigmatize and control their conduct. These mechanisms can be situated in the framework of governmentality.

Governmentality describes "the ensemble formed by the institutions, procedures, analyses and reflections, the calculations and tactics that allow the exercise of this very specific albeit complex form of power, which has at its target population, its principle form of knowledge political economy and as its essential technical means apparatuses of security" (Foucault, 1977-78 [2007], p.102). Governing is the practice of creating and circulating specific truths, and the spread of these through techniques, mechanisms and discourses that extend beyond the state, including other authorities and bodies of society (Rutherford, 2007, p.293). Manifestations of such truths become apparent in the adjudication of asylum requests.

As the year progressed, and the border was closed between Aruba and Venezuela, up to thirty asylum claims were made per day at the airport. The Aruban asylum system is still regulated through the outdated DIMAS handbook, which specifies that people need to request asylum upon entering Aruba. In terms of adjudication of the cases, this resulted in DIMAS and judges distinguishing between people who claimed asylum at the airport and those who had in some other way accomplished to claim asylum at DIMAS. The decisions' underlying argument was that if a person was truly a refugee in need of protection, they would claim

asylum upon arrival. However, there exists no particular correlation between the time of arrival and the request for asylum. In fact, it often tends to be the opposite. If a person genuinely fears for their lives if they were to be returned, they are often the least likely to approach any kind of authority. Additionally, as an informant of an NGO told me, none of this is remotely consistent with international law and does not account for surplus claims - events that occurred in a person's country after a person left it can make a person a refugee. Nonetheless, the perception of "if a person was really a refugee, they would have claimed asylum on entry" is influencing how cases are adjudicated and decisions made by either DIMAS or judges were following this line of argument to deny people's asylum claims as the NGO told me. This above-elaborated assumption became one truth, disseminated and mobilized in the asylum system, serving to disqualify people's claim to protection. It demonstrates how certain forms of knowledges are constructed, spread and carried out in different bodies of society and function as techniques of government to control the population of undocumented migrants.

Moreover, if governmentality is understood as "the conduct of conduct", biopower proves as a useful aspect of governmentality to examine Aruba's asylum system. Biopower, describes how the objective and means of power transformed to administer bodies through a number of calculated techniques and disciplinary means with the objective of normalizing behaviours and taking control over life. People are counted, statistically evaluated, systemized with the objective to protect the well-being of the population. Thus, as argued by Lilja & Vinthagen (2011), "biopower is 'pastoral' in the sense that it seems positive and constructive; it even might feel like love and care" as it "governs individuals and organizes them as members of a population in the same way as a shepherd who cares for his flock" (p.119). The asylum system instituted on Aruba, is pastoral in a sense as it is enacted under the pretence of a caring state; it is presented as helping the

vulnerable population of refugees. As the practice of this system shows, including first, the denial of 97% of asylum applications and second, the extended liminality of asylum seekers, it does not provide the promised protection. Yet, through the asylum system, migrant's mobility is disciplined as from the moment their data has entered the system, they need to adhere to monthly presentation deadlines to be entitled to protection and become subjected to mechanisms of "partition, selection and identification" (Tazzioli, 2018, p. 16). Thus, the system may be instituted under the pretence of aiding a vulnerable population, but ultimately is a profoundly useful technique of government enabling through recording their names, phone numbers and location a sudden overview of an otherwise 'invisible' population. The asylum system can be seen as a biopolitical technique of government, as it is a form of activity that shapes the conduct of undocumented Venezuelans through their systematic surveillance and disciplining of their movements.

4.2 BETWEEN VICTIMS AND VILLAINS

If we understand that "power is not possessed or held, but rather circulates via networks that work through and produce different bodies, discourses, institutions and practices" (Rutherford, 2007, p.295), power in society is never a "fixed and closed regime, but rather an endless and open strategic game" (Burchell et al., 1991, p.5). The production of the 'illegal' migrant relies on a variety of practices by people not related to the government that play into the knowledge production constituting people as either citizens, 'illegal migrants', 'asylum seekers' or 'refugees' (De Genova, 2002). The discourses constructing "Venezuelans" reiterate criminality, prostitution and human trafficking and produce adverse consequences for the ways people are perceived, framed and experience life.

The questionable criminality of Venezuelans seems to be promoted by the government. Often, crimes committed

by a Venezuelan person are used by people in authority to enforce and strengthen immigration control. For example, I was told that after a Venezuelan robbed a person wearing a Santa Claus outfit, the Minister of Justice used it to enforce that 12% of crimes are committed by Venezuelans and immigration control would have to be strengthened. In comparison to the 78% committed by the local population this is not at all a critical situation. However, the ostensible criminality of undocumented Venezuelans is utilized to increase the frequency of raids and intensify the visibility of migration control to demonstrate that the government is fighting Venezuelan criminality, while in fact they are doing little. Foucault's argument of "the production of delinquency" becomes informative to understand the framing of Venezuelan criminality to justify and expand surveillance of all of the state's subjects (Foucault, 1977, pp. 257-92). Criminality is an effective mechanism legitimizing increased state control, fostering the surveillance of all of society, while the general public becomes informative in the supervision of undocumented Venezuelans, who themselves in part, conform to their subjugation through their self-policing.

However, there is a strong gender component in terms of the vulnerabilities of Venezuelan women²⁰. Different stereotypes coexist and influence how women are perceived and treated. The discourse framing mainly Venezuelan women between 20 and 40 years as sex workers also affects teenagers. Once, Mariana's daughter, Catalina started crying when she told me that once she lost the money to buy the bus ticket and asked the men next to her if he could help her out. He told her to go to San Nicholas, the area of Aruba's red-light district, if she wanted to find a man who would give her money (Catalina, personal communication, March 03, 2020). As in many places, in Aruba, sex work is stigmatized, with sex workers either socially sanctioned for breaking moral norms of behaviours or equated with victims of human trafficking (Garcia, 2014). The discourse delegitimizes those that perceive it as a legitimate economic

survival strategy and simultaneously ignores the harsh reality of individuals that are forced into survival sex²¹. Essentially, the clichés Venezuelans encounter make women particularly vulnerable with regards to sexuality, impacting their likelihood to abuse and their prospects to report such ill-treatment²².

The vulnerability of marginalised women to sexual abuse is of course also known in the context of other vulnerable situations (war contexts, poverty, marriage), and impacts the discourse of the government when it comes to human trafficking and its consequences. In Aruba, there is a fairly known phenomenon of Venezuelan women working in Chinese owned bars, some of which are recognized for offering services that extend beyond regular bar work. In general, people may consent to some elements of sex work but there is a margin of what people consent to. While first known in Curaçao, recently in Aruba, people have started talking about “Trago girls” – attractive Venezuelan women hired by the owner of Chinese bar owners that are not paid by the hour but by a percentage of the night’s sale. They try to sell more expensive drinks to people to increase the sale. Some of the women may consent to offering other services and might be taken home by the person they have been catering for, but as there is no type of protection, I have been told that it is possible men have taken woman to a house with several men to abuse her (NGO, personal conversation, March 02, 2020).

Some forms of exploitation I heard of allow for the conclusion that there are cases of human trafficking. This is recognized by the island, which over the last years increased its efforts to combat human trafficking. Aruba does not want to be seen as a refugee island, nor does it want to be perceived as a trafficking island. However, there is an explicit link that is part of the efforts that go into efforts to reduce trafficking. The argument that receives most importance on the Aruba side resides with the tourist industry and informants of an NGO confirmed that there is a direct connection

between the anti-trafficking policies and procedures in place and the US Customs and Border Protection (CBP) Preclearance instituted in Aruba. The two conditions for that are first, having an asylum system and second, having an anti-trafficking organism in place. Not fighting human trafficking could jeopardize Aruba’s preclearance which in turn would impact the tourism industry; thus, the existence of an anti-trafficking body is vital.

However, it seems as if the trafficking of Venezuelans is primarily addressed as a by-product of the larger effort to reduce human trafficking, which seems to concentrate on combatting sex trafficking. The focus on combatting sex trafficking seems to be justified by there being more identified cases of victims of sex trafficking (NGO, personal communication, March 02, 2020). While this also aids sex-trafficked Venezuelans, Aruba’s response mirrors the global “moral crusade” on sex trafficking (Weitzer, 2007), constructing a social problem, of which the perceived magnitude exceeds the evidence, but that aims and allows for certain biopolitical interventions.

Hence, Aruba seems to represent the common eclipsing of sex trafficking to other types of human trafficking as campaigns of the national action plan tend to privilege efforts to combat sex trafficking over labour or domestic trafficking. For example, the short documentary #Promesafalso, produced and financed by a local TV station, is aimed to “protect as many girls and women from abuse and sexual exploitation” as possible and is advertised through remarks such as “she could be your daughter” (Promesa Falso, 2019). The documentary adapts the true story of the activist Shamere McKenzie, who is a survivor of trafficking. It sheds light on the possibility to fall prey to human trafficking concerning women from all social classes by telling the story of a student that is lured into sex trafficking through a friend that later exploits her (Promesa Falso, Switch Foundation, March 30, 2019). According to the 2019 Trafficking in Persons (TIP) Report of the

US Department of State (USDOS), the video was used to train local officials to detect victims (USDOS, 2019, p. 74). Although the situation portrayed demonstrates one way how people are lured into sex trafficking, it is only one scenario and maybe a less likely one compared to the heightened vulnerability of undocumented migrants. While vulnerable areas include the prostitution sector, it also concerns labour exploitation, especially domestic services, as people are at higher risk as they are outside the reach of officials. Indeed, the latest TIP Report (2019), highlights the need to increase efforts to “proactively identify victims among all vulnerable groups, including women in prostitution, those who hold adult entertainment visas, domestic workers, and migrants working in construction, supermarkets, and retail” (USDOS, 2019, p.74). Aruba has been downgraded to Tier 2 as “efforts were not serious and sustained compared to efforts during the previous reporting period” (USDOS, 2019, p. 74), while the report also explicitly references the vulnerability of Venezuelan immigrants, asking for the implementation of “guidelines for proactive victim identification and increase referral of possible trafficking victims among Venezuelan migrants and asylum-seekers” (USDOS, 2019, p. 74).

The lack of attention given to the vulnerability of undocumented Venezuelans to different forms of abuse and exploitation is particularly problematic considering the lack of information regarding the possibility of work or domestic permits - the mechanisms that allows migrants to receive temporary residence through employment through an Aruban company or as a domestic help. There is a question about what kind of verification is done about the working conditions somebody who has their work permit will receive. Camila, one of my participants told me about her cousin, who is legally residing in Aruba because she is working for a restaurant and has obtained her work permit. She says her cousin is exploited, working up to 12 hours, and being paid less than half of the hours she works. Furthermore, she unable to change her employment

situation, unless she finds another employer who is willing to sign her, which not many are. The system compels people to stay in exploitative conditions as their legal residence is dependent on their employment agreement. As I have not obtained information that verifies that there is some kind of supervision, labour and domestic trafficking might be more prevalent than generally assumed.

But the discourse on human trafficking has other functions as well. It further serves to stigmatize prostitution, portraying it as morally evil and socially undesirable. In terms of the perceived violence inherent to sex work, oral evidence highlights institutional discrimination and violence by clients and the police in the prostitution sector. Yet no study, that I know of, has been conducted in Aruba that compared these risks in prostitution to the ones faced by other women, e.g. in the form of domestic violence (Garcia, 2014). Domestically occurring violence is generally underreported, and the conclusion cannot be made that sex workers are more frequently victims of trafficking or other forms of abuse than other women (Garcia, 2014, p.40). However, the sex trafficking narrative fosters the assumption that only under the protection of the state, victims can be saved (Weitzer, 2007, p. 448). Consequently, “the corollary discourses of ‘human trafficking’ and ‘migrant smuggling’ authorize the state to gratuitously fashion itself as a paternalistic (indeed, patriarchal) ‘protection racket’” (Tilly 1985 in De Genova, 2013, p.1191). Here, biopolitical techniques of power can be enacted not to “aid” the state’s own ‘rightful’ citizens but can even be expanded to some of its undocumented denizens, particularly women that must be rescued (De Genova, 2013, p.1191).

Lastly, undocumented Venezuelans are not only framed as the victim to be saved; they are also depicted as the “presumably intrinsic criminal excesses of ‘illegal’ migration itself” (De Genova, 2013, p.1191). Valentina, whose story I referred to earlier, fell prey to a Venezuelan person she

considered a friend. She stated: “I understood that I fell into it because I was trusting a girl I had only known for two months. Just because she was Venezuelan I trusted her, and it turns out she would get paid for me” (Valentina, WhatsApp message, February 17, 2020). She told me she had been framed by the media as a drug consumer, and her exploitation was portrayed in the light of a Venezuelan trafficking circle in which criminal Venezuelans exploit each other (Valentina, personal communication, February 17, 2020). Her situation describes that often “the onus of ‘exploitation’” is displaced “onto nefarious ‘foreigners’ and the ‘opportunistic’ infrastructure of undocumented migration itself” - hence, “undocumented migrants are deemed in need of ‘protection’ from one another” (De Genova, 2013, p.1191). She said that what was omitted was that “people like me, who have no acquaintances in Aruba, are involved in a world of fictitious friendship, where the Aruban mafia has control over the island and everyone knows each other, where the haircutter is involved in the prostitution and drug movement that involves the owners of the nightclubs and bars, and the cops know about it all” (Valentina, WhatsApp message, February 17, 2020). On the one hand, her situation illustrates how Venezuelans are often equated with smugglers and traffickers. On the other hand, it reveals how the discourse on the victimized Venezuelan women in need of protection emphasizes the state as the actor responsible to control the situation and ensuring the well-being of its population. It thereby deflects from other fields of exploitation and underlines how demonizing sex work is deployed to keep Aruban society appealing to family tourism (one of the latest interventions representative of the issue is the plan to eliminate the prostitution zone in San Nicolas to make the town more family attractive). Lastly, the responsibility of the state in producing the structures that creates situations for such serious offenses is diverted from the state and placed onto the individual. The structural violence that produces the likelihood of undocumented people to fall prey to human trafficking is left aside.

Throughout this section I aimed to uncover how the apparatus of migrant governmentality controls and governs a population through the exercise of tactics and the construction of certain types of knowledges. I stressed that the proliferation of heterogeneous forms of border enforcement implies diverse technologies of government; these include not only systematic interventions like the asylum system but also intercessions such as the discourses on migrant criminality and prostitution that often characterize social interactions. I further contended that, coupled with the lack of research and reliable data, the discourse on sex trafficking and the human trafficking action program are modes of government that serve the moral policing of civil society and benefit the safeguarding of the tourist industry, but tend to ignore other forms of exploitation that could turn out prevalent if they were investigated. A final site for investigation is the impact of the threat of deportation on the lives of undocumented Venezuelans, as a site of disciplinary power, which the next chapter aims to analyse.

CHAPTER FIVE

DETAINABILITY, DEPORTABILITY

& DISCIPLINARY POWER

The word banish rhymes with vanish. Through banishment or deportation there is the literal threat of invisibility. Not only when the event is concretized, but in the anguish and the uncertainty leading to that. Made invisible. Made meaningless. Superfluous. To others. To ourselves.

- Margaret Randall, 1987

What does it mean to be restricted, physically, not by walls but by the lack of papers? When Juana tells me that “If I was free, I would drive from the north to the south of the island¹²³” (Juana, personal communication, February

02, 2020), she captures in a simple comment the deep emotional turmoil the sense of deprivation the reality of ‘illegality’ produces for people. Despite living here for more than three years, she has never explored the island. An island that is not longer than 30 km. “There are times when I feel that, I mean, it’s like it takes away a part of me that I didn’t know I had. You know what I mean? It affected me because there are times when it’s like you’re here but you don’t want to be here. And that’s the part that I tell you I



Figure 7. ‘One Happy Island’ © Research Participant.

found out about myself, that I didn’t know I had it. It’s that it gives you the feeling that you are locked in, that there are days that I just don’t want to be locked in this anymore. One is stuck between four walls. It’s like a bitterness, so to speak, because I mean, you can’t do anything, you just have this option. Be here or be here”. As Juana stated, the condition of ‘illegality’ affects people in a literal as well as in an emotional sense; it restricts them in their movement and in their options to respond to these restrictions. The condition of ‘illegality’ is like a medical condition. You treat it carefully, making sure it’s not visible but you are always carrying it around with you, like a “sombra” [shadow]. You forget about it as it becomes a normalized part of your life. Juana says one adapts, “You get used to it. You learn how to live with the new life, all the changes it incorporates, and then it re-emerges when something happens, for example when someone is deported. And suddenly it’s there again. The fear to be deported, the knowledge that you can be arrested, and so one lives in one’s shadow, here, on the ‘happy island’”. What Juana is describing, can be traced back to the state of deportability inherently attached to the condition of ‘illegality’. Rony told me he knows “you’re 50-50 here. Half in, half out” (Rony, personal communication, February 12, 2020). This feeling of always being one step away from being sent back to Venezuela effectively controls people’s behaviours and their bodies. Foucault has argued that technologies of power operate through a ‘micro-physics of power’ that has as its object the composition and control of bodies’ forces²⁴ (Mills, 2003, p.255). In this sense, disciplinary power trains people in their behaviours, it manufactures and normalises subjects to become and act alike (Foucault, 1977; Foucault, 2008). Deportability is only one form of a wider regime of control, yet one of the more efficient forms of governance as it ensures migrant’s self-policing. It controls their movements, normalizes exploitation and limits their responses.

Lucia thinks, if she could have a legal status here she would be able to have a normal life not under these pressures

and without feeling like a prisoner²⁵ (Lucia, personal communication, February 26, 2020). Often, people reference captivity and say they feel stuck in their lives. They say they feel trapped, imprisoned, confined. Lucia says she feels like she lives in a prison. Julio states he catches himself “caught living in a jail” (Julio, personal communication, February 02, 2020) and Sebastian remarks: “Its ironical, you’re like, “great you’re free, you came out of a dictatorship to get into a cage” (Sebastian, personal communication, February 14, 2020). It describes that “the disciplinary operation of an apparatus for the everyday production of migrant “illegality” is never simply intended to achieve the putative goal of deportation”. Rather, it is the state of “deportability, and not deportation per se” that is aimed at (De Genova, 2002, p.439).

Why is the disciplining of migrants through a state of deportability desirable for a state? In line with de Genova, I argue that deportability has “historically rendered undocumented migrant labor a distinctly disposable commodity” (De Genova, 2002, p.439). Undocumented labour has become embedded in the Aruban society, producing significant benefits, especially for industries that have come to rely on it (Bacon, 2008, p.79). Migrants are integrated into a well-established network, relying on the cheaper and more profitable workers with limited options, who often need to accept any offer they receive. While undocumented Venezuelans are portrayed and perceived as “space invaders”, they are simultaneously desperately needed workers in these competitive economic sectors (Chavez, 2007, p.192). I therefore argue that the disciplinary function of Venezuelan’s ‘illegalization’, achieved through the threat of deportation, needs to be situated within the larger processes of neoliberal capitalist expansion²⁶.

This also emphasises the need for what Paul Farmer (2011) called an anthropology beyond “the ethnographic visible”. While the condition of ‘illegality’ shapes the lives of Venezuelans in Aruba in every aspect of life, it must

be obvious that their exploitation and the limited options they have to respond to it, is a form of structural violence. Structural violence as formulated by Farmer, serves to “inform the study of the social machinery of oppression” by examining “the roles played by the erasure of historical memory and other forms of desocialization as enabling conditions of structures that are both “sinful” and ostensibly “nobody’s fault”²⁷ (Farmer, 2004, p.307). Systemically exerted violence is often covert - its effects are subtler, often symbolical, killing slowly (p.312) – its harm arises in part through its misrecognition as violence through the systemic distortion of the root causes and by the singular focus on the ethnographic visible (p.305). Hence, if we were to understand the problems Venezuelans face on Aruba, we need to deconstruct Venezuelan’s illegalization and understand the construction of ‘illegal Venezuelans’ as a process embedded in the global capitalist economy relying on migrant labour.



Figure 8. *'Hidden in Plain Sight': Road Work* © Hannah Mayr.

Their ‘illegalisation’ must therefore be traced back to the economic relationship between Aruba and Venezuela. As Aruba’s economy relies on the tourist industry, the need for migrant labour is engrained in Aruba’s economy, as the country is dependent on undocumented migrants building and cleaning hotels, gardening, or catering in other ways for the tourists Aruba is dependent on. Through their illegalization, Venezuelan migrants are deportable. As migrants cannot respond to their exploitation, deportability ensures a continuous reservoir of labour that is cheap, flexible and moveable.



Figure 9. ‘Heat’: Construction Work © Research Participant.

I feel like a slave in the 21st century”, says Julio one day. “It’s not a life, is it?”, he asks me and is referring to the fact that undocumented Venezuelans lives are structured by their work (Julio, personal communication, March 13, 2020). Camila wanted to study medicine; she is twenty years old and says, “now my life is just work, and work, and more work” (Camila, personal communication, March 13, 2020). Employed in the construction sector, housekeeping, gardening, or other types of domestic work – respondents argued that they do the work Arubans do not want to do. The necessity to find employment and the lack of documentation determines that the kind of labour undocumented Venezuelans can find, which is inherently inferior but profitable for the state. In other words, they find work in the dead-end “underbelly of the global economy” (Brettel, 2016, p.42).

Carolina explains that she was a journalist in Venezuela and switched from working with a recorder to working with a shovel. She says, “I was really frustrated. I stayed in college for so many years and I cried almost every day when I was working in construction”. As the only female employee at the site, she felt vulnerable but needed to adapt. She said, “at first it was uncomfortable, but later, what else? You have to move on” (Carolina, personal communication, February 02, 2020). Like Carolina, many Venezuelans are highly educated but compelled to take any job opportunity that presents itself to them. Many have post-graduate levels of education and are specialized workers with master degrees in engineering or finance but cannot practice their professions here. As one informant of an NGO summarized, they face multiple barriers: “It’s hard on them because they study for x-amount of years, and then can’t practice it. They work in something that they don’t want to do, which is exactly why they went to school, and ultimately they might not get paid” (NGO, personal conversation, March 02, 2020).

In Aruba, as much as in other places, it is in these sectors of the labour market, construction, domestic service,

agriculture, sex work - the so-called '3D' jobs: dirty, dangerous and demeaning - where immigrant workers from Venezuela are found. The industrial economies have become dependent on the work of migrants, and, also in Aruba, undocumented Venezuelans have become "a subclass of people" working in jobs with the lowest wages, least security, and most dangerous conditions (Bacon, 2008, p. 243).

Each one of my respondents spoke about abuse by employers. They are paid less than Arubans, if they are paid at all, and if not, they cannot report their exploitation²⁸. All respondents experienced the 'If you want to, you can report me' argument. It is used by employers, "who know that we are unable to [report them] and they take advantage of that", as Carlos states. He elaborates that "many people leave the situation the way it is and simply say 'Ok don't pay me' and that's it" (Carlos, personal communication, February 20, 2020). Their inability to respond to exploitation indicates that the category of the "illegal migrant" is "profoundly useful and profitable" as it effectively generates and sustains a "legally vulnerable - and hence, relatively tractable and thus "cheap" reserve of labor" (De Genova, 2002, p.440). Through copious ways employers are able to benefit from this system. The "displaced migrant workers are the backbone of this system", through the effects of "making them more vulnerable and socially isolated", their societal exclusion reduces the price of their labour (Bacon, 2008). As capital has to be flexible, portable to where it can earn the maximum return, "permanent employment only gets in the way" (Bacon, 2008). Venezuelan workers work usually for contractors who call a day in advance at the earliest and then send workers to different places. As employers determine the payment through the contractors, it reduces their responsibility for the employment conditions and for the workers themselves once their employment terminates. Such 'day by day' employment arrangements, which are leaving workers in permanent employment insecurity, are profitable for company owners. They gain advantages

through the lowered labour costs, not having to register who is employed for them besides the contractor; and from increased work force flexibility as when demand is high, contractors recruit people and they are put to work. When demand falls, those people have to find other jobs (Bacon, 2008, p.76).

Equally, employers do not have to provide for compensation if a worker is forced to leave the county (Bacon, 2008). While the fines imposed by the Aruban government to inhibit the employment of undocumented laborers are high, this system shifts the risks on the side of the undocumented person and deflects responsibility from the company. Once the work is done, they are dismissed, while sometime employers, I have been told, call 'migracion' themselves to evade the payment of workers as deportability means once 'migracion' arrives at a worksite, everyone without papers needs to run. This becomes a very simple and effective way to avoid payment.

It is disposable labour that is needed but these practices make people disposable in the literal sense as well; their lives are consistently devalued. The labour situation forces migrants to accept work that is often dangerous, without the employer being obliged to ensure the workers' safety. This is normalized in a way that Venezuelans sometimes perceive these conditions as "bad but necessary" (Miguel, personal communication, February 27, 2020). Julio stated that once they were told to remove an air conditioner that was attached outside to the wall on the third floor. One of the workers said he would not go up there without a security belt or some form of safety mechanism to which the employer responded: "It's normal. This is what we do here" (Julio, personal communication, March 16, 2020). The issue is that it is "normal", yet only for people without documents. Julio thinks that no Aruban would do this type of work because it is too dangerous. Moreover, he said the employer spoke in a tone of confidence and self-righteousness, knowing people will rarely decline work as

the money they earn is necessary. People know that the risk of deportation restricts undocumented workers and prevents them from addressing unpaid or reduced wages or overtime, violations in health and safety regulations, or sexual harassment (Bacon, 2008, p.81).



Figure 10. 'Progress': Construction Site in Aruba © Hannah Mayr.

Through the threat of deportation, their vulnerability, and the subordination of their labour, undocumented Venezuelans and other migrants can be kept in a condition of dependency and exploitation, disciplined because of their inability to respond to exploitation and learn to accept it as a necessary condition. Underlying this system is that

of an immigration policy and enforcement that effectively directs immigrants to economic sectors when their labour is necessary and removing them when it's not anymore (Bacon, 2008, p.76). Under the condition of 'illegality', and by implication, the loss of secure work in terms of income and identity, undocumented Venezuelans are forced to live life day by day. Deportability, produced by the lack of documentation, implies living life "within a collapsed temporal horizon, suffering a sense of a damaged future in the stomach and in the bones, trying to feel but fearing more what might be felt" (Butler, 2016 in Han, 2018, p.338). Respondents say there is no future to be planned, not even a tomorrow. There is only the today, which is defined by survival. Butler (2016) says that „under contemporary conditions of forced emigration and neoliberalism, vast populations now live with no sense of a secure future, no sense of continuing political belonging, living a sense of damaged life as part of the daily experience of neoliberalism" (p. 201, in Han, 2018, p.338). Undocumented Venezuelan's lives take place in a state of precarity, in which the future is always uncertain. They do not know if tomorrow they still have their employment, whether 'migracion' catches them, if they will get paid, or if they get sick²⁹.

The intersection of precariousness, here understood as the vulnerability of bodily existence and precarity, describing the social and political provisions that distribute precariousness differently, becomes problematic for those lives that are perceived as "ungrievable" or those who live in conditions that are unliveable (Han, 2018, p.338). This includes undocumented Venezuelans who were forced to migrate, who live without documentation and are part of an expendable workforce with little prospects of a stable livelihood (Han, 2018, p.338). "You are here (in Aruba) and you're not at the same time", said Carlos once. Physically he is here, but everything he cares about is in Venezuela. 'Illegality' produces being 'outside of society', in the outcast position created by the law but, at the same time, included in society, although in a hidden part. Migrants have "at

various times been both wanted and unwanted - wanted for their labor but unwanted as human beings“ (Doty, 2011, p. 600). The processes in Aruba that shape migrant’s behaviours are characterized by the policing, persecution and exclusion of undocumented Venezuelans and asylum seekers, performed through the spectacle of migrant ‘illegality’ and maintained through discursive formations. Simultaneously, there is this public secret of their gloomy inclusion as ‘illegal’ workers. Structured by the inherent threat of deportation, their lives take place in precarity, defined by the lack of stability and secure employment and being prone to exploitation. The structural violence produced by these simultaneous processes of exclusion and inclusion characterizes the situation of undocumented Venezuelans in Aruba.



Figure 11. 'On Edge' © Research Participant.

Earlier I have argued that ‘illegality’ is a constructed condition, defined by legal norms and arbitrary practices. In this section, I built on that argument by maintaining that the concept of the ‘illegal’ migrants is construed to socially exclude them but equally serves to economically include them under inflicted conditions of compulsory and extended vulnerability (De Genova, 2002, p.429).

While Dutch-Aruban relations are impacting the situation, I argue that the Aruban government has actively looked away regarding the Venezuelan diaspora on the island, and producing severely harmful conditions for undocumented Venezuelans. Hence, Venezuelan’s “illegality” is an advanced disciplinary mechanism that serves to train migrants in their behaviours, the subordination of their labour and produces lives that are unliveable.

CHAPTER SIX

RESISTANCE

Another day, we are on the beach when Julio says, “I talked about my positive perspective, but the reality is that it obviously changes you. Everything changes. For me, I know how it works, I don’t care. I don’t feel illegal. I even forget sometimes that I’m illegal. I live my life normally. But I understand how it works and clearly, it changes you. I try not to be limited by that and yet, it limits you” (Julio, personal communication, February 15, 2020). The condition of “illegality” impacts people’s lives substantively and everyday normality for those who can legally reside on the island becomes a distant dream for those excluded from it. Options to counter domination are limited, and often undocumented migrants need to accept the situation and the hardships it involves. But that is not the whole story. Julio, as quoted above, captures the complexity of the simultaneous processes of domination and resistance undocumented Venezuelans encounter. As Hollander & Einwohner (2004) argue, dichotomising people to resisters and dominators often overlooks that there are “multiple systems of hierarchy and individuals that can be simultaneously powerful and powerless within different systems” (p.550). While there are different types and dimensions of resistance (Hollander & Einwohner, 2004, p.549), the complexity of the nature of resistance arises as “resisters, after all, remain within the social system they contest” (Leblanc, 1999 in Hollander & Einwohner, 2004,

p.549). And yet, the condition of ‘illegality’ produces various responses, ranging from strategies of resistance to refusal; alteration through manipulating the system to their own advantage and accommodation through learning how to engage the imposed conditions adequately and intelligently to avoid deportation. Hence, although the frameworks I have drawn upon may indicate the absence of agency, in this last section, I want to address the individual’s agency to respond to the condition of ‘illegality’ (Doty, 2011, p.699). As there are a range of responses to the imposed conditions, in line with Lilja & Vinthagen, I argue that different forms of power generate different forms of resistance. Resistance to sovereign power, biopower, disciplinary power and refusal will be discussed in the following subsections.

6.1 RESISTING SOVEREIGN POWER

“Sovereign power works by claiming the “monopoly of rule” – it transforms individuals in subordinate subjects through the fear of being caught and punished” (Lilja & Vinthagen, 2014, p. 112). Sovereign power requires complete obedience. Consequently, resistance implies an undermining of these values and institutions. “Sovereign power will be countered by resistance that is claiming a different sovereignty that undermines the monopoly of the king, or that defies the pressure to obey and to subordinate to the sword” (Lilja & Vinthagen, 2014, p. 112). As such, resistance needs to challenge the primary mechanisms of power: “commands, prohibitions, punishments, monopoly of violence, fear, obedience habits, status symbols, claims of legitimacy or legality or sovereignty” through transformation, undermining or managing (Lilja & Vinthagen, 2014, p. 113). Breaking these commands, by “doing what is illegal or doing things for deviant interests and circumventing” resistance is executed by undermining the sovereignty of power foci (Lilja & Vinthagen, 2014, p. 113). It requires real behaviour of non-compliance to undermine the established power relation until sovereignty becomes “non-effective” (Lilja & Vinthagen, 2014, p. 113).

The act of unlawfully deciding to stay in the country already undermines the state’s sovereignty. By transgressing the state’s law, undocumented migrants throw the fiction of state control into despair. One such transgression is their intent to use the tourist visa for their own objectives, which never includes complying with the time of their tourist visa allows them to. The simple fact that people choose not to comply with the Aruban immigration law, either overstaying their visas or entering through the open sea, means a rejection of adherence to the countries’ legal system. Not complying to the immigration regime undermines the value system promoted by the Aruban government that assumes the law to be above everyone and a moral code guiding behaviours. They do not abide by the state’s immigration laws and establish their own values towards it, which includes perceiving their ‘illegalization’ as a necessary evil to move forward. In the context of limited options, escaping a violent and dysfunctional state and flouting Aruba’s state law both emphasize people’s intentionality, agency and resistance to the Aruban immigration regime.

Once people enter ‘illegality’, their lives are severely restricted by the sanctions on individual’s freedom and choices they can make. Nonetheless, in 2017, Miguel, a former activist of a Venezuelan opposition party, Voluntad Populista, initiated a hunger strike in the detention center, Dakota. He’s been a party activist since 2014. In 2017 things got worse; he was illegally searched and seized at home, and his passport was taken away from him. He left the country on a boat, risking his life, because he was fearing for his life. He had to leave Venezuela from one minute to the other, with no preparation, no passport, no luggage. He arrived without anything in Aruba, and did not immediately request asylum upon arrival. He had letters to prove the political persecution of the parties’ members but did not know about his options upon arrival. He was not familiar with the asylum system, with the island in general and

was traumatized by the intensity of what happened to him in Venezuela and the journey by boat. Later, he claimed asylum, but was apprehended by Guarda Nos Costa during work. He said he was “handcuffed, beaten” and placed in detention for over two months (Miguel, personal communication, February 27, 2020). He tells me that “their [Guarda Nos Costa’s] attitude against us was not very pleasant. They threatened us with vile or abrupt deportation without our consent. Several times we had to undress in the cell so that they would not take us to the airport. Because of our situation, at least in my condition, I cannot go back to Venezuela. I run a very big risk of disappearing, it’s that simple. Many of the people who were with me in activism are either in prison or have ceased to exist. So I can’t go back to Venezuela” (Miguel, personal communication, February 27, 2020). After being detained for two months in Dakota, in March 2019, he started a hunger strike. After two weeks they let the strikers go. He currently remains in the asylum seeker limbo. And yet, he says that he would rather spent the rest of his life in Dakota than return to Venezuela.

6.2 RESISTING BIOPOWER

If the objective of the state is to maintain the nation’s well-being, in modern nation-states achieved through what Foucault termed biopolitics, the Aruban state apparatus claims to achieve this by keeping ‘illegal aliens’ out. The asylum system, I have argued, is a biopolitical system as its aim is not to provide aid to vulnerable human beings, but to document a population the state has little control over. As Lilja & Vinthagen (2014) state: “Biopower is a gardening and cultivating form of power; one that uses surveillance, but is able to only react when some behaviour gets out of hand. It is a form of power that will be able to accept limited deviant behaviour, as risk management, if it is possible to use it for its own purpose” (p. 119). While increasingly, undocumented Venezuelans apply for asylum, many individuals do not want to be

registered within the asylum system, some because their situation is too vulnerable to risk approach any authorities; others because they perceive the Aruban state as unwilling to help them, or they perceive the monthly reporting at DIMAS as a violation of their freedom, like Carlos, who says: “they treat them [asylum seekers] here like criminals, practically, presenting themselves monthly as if one is going to evade justice” (Carlos, personal communication, February 20, 2020). Of those with pending asylum requests, some have later decided not to comply. Some stop presenting themselves at DIMAS. After years of waiting, they doubt that their cases are processed. Hence, many perceive the system as one that besides limiting and controlling them, does not offer much protection. Many of the undocumented Venezuelans also actively chose to stay undocumented, outside the state’s control and resist to the ostensible protection offered by the state. The decision to not partake in the asylum seeker limbo but remain undocumented and outside the state’s surveillance highlights an important way of refusing to be monitored by the state.

As opposed to sovereign power, biopower is a technique of government that is enacted through disciplinary means of control in which the body becomes of central importance. One form of resistance can be in undermining the relationship between “allocated punishments and rewards” (Lilja & Vinthagen, 2014, p. 115). Hence, to be punished by the state may unexpectedly turn out as a reward. Changing the endorsed reward-punishment associations can become a form of resisting to being disciplined. While my respondents highlight that they have to learn how to abide by the rules of the game, they have also found ways to manipulate it and use it to their advantage. They are being played, but they are also active players. The asylum system has become a way for undocumented Venezuelans to use the process as a way to temporarily achieve a semi-legal status, since they cannot be deported during the time they are asylum seekers. Using the asylum system as

a chance to improve one's situation in a position where all other options are limited gives people about one or two years of having a semi-legal stay or semi-secure protection from deportation. While this strategy still implies a high risk of detention (as people have to work but if they are caught working, they are detained or have to comply by daily presenting themselves), it does provide people with the chance of having some security offering protection from being immediately deported if caught.

Moreover, undocumented Venezuelans who are detained withdraw their asylum requests rapidly. This highlights two things: first, the asylum system is not the best solution to the issue, and second, the desired deterrence effect of the swift detention and deportation system is reversed. Many of the individuals I spoke to are “recyclers”: they have been deported more than once, and were back on the island as quickly as possible. If one is from the state of Falcon, the Venezuelan peninsula where most Venezuelans on Aruba are from, the trip is highly dangerous, yet relatively uncomplicated. Voluntarily signing deportation papers in order to come back as quickly as possible changes the reward-punishment system of the state that punishes transgression through expulsion. Expulsion has been reinterpreted as “part of the game”; as just a mode of getting on with life again by coming back as soon as possible. Julio stated he tends to tell people who are afraid of deportation: “Relax, you're here now. Why did you come? You came to get ahead... and this is part of the game and if they take you, they take you, and you will be back again” (Julio, personal communication, February 03, 2020).

6.3 RESISTING DISCIPLINARY POWER

Disciplinary power is productive. Operating through techniques of government such as discourses, it deploys surveillance, normalization and examination to shape peoples behaviours by training one to conform to certain norms. Therefore, resistance to disciplinary power can be

possible in each moment of training, rule, or discursive modes people are subject to through overt or hidden engagements (Scott, 2016). Present mechanism of resistance include undocumented Venezuelan's openly confronting people speaking to them in derogative terms, making their discontent known or ignoring costumers' or employers' orders. They established counter-discourses to counter the supremacy of authorities. To negotiate the different forms of violence undocumented migrants experienced, the officers working in the agency have been depersonalized. The Venezuelan discourse on *Guarda Nos Costa* uses the term ‘migracion’, as the homogeneous evil, which serves in a way to make clear that the migration officers, in the eyes of Venezuelans, lost part of their humanity.

Moreover, disciplinary power can be met by “forms of resistance that challenge through avoiding, rearticulating discourses and by destabilising the institutional control of behaviour” (Lilja & Vinthagen, 2014). In part, I argued, the objective of the current practices is to make undesirables invisible but silently incorporated in the economy as docile subjects. It is expected that undocumented migrants live in hiding and let their lives be controlled by the threat of deportation. While deportability serves as the strongest mechanism to achieve this objective, the disciplining effect of deportability loses its strength over time. While NGOs told me that “migracion” and the police identifies undocumented migrants because they respond in a suspicious way to their presence, many of the people I spoke to learned how to navigate their ‘deportability’ with the time. “I don't really worry about it. What I do is work. I don't hide, I don't run from anyone. I walk peacefully. I feel that the more you hide, the more things happen”, said Carlos. Like Carlos, many have renegotiated the threat of deportation³⁰. While the fact of their deportability does not change, undocumented migrants learn how to navigate their deportability, and doing so becomes a form of non-compliance and resistance to the powers aiming to control

their conduct. Thus, while the threat of deportability at first has a strong disciplinary effect as it keeps people in isolation, who are afraid, unfamiliar their environments well and distrustful of people, this effect vanishes over time. Some people manage to forget about deportability; for others its effects become milder because they have other elements in their lives to balance the effect. Thus, “rather than existing as docile bodies” undocumented people have found ways to “continue living despite the fear of deportation and social stigma heaped upon them” (Chavez, 2007, p. 194).

Power always produces resistance, but at the same time, as there is no outside of power, resistance always occurs in opposition to the system of domination (Foucault, 1978, p.95). Hence, the problem with one never being outside of power is that one cannot draw on resources outside of what has been received – and as power not only shapes the ways of resistance, but resistance is utilizing power techniques, it is not always self-evident what is what (Lilja & Vinthagen, 2014, p. 117). How does the meaning of resistance to discipline fluctuate if we look at subjugation through adaptation and resistance through strategies of survival?

For a while, I have unconsciously been using the term ‘becoming illegal’. ‘Becoming illegal’ has always felt uncomfortable to me. Have I not devoted significant amounts of energy into saying the exact opposite? I use ‘becoming illegal’ because knowing how to survive in marginality is not something my respondents were born with; it, therefore, implies different kinds of skills (or capitals) that one has to acquire. “It’s not that you are suddenly illegal. It’s something you have to learn - and not everyone learns it. That’s why a lot of people don’t last long - they leave. Some leave voluntarily and others hold on. It’s because, you have to learn to do it. You must learn it. If you want to survive on the island, you must”, explained Julio to me.

I use the word ‘becoming’ because it indicates the process people go through, which is characterized by different types of learning. As Rony once stated, “so, there you are learning how to be an illegal. It’s something I learned since I arrived on the island” (Rony, personal communication, February 12, 2020). Therefore, I perceive, highlighting ‘illegality’ in the process of becoming has the ability to shed light to the ambiguity between learning to behave according to the powers ascribed to one, while at the same time resisting them. Allen (2001) argues “since there is no outside to power, freedom always involves strategically reworking the power relations to which we are subjected” (p. 51). However, she also says that the capacity for critical self-transformation is “a capacity for autonomy”, in which “autonomy’ is understood as the twin capacities to reflect critically upon the power-knowledge relations that have constituted one’s subjectivity and to engage in practices of self-transformation (Allen, 2011, p.44). She refers to Foucault’s notion of technologies of self, describing how individuals’ self-transformation, in a way, can be understood as forms of resistance to their subjectification (Lilja & Vinthagen, 2014, p. 116).

When Lucia tells me that “you know, I think one has overcome so many things that you get very inventive, you find a way to manage”, in a way she is referring to what Hannah Arendt argued - that “a man who wants to lose his self discovers, indeed, the possibilities of human existence, which are infinite, as infinite as is creation” (Arendt, 1961, n.p.). The new skills people develop to survive showcase a high level agency as it demonstrates their ability to transform the relations they encounter. They include, for example, knowing where and when to work. Rony, once said that “you also have to learn when you can work and when you can’t, you know? When the street is hot, and when the street is cold. It’s like marea, you have to know how to navigate it” (Rony, personal communication, March

06, 2020). Living life undiscovered is not automatic but emphasizes the individual's capacities to understand, interact, learn and thereby, remaining the agents of their lives. With regards to their apprehension, people learn strategies not be detected, identified, or caught. They learn how to respond to exploitation and how to alter their situation through negotiations, threats, or relying on the social capital they possess and can access. They can access networks of information, provided by the community that together knows where to go and where not to go, when and what to buy, who to trust as an employer and who not to trust, and the support provided when someone needs medical attention. There are mechanisms to warn each other about places where they hear that *Guarda Nos Costa* had been present. The body becomes a resource, and is trained to be ready to escape: "I train for that very thing, for when it's my turn to run" (Rony, personal communication, February 12, 2020). And even clothes become an important strategy to be less recognizable and identifiable when one needs to run or is walking down the street. Some wear two sets of clothes, so they can remove one if they are forced to run. Another strategy is to never work in uniform, but in streetwear, while yet another is to wear the shirts of major Aruban business, since for undocumented people these jobs are rarely accessible. Adopting ways of ensuring one can escape is of major importance. It thus comes with an increased awareness of one's environment, and types of knowledge, for example, when to run and when to hide.

The condition of illegality does mean people do not have the autonomy over deciding what job to take, to go to the authorities when they are not paid, or to get a health insurance. At the same time, however, they can alter the ways in which they engage with the daily constraints experienced through different strategies, and choose how much it affects them. As Lucia said, "you choose your thoughts and I can no longer burden my mind with things that won't build me up, that won't lead me

to anything, what I'll achieve is to get sick, not happy" (Lucia, personal communication, February 26, 2020).

While subjectivities are affected by the circulating discourses and their mechanisms of control, people can partly become agents through practices creating the 'self'. They are anything but passive victims of their situation, uniformly shaped by the effects of some totalizing power structure that is prohibitive and to which people cannot respond. Instead, undocumented citizens rationalize, counteract, and resist their subjugation, finding a number of ways to engage with the situation and draw on a reservoir of skills and knowledges they obtained on the island.

6.4 REFUSAL

"Who are you to tell me that I can't be here if the world is for everyone?" (Julio, personal communication, March 13, 2020). We were at a café, in public visibility and I made the mistake to look at the police officer who passed by. I asked whether he wasn't bothered and he got angry with me. Why would I attract attention to him? I felt not particularly intelligent at that moment but it just would not get to me. Why would he not accept that he should be afraid, I thought. I inquired. For weeks we had been hanging out. So I asked him again and he told me that nobody can tell him where to be and where not. Why would he feel like his self-worth should be defined by others? He is not afraid of the police, he looks them in the eyes and smiles when he passes them. Some of the people I have been speaking to have adopted the public discourse and talked about themselves as 'illegals'- sarcastically though and only some. Others, understandably, got irritated when I mentioned the term. "I told you, I don't like the word illegal. To me no human should be illegal." (Rony, personal communication, February 12, 2020). What I noticed in these situations was that there is something more than just resistance. People refuse to

self-identify as ‘illegal’. Refusal differs from resistance, as theories of resistance assume “a hierarchical relationship in which a subordinate resists a superior power”, while “refusal works differently by professing a relationship between equals” (McGranahan, 2018, p.368).

Yet relationships between equals do not always play out on equal territory. For people such as undocumented migrants or refugees, they may take place in a “deeply unequal scene of articulation” (Simpson 2017, p.29). While “migrant ‘illegality’ is produced as an effect of the law, it is also sustained as an effect of a discursive formation” (De Genova, 2002, p.431). Rony tells me that being labelled or perceived as illegal always affects has an effect on the person. “It affects you because they simply call you illegal, emotionally it affects you because you are, you feel less than they do” (Rony, personal communication, February 12, 2020). Against such a backdrop, refusal can be an “antidote” to inequality, “a symptom, a practice, a possibility for doing things differently” (Simpson 2017, 29 in McGranahan, 2018, p.368). People are upset; they know that if “when they fire you from your job, it’s for anything but being a bad worker”. Usually its “because you didn’t shut up when you had to shut up according to him because you’re an illegal and he yelled at you” (Rony, personal communication, February 12, 2020). And yet, people refuse to be put down; they sometimes ignore their employers’ demands, refuse to engage with them; or quit their jobs. Hence, although there can be ‘no outside of power’, there can be a rejection of protracted inferiority through the act of refusal. While in many ways, undocumented Venezuelans are forced to adapt to situations they should not have to adapt to, all refuse to perceive of themselves as illegal. The condition of illegality does not achieve that people let the label change their identity. As Sebastian said: “It’s a question of humanity, of rights that every human being should have. We are not illegal, we are human” (Sebastian, personal communication, February 14, 2020).

CHAPTER 7

RETHINKING ARUBA



Figure 12. ‘Longing and Unbelonging’ © Hannah Mayr.

The current situation undocumented Venezuelans and asylum seekers face in Aruba is rather dire. People are effectively illegalized through an immigration legislation that is based on the dichotomy between refugees and economic migrants, which disqualifies Venezuelans from protection, despite them escaping from conditions that are at best unsustainable to live life decently and at worst, life-threatening. The effects of their ‘illegalization’ on people’s lives are severe. People live in isolation, poverty, and with

the constant threat of deportation. Their marginalization makes them subject to exploitation and abuse. They feel unprotected by the law, stigmatized and subject to extraordinary forms of policing and control.

Throughout this thesis, I attempted to denaturalize and contextualize Venezuelan's 'illegality' by discussing Aruba's immigration law as producing its subjects through the creation of categories of differentiation. I have tried to emphasize Venezuelan's 'Illegality' as a product of Aruba's current legislation, hence, as historically grounded, yet productive, and situated within regimes of power that go beyond the state (De Genova, 2002, p.424). I perceive the interpretation of the immigration law as truthfully enacting moral categories of what is 'right' and 'wrong', or in the politics of the migration regime defining who is 'included' and 'excluded' as reductionist. The law, imagined by public discourse as coherent, is malleable and allows for highly ambiguous interpretations and illicit transgressions that showcase the "reality of messy politics that involve and encourage illicit alliances" (Heyman & Smart, 2001, p.12).

The practices of Aruba's immigration regime, I argued, allow for an interpretation that several different techniques of government are enacted to control migration and migrant's behaviours, of which the underlying rationale seems to be the protection of Aruban society through safeguarding the tourist economy. The current practices are perceived as legitimate as the safeguarding of the tourist economy is informing Aruban politics. I situated Aruba's immigration apparatus in the framework of governmentality as my respondents' information elicited an interpretation of different modes of power, including demonstrations of sovereign power, biopower, and disciplinary power, as enacted by a variety of actors to control migrants' conduct.

First, Aruba's immigration regime is inefficient in achieving the objective of controlling 'irregular' immigration to Aruba as the phenomenon of "re-cycling" Venezuelans showcases.

As Aruba needs to maintain the illusion of state control over the Aruban territory, I argued that 'illegal' migration poses a threat to Aruban sovereignty, causing an upsurge in sovereign techniques of power. The extraordinary demonstration of this is manifested in the increasing visibility of border control through the deployment of helicopters and regular, spontaneous raids of *Guarda Nos Costa*.

While the reasoning of keeping people in detention is that these are unlawfully on the island and *DIMAS* rushes to terminate their asylum claims so they can be repatriated, undocumented Venezuelans perceive their detention in harsh conditions for extended periods as a strategy used by *Guarda Nos Costa* to make individuals withdraw from their asylum application faster. The active detention and removal of societally undesirable aliens, promoted through the narrative of Venezuelans being a threat to the public order, produces a wide array of arbitrary and harmful practices. The devaluation many Venezuelans experience in their daily lives is epitomized by the degrading treatment they are subject to in detention centres. The accounts of many respondents who reported being subjected to dehumanizing practices, support the argument that people are stripped of their political rights and governed in a state of exception. Since individuals come here to work to sustain their families, time lost in detention means they cannot work and send remittances. Many of the people detained sign deportation papers within a short amount of time in order to be quickly returned to Venezuela, which allows them to yet again return to Aruba more quickly. In effect, this quick expulsion simply keeps up an illusion of effective migration control.

Secondly, the asylum system, under the pretence of being humanitarian, can be understood as a biopolitical technique of government to document, monitor, and control subjects that are otherwise outside state control. It appears to offer protection, yet the non-existent acceptance rate legitimized

through the interpretation of Venezuelan migration as being economically motivated, allows for an interpretation of the asylum system as a useful mechanism to number, discipline, and ultimately legitimately expel undesirable people. I further argued that the framing of Venezuelans as either criminals or sex-workers; and by implication the trafficking discourse, to justify increased border control mechanisms and allowing for the moral policing of Aruba's entire society.

Thirdly, I reasoned that Venezuelan's normalized 'illegalisation' deflects from what it really is: A condition produced by different forms of regimes of power and a transnational social relation of labour and capital (De Genova, 2013, p.1190). While 'illegalized' Venezuelans are socially excluded, subject to constant policing, surveillance, and control; at the same time, their 'illegality' is essentially useful for the state, which benefits from their silent inclusion into Aruba's economy. I reasoned that the Aruban economy is dependent on the reservoir of mobile labour, which is cheap, flexible, and labour in conditions that Aruban citizens would not accept; and stays like that as the threat of deportation serves as a highly efficient disciplinary technique ensuring the subordination of migrant's labour since their 'illegal' status often deprives people of the options to respond to exploitation.

Lastly, I tried to counter undocumented migrant's portrayal as either perpetrators or victims without agency. The individuals I spoke to are highly capable, educated, and resourceful, who have found ways to navigate the situation. Developing different strategies to resist the multiple forms of control they are subjected to, they have been able to carry out hunger strikes, use the asylum system as a way to secure their situation temporarily, or decide to boycott the state's laws by staying outside the state's visibility. They draw on a series of tactics to escape detection, counter the public discourse reducing them to essentializing categories and reject their labelling as 'illegals'. They refuse

to let the condition of illegality affect their identity and self-perception.

In sum, the pattern arising from the data I collected in Aruba is one of structural violence, neglect and abuse, which affects the Venezuelan minority by producing violent conditions. The situation of undocumented Venezuelans and asylum seekers is severely harmful, however, I argued, it is produced through damaging structures. Thus, the post-colonial relationship cannot be left aside. Nonetheless, although Aruba's current response to the Venezuelan situation is impacted by the Dutch policies, the government of Aruba has ignored the dire reality undocumented Venezuelans and asylum seekers face on the island. Hence, I believe the situation relates to what Sartre described in the play *Dirty Hands*: "Half victim, half accomplice, like everyone else" (Sartre, 1948).

It would go against the understanding of ethnographic research in deportation studies to end with policy recommendations. But if the aim is to reduce the violent conditions that Venezuelans suffer from, we first need to understand why they exist. The Aruban government and society would have to focus on understanding why Venezuelans flee and would have to take responsibility for those that are already here. Overwhelmingly, undocumented Venezuelans and asylum seekers perceive the lack of the right to work and the right to healthcare as most detrimental, but every time the word work permit gets mentioned, the authorities get very nervous. 'Too many people on the island', 'we're full', 'this would be a pull effect' - those are the reasons why temporary work permits are not on the table. I would argue, and I am not alone in this argumentation, that there is a fundamental misrecognition of why Venezuelans migrate to Aruba. If people are starving, dying of untreated illnesses, if they have no access to water, no electricity and protesters are shot on the streets - if these are the conditions people flee from, the push factors consistently outweigh any pull factors. Self-evidently, people do contemplate where to

migrate. Yet, in the case of Aruba, its proximity and the social relations that have been built over centuries are facilitators that cannot be amended from the outside. People will keep migrating to Aruba, whether there is a work permit or not, and these people are suffering. Discourses ‘othering’ the Venezuelan population have painted an image of a large part of Aruban society’s perception of Venezuelans as driven by hostility, lack of understanding and fostered by the lack of information about the reasons and motives of Venezuelan migration. The social divide may impact social cohesion and increase nationalism. Aruban society runs into the danger of echoing Europe’s anti-immigrant populism. Once an informant stated that this situation will not be changed unless it becomes of interest to someone. I perceive the effects of the current practices as having repercussions on Aruban society and the country might later be harmed by its current anti-Venezuelan campaign, especially considering that Venezuela and Aruba have had such longstanding social relations. As people are already dying in Aruban waters, I fear it is only a matter of time until the first Venezuelan dies during work, apprehension or detention; avoiding such circumstances, could quickly become of interest to someone.

I aimed to show a different perspective to that of Aruban society, trying to provide a counter-discourse by highlighting people’s experiences, their thoughts and their perception of the situation. These persons are highly skilled and want to contribute to Aruban society. I perceive it important to highlight the substantial amount of unused human capital Venezuelans bring to the island, which Aruba could benefit from. People say, ‘there is a lack of everything on Aruba’ and the sole focus on the tourist economy is not sustainable. Tourism is vital for Aruba, but at the same time, I want to make the argument that Venezuelans might be able to help diversify the economy. The people I have spoken to are doctors, politicians, administrators, students, and managers, they would be a valuable contribution to Aruban society, but only if they are not marginalized and kept in

abusive conditions in the current hostile environment.

Yet, as this “state of exception” increasingly becomes the normal state of rule, its by-product, concealed detentions and expulsions, continuously render individuals invisible (Peutz, 2006, p.231). It is important to make these stories visible and situate them in the nets of discursive and disciplinary relations forming and controlling subjectivities. Future research could focus not only on how these individuals are regulated and governed in liminal space but further apprehend how this state of continuous insecurity, which is a space empty of protection, without vision of a future, affects their subjectivities and sense of being in the world.

¹ The quotes by Julio in this chapter are from the Interview conducted on the 21st of February 2020.

² My aim is to dissect the labeling and classification of people in essentializing categories, thereby highlighting the need to understand these as constructed; as adjacent techniques of power aiming to achieve divergent objectives of a variety of involved actors. Not to promote exchanging one category for another.

³ The term regime serves to “acknowledging the multiplicity of actors that are involved in the system and researching the networked ensemble of discourses, institutions, and practices that aim to make migration governable“ (Kasperek, 2016, p. 66).

⁴ The current legislation of course affects undocumented migrants and asylum seekers from different countries. However, since most arriving migrants are from Venezuela and the current legislative changes were introduced because of the increase of Venezuelan migration, I have only focused on their situation, albeit it certainly similar across different nationalities that are undocumented or asylum seekers on Aruba.

⁵ Vulnerability is heightened if one understands the smallness of an island where everybody knows each other. Considering that Venezuela is so close that it can be seen from some points in Aruba, it is unsurprising that trade and family relations have been

built over centuries. This proximity then manifests itself in strange combinations, like undocumented Venezuelans being related to migration officers of the border protection agency.

⁶ In Argentina, this is the MERCOSUR travel permit, in Brazil the Normative Resolution No.126 (2017), in Chile the Visa of Democratic Responsibility (2018), in Peru the Permiso Temporal de Residencia (PTP) (2017), In Ecuador the Ley de Movilidad Humana (2017) and in Colombia the Permiso Especial de Permanencia (PEP) (2015).

⁷ Brazil and the countries of the Andean corridor, including Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Chile, and Argentina incorporated the extended refugee definition of the Cartagena Declaration into their national policies (Camilleri & Hampson, 2018, p. 10; Huang & Gough, 2018, p. 4). Through the Cartagena Declaration and the Quito processes, which eight out of thirteen countries signed, Argentina, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Paraguay, Peru, and Uruguay (Miller & Panayotatos, 2019), most Latin American countries had initially adopted an open-door policy towards Venezuelan migration, allowing Venezuelans to apply for political asylum and issuing temporary permits, admitting Venezuelans to reside and work in the respective countries. In the last years, however, when migration from Venezuela increased, Chile started to restrict immigration laws by making the possession of a passport a requirement for entrance to Chile and thereby initiated a domino effect of stricter immigration policies as Ecuador and Peru feared that people would consequently stay in these countries (MMC, 2019). Sharing a 2200 km long border with Venezuela, which cannot feasibly be controlled, Colombia is left carrying most of the burden with an estimated 2 million Venezuelans residing in Colombia. While Colombia still has a relatively open-door policy, states are vulnerable to other states' policies (Brochman & Hammar, 1999, p.17) and Colombia started incorporating stricter policies (Camilleri & Hampson, 2018, p.13)

⁸ Aruba is further bound to the European Convention on Human Rights and Fundamental Freedom (ECHR), the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and the 1987 UN Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (UNCAT), as well as the "customary international law principle prohibiting refoulement"

(Amnesty International, 2018, p. 21). That is, the "removal of a person to a country where he or she is exposed to inhuman or degrading treatment or faces a risk of being tortured is not allowed" (Amnesty International, 2018, p. 21).

⁹ The Handbook is outdated, as, at the time of writing, the DIMAS website still indicates that the Handbook is being updated in accordance with the changes made in July 2019.

¹⁰ An asylum seeker is classified as: "A person claiming protection in accordance with the Refugee Convention, whose application has not yet given rise to a final decision" (DIMAS handbook, 2019, p.4). A refugee is "Any person who is outside the country of his nationality or has no nationality outside his country of origin, and who cannot or does not wish to avail himself of the protection of that country because he has a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion" (DIMAS handbook, 2019, p.4).

¹¹ The two cases that were apparently accepted are unknown to the public. Equally are the reasons for admission.

¹² Although asylum seekers officially have the right to appeal, they do not have a very good option for getting those heard. People can file an objection of complaint ('bezwaar'), and for the objection the Minister of Justice has a certain amount of time to respond to. However, if they do not respond, the person has to file another complaint. Meanwhile the person is still in detention. The entire process is very costly as it involves court fees for each of these objections. Additionally, if the case should actually be taken seriously and now, one has to file a 'vovo', a special adjunction on top of that, which entails additional court fees. While ultimately, each of these complaints is a separate legal process that can charge from 450 up to 1800 florins sometimes for each of those processes. This is heightened by the fact that all legal documents are provided in Dutch, and there exists no clear and translated information in Spanish (or any other language), hence, it involves additional costs for translators or lawyers.

¹³ Because of this, the Court in First Instance of Aruba determined that detainees who wish (continual) evaluation of their detention must request that the detention decree be nullified in writing. Automatically when no recourse is given to this request it is

considered denied, according to the National Ordinance on Administrative Justice. Normally an unanswered request is considered fictionally denied after 12 weeks, but considering article I.5, subsection 3 of the Constitution (Staatsregeling) of Aruba, which states that every detained person has the right to quick review of their detention, a fictional rejection should be considered after 2 weeks (Rechtspraak).

¹⁴I was told by Jose, who had been deported from Aruba once and was forced to take the boat the second time he came to Aruba, that one person boarded the lancha with flip flops. Another woman boarded with a suitcase. My informant just shook his head. “They don’t give you any information what you’re getting into- They did not know that all their belongings would be lost”, he told me. He had not slept properly because he needed to be constantly available and ready for departure. He elaborated that “after you paid the boat, on some point they call you and half an hour later you need to be on board. Otherwise it leaves. Your money lost. They don’t care about you”, he says, “all they care about is the money. It’s a clandestine project, involving various types of mafias” (Jose, personal communication, February 24, 2020).

¹⁵ These include: that asylum seekers who cannot be detained have to report daily at Guarda Nos Costa, that people can be stopped on the streets based on the fact that they ‘look’ Venezuelan, or that they can be detained for weeks in conditions that are meant to be temporary solutions.

¹⁶ All quotes from Jose were collected during the personal communication, February 27.

¹⁷ Aruba’s Correction Institute

¹⁸ For example, regarding the 23,8 million euro provided by the Netherlands to Curaçao and Aruba in September 2019, 45% are invested in ‘crisis management’ mechanisms, which includes for example, funds for hurricanes (Heintze et al., 2019, p.9). The remaining is distributed among the islands. In the end, as NGO’s confirmed, Aruba does not seem to see much from the money that the Netherlands is providing, and is said to invest the funds in useful projects, such as helping Venezuelan children to learn Papiamentu, gender based violence aid and building schools.

¹⁹ By comparison, Spain has granted 15% of Venezuelans asylum; however, in 2019, 40.000 Venezuelans benefitted from the

temporary residence and work permit for humanitarian reasons applicable to denied asylum seekers (Martin, 2019).

²⁰ While there is knowledge on the occurrence of domestic violence, survival sex, human trafficking, child exploitation, research on these interrelated issues is lacking and there seems to exist no data the prevalence of each phenomenon.

²¹ None of my informants had to resort to survival sex; however, some had been offered to work in the sex industry and some were seriously considering the offers due to their financial situation.

²² One discourse, but also a romanticised reality is that of Venezuelan women “coming here to steal Aruban women’s husbands”. The stigma frames women not only as the opportunity-seeking mistress but further severely impacts women’s prospects to report abuse. One of my informants tells me of three of her friends ultimately left for another country because of domestic violence, which the police would not investigate. Two of her friends, she tells me, were abused by their husbands but the police would not take their cases seriously, and further blame the women for their abuse by telling them they chose to marry the men (Maria, personal communication, February 26, 2020). Another friend of Maria, left after being domestically abused because the police, that were said to be acquainted with the husband, made sure she would not file a complaint. Moreover, many of the women I interviewed perceive Aruban men as a threat to them. They explain that they are constantly approached by Aruban men, who will not stop coming after them, even after telling them multiple times to leave them alone (Valentina, personal communication, February 17, 2020). The persistence of this form of harassment seems to capture a certain kind of mindset some Aruban men have over Venezuelan women and may have played into situations such as the one Maria had to experience. Maria was drugged during her work cleaning a person’s home and feared sexual violence but could fortunately get out of the situation before she was harmed in other ways. p.35 This type of behaviour has led to escalations, as in the case of Maria, who has been sustaining her five-headed family through house-keeping (Maria, personal communication, February 26, 2020). Once during work, she was offered a piece of cake by the men sitting on the sofa in the house she was cleaning. She appreciated the gesture and but started to feel very uncomfortable shortly after

eating the cake. She went to the bathroom, trying to work out why she'd feel heavy and tired and barely able to keep her eyes open. She said, when she came out, "one look was sufficient to know what had and would further happen to her" (Maria, personal communication, February 26, 2020). Maria is an independent and self-assured woman who was able to avoid further harm. Telling the men that if they would approach her in any way, she would call the police, ultimately she managed to get her husband to pick her up and got out of the situation safely. If this has happened to her, it is likely to have happened to others and maybe those did not have the resources to change the situation. Second, it illustrates how Venezuelan women are objectified, devalued, and seem to be perceived as "free goods" by Aruban men. The situation was horrifying for Maria. She had never consumed drugs in her life and since that day, she is alert to any situation that makes her uncomfortable but her status as undocumented forces her to accept employment even if she is alone with male employers.

²³ All quotes collected with Juana in this section stem from the interview on February 02, 2020.

²⁴ Foucault (1977) states: "it is always the body that is at issue—the body and its forces, their utility and docility, their distribution and submission" (p. 25).

²⁵ All quotes collected with Lucia in this section stem from the interview on February 26, 2020.

²⁶ While there is an eminent problem between the post-modern scholarship and that of political economy, I do not perceive them to be unbridgeable. In fact, I find the combination of the different directions of analysis as crucial in understanding the situation of undocumented Venezuelans on Aruba. Besides, according to Mills, Foucault argued that the production of the docile body, which prison techniques of control aimed at were "caught up with the economic imperative of productivity, insofar as the investment of the body with disciplinary relations of power is directed toward the production of a subjected population suitable for economic exploitation" (Foucault, 1977, p. 25 in Mills, 2003, p.256). She further points out that, in the *History of Sexuality*, Foucault argues that "the development of a disciplinary regime of power was crucial to the emergence and successful installation of capitalistic economic relations" (Mills, 2003, p.256). Hence,

for my understandings, Foucault's writings have not excluded a political economy angle, but expanded the mechanisms by which the objective of labour productivity can be achieved.

²⁷ Farmer argues that through the lens of structural violence, violent conditions, such as abject poverty or illness, and in this case illegality, are not perceived in isolation but as the product of diverse historical, socio-economic, and political processes, which include the erasure of history, that successfully detaches current subjugation, inequality, and illness from the legacy of colonialism and neoliberal interventions (p.308).

²⁸ "At the time we were working, I was abused. Twenty pools and they didn't pay us well. At least the locals got 15 florins an hour, I got 8.5 florins. They took away my tax anyway. The tax they'll never declare to the government. They know you can't say anything and they take advantage of that. That's the biggest crime I have seen in Aruba", said Julio (Julio, personal communication, February 10, 2020). All informants were not paid on at least one occasion. Juana, who has a post-graduate degree in Business states that: "here the hour was paid in ten guilders, well they still pay ten guilders, but he paid me three guilders. Working from 7 in the morning until 11 at night" (Juana, personal communication, February 9, 2020). Her friend, Carolina, who was a journalist in Venezuela, added that she worked in construction work because without documents she could not find other employment and needed the money. She found this work through people that she met on Aruba. She would have to mix cement, crimp walls and help build a roof. Carolina was working for a contractor, who would tell her what she had to do. She was helping him but also the only female in the job. Working from 7 am to 5 pm from Monday to Friday, she would get paid only 350 florins a week even though people are usually paid very well for construction work. She, as everyone else I have spoken to, was paid less than the Aruban workers. While Arubans get paid up to 100 dollars a day or at least 100 florins, she would get paid only 70 florins a day (Carolina, personal communication, February 9, 2020). Illegalized Venezuelans have to survive on a low and uncertain wages, on an extremely expensive island. This comes with other limitations. José, also working in construction has been sharing a room with four other Venezuelans for more than three years now and pays 150\$ a month in rent, so even if

he does not get paid one month, he can still send money back to his family (Jose, personal communication, February 20, 2020). Julio initially struggled to find employment. For two weeks, every morning, he would go to a hotel and ask for work. Everyday encountering another thirty people that were equally waiting. One day, when he was finally accepted, the employer in the end told him that he was too young. It caused him to panic; it had been too long he had not been working. Ultimately, they agreed to put him on trial. For eight hours a day over the course of twenty days he had to mix cement and bring the heavy buckets up to the scaffold where they would be processed. The following weeks, he had to carry boxes of ceramics over the entire compound, and later he had to remove old ceramics with a hammer from an empty pool. He worked from six in the morning until at least six in the evening, 12 hours a day, being paid less than minimum wage.

²⁹ Respondents are worrying about the lack of health care. Mariana is frustrated and worrying about her and her children's health as the only medication she can get is paracetamol. "Tell me what illness are you going to cure with some god-damn paracetamol, please?" (Mariana, personal communication, March 3, 2020). Carlos enforced that, regarding the lack of health care, he perceived "the government of Aruba [to have] violated all the rights that can be violated by a person. I say that health cannot ask whether you have papers or not. If you need it, you have to attend to it. I say that first aid should not stop anyone, and I say that this is one of the most vulnerable human rights that a person does not have here" (Carlos, personal communication, February 20, 2020). Undocumented Venezuelans cannot get health insurance and are left without aid; when they get sick, even buying antibiotics in the pharmacy is impossible as one needs to have a doctor's recipe. Juana had a stroke. She explains that she was not able to go to a hospital to receive help due to the costs and the lack of documentation. A doctor, also undocumented, who visits people in their homes was finally able to help her. She stated it was stress that caused her condition. Stress has often been diagnosed as a facilitator for illnesses; thus, especially in the stressful condition of 'illegality', people are likely to get ill. While in Aruba, Lucia, who migrated with her family, thinks her health has been affected by the high level of stress. She had salmonella and a kidney infection;

last week she had colitis. She is forced to rely on palliative remedies because she does not have the means to go to a hospital. She potentially could go if she could find a representative with a Dutch passport, but the bills are high and she cannot afford it. The Aruban health care system is hardly affordable for citizens, even less so for undocumented migrants. Carolina tells me that there was a recent case where a girl had an accident because she had a stroke while driving a car, crashed, and was hospitalized in a very serious condition. The Venezuelan community went to the radio, sold soups, found ways to gather money for her since she had no insurance and they were letting her die in the hospital. In the end, she was taken to Colombia for treatment by air ambulance costing another 8,000 dollars. Only because she was able to get support from the Venezuelan community, she survived. Juana said, the Aruban authorities, even though the girl was applying for political asylum, were not helping. Moreover, some representatives NGOs stated that they recognize the psychological traumas experienced by Venezuelans, but say that the 'machismo' culture forbids people to ask for psychological help. That might be impacting it, but my experience is rather characterized by respondents stating that they need psychological treatment, as was the case of Jose and others, but have no option to access any type of care. José is still suffering from the consequences of the journey by boat. The trauma of the horrors he experienced caused months of insomnia. He says he needs psychological care.

³⁰ "I don't take any trails, I walk on the main roads. Because I'm not doing anything wrong and so you can't go around hiding like a criminal...I live my normal life" (Carlos, personal communication, February 20, 2020). If he runs into the police he will say hi. Before, he says he felt like a criminal and got very nervous. Today, he states, "If I want to go to the Chinese store, I can walk, I don't have to walk with that anxiety". Lucia also said she changed with the time. Now, she says, she looks fine but a year and a half ago she would cry everywhere because of how she feared that Guarda Nos Costa would take her even though she had that paper (Lucia, personal communication, February 26, 2020).

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